

**REVIEW OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2022  
USAID BUDGET REQUEST**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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JULY 14, 2021  
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## **REVIEW OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2022 USAID BUDGET REQUEST**

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2021**

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:34 a.m. in room SH-216, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, Van Hollen, Risch, Johnson, Romney, Paul, Young, and Cruz.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Administrator Power, thank you for coming before the committee to testify on the Administration's proposed budget for USAID. We look forward to your testimony and getting a better understanding of your vision for operationalizing the budget request.

Let me start by saying that for the first time in a few years I am pleased to see the budget restores the principles of defense, diplomacy, and development, the three D's, as equal elements critically important to the success of U.S. foreign policy.

As we know, foreign assistance, development aid, and humanitarian relief are not charity programs. USAID programs around the world are concrete manifestations of American values and the partnership of the American people.

AID personnel in the field work in tandem with local partners and communities building sustainable programs to promote health programs, private sector development, governance reforms, and desperately needed relief.

This work lifts people out of poverty, improves lives, and also helps build societies' resiliency to predatory economic practices masquerading as development.

The Biden budget requests increase for development assistance of the Economic Support Fund, the Asian, Eastern European and Central Asia program, and other demonstrate a renewed seriousness and interest in international cooperation.

The budget request for programs that support democracy promotion, improve food security, build resilience capacities, address the climate crisis, and promote equitable and inclusive economic growth will be critical to realigning U.S. foreign policies with that

of our allies and addressing the needs of vulnerable and fragile countries.

Under President Biden's leadership, the United States is gradually gaining control of COVID-19. However, the disease is surging around the world. Deadly third waves in Latin America, Africa, and Asia have cost thousands of lives, overwhelmed fragile health systems, and disrupted livelihoods.

We know all too well that other countries' ability to combat these kinds of deadly and contagious viruses directly impacts the health and safety of all Americans.

USAID is playing a critical role in the U.S. overseas response in combating new and emerging variants that threaten our fragile progress and the livelihoods of Americans.

I look forward to discussing USAID's plans for supporting global vaccine distribution, advancing the global health security agenda, and strengthening pandemic preparedness.

Finally, there are regional challenges that have never been greater, and I look forward to understanding how you are positioning USAID to address ongoing crises.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, we are witnessing severe challenges to democratic governance, and the pandemic is exacerbating the region's social and economic inequality, driving people to new levels of desperation for fundamental rights and freedoms.

In recent weeks, we have seen the assassination of Haitian President Moïse, the unprecedented mobilization of thousands of Cubans demanding their freedom, the consolidation of the region's third dictatorship in Nicaragua, and a contested election in Peru, and the Administration is rightly prioritizing efforts to address the drivers of migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, starting with strengthening democratic institutions and good governance, growing economic opportunity, and improving public safety. These crises pose risks to the stability of the hemisphere.

Afghanistan's rapid deterioration poses a serious national security risk. Many of our Afghan partners who champion democracy and human rights are unable to apply for the Special Immigrant Visa program or other existing channels to protect Afghan allies.

I urge you to accelerate your plans to address the potentially life-threatening situation these individuals face with the current U.S. withdrawal from the country.

How we withdraw and what political arrangement is left in our wake matters deeply not just for U.S. interests, but also for the lives of these brave Afghan partners.

Africa is facing numerous security and development challenges: the protracted conflict in Ethiopia, a fragile transition in Sudan, coups in Mali and Chad that are diminishing efforts to counter extremism in the Sahel, and Nigeria, the so-called anchor state in West Africa, is beset by terrorism, conflict, and democratic backsliding.

In the Middle East, we have to find ways to elevate USAID's role in helping promote good governance and private sector development in places where we have been more focused on military engagement.

So I know how deeply inspired you are to ensure that USAID is leading the efforts to both prepare for the challenges ahead and to

heal the wounds and sufferings of those affected in this complex world.

We have full confidence in your ability and look forward to hearing your vision for executing and communicating USAID'S strategic vision for this year and beyond.

You are running an immensely valuable institution, and I want to know what you are doing to empower and inspire the best from the people at USAID.

Again, with our appreciation for your work and for appearing before the committee, I turn to the distinguished ranking member, Senator Risch.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO**

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Administrator Power, for being here today.

This is, truly, an important moment for U.S. foreign assistance. Thanks to American ingenuity and swift vaccine rollout, our country is finally opening back up for business, and yet many countries around the world are still struggling to combat COVID-19.

We have known since the beginning of this pandemic we will never be fully secure at home if we allow this disease to run rampant abroad.

Carefully planned and appropriately targeted U.S. foreign assistance can help other countries get a handle on their COVID-19 outbreaks and counter the second order impacts of the pandemic.

Congress has appropriated billions of dollars to USAID to this end. However, emergencies like these present numerous opportunities for fraud, waste, and abuse of taxpayer dollars.

I am interested to hear from you how USAID plans to use these resources while guarding against their misuse.

Ms. Power, you and I have discussed the fact that Chairman Menendez and I recently introduced a bill intended to overhaul the U.S. global health security architecture. This bill would place the State Department firmly at the center of our global health security efforts by providing sorely needed foreign policy and aid coherence.

It would also recognize and enshrine USAID's role as a prime implementer of U.S. global health security assistance. I hope to hear your thoughts on this legislation.

Regarding Asia, I believe that advancing an effective strategy to compete with the People's Republic of China must be the United States' top policy priority.

I expect that we will hear today about how the proposed USAID budget would address this strategic imperative and also how it would bolster U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific region as a whole.

USAID should prioritize countering malign foreign influence by authoritarian nations. This objective is also a key priority in the Strategic Competition Act legislation Senator Menendez and I authored, which recently passed our committee.

I look forward to hearing the specifics of what USAID plans to do to counter this type of influence and where it plans to prioritize programming, both in terms of geography and issue areas.

It is notable that this malign influence is exercised not just through governments, but also through multilateral institutions. The PRC's ability to co-opt and manipulate the international COVID-19 response through the World Health Organization, and now through COVAX, is appalling.

I hope to hear how USAID and you, as our representative to COVAX, will shed light on the irony that China has contributed nothing to COVAX and yet now stands to profit from it when, indeed, they started this whole mess in the first place.

Turning to Afghanistan, since the withdrawal announcement, the Taliban have ramped up their attacks on government-held areas and now control almost a third of all districts.

I am deeply concerned that the Administration's foreign assistance plans for Afghanistan do not reflect the reality on the ground. In truth, we will have a hard time implementing aid programs and providing the necessary oversight of taxpayer dollars given the increased instability in Afghanistan.

I have appreciated the Administration's consultations with Congress on assistance to the Palestinian people, but as long as the Palestinian Authority continues its despicable pay for slay program, we will scrutinize every dollar to ensure it is compliant with the Taylor Force Act and other laws.

The Administration can secure secession of the pay for slay before opening the floodgates of assistance.

In recent years, the United States has committed more than \$1 billion to support Sudan's fragile democratic transition. We must be good stewards of this assistance.

While I recognize the need to live up to commitments under the Abraham Accords, including for wheat purchases, this must not come at the expense of commitments to democracy and human rights.

My staff recently returned from Ethiopia where they saw first-hand the efforts of USAID to help mitigate the suffering of people in Tigray and other parts of the country. USAID leadership should follow the "do no harm" principle delivering assistance, while leaving the politics of the U.S.-Ethiopia bilateral relationship to the diplomats.

I am concerned by the proliferation of political crisis in the Western Hemisphere demanding immediate and substantive attention from the United States. We were all appalled by last week's assassination of Haiti's president and the attack on his wife and urge USAID to work with like-minded partners to help restore democratic order and self-reliance.

The United States has spent close to \$3.6 billion in foreign aid to northern Central America without much success in improving governance, conditions, or reducing the illegal migration from the region.

Before committing additional substantial U.S. funds, the Administration should describe how it will hold the governments in this region accountable for their commitments to improve governance and protect would-be refugees arriving at their borders.

Likewise, the United States is the largest provider of foreign assistance to help Venezuela's neighbors manage the humanitarian

crisis unleashed by the Maduro regime and its allies in Cuba, China, and Russia.

USAID must make absolutely certain that our humanitarian efforts do not legitimize the Maduro regime in any way, or its foreign allies, for that matter.

Thank you for being here today.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

All right. Madam Administrator, your full statement will be included in the record, without objection. I would urge you to summarize it in about 5 minutes or so we can have a discussion with you.

With that, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE SAMANTHA POWER, ADMINISTRATOR, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and esteemed members of the committee. Thank you also to your staff, who are such great partners to USAID.

Last month, I traveled to Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador to hear directly from the people impacted by the cycles of poverty, violence, climate shocks, and corruption, and I traveled to assess and expand the impact U.S. assistance was having on their lives.

What I saw there was a local reflection of global trends, people that continue to lose loved ones and suffer through lockdowns due to a still raging COVID-19 pandemic that has already left 4 million people dead around the world, families that have been traumatized by more frequent and intense hurricanes and rare weather events, many in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, and, as you indicated, everyday citizens who are angered by poor governance, autocratic behavior, and corruption that limits opportunity, investment, prosperity, and personal freedom.

These various challenges are combining in volatile ways, culminating in frustration that drives people to the streets, as we have just seen this week in Cuba, rage that spills over into deadly conflict, as we have seen in Burma and the Tigray region of Ethiopia, and despair that causes people to flee their communities, as we have seen in Central America and across the world with a level of mass displacement not seen since World War II.

These are not positive developments, it is safe to say, but as an American, I am very glad that USAID is uniquely positioned to confront them, and I am immensely grateful to you for sustaining support for the agency's vital programming.

Your continued bipartisan support for USAID saves and improves millions of lives each day, while enhancing U.S. national and economic security as we emerge from a once-in-a-century pandemic and as we confront the inroads that China has made in different parts of the world by increasingly using its financial power as leverage to advance its interest.

The FY22 budget request of \$27.7 billion for foreign assistance funding fully or partially implemented by USAID will help us address urgent priorities and allow the United States to lead the world in providing development and humanitarian assistance to promote security and improved economic conditions.

It will also allow the United States to lead on the global stage and to leverage our activities to inspire our allies and our private sector partners to contribute more, but in order for us to get the most out of our programs, we know we must also make ourselves a more capable and nimble agency at a time of heightened need, and to do this we need to increase local partnerships and address staff shortfalls.

Lasting solutions to development challenges require local organizations that have the insights to develop tailored solutions and the credibility to implement them. Yet, in FY 2020, USAID obligated approximately 5.6 percent to local partners around the world.

To engage authentically with local partners and to move toward a more locally-led development approach is staff, time, and resource intensive, but it is also vital to our long-term success to sustainable development.

I look forward to engaging with you in the near future about how we can pursue flexible solutions that allow us to increase our level of local partnership while still carefully, vigilantly, protecting taxpayer dollars.

This budget that we are proposing will also help us build institutional capacity commensurate with USAID's role as a national security agency.

Over the last two decades, the funding levels and complexity of our programs has expanded at a rate that significantly outpaces our staffing.

Each USAID contracting officer, for instance, has managed over \$65 million annually over the past 4 years, more than four times the workload of their colleagues at the Department of Defense, who manage an average of about \$15 million.

Moving forward, we are seeking not a return to the previous status quo, but to work with members of Congress to increase our number of direct hires while maintaining a strong focus on creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive agency.

With your support, USAID will move aggressively to tackle the world's toughest challenges in order to build a more stable and prosperous future for us all.

I look forward to our continued partnership and here today to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Power follows:]

#### **Prepared Statement of Samantha Power**

##### INTRODUCTION

Thank you Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished Members of the Committee. I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 President's budget request for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The global challenges we face today have become more complex and numerous, casting a large shadow over our lives. A persistent pandemic has left over 4 million dead, swelled the ranks of the extreme poor for the first time since the late 1990's, and exposed the pervasive inequities that continue to fray societies across the globe. Authoritarian regimes like China and Russia are acting more aggressively by the day, exploiting not only the COVID-19 emergency, but vulnerabilities in our democracies. A rapidly changing climate is sending fiercer storms our way and inflicting droughts, deep freezes, and wildfires upon communities. Mass displacement is at its highest since World War II. And every day, it seems as though new horrific crises emerge, such as that in Ethiopia's Tigray region, where Ethiopians are facing both

conflict and the worst food insecurity the country has seen since the 1980's famine killed over 1 million people.

These are not positive developments, but as an American, I am very glad that USAID is uniquely positioned to confront them, and I am immensely grateful to you for sustaining support for the Agency's vital programming. Your continued bipartisan support for USAID saves and improves millions of lives each day, while enhancing U.S. national and economic security. When we fight the COVID-19 pandemic abroad, we help stem the rise of variants that can possibly lead to new outbreaks at home. When incomes rise in the developing world, those countries become more self-reliant and less dependent on U.S. or other donor support. When the U.S. delivers aid to those affected by natural disasters and humanitarian crises, we demonstrate the best of American values and build the type of goodwill that inspires action and cooperation from our allies.

