

**Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
by Ariel Pablos-Méndez
Nominee to Assistant Administrator for Global Health
at the U.S. Agency for International Development**

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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and for your longstanding, bipartisan support for global health. It is an honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee for the position of Assistant Administrator for Global Health at the United States Agency for International Development. If confirmed, I will have the even greater privilege of serving the American people in fostering a healthier, safer, and more prosperous world.

USAID makes a profound statement about what America stands for. I am humbled by the trust and confidence that President Obama and Administrator Shah have placed in me and am grateful to have the support of Secretary Clinton. If confirmed, it will be a privilege to work under their leadership and with USAID's talented and dedicated staff to reaffirm the Agency's status as the premier development agency in the world.

I would like to recognize USAID's Susan Brems, the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator, and Amie Batson, the Deputy Assistant Administrator, for their leadership to date in the Bureau for Global Health and the Global Health Initiative. I also wish to acknowledge the support and love of my family and friends, including my wife and children, who are with me here today.

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I am a physician. Over the last 25 years, my career in academic medicine has been inspired by the lives of my patients and the potential of the medical students and residents I have had the opportunity to teach. I am also a public health professional who, through research on tuberculosis, entered into the exciting arena of global health. I have dedicated my professional career to science and humanity, working with Columbia University, the New York City Department of Health, the United Nations and the Rockefeller Foundation. My engagement with the federal government has until now been in an advisory capacity. If confirmed, I very much look forward to the opportunity to serve actively.

I grew up in Mexico in the 1960s, in an area where green revolution research – supported by USAID and the Rockefeller Foundation -- transformed agricultural production and directly improved the lives of millions, my family included. I trained in Internal Medicine in New York in the late 1980s. During those years, I watched young lives ravaged by HIV/AIDS before the advent of life-saving treatment and saw the threat of tuberculosis re-emerge and intensify through multi-drug resistance. These experiences made a strong impression on me and have shaped my career.

Recognizing that infectious diseases don't respect borders and that effective responses here at home largely depend on what happens in other countries, I ventured into global health. In this sphere, I have been fortunate to work in a range of exciting initiatives, including: 1) developing innovative public-private partnerships for new drugs and vaccines for the poor, like The Global Alliance for TB Drug Development; 2) mobilizing a research coalition together with the NIH and other partners to scale up full treatment of HIV-positive mothers and their families -- a prelude to PEPFAR; 3) working with the World Health Organization to bridge the "know-do" gap with information technology or e-Health; and 4) since returning to the Rockefeller Foundation, leading the initiative on the transformation of health systems in Africa and Asia.

If confirmed, I will draw upon these diverse experiences to provide leadership for evidence-based innovations, public-private partnerships, and inter-agency collaboration to promote access to appropriate health services at an affordable cost, especially for the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

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As we enter the second decade of the new millennium, global health has never been more central to the development agenda – and the United States is a leader in both.

Thanks to the foresight and leadership of Members from both sides of the aisle, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the President's Malaria Initiative, the Global Alliance on Vaccines and Immunization and work in women's health have saved millions of lives and reestablished hope for the future, especially in Africa. Public-private partnerships are no longer seen as optional, but rather as essential to achieving long-term strategic goals.

I have been a witness and a partner to this work, which is having an impact similar to the agricultural green revolution two generations ago. The American people can be very proud of these accomplishments.

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President Obama's *Global Health Initiative, GHI*, signals the next phase of American leadership in world health and charges USAID to work with other U.S. Government agencies and partners to crystallize that vision.

GHI will consolidate the fight against diseases of poverty while strengthening country-led health systems, with a focus on women and children. At a time of financial constraint, GHI calls for better evidence, game-changing innovation, integrated services and novel partnerships to take on grand challenges.

As stated by Administrator Shah, by building country-led health systems, harnessing new technologies and improving the efficiency of our efforts, we can save the lives of 3 million children, prevent more than 12 million HIV infections, and avert 700,000 malaria deaths by 2016. We can also ensure 200,000 pregnant women give birth safely, prevent 54 million unintended pregnancies and cure nearly 2.5 million people infected with tuberculosis.

This is an ambitious agenda, commensurate with the extraordinary challenges faced by poor and vulnerable people in the world, and requiring both our commitment and new ways to solve problems.

Mr. Chairman, there could not be a better time to join USAID and serve the American people. I am humbled to be considered for this position. If confirmed, I will be honored and excited to contribute, under the guidance of Congress, to realizing these mandates and those in the future fitting a changing world.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to your questions and recommendations.