

Statement of
Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Molly Phee
U.S. Department of State
Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing
“FY2023 Budget Request for Africa”
July 27, 2022

Chairman Van Hollen, Ranking Member Rounds, it is a pleasure to see you again and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Biden-Harris Administration’s FY 2023 Budget Request. Before I start, I would like to express my appreciation to Congress for the additional supplemental funding for Ukraine, which included over \$5.1 billion specifically for addressing the global food security impacts of Russia’s invasion. To date, more than \$1.27 billion in humanitarian food security assistance from the additional supplemental has been provided to countries in Africa. An additional \$337 million will be used for the Feed the Future initiative and to help address the immediate needs of people suffering from food insecurity exacerbated by the Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Thank you.

This Budget Request will continue to advance the priorities of the Administration and the Secretary of State to build partnerships across Africa in support of U.S. interests and shared goals of African leaders and their citizens. State and USAID remain focused on advancing peace and security, promoting democracy and human rights, supporting economic growth, and building resilient societies through our efforts to combat climate change, strengthen good governance, and promote healthier lives. The State and USAID Joint Regional Strategy and the forthcoming U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa will guide the diplomatic and development work of posts and staff based throughout the region. We are also preparing to host the second U.S. Africa Leaders' Summit in December. President Biden’s budget request of \$7.8 billion will provide the resources needed to continue to elevate our engagement and build upon our successes.

With this funding, we will continue working to fulfill our commitment to provide COVID-19 vaccines. To date, we have provided over 169 million doses to 44 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. We provided more than \$2 billion in COVID-related assistance for emergency health and humanitarian support. The pandemic continues to underscore the need for investment to support African health systems and we are requesting \$5.7 billion, including \$3.8 billion for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Simultaneously, we are relentlessly working to mitigate the continuing economic impact of the pandemic, including through increased engagement with the American private sector and especially engaging young people across the continent in these efforts. This request includes funding for Administration initiatives ahead of the U.S. Africa Leaders’ Summit, including support to bolster trade and investment through signature U.S. government programs like Prosper Africa and Power Africa. It includes funding for a new digital initiative to expand affordable and inclusive digital connectivity and the scaling up of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Regional Leadership Centers.

As we discussed during a hearing earlier this month, recent extraconstitutional changes of government in several countries highlight the need for greater investment in democracy and governance programming and more development assistance that targets underlying social, environmental, and economic deficiencies. The President's Request includes \$285 million to strengthen democratic institutions, promote respect for human rights, and directly respond to democratic backsliding across the continent. We are requesting increases in democracy funding along with health and economic growth funding to advance the Sahel Strategy. To that end, the budget also requests \$440 million to continue Feed the Future programs to address global hunger, nutrition, strengthen social safety nets and food insecurity. This coupled with the emergency supplemental funding will help to offset the impact of sharply increasing food prices and market disruptions.

In support of these shared priorities, the President's Budget includes \$438 million to strengthen the ability of African regional and sub-regional organizations, government institutions, and civil society to better address state fragility and armed conflict. We appreciate your commitment to and dedicated resources in support of the Global Fragility Act. We will utilize these critical resources to prevent and reduce conflict in priority countries that include Mozambique and those in Coastal West Africa.

None of these critical efforts, however, would be possible without our greatest resource: our people. It is an honor and privilege to represent the incredibly talented, dedicated public servants that work tirelessly every day to build and advance U.S. relationships across sub-Saharan Africa. This fiscal year, we will add 30 new positions that will serve as an important start in reinvesting in our people and providing the resources needed to achieve the policy outcomes we seek. Still, as our partnerships on the African continent grow, more positions are needed to sufficiently address the complex problem sets we are tackling in DC and abroad; therefore, we are requesting 95 new positions to advance the foreign policy priorities mentioned and to provide support to our overseas posts.

In partnership with this Committee, I welcome additional input, resources, and flexibilities from Congress as we carry out this important work. As you know, funding for Sub-Saharan Africa is heavily earmarked. There is only a limited amount of discretionary funding for bilateral and regional priorities; discretionary programming would enable us to seize opportunities and respond quickly to rapidly changing conditions. In addition, we welcome additional resources to continue addressing the dire global food security crisis and expand our efforts to counter Russian misinformation. As stated earlier, the funding to date has been invaluable for our programs and personnel overseas.

In closing, let me reiterate my appreciation to this Committee for your frequent engagements with me and my team. Throughout our conversations, I have greatly valued your support in upholding our shared commitment to advancing democracy, inclusive prosperity, and national security as the benchmarks for a successful U.S.-Africa partnership.