As we emerge from a once-in-a-century pandemic and confront the already substantial inroads that China has made in different parts of the world, the FY 2022 budget request of \$27.7 billion for foreign assistance funding accounts fully or partially implemented by USAID will help us address urgent priorities, and allow the United States to lead the world in providing development and humanitarian assistance to promote peace and security, effective and accountable democratic governance, and improved economic conditions. The budget request will provide USAID with critical resources to combat the COVID-19 pandemic abroad, address the drivers of violent extremism and the root causes of conflict and migration, build resilience to extreme weather patterns caused by a rapidly changing climate, defend democratic institutions and fight corruption, help support civil society and independent media, and meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable populations.

In order for us to get the most out of our programs, we know we must make ourselves a more capable and nimble Agency at a time of heightened need. Collaborating with local actors to address local priorities in the world's poorest countries remains fundamental to USAID's mission. USAID assistance and development expertise can provide local leaders, entrepreneurs, civil society, and all people the tools to take the lead in their own country's development. We have long advocated an inclusive approach to development and moving forward we will double down to seek to ensure that marginalized populations can reap the benefits of our programming. The President's FY 2022 budget request strengthens the Agency's ability to respond to short-term shocks, while allowing us to deepen investments that will help us secure a more stable and prosperous future.

#### USAID AS A NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY

USAID seeks to make the world safer, healthier, more democratic, and more prosperous. The Agency was created as a tool to promote peace and prosperity following the devastating impacts of World War II. We are facing a wide range of threats today, be they from autocratic nations attempting to subvert liberal and democratic norms, pandemics that upend the global economy, displacement of tens of millions of people due to natural and manmade disasters, or existential threats to our environment that jeopardize our future on Earth. USAID has a central role to play in tackling each of these challenges.

Development has often taken a backseat to defense and diplomacy as a means of advancing U.S. national security objectives. But President Biden made clear that defense, diplomacy, and development are all vital components of our foreign policy, as reflected by his decision to elevate the USAID Administrator to become a standing member of the National Security Council. I take that responsibility seriously and will continue to advocate tirelessly for development and humanitarian goals at the National Security Council.

As the world's premier global development agency, USAID is uniquely placed to address the world's toughest problems, catalyze our partners, and strengthen our global standing at a time when China increasingly uses its financial power as leverage to advance its interests.

#### ENDING COVID-19 AND STRENGTHENING GLOBAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to wipe away decades of development progress. Extreme poverty has increased for the first time in almost 25 years, and it could take many years to recover from the health, economic, and education impacts. In order to keep Americans safe, mitigate the risk of new variants, and rebuild our economy, we must fight the pandemic everywhere. Our global health leadership is evident in USAID's response to emergency requests for support in partner countries such as India and Nepal, where USAID stepped up to deliver life-saving personal protective equipment, oxygen, and medicines to communities battling a fe-

rocious second wave of the virus. With your support, we will continue to meet people around the world in their hour of dire need. Millions of lives hang in the balance, and USAID support can mean the difference between life and death.

The U.S. is also rallying other countries to bring about the vaccination of the world. President Biden's recent commitment to deliver 500 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine by June 2022 is the largest-ever by a single country and is a historic pledge to supercharge the global fight against the pandemic. This is on top of the 80 million surplus U.S. doses that the Administration has been distributing in recent weeks. As part of this work, USAID has re-engaged with our multilateral partners including the World Health Organization and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. As USAID teams help strengthen cold chains and health systems, we are coordinating our vaccine supply efforts with the COVAX initiative to provide doses to countries in need and working as a government to increase the overall vaccine supply.

Even as we move quickly to support vaccine uptake and provide additional crucial support to countries battling the pandemic, USAID works with other USG partners on preventing child and maternal deaths, controlling the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and combating infectious diseases like malaria and tuberculosis, while building resilient health systems and advancing global health security to prevent the next pandemic. While COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on many global health outcomes, the tuberculosis (TB) response has been particularly hard hit. As a result of the pandemic, an additional 6.3 million people are projected to be stricken with TB, and an additional 1.4 million people are expected to die from the disease between 2020 and 2025.

Nutrition gains have also been set back, with an estimated 2.5 million additional children expected to experience stunting by next year. In addition, over 6 million women experienced disruptions to family planning services. And 164 million treatments for neglected tropical diseases—three quarters of the normal total—went unprovided in 2020. Postponed immunization campaigns are putting around 228 million people, mostly children, at risk for diseases such as measles, yellow fever and polio. Because services have been redirected, in many countries around the world, people are dying at higher rates of these preventable illnesses than they are of COVID-19 itself.

The FY 2022 budget request includes \$3.9 billion to strengthen USAID's role in global health activities, expand the number of countries we work in, and work to retain the hard-fought gains made over the last 60 years. Last year, as we supported our partners who were trying to stem the spread of the COVID-19 virus, together with international partners we nonetheless managed to achieve historic successes in global health, including certifying the Africa region as wild polio-free, providing 80 million people with mosquito nets in an effort to prevent malaria, and launching innovative programs designed to deliver quality, evidence-based voluntary family planning and reproductive health care as well as maternal, newborn, and child health services in USAID partner countries. For every dollar invested by USAID, we have worked with partners to secure \$26 in donated medicines for neglected tropical diseases, yielding a total of \$26 billion for mass treatment campaigns to date.

#### COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is the greatest common threat the world faces today, setting back progress on core priorities, from food insecurity to displacement to the rise of zoonotic diseases. We must move far more aggressively to address this threat, including helping communities anticipate, respond and recover from increasingly intense shocks. President Biden has called the climate crisis "the number one issue facing humanity." It is a crisis that does not recognize national borders. Just as we have witnessed storms that increase in frequency and intensity in Asia each year, we have seen wildfires in California eight times larger than they were 50 years ago. The same extreme weather patterns that lead to recurrent droughts in sub-Saharan Africa that displace people from their homes also caused the anomalous deep freezes in Texas in February 2021 that cut power for millions and left more than 20 people dead.

Since 2000, climate-related disasters have affected almost 4 billion people globally, costing an estimated \$2.2 trillion. Without urgent action, climate change could push an additional 100 million people into extreme poverty by 2030. That's why President Biden rejoined the Paris Agreement on the first day of his Presidency and committed to tripling the U.S. Government's funding for climate adaptation by 2024. The U.S. is leading by example, announcing a bold commitment to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 50–52 percent from 2005 levels by the end of this decade. However, approximately 85 percent of global carbon emissions come from out-

side the United States, with about two-thirds of these emissions coming from developing countries. The FY 2022 budget request includes more than \$600 million to enable State and USAID to work with partner countries to set and pursue ambitious goals toward net-zero emissions, expand critical renewable energy infrastructure, adapt in a manner that mitigates the deadly effects of rising seas and extreme weather events, and improve the management of carbon-rich forests and landscapes. In addition, as announced during the Climate Leaders' Summit, USAID plans to mobilize \$3.5 billion in private investment for climate, working in collaboration with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and partner governments to use innovative solutions to procure and fund green energy projects. We are also working with the InterAmerican Development Bank, the DFC, several pension funds, and venture capital firms on Natural Climate Solutions to conserve, restore, and reforest 20 million hectares by 2025. The request will support USAID's plans to double private investment in adaptation in 20 of the most vulnerable countries and accelerate the transition to net-zero emissions in at least 20 partner countries.

USAID works with and in countries that are most at risk of climate change. Our programs support countries as they seek to anticipate and manage climate-related disaster risks and adapt to climate change. From working with NASA to provide satellite information that helps governments and farmers make decisions on water resources, food security and disaster preparedness, to developing and improving agricultural insurance, microfinance and other tools that empower people to manage weather and climate risks, our programs are building resilience to climate change. Concurrently we are supporting countries to rapidly reduce their emissions, and increase carbon storage, all while helping them secure a clean energy future, develop their economies sustainably, and protect their forests, coastlines, and watersheds.

USAID is also in the process of developing a new Agency-wide Climate Strategy to ramp up climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, and further integrate climate change considerations into our assistance programs across all sectors. Ensuring that women and girls can meaningfully lead on addressing climate change is key to this work. Research shows that climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resilience building is more effective when women are involved. As the burden of climate events falls disproportionately on the backs of low-income, Indigenous, and marginalized communities, we will also seek to target our assistance to strengthen the resilience of these populations.

#### BOLSTERING DEMOCRACY AND COUNTERING AUTHORITARIANISM

As is well known, the cause of democracy is currently on its back heel in many parts of the world. Amid the 15-year democratic decline globally documented by Freedom House, nine more countries slipped into a state of autocracy in the last 5 years alone, representing more than 300 million people. Authoritarians are using the COVID-19 pandemic as a further excuse to curb individual freedoms and tighten their grip on power. As we have seen in Uganda, Russia and other contexts, authoritarian regimes in particular have used COVID-19 as justification to target LGBTQI+ persons. The pandemic has also tested the ability of fragile democracies that are trying to respond to and maintain public confidence in their institutions. The People's Republic of China increasingly supplies technological surveillance tools to other nations, and uses its financial leverage to sway their actions. As countries grow more repressive, they become more inclined in turn to support China's initiatives on the global stage, including those to weaken human rights norms, in ways that are detrimental to U.S. interests.

Yet for all of this, other trends and events should motivate us to step up to do more to meet this challenge. Mass pro-democracy demonstrations reached an all-time high of 37 in 2019, higher than during the Arab Spring or the end of the Cold War. And as the 2018 women-led revolution in Sudan shows, no matter how tight a dictator's grip on power may seem in a given moment, the will of the people can suddenly assert itself—and prevail. Although the country's democratic transition remains tenuous, Sudan's Civilian-Led Transitional Government is ushering in reforms in an effort to take the country down the path to democracy.

The FY 2022 budget includes a request for \$2.8 billion in foreign assistance across USAID and the State Department to meet this moment. First, we need to bolster our "Rapid Response" capacity to quickly seize on opportunities to support democracy throughout the world when there is a political opening of the sort that occurred in Sudan, or an attempt to roll back democratic progress as in Myanmar. Second, corruption is the Achilles' heel of many illiberal regimes, and USAID will use our programmatic assistance, and our voice to support reformers, independent media, and civil society actors fighting corruption and promoting accountability. The President's budget request of \$50 million to fight corruption aligns with President Biden's

National Security Study Memorandum identifying corruption as a core United States national security interest. Third, we will help countries fight misinformation and disinformation, increasingly used by malign actors to stoke public anger against democratically-elected officials and civil society. Fourth, we will work to support activists and citizens subjected to digital repression by regimes that are becoming increasingly sophisticated at surveilling and censoring their populations, including across borders. By the same token, we will continue to provide support for governments to align regulatory frameworks for emerging technologies with democratic values. Finally, in the service of these goals, we will work to support independent and public interest media, helping journalists and whistleblowers withstand government repression, legal harassment, disinformation, and attacks on media outlets' financial viability. This work includes protecting the human rights of at-risk groups, such as LGBTQI+ persons in line with the President's Memorandum to Advance the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons Around the World. USAID is in particular focused on combatting rising violence targeting transgender persons through supporting a Global Barometer on Transgender Rights and expanding livelihood opportunities.

President Biden pledged to host an international Summit for Democracy so that democratic governments can align to confront authoritarianism, fight corruption, and promote respect for human rights. This Summit is an opportunity to elevate support for democracy as a cornerstone of our foreign policy, in concert with our allies and partners.

#### ADDRESSING IRREGULAR MIGRATION FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

For far too long, Central Americans have been entrenched in cycles of poverty, violence, and corruption. El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are home to some of the world's most dangerous cities, riven by criminal gangs, extortion, and gender-based violence, all of which persist and flourish due to lack of rule of law and pervasive corruption throughout national and municipal authorities. Weak governance and endemic corruption undermine social and economic progress, and troubling recent developments, such as the Salvadoran legislature's dismissal of the Attorney General and the magistrates of the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court, illustrate democratic institutions are under pressure. The grim circumstances these countries face are compounded by the increased frequency of extreme weather events, particularly in regions reliant on subsistence farming. Last year, the powerful, back-to-back storms of Hurricanes Eta and Iota brought heavy rains and severe flooding, affecting millions of people. The COVID-19 pandemic has also had far-reaching impacts, not only on health, but in undermining food systems, food security, and economic prosperity in the region and COVID-related lockdowns have yielded increasing rates of domestic and other gender-based violence. These compounding factors are contributing to the increases in Central Americans who are abandoning their homes to embark on the dangerous journey toward the U.S. southern border in a desperate search for a better life. Without reliable harvests, sustainable sources of income, and guarantees of physical safety, many see migration as their only option to survive and provide a future for their children. Those who attempt the journey and are returned are met with insufficient support to reintegrate in their communities.

The President's FY 2022 budget request includes \$861 million across State and USAID, as a first step toward a 4-year \$4 billion commitment, to support opportunities for families in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to feed their children and build stable and secure lives at home so they do not feel compelled to migrate irregularly to the United States. This approach includes a greater emphasis on building economic resilience, an emphasis on data-based evaluation to identify and address conditions in emigration hot spots, and a recognition that improved local governance free from corruption is needed to unlock improvements in living conditions and economic opportunity. At the direction of President Biden, USAID is aggressively ramping up programs in all three countries. USAID's programs can improve incentives for individuals to stay in their local communities. Through whole-of-government initiatives like Feed the Future, we are addressing the root causes of poverty and hunger. Increased agricultural incomes and greater resilience for smallholder farmers, for example, improves food systems and expands economic opportunity.

Like you, though, we recognize that ultimately political will from the region's leaders will be the best predictor of whether economic and security conditions in the region improve. In the wake of challenges to democratic institutions in the region, we are speaking out in defense of the rule of law. We are deepening our support for local actors fighting corruption as well as those holding governments accountable both for their performance and for their infringements or attacks on democratic

norms. USAID is working with civil society, U.S. and local private sector partners, faith-based groups, and reform-minded officials in local governments to multiply our impact in addressing the interrelated economic, governance, and security conditions that contribute to an individual's decision to migrate.

#### BOLSTERING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Even as the world races to address the COVID-19 pandemic, we must still grapple with other emergent and protracted crises. Political conflicts are becoming more intense, hunger is on the rise, severe and frequent weather events and natural disasters are exacerbating chronic vulnerabilities, all of which are taking a heavy toll on civilians and leading to situations of protracted displacement. As of April 2021, the United Nations World Food Program estimates that 296 million people in the 35 countries where it works are without sufficient food—111 million more people than in April 2020. And more than 34 million people are currently on the very edge of famine and risk starvation, up from 27 million people in 2019. The United States is the world's largest donor globally for humanitarian assistance, and we will continue to use our contributions to get other countries to step up to do more. For example, we are working with Gulf donor nations to strengthen the ability of communities in Bangladesh to withstand the impact of cyclones. We also significantly scaled up humanitarian assistance in the Northern Triangle countries, and urged the United Nations to release a Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), and are actively engaging with other donors to shore up commitments to the response. For example, on June 10, the European Union announced \$22.3 million in new funding assistance to Mexico and Central America, and other donors, including Canada, Germany, Sweden, and South Korea, have signaled interest in supporting the HRP.

In the Tigray region of Ethiopia, the scale of humanitarian need is staggering and sobering. After more than 8 months of hostilities between multiple armed actors, approximately 5.2 million people are in need of food assistance, out of a total population of around 6 million. As soon as the conflict in Tigray started, USAID immediately began providing life-saving aid. The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian aid to the Tigray response, providing more than \$488 million in food, nutrition services, agricultural supplies, safe drinking water, shelter, health care, and essential services to protect the most vulnerable.

Our Disaster Assistance Response Team, or DART, which deployed in March, has been focused on rapidly scaling up our life-saving efforts to reach even more people, but it will not be enough if the current trajectory continues. I want to be crystal clear—we expect widespread famine in Ethiopia this year. This is a man-made catastrophe, and it needs to end. The Government of Ethiopia and all armed actors need to immediately allow for unimpeded humanitarian access into and throughout Tigray. Aid operations also depend on fuel, electricity, telecommunications, and banking services which need to be restored and maintained. I ask for your support to use your voice in the days and weeks to come as we find ways to support the people of Tigray, hold accountable those who have harmed civilians, and press for an end to the violence and suffering.

Around the world, USAID's dedicated teams and partners continue to respond to other grim man-made crises with untold levels of suffering. In Yemen, by most metrics the world's largest humanitarian emergency after more than 6 years of war, two of every three people, or 20.7 million people, need humanitarian assistance this year. The UN projects that nearly one in two Yemeni children under 5 years of age will be acutely malnourished this year. Our brave relief agency partners surmount numerous obstacles every day to deliver lifesaving assistance to millions of people, but in many places, they cannot access populations in need due to cynical intransigence from those who control the territory, and they do not have enough money—despite generous contributions from the United States and other donors, the UN appeal for Yemen is only a third filled this year. Of course, we at USAID continue to do all we can to support U.S. Special Envoy Lenderking in his efforts to bring about the political solution that alone will end the war.

In addition to Tigray and Yemen, our DARTs are also responding in places like Syria, where we are seeing heightened humanitarian needs due to the ongoing conflict, economic crisis, and COVID-19 outbreak there. Our humanitarian experts also remain on standby to respond to unexpected natural disasters such as earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes, floods, and even volcano eruptions like those we have seen recently in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

This has been a year like no other that came before, but we expect continued, deepening need well into the upcoming year. The FY 2022 budget request includes \$6.3 billion in humanitarian assistance administered by USAID that will allow the Agency to address unprecedented humanitarian needs. We will also invest in resil-

ience and risk reduction efforts that reduce the economic and human cost of disasters. Studies show that every dollar spent on adaptation and resilience can save as much as \$3 in humanitarian aid. Over the past decade, we made substantial investments in early warning systems and emergency response in Central America. This meant that when storms Iota and Eta ripped through the region in November of 2020, the number of people killed was in the low hundreds; in 1998, a storm of similar size and trajectory killed 10,000 people. Helping people affected by natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies reflects our values as Americans, demonstrates our global leadership, and makes the world a safer place.

#### EXPANDING ECONOMIC GROWTH

The COVID–19 pandemic has deepened development challenges, exposed inequities, and erased years of progress on poverty reduction through its impact on the global economy. Global gross domestic product shrank by 4.4 percent, the worst decline since the Great Depression, according to the International Monetary Fund. Despite the bleak economic outlook, there are opportunities to recover and accelerate reforms so that the U.S. can revive relationships with our trading partners.

USAID assistance will support economic recovery with a laser focus on job creation, strengthening small and medium businesses, and reducing the time and cost to import and export goods. At the beginning of this year, USAID launched its new Economic Growth Policy, which confirmed and elevated the need for inclusive, sustainable, and resilient growth as central to sustainable development and poverty reduction. This is needed now more than ever to address the devastating and ongoing secondary impacts of COVID–19 on the global economy. In particular, the new policy strengthens our focus on engaging with the private sector and improving the conditions for foreign investment in emerging markets, which in turn creates local jobs and market opportunities for American companies and investors. Our work will also create market pressures on governments to reduce corruption, enforce the rule of law, and ensure access to economic opportunities for all, especially women. This effort is a driving force behind our request for the Gender Equity and Equality Action Fund, which will work to empower women economically, while also preventing and responding to gender-based violence and supporting marginalized populations.

The FY 2022 budget request increases our inclusive economic growth programming to \$4.9 billion globally across State and USAID, bolstering our work to create conditions for more favorable investment climates. We are also stressing the importance of economic analysis for increasing our impact per taxpayer dollar spent. The request also funds economic growth programs that are essential for sustainable development in developing countries, which generate the public resources governments need to invest in education, health, rural roads, as well as digital and other infrastructure. The Agency needs to adapt its systems, processes, and procedures to support full engagement with the private sector. In particular, we must upgrade our hiring, data, relationship management, professional development and procurement systems to engage the private sector at scale.

#### INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

None of our work is possible without the dedication of our staff across the world. This last year has demonstrated their strength and provided lessons on what we need to do to meet the challenges and opportunities that we will face in the future. The COVID–19 pandemic has not only had an impact on the work we do overseas and the communities in which we work, but also on the lives of our dedicated USAID teams. Many of our staff have been working diligently to provide life-saving aid to communities around the world, even while their loved ones battle and succumb to COVID–19. Moving forward, we are seeking not a return to the previous status quo, but to a more dynamic work environment that better supports our staff. The FY 2022 budget request includes \$1.9 billion to invest in our people and ensure a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce, and we will utilize these funds to strengthen the Agency to maximize our impact and build institutional capacity commensurate with USAID’s role as a national security agency.

With your support, we are also increasing the size and agility of the career workforce to better advance U.S. national security priorities. Since last year, we have hired approximately 500 career employees and are working to reach our target levels of 1,850 Foreign Service and 1,600 Civil Service employees this year. However, it is not enough just to recruit talent, we must nurture and develop it. We will work to empower and support our Foreign Service Nationals, local country employees of USAID who represent the heart and soul of our workforce. And we will also build on the successes of our Staff Care employee assistance programs as we continue to invest in our employees’ physical and mental well-being.

Underpinning all of our efforts will be a strong focus on creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive USAID. On my first day as Administrator, I signed into action our Agency's new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy, designed to help us create a workplace that lives up to our ideals. The strategy outlines concrete steps the Agency will take to ensure we are creating a workforce that better reflects America, including the expansion of initiatives to create paid internship and fellowship opportunities as well as strategic outreach efforts to Minority Serving Institutions. The requested funding will fund new recruitment and training programs to develop a global workforce that reflects our nation; and it will help us implement comprehensive training, career mobility, and advancement programs to help retain diverse employees in entry-level positions and strengthen the Agency's culture of inclusion, equity, and access. It will also help us address Government Accountability Office recommendations to enhance data collection and reporting efforts, and strengthen our ability to disaggregate workforce data across various demographic categories.

#### ADVANCING PEACE AND STABILITY

The number of flashpoints in the world right now is striking, from raids killing dozens of people in the Sahel, to an ISIS-offshoot group storming a city in northern Mozambique, to armies in the Caucasus standing off, to long-standing conflicts in the Middle East boiling over. Violent extremist groups like Boko Haram in West Africa are taking advantage of conflict and instability to recruit and expand their ranks. Our military alone cannot solve these challenges; USAID assistance is a much more cost-effective way to advance peace and security. As former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said, "Development is a lot cheaper than sending soldiers." We will use our resources to support civilian efforts to erode the appeal of extremist groups like ISIS, Boko Haram, and Al-Qaeda, and help our partners become prosperous and peaceful nations.

The FY 2022 request expands resources for our newly-established Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization. I share the concerns many of you have about the rise in conflicts, and accompanying risk of increasing mass atrocities, in many of the countries where USAID works. Even more alarming is the risk of violence spreading into places we previously considered safe from these threats, such as coastal West Africa. This budget request includes funds which will allow USAID to work toward preventing violence from spreading across West Africa, applying non-military solutions to counter the recruitment and advance of violent extremist organizations, and bringing stability to areas in crisis. This budget also gives USAID the chance to effectively deploy resources in conflict prevention and stabilization to implement the Global Fragility Act in select countries and in coordination across diplomacy, development, and defense efforts. Whether through flexible, small grants mechanisms targeting the grassroots, implementing the Women, Peace and Security Strategy, or leveraging political openings to build peaceful, prosperous societies in countries like Sudan, USAID will continue to work with interagency partners to build peace and stability and create paths to resilience.

#### CONCLUSION

The challenges I have described here don't just threaten countries far from our shores—they impact our national security and prosperity directly, here at home. The steps we take to combat COVID-19, climate change, hunger, conflict, and other ills abroad, make us safer, while demonstrating compassion and cooperation with people all over the world.

With your support, USAID will move aggressively to tackle these challenges in order to build a more stable and prosperous future for all of us. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Madam Administrator.

We will start a round the questions. First, let me say I know that you mentioned to the ranking member and I before we started the hearing that we have three highly qualified USAID nominees that are pending with completed files, and I also believe that we need to get them out of the committee and, hopefully, confirmed prior to the August recess so you can do the work we want you to do.

I am prepared to notice a hearing for the two deputy nominees next Thursday, and we will be working with the ranking member to, hopefully, get an agreement so that we are in a good place so that we can try to move those nominees ahead.

Under the previous administration, USAID was frequently absent from budget planning and decision-making processes affecting the agency. How were you and the agency involved in the development of the FY22 budget that we are discussing today?

Ms. POWER. Well, sir, I was not present from the creation, personally, just because of my own confirmation schedule.

In terms of my own personal involvement, I came in after the top-line levels had been assessed, but the agency was very much involved working, of course, with the State Department.

Many of the accounts that are in the proposal are only partially managed by USAID. There is a division of labor entailed, a natural synergy at its best, with the State Department, and then, of course, working with OMB to make sure that we are prioritizing the President's priorities and so I believe the involvement was intense and iterative.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, let me turn to the COVID issue. The U.S. is gradually gaining control of COVID-19, but the disease continues to surge worldwide. Most people on the planet are still waiting for vaccinations.

The U.S. has made a range of announcements to support access, including vaccine donations to specific countries and support for sharing intellectual property.

What additional steps can we take right now to accelerate the rollout of vaccines worldwide? For example, the President's vaccine donation announcement is significant, but there is still considerable need and demand for other means of mitigating the spread of COVID and the therapies for treating the sick.

How does the 500-million-dose donation fit into the Administration's broader global cooperation strategy to beat COVID?

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much. There are a number of different elements, as you say, to the broader strategy and vaccines, of course, rightly, make global headlines. I believe the 500 million purchase of the Pfizer doses is absolutely critical.

That will be dispensed by June of next year with 200 million distributed this year and 300 million the first part of next year, alongside the 80 million surplus doses.

As you note, donating doses and getting shots in arms are two very different things, and so USAID, with our 80 missions around the world, is involved in enhancing vaccine readiness to make sure that the cold chains are in place in order to work with our partners UNICEF, PAHO, and others, as well as health ministries to make sure that the countries that receive the vaccines put them to good use, vaccinated health workers providing second shots for those who did not have second shots delivered because the India doses were pulled back because of India's own crisis.

So vaccine readiness is key and the ARP money has been vital to USAID's ability to support our partners. As you note though, vaccines, because of the supply issues around the world, are only going to reach a small share of the world's population in the next calendar year.

Therefore, whether it comes to PPE or oxygen or other forms of health support that went by the wayside because of the attention to COVID or the shattering of health systems brought about by the

arrival of COVID, U.S. funding for those health systems and those other dimensions of the COVID response is also critical.

Again, the ARP made generous funds——

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. Let me ask you, you mentioned the ARP funds. You notified Congress on \$115 million in ARP funds for accelerating vaccine distribution, and the President's announcement in Cornwall to purchase 500 million doses, which spurred matching commitments from G-7 partners, is this \$115 million the amount necessary to fulfill the entire 500 million dose commitment?

Ms. POWER. You would know better than I. It was before my time, but that when the ARP was passed, again, so generously here on Capitol Hill, it was not envisaged as the means to cover vaccine purchases.

So, the second \$2 billion that was allocated for COVAX went toward the Pfizer purchases and much of the ARP money that we had intended to invest in health systems has also——

The CHAIRMAN. So the answer is no, that is not enough?

Ms. POWER. There are lots of demands on the ARP. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. How is this procurement going to be distributed? Is it going to go to COVAX? Will we, through USAID, distribute doses bilaterally? If so, how are you prioritizing bilateral distribution?

Ms. POWER. I think it is a both/and scenario. The terms of the Pfizer deal, as you may know, are for COVAX countries, so for low income and lower middle income countries.

The 80 million surplus doses that we are providing bilaterally have more flexibility. They are not subject to those terms, and so that is where you are seeing the kinds of doses we were just talking about to Latin America and to our partners in Indonesia, Vietnam, et cetera, just in the last few days.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I would just close on this.

Look, I am all for COVAX, but I think the United States should be more robustly engaged in the bilateral distribution of the vaccines.

China is all over the Western Hemisphere and other places in the world. So I go to the Dominican Republic, speak to the President, who tells me, I really want to work with the Americans, but China is here offering it to me. I cannot get it from the United States.

This is a country in a time in which the Western Hemisphere is moving all in the wrong direction in terms of democracy and human rights that both observes that, that is in the midst of doing things.

They have about 60 percent of their hospital beds are being used by Haitians and he is taking care of them. He has 150,000 Venezuelans that have fled to the country. He has given them working papers. It is those type of actions that we want to support, but when he is faced in terms of life and death decisions between let us choose the Chinese vaccine or let me at least buy American vaccines and I cannot get them, then there is another dimension in addition to doing the right thing on vaccination that has a force multiplier in terms of our diplomacy and our interests. I just hope that the Administration will look at that.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me start there.

I was just astounded the other day when COVAX said they were going to buy the Chinese vaccine. I assume you saw that release. Have you discussed that with the other people at COVAX?

Ms. POWER. Yes, Senator.

Senator RISCH. Do they appreciate the irony of this where China started this and refused to participate in COVAX, and will not contribute money, will not contribute vaccines, but then COVAX is turning around and actually paying them for their vaccines.

I mean, this is odd. It is strange, to say the least.

Ms. POWER. If I may just make a couple points here.

First of all, it is appalling that Beijing chose to make a profit on those vaccines rather than to contribute financially to COVAX or to donate its state-owned doses to COVAX to reach people in their hour of desperate need. There is no other way around it. It is appalling.

From the standpoint of COVAX and why that transaction went forward, it is the case, as you know, Senator, that the supply for this third quarter of this year is not available, fundamentally, and the Delta variant is raging, because, as I indicated earlier, India pulled back the Serum Institute of India doses that COVAX had expected to provide, for example, second shots and to reach health workers.

Hundreds of millions of doses that COVAX had expected to be able to distribute never arrived. The U.S., as you know, through Pfizer is moving to address the supply issue, but that will not really kick in until August and then into the later part of this year, and even that will only scratch the surface in terms of the global need.

So I think what you are looking at is a raging pandemic, a supply challenge that the U.S. and Europe will be addressing, and you will see other pharmaceutical companies also have their drugs probably licensed toward the end of this year, but in that hour of relative desperation, it felt it needed to bring vaccines online as quickly as possible, particularly, again, to get those second shots and those health care workers reached. That is no excuse for what China did in that context.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that. From your position at COVAX, what are you finding as far as the other countries' acceptance of the Chinese vaccine?

I mean, here in the U.S. we see even slight ineffectiveness is greeted with real disdain, and as we read what is going on with the Chinese vaccine, it seems to be pretty low quality compared to what we are producing.

What is happening there? What are the countries saying about getting the Chinese vaccine?

Ms. POWER. Well, as you know, different studies have yielded different research findings as it relates to a number of the vaccines on the global market, including the two Chinese vaccines in question.

It was licensed to be used and, again, because it is not a question of choosing COVAX, choosing between Sinovax or Sinopharm, and Moderna—I think it is obvious what the choice would be if that

were the choice—it is choosing one of these Chinese vaccines or not having supply in this period.

So, I think, and just to come back to the chairman's point, across our hemisphere and around the world, people's very strong preference appears to be for a U.S.-manufactured vaccines, particularly mRNA vaccines, like Moderna and Pfizer. So once that supply becomes available, I think it is going to be very clear choice.

Let me just say one more thing, if I could—sorry—which is to the branding point about COVAX because I think this is implicit in what you are saying, and the chairman raised it.

When COVAX doses are donated by—because of the generosity of the American taxpayer and because of the generosity of the U.S. Government, those are branded with the American flag. Those are not branded just simply as COVAX, as an international organization.

Our ambassadors are there to meet the planes when they land. We are very aware of what China is using its vaccines and people's desperation to extract and we do not ask for anything in return, unlike our Chinese counterparts, but we are intent, certainly, on making it known when it is our vaccines that are arriving of the higher quality that we know them to be.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Ms. Power. My time is up. I am not going to ask another question, but one area I wanted to go into and I will just underscore for you that assistance to the Palestinians are going to be very closely scrutinized by some of us here.

I know there are people in the House of Representatives that have a different view of this than we do, but as long as they have the pay for slay program, we are going to look at every penny that is spent with the Palestinians.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Power, welcome. Nice to have you here. Thank you for what you are doing.

Last week, I was in Bulgaria and, as you are aware, the Biden administration recently imposed Magnitsky sanctions in Bulgaria against former corrupt officials. I thought I would be attacked on the use of those sanctions when I visited.

Instead, we were heroes. The Bulgarian Government and people look at this as an opportunity to really deal with a systemic corruption problem that they have.

You indicate in your statement that corruption is the Achilles' heel of many illiberal regimes, and I agree completely with you on those statements.

Our committee has passed legislation that would build up the strength of our missions in understanding the circumstances in the countries in which they represent the United States with tools to help deal with the corruption in these countries.

So my question to you is, you talk about rapid response in your statement, and when there is an opportunity we have to be able to move quickly.

Can you just share with me your strategies on how you are going to use the tools that you have at your disposal to deal with the

widespread corruptions that we are finding in so many countries that is really fueling autocratic regimes and attacks against their own country?

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator.

In President Biden, you have found a true partner in combating crime and corruption in so far as he is the first American president to have issued a presidential memorandum declaring the fight against corruption in our national security interests.

I just this month have created at USAID the first ever Anti-Corruption Task Force and it will entail, in answer to your question, a combination—and it is reflected in the 2022 budget request as well—but a combination of providing support, for example, to civil society and independent media actors who are exposing corruption and malfeasance.

It is also going to entail mainstreaming the anti-corruption fight across USAID programming areas, and I do not mean simply for the purpose that we would all share, which is to avoid fraud, waste, and abuse. Absolutely. We are already all over that, but actually just looking at where corrupt actors can be found and where our leverage can be used in other sectors to shine a light on what is the Achilles' heel, I think, to these illiberal forces.

So some of this is about using our platform and our voice and our spotlight, and some of it is about working with the Treasury Department, Justice Department, on some of the accountability tools that that you have been so critical in putting in place.

I really think that we have lined up the moons here and all of the elements to have the most aggressive anti-corruption plank to our foreign policy in American history.

Senator CARDIN. Let me make a suggestion. We use the two branches of government, I think, effectively to deal with the global challenge of trafficking in persons with the legislation that was passed by Congress with the focus in the State Department in regards to trafficking and the accountability issues.

I think we have made tremendous progress globally on that issue. We can do the same with corruption. The legislation that we are passing here will give you additional tools and expectations in our relations with other countries, and it strengthens America's position when we work together.

I would just urge you to work with us on that legislation. Let us get it to the finish line, and that will give you some additional ability to work in-country to get changes.

I want to touch on the other issue that you mentioned in that statement in the same area and that is that the cause of democracy is currently on its back heels in many parts of the world. Then you cite the Freedom House study that shows a decline of democratic states.

When you look at the percentage of resources that are devoted to democracy building, it is not a large sum of your budget. I noticed that you have requested additional funds, and we appreciate that, but it seems to me you have limited funds to deal with a huge problem and I would just welcome your thoughts as to how we can effectively promote democratic institutions.

Ms. POWER. I think there is a broader and deeper question even at the heart of your inquiry, Senator, which is, are we looking with

fresh eyes at the standoff between democracies and authoritarian forces or autocratic forces around the world.

I think each administration looks at the democracy funding and programming of the administration before it and looks to see should it be adjusted in this way or that way.

I really hope that the President's democracies summit, which I know many of you are providing input on, provides an occasion to give the kind of fresh look at the resources required to meet this moment with China trying to pull countries into the autocratic and authoritarian column every single day using the tools of suppression and technological surveillance to do so, and then when a country has turned more autocratic, then calling on that country to vote with China in the U.N. to undermine human rights and democratic norms.

I think there really is a question about whether we are resourced and thinking sufficiently ambitiously because we know they are, and so I welcome going deeper on that conversation.

We have requested a modest increase. We are doing a soup to nuts look at our programming, including in consultation with many of you, but ideas welcome because this is not an afterthought for Beijing. This is the point.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Administrator Power, welcome. I want to concentrate a little bit on Central America. I know you recently made a trip to the Northern Triangle countries.

We have a crisis on our border. I know many members are in a state of denial, but we have been apprehending about 6,000 people per day over the last 3 months—the human depredation, human traffickers, the open lanes for additional human trafficking and drug smuggling. It is a crisis on our border.

I know that the Vice President went down to Central America looking for root causes. I just want to ask you, did you discover or did you come to any conclusions in terms of what the root cause of that out migration is?

Ms. POWER. I know you know because I know how carefully you are tracking this—but a complicated stew of forces.

Some communities you meet with people where gang violence where, literally, there would be bodies on the streets because of gang violence, where our programs attempt to reduce the number of homicides, knowing that that would be a reason—I cannot even imagine being a mother and handing one's child over to a coyote, but it is a level of desperation sometimes around physical security.

Senator JOHNSON. Can I—

Ms. POWER. That is acute, and the economic, of course, is the main, especially in the wake of COVID.

Senator JOHNSON. Let me just, quick, interject and I want to let you finish answering the question.

When you mentioned gangs, one fact that is really not very widely known, of the unaccompanied children that are coming into this country being apprehended, 70 percent are males. Seventy percent are 15, 16 or 17.

That would be the prime age for recruitment into gangs, things like MS-13. That is not a fact that we are focusing on very much when we are talking about the crisis, but go on. You were talking about the gangs in Central America.

Ms. POWER. Well, just offering that as one source. I actually keep a handy chart, and I am sure you have seen some like it, but we actually have crunched the data.

You do not need to see the specifics, but just in looking at any country of the three, looking in which areas is it by virtue of—is it some hurricane aftershock, but in which countries when we look at intention to migration surveys, is it unemployment or economic—perceived economic despair, in what cases, again, is it a spike in homicides.

So it is very important that we tailor our programming per community in accordance with what those actual causes are, which also fluctuate, of course, with time.

Senator JOHNSON. I was asking for a root cause. I have my own ideas on this. Let me just kind of throw something at you.

When I went down there in 2015, I was surprised at the reaction we got from the presence of both Honduras and Guatemala when they said, we are dealing with corruption and impunity. Corruption, I understand. I think we were talking about that earlier.

Impunity, what do you mean by that? Well, impunity springs from the fact that you have the drug cartels that are untouchable. I mean, literally untouchable.

That then spreads over the rest of society where you end up with the gang activity and you end up with the extortionists shooting a cab driver, burning his cab if they do not hand over the ransom.

The drug cartels exist in Central America because we shut down to a great extent the drug trafficking through the Caribbean and redirected it through Central America. The drug cartels exist because of America's insatiable demand for drugs.

So if you are looking for a root cause of all the problems in Central America, almost all of them, it is America's insatiable demand for drugs.

So if we are not willing to recognize that fact, we are not addressing the root cause, and quite honestly, we do not stand any chance whatsoever wiping out those drug cartels. They are just endemic. The communities rely on the profits of the drug cartels.

So we have to keep that in mind. So when you are proposing \$860 million for Central America, where is that going to go? How does that not just go down a hole and completely wasted if we are not willing to recognize what the true root cause is?

My final point is when I was down there the presidents of both Honduras and Guatemala begged our delegation, please fix your laws. This is not helpful to us to lose our future.

I saw a recent interview with the new president of El Salvador making the same point. This is not as successful economic model for Central America to lose all of our people.

I would just encourage this administration and you, as you are looking at how you design these programs, please recognize the true root cause, which is America's insatiable demand for drugs, recognize that our open border, our pull factors, is not helpful.

It is destructive to Central America. If we really want to help them out, we need to secure our border. We need to stop that flow of their citizens.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.  
Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and, in particular, Administrator Power. Thank you for your testimony and for your continued service to our nation.

I am pleased to see the Biden administration's budget request for USAID includes investments to address the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic and to bolster our ongoing role in global health, foreign assistance in the Indo-Pacific specifically to counter China's influence there and in other regions of the world, and demonstrates our commitment to fighting climate change.

I look forward to working with you to improve the effectiveness of USAID. Like Senator Johnson, as he was just describing, I, too, have just returned from Guatemala and have a number of questions about how we are going to effectively deliver assistance in a way that will bend the curve of a number of challenging developments there.

I visited a shelter for trafficked youth, as did you in your recent trip, and one of the inspiring aspects of that visit was that it was a locally developed and run program.

Our assistance to that particular initiative did not require funding to go through a governmental agency. It goes directly to an NGO.

So, Administrator, I would be interested in hearing what you think is a possible strategy for increasing the localization of our assistance programs, devoting a larger share of development assistance funds to supporting initiatives implemented by local partners and what role additional staff would have in making that possible.

I might, and perhaps this is motivated by that trip, recommend piloting that in a region, for example, Central America, where we lack credible national government partners in development.

Ms. POWER. Yes. Your last point about lacking credible government partners is an important complement, I think, to the exchange I just had with Senator Johnson. I mentioned violence and economic despair, but the governance and corruption trends are really going in the wrong direction, requiring us to think very creatively about how we steward these resources that we hope, again, that you will be generous enough and the American people be generous enough to provide in order to deal with those causes of despair and migration that can be tackled within the region.

So the question you pose on how to strengthen our relationship with local partners can sound a little bit abstract, a little bit wonky, a little bit sort of inside foreign assistance, like, a perfect Samantha Power/Chris Coons exchange.

[Laughter.]

Ms. POWER. It is so important because, as I tried to say briefly in my opening statement, it is the essence of whether the development we do is going to be sustained over time.

Because we, USAID, want—and you all as well and the president want to move quickly, often there is just a lot of gravity pulling us toward very large, often U.S.-based contracting partners that may

design to enlist local partners as part of the overall contract or grant but, fundamentally, the investments are not made in that internal capacity and that ability to have the accounting capacity, the ability to comply with USAID's regulations, many of which are in place in order to be responsive to the need for oversight that you have.

So the shorter answer is I think we are off to a good start with the new partnerships initiative and the local works initiative, which both, again, I think came out of a partnership between USAID and Congress.

I think that we need to try to lower the barriers of entry because it is so onerous to work with USAID for these small local organizations, and we need to invest in the internal capacity those organizations have to meet the legitimate oversight questions and challenges that we absolutely have to retain in order to do our jobs as stewards.

Senator COONS. Well, I look forward to working with you on tackling USAID's procurement process, the challenges both in terms of regulations and staffing that you face in terms of trying to be flexible so that you can better respond to changing circumstances such as we are seeing in Ethiopia or Afghanistan or Haiti where developments—challenging changes and circumstances require more than just disaster aid, but require us to change prioritization or strategies around development.

If I might, just a quick last question, Mr. Chairman.

The Development Finance Corporation is a new tool that through its loan programs can reduce the cost of financing development by leveraging private sector resources, and the Senate just passed an important bipartisan bill that supports the expansion of the DFC's lending authority to enable our competition with China, something Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch really championed through this committee.

I would be interested in your views on how you ensure that the DFC remains focused on development and what your role will be in strengthening the DFC as we expand its capacity to compete on behalf of the United States in partnership with the private sector against the increasing influence that China is having around the world.

Ms. POWER. I probably do not have time really to respond in detail, but just to say that, as a kind of Rip Van Winkle here who was gone for 4 years and now is back in government, I do think the enhanced capacity you all have given the DFC is, from my standpoint, the newest, freshest tool in the toolbox.

Your continued message that this is a development finance institution is really important. I did not have a chance, Mr. Chairman, when you were asking about the sort of full set of tools in the toolbox on COVID, developing vaccine manufacturing capacity in Africa, where they are importing 99 percent of vaccines, DFC has just announced a big deal with J&J in South Africa with other international financing bodies.

Multilateralism, what we do, and that is going to bring more than 500 million doses online coming from South Africa by the end of 2022. I think that is just the beginning.

Certainly, my impression—and as the vice chair of the DFC, my impression is that that is very much the orientation of the leadership of DFC to meet these needs in developing countries, recognizing that that is going to be profitable for everybody over time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Paul.

Senator PAUL. Good morning.

Are you aware of how much revenue the Federal Government brings in?

Ms. POWER. Probably order of magnitude, but not the specific.

Senator PAUL. It is about \$3.8 trillion estimated for this year, last year about \$3.7 trillion, but we are spending close to \$7 trillion maybe this year, a little over \$6 trillion last year.

So the deficit was of historic proportions last year, over \$3 trillion. It will be, again, \$3 trillion or more by the time the majority party weighs in.

Amidst that massive deficit, do you think that debts matter? Do you think it matters how big a deficit we have?

Ms. POWER. If I can stay to my area of expertise, which is how we spend the money that you are generous enough to appropriate, I am probably on safer ground.

I have my views as a citizen, but I am here in my capacity as USAID administrator.

Senator PAUL. All right. The thing is, is that we probably do need people in government who do understand a little bit about finances.

I mean, you are asking for a 15 percent increase in the welfare that we give to other countries and, really, I think it is irresponsible. It is the wrong thing we should be doing.

We should be conserving our resources, particularly conserving them for our country as opposed to sending them to other countries.

There is not a great deal of evidence that the money that we launder throughout the world really over time has been a benefit to us. There is a great deal of evidence that much of it has been stolen.

We mentioned corruption. Yes, there is plenty of corruption and often the government-to-government money has been stolen through the years, but some of it is spent on things that are just—if the American people knew about them would be outraged.

Some of the AID money went to spreading green growth in Peru, some sort of climate alarmism, selling Serbian cheese, venture capital fund in Bosnia, small business loans to people who have been deported, and dealing with truant Filipino youths.

In Afghanistan, we spent \$60 million on a hotel that was never completed. It was a shell of a hotel across from our embassy. It became such a danger that our troops had to patrol it and, ultimately, will have to be razed if it has not been so already.

They will probably need more money to raze it. After we gave somebody \$60 million, the contractor ran off with the money.

The people who want global climate alarmism to spread through both AID and our defense budget built a \$45 million natural gas station in Afghanistan. The first problem was it was supposed to cost \$800,000, and then in the ever lack of efficiency of govern-

ment, it ended up costing \$45 million when initial estimates were \$800,000.

That was the first problem. The second problem is the average Afghani makes about \$800 a year. Does not have a regular car, much less a car that runs on natural gas.

So the thing is, if you look at the history of the welfare that we distribute around the world, you really see a history of both sending it to corrupt nations.

If you look at the money sent to the Mubarak family, to Egypt, I think it is a billion and a half a year, but over, like, a 30-year period I think it was \$40-some-odd billion.

Well, Mubarak's kids were each worth about \$5 billion. Mubarak himself became worth about \$10 billion, and I do not think anybody argues that some of that was not gotten by taking the cream off the top as our aid came in.

That is the history of it, throughout Africa, throughout all of these nations, of people skimming off the top, but it is insulting to Americans.

We are running a \$3 trillion debt, and it does have ramifications. What we are seeing is inflation throughout the economy right now. It is an insidious tax. It hurts the poor the worst. It is a regressive tax, and we are going to see more of it.

It comes from people who do not seem to have an opinion about debt, who just seem to just go along their way and say, oh, I am going to help people. I call it the big heart small brain syndrome. Give everybody money. Give everybody free money.

Give the world free money, because we have a big heart and we want to help people, but we do not see, really, the ramifications of what the debt is doing to our country and what it will ultimately do.

If you want to see the unraveling of it, look at Venezuela. That is what our future will look like if we consider to not be concerned about debt.

So my admonition to you is you should care about the debt and that you should be aware of the debt in coming forward with a budget that asks us to increase by 15 percent when we will have a deficit of over \$3 trillion this year.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator. I do not have much time to respond. I would be grateful just to say a couple things.

First of all, I have made multiple endeavors to come and see you. I would love to talk about the programs that you have concerns about.

I actually think when I had the privilege of serving the Obama administration, there were a number of issues related to assistance to particular governments where were you and I had a meeting of the minds, if I recall, unless I am misremembering.

On the broader sort of view of foreign aid, I just think it is really important to disaggregate what we are talking about and to dig into particular programs, and that is why one of my priorities as administrator is to enhance the rigor of our evaluations, to be accountable, to look at some of the programs maybe on your list. Maybe they should be stopped or maybe they should never have started and maybe we can learn from them.

If the pandemic has not taught us how connected the health and safety of Americans is to people who live around the world, I do not know what will. We are connected, and if we do not invest in global health systems internationally, it is going to be the Americans who will pay the price.

Senator PAUL. Nobody is arguing we are not connected. It is just whether we have to pay for everything.

Ms. POWER. So you want the Chinese then to pay and to exact their leverage in that manner? You want someone to do it, but we are to be the freeloader on a Chinese-led world order? I am not for that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Great to see you, Ambassador. Thanks for your continued service to the country. I wanted to try to hit a couple hot spots in the Middle East in the time that I have.

First, I want to talk about Lebanon, a country that right now does not occupy a lot of oxygen in this town, but were it to disintegrate would be our and the world's obsession for the next decade.

Right now, the economy is in freefall. The currency is virtually worthless. The country's economy is built on a pyramid scheme that enriches a set of elites, which have sort of a frozen status quo for years.

The question is what is the best way for the United States to use its aid to try to promote the type of reform that will help this country sort of get back on a path to sustainability? How can we change the current dynamic?

For instance, should we be considering, perhaps, a narrower approach? I mean, my sense is that we have tried to put broad conditions on our aid. Should we be thinking about focusing, for instance, on one sector of reform, like banking reform, and narrowing our ask?

What we are doing today does not seem to be moving the needle. What would you suggest should be our approach to using our aid in Lebanon as leverage to try to rescue this country from a crisis today that does, frankly, within the next year threaten to propel the entire nation into chaos, continued economic freefall, and potentially civil war?

Ms. POWER. Would that there were a silver bullet for the gravity and breadth of the crisis unfolding there, I guess I would just offer a couple associations and look forward to maybe talking with you more about this.

First of all, Lebanon is a place where we have been more successful than we have, for example, on a country like Yemen, in multilateralizing our response and in getting Europeans and others to step up.

I think if we were to go in the direction that you describe, a sector-based approach, it would be essential that other sectors not be left behind.

Second point, which, again, is true of every country we have talked about so far today, which is governance, governance, governance. Absent the kind of political unity, you do not even see garbage collection occurring, right? State formation, state erosion ends

up being critical in terms of making the partnership work for the Lebanese people.

Then the third and final point is there are huge demands being placed on global humanitarian emergency assistance, as you well know. Tigray now alongside South Sudan, alongside Yemen, Syria, Venezuela. We could go on.

Just looking back a couple years, you would not have thought that Lebanon would potentially find itself on that list.

As the USAID administrator, I am both interested very much in governance and economic development, but we are also in a situation where we are having to provide emergency humanitarian funding because that is how weak the governance and the ability to deliver for the people has become.

Senator MURPHY. Let me turn to Gaza.

According to the U.N., the main border crossing that we use to get humanitarian goods into Gaza is operating only at about 50 percent capacity right now due to Israeli delays and restrictions.

UNRWA has not been allowed to get insulin and syringes in since October of last year. UNICEF has been barred from importing epoxy into Gaza.

What are we doing right now with the Israelis to try to ease these restrictions and do you have any hope that there might be the opportunity to reopen another crossing?

I know this is a priority for this administration. We want to make sure that only the right things get into Gaza. At the same time, we are going to repeat history over and over and over again if we do not find a way to relieve the legitimate humanitarian suffering there.

Ms. POWER. Yes, and maybe if I could, Senator Murphy, just to take this occasion too to respond to something Ranking Member Risch talked about at the close of our exchange, which is I think we are all on the same page in wanting to ensure that our funding goes to the intended beneficiaries.

Given the Taylor Force Act, given, of course, prohibitions on any funding going to Hamas, that is what USAID and our partners on the ground do. We live by American law and the rules that have been put on the books and they have been put on the books for a very good reason.

So I think part of what we need to do is unlock some of the funding that is going to be very important for the reconstruction effort and for economic development.

With our Israeli interlocutors, there seems broad support for that. There is a recognition that economic deprivation and despair helps create a receptive environment for radicalization and that is not something that is in anybody's security or economic interest to see happen.

I hope we will soon have an ambassador in Israel. Again, the nomination is up here, and I hope, like others, will move forward so that we will have the ability to maintain that dialogue.

As it relates to Gaza, it is really important to remember in addition to all of our vetting, we have a third layer of vetting for anything that goes into Gaza, for obvious reasons, but also COGAT, the Israeli system by which supplies go through, is there as well as a check on what goes in.

You are right, that can produce delays and that is something, again, in terms of people not getting the resources that they need, that is not in anybody's interest, but it also should offer some assurance for those who are concerned about assistance not reaching, again, its intended destination, that we have systems in place, again, to make sure that the humanitarian development assistance goes for its intended purpose.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

For the members' information, there is a vote going on. It is the chair's intention to plow through for at least a half hour and then we will see where we are at, at that point.

Senator Young, I understand, is with us virtually.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Chairman.

Administrator Power, welcome to the committee.

Here, unfortunately and tragically, in the midst of the worst border crisis, arguably, in our nation's history, this year, tons of illicit drugs will enter the country. Thousands of migrants who are fleeing violence and corruption through Central and South America will illegally cross our southern border.

Now we are staring at yet another emerging crisis in Haiti and the ongoing protests against the tyrannical communist regime in Cuba. We have to do more to address and stop the root causes of these crises before they arrive at our door. I know this is something that has been emphasized by various members of the Administration.

I believe the Biden administration's rhetoric has invited much of this crisis, though. It is well documented that many migrants would not make this dangerous journey and risk their lives if their home countries could be provided some semblance of security and governance, which leads me to USAID.

I do believe that USAID has a large and important role to play in helping those nations regain their sovereignty from the narco terrorists who are at the heart of the crisis.

So I am glad to see USAID has increased funding for the international narcotics control and law enforcement efforts, even if only by small measures.

Administrator Power, first, do you believe there is a crisis at the southern border—I think the president indicated directly at one point there was—and if so, what is USAID doing in response to the border crisis?

Specifically, are you working with the Northern Triangle or elsewhere in the region to stem the flow of migrants? Maybe you could speak about that.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator. I am looking at the same apprehension numbers and border crossing numbers that you are and certainly see the worrying flows, as you noted, instability throughout the hemisphere means that this is not only an issue also of the Northern Triangle.

There are root cause issues in a number of countries that we have to think through.

Because you raised it, if I would just say a quick word on Haiti, I think it really underscores why economic development, security, and governance are the three legs on the stool.

If any one leg is shorter than the others, the stool kind of topples over, to use a probably tired metaphor. In Haiti, the political dysfunction, the absence of political unity right now combined with the physical insecurity and the spikes in violence and homicide, combined with COVID and the exacerbation of all the preexisting economic conditions, again, creates a very, very potent and destabilizing mix.

You asked specifically about the Northern Triangle countries. I was down there. One of the most important purposes, I think, of any high-level trip, including by members of this body, is to send the message that there is no workaround for democratic backsliding.

There is no workaround for corruption. We cannot attract the kind of private investment. We might be interested in moving supply chains as we diversify our supply chains to some of those countries. How do you do that, right, when the corruption trends are going in the wrong direction?

I had the unfortunate task since I saw you last, Senator, of rerouting funding that was supposed to go to the Attorney General's office and the Supreme Court's office in El Salvador.

It had to be rerouted away from those offices because the individuals in those offices were fired by the President and we decided it was not a worthy investment because it had become—these were sort of political choices and politicized bodies. So we invested, instead, in civil society, organizations holding that government accountable.

So we do things like that. I also think lawful pathways of migration, the H-2B and H-2A programs, which are quite nascent in the Northern Triangle countries, stressing and entering their facilities where asylum claims can be processed in the region.

USAID is working really closely with labor ministries to try to staff them up so they are in a position to process lawful migration claims. There are actually very few overstays on H-2B and H-2A visas in that program, as I understand it, but we have a lot to learn from—

Senator YOUNG. Administrator, I am going to interject, respectfully—

Ms. POWER. Of course.

Senator YOUNG. —just on account of my time expiring. Thank you for your effort to comprehensively respond to my line of inquiry.

Ms. POWER. Sorry.

Senator YOUNG. I will say that Senator Cardin and I are trying to provide the Administration with tools to deal with the corruption side of things, to actually allow countries to be tiered based on levels of corruption, and then allow sanctions to be imposed directly upon those individuals who we know are responsible for various levels of corruption.

We think those tools will be effective at the State Department and, by extension, assist USAID and the people of those countries as well.

Moreover, I think immigration reform and ensuring that our nation's immigration laws are fixed can be helpful. You mentioned

the various H-2 programs, and I think we can build on the success of those programs.

Of course, border security is going to have to be part of that. That is not part of your portfolio, but it bears mentioning. We will never get major immigration reform until we take that seriously.

One final—

The CHAIRMAN. Senator, I am sorry, but you are 1:38 over and we have a vote on the floor.

Senator YOUNG. I do understand. Thank you for indulging me, Mr. Chairman, and I will follow up with some written questions for the administrator.

Thank you so much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. For the attention of members, I am now told by the floor that because President Biden is coming to the Capitol, the timeframe on the clock will not be as extended as normal.

So I am going to recognize Senator Kaine. That will get us to when they say they are going to close the floor, and then if I can have somebody come back, we will continue. The next person on the next side is Senator Romney.

Senator ROMNEY. Cannot make it back.

The CHAIRMAN. Cannot make it back.

Well, let me see if I can stay and see if they do not close the vote. So have you voted already?

Senator ROMNEY. No.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Senator Kaine, if you want to—

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just three observations. I just returned from the Americas with a group of six senators, bipartisan, from this committee—Senators Portman, Coons, Senators Luján, Hoeven, and Crapo—Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Colombia, and just three observations concluding with a compliment to USAID.

Number one, I agree with Senator Johnson. We really have to grapple with root causes, and the root causes are violence and lack of economic opportunity and weak institutions and corruption, but they are very connected to the U.S. demand for drugs. Just today, the CDC put out statistics. Overdose deaths went up by 25 percent last year, highest overdose death total in the history of the United States, and we heard this over and over again and we know it in our communities.

The insatiable demand of U.S. citizens for drugs and their willingness to send cash south creates narco trafficking as a powerful and wealthy industry, and that industry creates violence in the neighborhoods of Honduras and other nations and people flee violence.

It weakens institutions and creates corruptions, and that causes people to leave, and it puts a limit on economic investment and that causes people to leave.

So we have to grapple with this in a multidimensional way, but there is no way to deal with this without dealing with our own demand because if we do not do that, we will be back talking to the tenth president in the future from all these countries and we will have exactly the same problem.

It does not mean the solutions are easy. My hope, if we recognize this, is that we might talk about these immigrants in a different way than we often do, because their pain is our pain. Many of them would not be here if it were not for our pain.

So we see them showing up at the border, like, how dare you. Well, they are coming because of us. They are coming because we have ravaged their neighborhoods.

All eight of my great grandparents came to the United States from Ireland, just as you did, Administrator Power, but my great grandparents did not come because U.S. drug demand was destroying their community.

The people that I worked with in Honduras, 40 years ago and the folks who are just like them today, they are deeply, deeply affected by what is going on in the domestic reality of our nation's life and they are seeking a refuge from conditions that we are complicit in creating.

Again, that does not make the solutions easy, but as we talk about people who are arriving under these conditions, I hope that our rhetoric might be more compassionate about them.

Second, it would have been easy to rationally understand this, but not until I went to the Americas did I realize how powerful the U.S. vaccine diplomacy has been. We met with all four presidents of these countries and the shortest meeting was 2 hours.

We usually do not get meetings with heads of state, but I attributed it to they had not seen CODELs in a while, but I really attribute it to their gratitude around the vaccine deliveries. They talked about the vaccine issue out there and that China and Russia will sell them vaccines and will make a contract and maybe deliver or not, or maybe delay delivery.

The U.S. is getting the vaccines, and I hope—and I am going to submit this for the record, Administrator Power, because this is an answer for you and others—I would like to see a chart about vaccine donations in the world and what the U.S. is doing and what other nations are doing.

We are doing it bilaterally, but we are also doing it through being the largest contributor to COVAX. I would like that all on the chart, because the appreciation for what we are doing and the belief that the U.S. vaccines are the gold standard while there is questions about the quality of the other vaccines, that gives us an enormous opportunity to continue to build goodwill, and I hope that we will.

Finally, a thank you to USAID. We went to two locations, the Albergue de Arguellas in Quito, Ecuador, run by Jesuit Relief Services, but funded partially by USAID, and the Raices de Amor in Guatemala City run by a local nonprofit, partially funded by USAID, and we really just saw the tremendous need and the creative work that we are doing.

The Quito facility was a facility for immigrant families coming across the border from Venezuela, some from Colombia. One described showing up with the family and just knocking at the door, and it just reminded me of the old story of a pregnant mom and a husband showing up and is there room at the inn. No, there is no room at the inn.

Well, this was a place in a really poor neighborhood in Quito, where yeah, there was room. You knock at the door, there is going to be a place for you, and this is funded by USAID.

It was a real manifestation of the continuing crisis in Venezuela and, to some degree, in some parts of Colombia as well.

The second site was the Raices de Amor in Guatemala City, which is for human trafficking victims, mostly girls under the age of 20, as young as 13 or 14 who have—I was going to say lost everything, but many did not have much to lose, who do not have anything, but find in this small community in the heart of Guatemala City some adults will care about them and, hopefully, help them get on a better life path.

This is enormously important work in a region that really, really needs us, and so you have a wonderful responsibility, a grave responsibility, on your shoulders. I look forward to working together with you and I will submit for the record this question to try to get a chart that all the committee can see to demonstrate the tremendous generosity of the American people around the vaccines and hope that we can continue that.

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Romney is recognized. I would like to ask Senator Shaheen, since she has voted, to preside until I get back. Thank you very much.

Senator Romney.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do not let them close the vote till I get there. I will be very brief, and I am not going to ask Administrator a series of questions because of the time, but I would note a couple of things.

First of all, I appreciate very deeply the work that you do. I recognize, as Senator Paul did, the damage that debt does to our nation. I am concerned about a 15 percent increase in your budget and think that is a mistake for us to be adding budgets at this time.

At the same time, I believe that your organization has a humanitarian purpose, but also a national purpose, and American national interest is being fostered by USAID or we would not be devoting the level of resources we are to the effort.

I would be interested in your perspective on our national interest in the way we apply our resources and, perhaps, a report of how successful we are in pursuing our national interest in providing that humanitarian relief. That would be a topic number one.

Number two, I also concur with the comments that were made by Senator Kaine and Senator Johnson about focusing on root causes, but with regards to root causes coming from the Northern Triangle, I believe we met the enemy and the enemy is us, as Pogo once famously said.

The problem is here. Our ability to change gang violence, corruption, and so forth in other countries is, obviously, very modest. If we are going to try and change things, it has to be changed here.

Finally, let me just note this. I am very concerned about the USAID employees in Afghanistan and the risk they may be under, and would like to hear in a report to this committee the level of threat to our Afghan citizens who worked with USAID and wheth-

er we are getting them out, can get them out, and whether they are able to qualify for the Special Immigrant Visa.

With that, I am going to leave and go vote. So please go ahead and respond. You have got 3 minutes——

[Laughter.]

Senator ROMNEY. I will be back and will hear your comment. Thank you.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator.

Your first question is profound, and even if you have given me lots of time I do not think 3 minutes would do justice to why it is in our national interest to support this kind of work.

I offered one response in my exchange with Senator Paul around the pandemic and pandemic preparedness where our national security, our individual security, our collective security is so linearly tied with other countries' ability to get viruses under control because it is the paradigmatic example of a threat that crosses borders and does not respect border controls or problems without passports, as they call them.

It is in our collective interest to see countries curb their emissions, given the harrowing rate of warming and the extreme weather events that are going along with that warming, weather events that, again, are problems without passports that do not respect national borders and that are wreaking great havoc on American farmers, with American wildfires, with flooding, with 118° heat in Portland, Oregon, you name it, which itself has really pernicious health effects all around the world, but also here in this country.

Those are just a couple examples, but also, Americans have so much to be proud of. We have so much to be proud of in having gone into West Africa in 2014 and mobilized a global response to an Ebola epidemic that otherwise would have become a pandemic, and mobilizing other countries to carry their fair share.

Same in the Democratic Republic of Congo in dealing with the recent Ebola crisis there. If the United States had not done that, Lord knows where Ebola would now be within Congo and well beyond.

PEPFAR, George W. Bush's tremendous creation. Seventeen million people alive today, lives saved because of the generosity of the taxpayer, but also giving the world and ability to get HIV/AIDS under control, relatively speaking.

We still have objectives that have not been met in that regard, but, again, both in our interests in terms of the health and welfare of the American people and so consistent with our values and what Senator Kaine was talking about in terms of people's gratitude and sense of partnership with the United States.

Because unlike our competitors, we are not extractive in the way that we provide development assistance. We are not transactional. We are not asking for something in return.

We are not asking to make a buck on COVID vaccines when people are in their hour of greatest need, and that is the spirit in which development assistance is provided, that spirit of partnership. As it happens, it then translates into more influence in the world and an ability to advance our interests in other ways, an ability to mobilize coalitions around things that are more narrowly in our short-term self-interest.

I know I am out of time. I would love to respond as it relates to USAID personnel and our implementing partners on Afghanistan, but I have a sneaking suspicion that Senator Shaheen might have a question in that regard as well. So perhaps I can wait and say something on that in a little bit.

Senator SHAHEEN [presiding]. Well, thank you, Ambassador. It is too bad that Senator Romney was not here to hear your answer. I am sure he would have appreciated it.

Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen, and welcome again, Madam Administrator.

Let me start with a question on Power Africa. You were part of the Administration that helped launch Power Africa, a very successful program, in my view, but one that could be expanded and has even greater potential.

Power Africa delivered first-time electricity to more than 103 million people and helped connect more than 22 million homes and businesses to electricity.

I know this occurred before you were confirmed, but the Administration's budget actually cuts the budget for Power Africa compared to last year's level by about 26 percent.

So if you could talk a little bit about whether or not you agree that Power Africa is an important program and whether you want to work with this committee to restore at least level funding for this program.

Ms. POWER. Thank you. Well, let me just say that our ambition is to take this flagship program and to expand it by bringing in new private sector partners in other countries as well. There is a lot of interest in Power Africa in Europe and Asia and beyond.

I think the target now is to connect 60 million homes and businesses to electricity by 2030, so to expand on the numbers that you have shared. Again, it is how American development assistance should work. We leveraged \$650 million and turned it into \$56 billion in commitments.

I will share, just briefly, that I spoke with the Sudanese Prime Minister Hamdok last week and, of course, just as the chairman was saying earlier, it is so in our interest as the United States to support those bright spots that exist globally—Sudan, Dominican Republic, he was mentioning.

Unfortunately, there are not that many in terms of governance and the trend lines in governance, but the very first thing he wanted to talk about was Power Africa.

So suffice it to say I think it is an incredibly important program. Senator Romney was taking issue with the modest increase in the President's budget request.

I mean, just given that there are more conflicts happening anywhere in the world right now than any time since the end of the Cold War, given the COVID fallout and the rises in extreme poverty of a kind we have not seen in generations, the fact that routine immunizations are not occurring, kids are out of school.

I mean, 15 percent compared to the state of the world today versus 2 years ago—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I agree with you, Madam Administrator. We definitely need to have the resources to match our ambitions

when it comes to our global strategy and priorities. That is why I hope we will also work to increase the amount for Power Africa.

Ms. POWER. I did not mean to go back to that—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Yes.

Ms. POWER. —but it was simply to say that that is why I think that it is those other demands on our funding is the only reason that you see that reduction.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I understand.

I would like to turn to a question that was raised by Senator Murphy, and I think all of us, support continued resources for the Iron Dome defense system and Israel's security assistance.

I am also pleased that the Biden administration has resumed funding to support humanitarian projects in the Palestinian areas. As you know, the Administration proposed, I believe, \$75 million in ESF funds to the Congress.

My understanding is that request is currently being held here by the ranking member. I look forward to a conversation with the ranking member and his team about that.

Have you had conversations with the ranking member and his team to try to resolve that issue?

Ms. POWER. We have tried to ensure that we can move the money that we think is so critical to meet basic needs in terms of food vouchers, livelihoods, youth engagement—I mean, again, where the potential for radicalization is there and the East Jerusalem hospital network. We are very eager. We feel that we have the vetting mechanisms in place to offer the assurances—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Is it not the case that this is some of the—or if not the most vetted money that AID—

Ms. POWER. It is the most vetted money.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Back to you. Right?

Ms. POWER. It is the most—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. It is the most vetted money because—

Ms. POWER. It is the most vetted money.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. —we all want to make sure we comply with the limitations that have been rightly established in the law.

We also, I would hope, want to provide important assistance as part of engaging with the Palestinian people. Hopefully, at one point, getting to the point where we can resume the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians for a two-state solution.

Is it not the case that this is 2020 money and if it is not dispersed by the September 30, you no longer can spend these monies?

Ms. POWER. I believe that is the case, yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So I hope the Administration will continue to push hard. I will work with you to push hard. I just think it would be irresponsible to allow those funds to lapse, and I hope the Administration will use all its authorities when it comes to that request that you have made.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator. I would just note the combination of the recent conflict and then the COVID fallout and the economic havoc and downturn that that caused means that the needs are even more acute than the cycle of post-conflict needs in that region.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Yes. It is reckless and wrong to be holding up those funds, in my view.

So thank you.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen.

Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ambassador Power, welcome.

Right now, Americans, in the eyes of the world, are focused on the nation of Cuba, are focused on thousands of Cubans who are bravely taking to the street, risking their lives to protest.

I will say I have been disappointed by the responses from the Biden administration that have been lukewarm at best. You are someone who cares about human rights.

In your view, what are the protesters in Cuba seeking and what are the impediments to their getting it?

Ms. POWER. Well, I mean, you only have to hear the cries on the street for freedom. You only have to hear the complaints about the inability to access basic health services at a time of a raging pandemic.

You only have to see the internet shutdowns and the frustration that you cannot associate, speak, do anything freely.

I am not there. Even if I were there, I am sure it is a heterogeneous set of motivations for different people, but people do not want to be repressed and they want to enjoy individual dignity, and the regime denies them that.

Senator CRUZ. So I believe the Cuban communist regime is an evil oppressive dictatorship that regularly, as a matter of policy, commits murder, commits torture, represses the people, and strips them of their basic rights.

Do you agree with that characterization?

Ms. POWER. I believe it is a repressive horrific regime that has not ever met the aspirations for freedom and human rights of the Cuban people. This is a government that day in, day out, abuses the rights of its people.

Senator CRUZ. The Biden administration put out a statement describing what was happening in Cuba as the Cubans exercising their right to peacefully assemble.

Do Cubans have a right to peacefully assemble under this dictatorship?

Ms. POWER. Well, we have seen calls to combat by the Cuban Government that are reprehensible. I am sure you are tracking very carefully the alleged disappearances of some of the protesters where their whereabouts to this day are unknown, and no, again, as I indicated, there is no freedom of association for the Cuban people, nor has there been.

Senator CRUZ. We are also seeing, in addition to protesters chanting "Libertad," chanting "Freedom," in addition to chanting "Down with the dictatorship," we are seeing them waving American flags. Why is it, do you think, that they wave American flags?

Ms. POWER. Well, this is something we have seen around the world, and for all of our imperfections, we are a country based on an idea, a set of ideas, that people are entitled to human rights and equality and dignity.

I believe that that flag, our flag, certainly for me as an immigrant to this country, embodies those aspirations.

Senator CRUZ. Across the globe, we have seen this repeatedly, whether in Cuba or in Hong Kong, and I think there is no symbol today in the world that more powerfully embodies freedom than the American flag.

Sometimes it seems that those protesters and dissidents in other countries understand that better than some people in our own country do.

Let me shift to another area, which is Gaza.

Recently, I traveled to Israel in the wake of the massive rocket attacks that Israel faced, and at the time met with senior leaders in the Israeli Government, who consistently raised concerns about money in Gaza being diverted to go to Hamas and going to terrorism.

In fact, we heard specifically about water pipes designed to provide clean water and sewage being turned into rockets, the same steel pipes that were meant to have clean water instead being used as weapons of war and rockets.

Likewise, concrete meant to build homes and buildings being turned into the infrastructure for terror tunnels to attack Israeli citizens.

What specific steps will you take to prevent Hamas from using the metal, the concrete, and the money that the Biden administration intends to pour into Gaza?

Ms. POWER. I am out of time to do your question justice, but I have also visited those crossings and have met with families that have in the past, at least, been able to hear the sound of digging and the sense of anxiety and insecurity that creates in the wake of, again, one of these cycles of conflict. I can only imagine how chilling that is.

USAID has—we work really closely with COGAT. You probably met with the Israelis who are themselves right there at the crossings deciding what goes in, checking.

If we are talking specifically about Gaza, we work with international partners, trusted partners. I was indicating earlier we have for Gaza the most elaborate set of vetting procedures that we have anywhere in the world. It is a third layer. We vet not only the prime contracting partner and the sub awardee, but the sub sub awardee.

Even though we do not have a big staff presence, we have third party monitoring. Again, we are working in lockstep with our Israeli partners and the needs are acute. We really feel that it is extremely important.

We will adhere to the laws that this body has passed and that are absolutely essential. At the same time, meeting the development and humanitarian needs are in the interests of peace and stability in the region.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you very much.

Senator Markey.

Oh, sorry. I am sorry.

Senator Shaheen.

I thought that in all this time you would have gotten a shot, but I am sorry.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. No, we have had people come so that is a good thing.

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, okay. Well, you are next on the list. So by all means. Thank you for presiding.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. Again, welcome, Ambassador, and thank you for the great work that you and everyone at USAID is doing around the world.

There has been a lot of discussion in this hearing about the impacts of COVID and the additional challenges that has meant for countries around the world. It has also had an impact on women because we have seen the lack of access to family planning and reproductive health care for women and girls.

In fact, because of the 10 percent decline in use of contraceptives, we expect that more than 48 million women will have an unmet need for modern contraception and more than 15 million additional unintended pregnancies will happen.

Can you talk about how you expect to work to expand and improve USAID's family planning and reproductive health programs and what we need to do to increase access to these programs in the middle of this pandemic?

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator.

Well, I think we have heard the whole range of impacts on women from the pandemic, including the surge in domestic violence, described as the second pandemic or a shadow pandemic.

I would say that the combination of, again, making sure that USAID is pursuing not only sustainable development, but inclusive development, and what we have seen over the life of the pandemic and we will get the data on this in a more systematized way soon, but is on all of our programs whether it is, yes, there have been kids dropping out of the school population, but a disproportionate number of girls.

Yes, there have been drop off in health services across all populations, but with the disproportionate effect that you describe, of course, on voluntary family planning.

So I think the combination of our preexisting funding with an emphasis on those disproportionately affected by the pandemic plus, thanks to your collective generosity through the ARP funding, that has given us an opportunity to go back into our global health programming and ask, okay, what is the COVID fallout component of this where we have to supplement what we had planned to do to begin with.

Now, some of that ARP money now has been dedicated to vaccine purchases, which was not anticipated. So the 2022 budget request is really important in this regard, but it is going to take a long time. I mean, you could never go back in time for the people who have suffered, again, these disproportionate effects in any one of these domains, but even to get back to where we were in, January of 2020 it is going to take, really, years.

The other thing I would point to, it is not exactly on point but is the Gender Equity and Equality Action Fund. It is not on point because it is not family planning specific, but it is an effort in ex-

panding WGDP, which existed and it was doing important work in the last administration, but expanding that effort and the resources dedicated to it to deal with some of these very specific COVID effects on women, and happy to talk more about that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I hope we will see an ambassador for global women's issues nominated soon to help address those challenges in the State Department.

I do want to go on to Afghanistan because, as you pointed out, I do have an interest in what is happening there, as we all do.

There are reports out today that we have begun evacuating SIV applicants who have helped the United States. I do not know if that report is accurate, but, obviously, we have thousands of Afghans who have helped the United States over the last 20 years who are in the queue, and in real danger if they are not able to leave the country.

So I would like for you to respond to that and what we are doing through USAID to help with that in terms of any Afghans who worked with USAID.

I would also like you to talk about what we can do to help women and girls once we are completely out of the country, which I think is probably just imminent, and what USAID can continue to do to help, particularly, women and girls in the country.

Ms. POWER. Thank you.

Well, in brief, our intention is to continue our programming. We are every bit as aware as you of the deteriorating security environment, of the Taliban's recent gains.

It is hard to disentangle the development questions, whether those development questions are relating to women and girls or the population as a whole, from the question of ongoing security relationship with the Afghan Security Forces.

So I think if you saw the handover ceremony where General McKenzie now has, in a sense, assumed command from CENTCOM, but looking at the ways in which we can continue to pay Afghan Security Forces, vet them, maintain their ability or support their maintenance of their ability to hold their ground.

Things have not been going well these last weeks. It is the fighting season, but I want to start with noting the importance of security cooperation.

Our partners want to stay. I think you and I have talked about this a little bit in the past. Many of our partners were there prior to 9/11 and have worked in some of these what I would consider impossible circumstances and have found a way to continue to deliver assistance.

We, USAID, and the U.S. embassy as a whole through COVID have also learned to work remotely. We have not been out and about because of lockdowns nearly as much as we might have been before, and so that has given us some technical capacity.

We are consolidating our hub at the embassy, true, but have an ability to, again, partner with our implementing partners.

So, again, it is the security situation that will, I suppose, influence the cost benefit calculus of any particular partner as they think of—especially those outside of Kabul, but our intention is to continue to fund those efforts and it is, certainly, what the Afghan people want more than anything.

Very briefly, and it just is too important not to try to address even though I know I am over time, as it—thank you and thank everybody up here for raising your voices on the fate of our Afghan partners.

That includes not only USAID staff or embassy staff or interpreters and translators who have worked with our military or the intelligence community, but our implementing partners—those NGOs that have been out there on the front lines promoting women and girls' education.

Just to take the USAID staff question as a kind of proxy for this larger challenge, about half of our current USAID staff at the embassy are eligible for SIV, only half because of the time requirement which is to 2 years, so they might be just shy of that.

Of our 5,300 Afghan implementing partners, two-thirds are not eligible for SIV because, as you might recall, the legislation makes contractees eligible, but not those who receive USAID grants or cooperative agreements.

As a result, we have to look at other mechanisms in those scenarios to think about how to not create inequity as it relates to taking care of those who have risked so much in partnership with us.

What I can say, and I am sure you have been in these conversations, is that this is a huge priority for President Biden. We do have other refugee resettlement options. There is an effort, as you as you indicated—

The CHAIRMAN. Administrator, I am going to ask you to augment the record. I love your very complete answers.

Ms. POWER. Always.

The CHAIRMAN. We have another vote coming up and we still have some colleagues who have questions to ask. So with all due respect.

Ms. POWER. I never thought I would be the one to want to prolong a hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, you are doing a good job of it.

[Laughter.]

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

I understand Senator Merkley is with us virtually and then Senator Markey will be next.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Administrator Power. I wanted to applaud the fact that you are working to have USAID produce a climate strategy. When do we expect to see that?

Ms. POWER. I believe you are going to see it by October or November of this year, of course, but let me get back to you on the precise timing.

Senator MERKLEY. So in the past, we have often associated economic development with the production of more electric power in countries and supported various fossil fuel strategies to produce that electric power.

Will we completely pivot away from supporting the expansion of fossil fuel development of electricity generation?

Ms. POWER. I am not hearing you perfectly, but certainly, this administration's emphasis absolutely is on transitioning away from

fossil fuels and to clean energy solutions. That is our emphasis in Power Africa.

I am the vice chair of the Development Financing Corporation. That is absolutely the objective, as you know, of new projects and initiatives that DFC is pursuing. So that is, certainly, the strategic thrust of everything we are doing in terms of transition in our energy dialogues, partnerships, also in encouraging regulatory changes because that is something USAID missions do well and apart from technological tools. We know we are running out of time.

Senator MERKLEY. Great. So I am going to speak more loudly.

Ms. POWER. That is better. Thank you.

Senator MERKLEY. Better?

Ms. POWER. Yes.

Senator MERKLEY. So there has to be absolute clarity here. We cannot continue to encourage the world to develop new sources of fossil fuels to power new electric power generation plants.

If you compare the last 30 years, the previous 30 years, the changes are dramatic, and it is absolutely savaging the western part of the United States.

Where I come from, from Oregon, we now live in fear of summer and the fire season and the droughts that are having such a huge impact.

So, in your role with DFC, the individuals within DFC have indicated they plan to continue to finance natural gas projects. Will you, in your role, say that has to come to an end?

Ms. POWER. Well, my understanding, Senator, and maybe I should just get back to you on this, but is that that is, again, the objective for DFC as well.

What I do not know is in terms of projects in the pipeline—what their obligations are, but that is absolutely the position of President Biden that we have to move in that direction and it is my position as well.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, and let me note that the climate impacts are having a massive impact on human health across the world, and so when we think of the mission of USAID of improving the health and welfare of people around this country, it is just essential that USAID adopt a strategy, this climate strategy, for a full transition to renewable energy and away from fossil fuels.

Otherwise, we are just tending to continue to promote the strategy that is bringing the disaster we are facing right now, and every report coming out shows more and more people are becoming climate refugees.

Ms. POWER. Like COVID, climate change effects are now cutting across, literally, every single aspect of USAID's programming in a crushing way.

So I agree completely, and I should say and should have said at the outset that, of course, I am working very closely with Secretary Kerry and his team as they build out their diplomatic push to get countries to make the kinds of commitments they need to make so that USAID can swoop in behind and provide the programmatic support to facilitate those transitions.

A huge part of what we do, Senator, is also just deal with the harms and how to mitigate the damage caused by the increasing

temperatures that we already see, including through heat resistant seeds and the kind of research we do in food security.

Because already the famine numbers, the displacement numbers, the conflict numbers, they are already rooted in scarcer natural resources and by virtue of hotter climates and more extreme weather events.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, and you are absolutely correct about the connection between what we do and what Senator Kerry is doing, and as he works with the world to help people pivot off of fossil fuels, it completely undermines his efforts if we are continuing to develop fossil fuel resources domestically or if we are promoting it through USAID or through the Development Finance Corporation.

So many countries are less well off than we are, and for us to say, well, we are going to continue to develop things here at home, but we want you to stop and pivot to renewables does not put a lot of weight behind the moral authority of the vision that Ambassador Kerry is working to advocate for around the world, and without U.S. leadership in this, we are in complete trouble.

I will look with great interest to your climate strategy, really encourage you to use your leverage with the Development Finance Corporation for them to end their fossil fuel investments and support, which they tell me they want to keep doing, and I would like to hear a very different answer coming from them in the future.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Markey.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

I am very pleased. Just following up on what Senator Merkley was talking about, I am very pleased that there is a request for \$600 million for bilateral climate change programming within the budget requests.

Asia is by far the part of the world that is most disaster prone. It experiences twice as many severe storms, major floods, as the Americas or Africa, and between 2008 and 2018, more than 80 percent of all disaster-related displacements occurred in the Indo-Pacific region.

Can you speak about how USAID is planning to mobilize that funding with those countries? Because, after all, it was, in fact, the devastating tsunami in 2014 that created the Quad format, consisting of the United States, Japan, Australia, and India, to put together a humanitarian response.

So could you talk about what the vision is that AID has for working in partnership with these countries on climate-related disasters in the Indo-Asia area?

Ms. POWER. Let me attempt to. While noting that your question is actually more complicated than it would seem because we have in the budget request, as you noted, a request for an increase, unsurprisingly, from the last administration as it relates to climate-specific funding.

Bear in mind also, Senator Markey, that that our emergency funding request, our Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs request, is also really the product of climate-related emergencies now informing the number of emergencies that we have to respond to.

So there is conflicts. Of course, so many conflicts are themselves related, as we were just talking about, to climate-related scarcity and so forth.

I mention that because it is not only our climate and environmental programming and what we might do, for example, to help a country transition to clean energy sources or how we might enhance disaster resilience of the kind that we have done in Central America, where a hurricane strikes and far fewer people die now than died with comparable hurricanes striking a decade ago, all of that is incredibly important.

When it comes to just getting out the gate when those harms have taken hold, and I was not aware of the stat that you just described in terms of that decade of, again, disparate impact of extreme weather events in that region, but that makes it likely that our Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs funding is likely to be steered in managing those crises.

That money would allow us to respond to disasters annually in more than 70 countries, which is what we now have to crazily bake into our calculation by virtue of conflict, but also of this surging number of extreme weather events.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Can I just turn quickly, if I could, to Haiti?

Ms. POWER. Please.

Senator MARKEY. After Hurricane Maria hit in September of 2017, I went down to see what the conditions were and, clearly, AID was central in helping these people through that disaster.

At the same time, they were still suffering from the legacy of the U.N. troops in 2010 bringing cholera for the first time in their history into their country, and it has affected hundreds of thousands of people in that country, and now they are in another crisis down in Haiti.

Could you talk a little bit, if you could, about the role you see AID playing now during this particularly difficult time for the country?

Ms. POWER. Thank you. I think one cannot decouple the diplomacy from the development and humanitarian assistance. Not that you would, but, in terms of root causes, there has to be a path to political unity. There has to be a recognized government now in the wake of this horrific assassination.

There has to be a roadmap to legislative and presidential elections, and USAID will support, of course, the effort to get to elections as soon as practical and as soon as possible.

I think we have a role, of course, in seeking to strengthen Haiti's sanitation. We provided, I think, 300,000 food vouchers last year.

We have expanded access to health care, working in 164 clinics, which reaches 4 million of the 11 million people in Haiti, I gather. So there is that kind of core health and sanitation and other development investments and then alongside the emergency responses because with Haiti, especially, what the country has always struggled with and our investments have never redressed in a durable way is resilience, is this ability to withstand a shock, whether a hurricane, an earthquake, or a depravity like this assassination.

So that is our emphasis and perhaps there will be more resources now available for that as people focus on Haiti again as we, unfor-

tunately, tend to do in society, at least, in cyclical ways even as USAID is on the ground throughout.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. I do agree with you, that after years of assistance it has not brought democracy or stability to Haiti, and we just cannot continue down the same path expecting a different result.

So we just have to have a new way in which we relate to that country, as we move forward and I think we are very fortunate to have someone like you who has this job, not just for that situation, but for every other one of these crises across the planet that are humanitarian crises that need U.S. help.

So thank you so much for all your great work.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Administrator, I am going to just rattle off a series of things because of time constraints. I will look forward to speaking to you afterwards. There is a vote going on, on the floor.

Certainly, in Cuba, we are seeing unprecedented pro-democracy protests as courageous Cuban men and women are demanding change in their country and end to the dictatorship. They are being met with violence by the regime, bloody violence.

I want to follow up with you on how part of our Cuba democracy grants come to USAID, about \$6 million or so. So I want to follow up on how USAID can strengthen its existing programs to support the efforts of the Cuban people to become more free.

I am concerned that with what has happened in Armenia—I mean, with Azerbaijan and Turkey's aggression towards Armenia that the request does not meet the humanitarian challenge that has existed and the exodus of people have had to flee to Armenia. It looks so low. So I want to follow up with you on that issue.

I would like to follow up on you on our priorities for the U.S.-Colombia relationship, which is right now in a very difficult set of circumstances—one of our closest partners in Latin America and strong bipartisan support for that relationship.

There is a series of challenges the country is facing with the overflow from Venezuela and others, and then lastly, I, certainly, want to follow up with you on the questions of your trip to Central America plus what we are seeing in the hemisphere. For example, I support the decision that AID made with reference to changing some of our funding as it relates to the actions of President Bukele.

I think there has to be consequences for such actions, but I would like to get a sense of how and what standards we are going to create to restore funding for its original purpose so that we can set clear markers to those in the hemisphere, where we stand to help your people, but you cannot, ultimately, do what you are doing if you want our help.

So just a few items that I will follow up with you. They are all important, and we thank you for your service. We thank you for your very elaborate testimony today.

The record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow.

With the thanks of the committee, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:33 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

## GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY

*Question.* The President requested \$800 million for global health security programs and activities in fiscal year 2022 including funds for 70 new positions at USAID to support Global Health Security programs.

How will these positions be integrated into the organizational structure at USAID, and how will they increase the ability of the U.S. to help countries, prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks?

Answer. The President's request for Global Health Security programs and staff will be fully integrated into the Agency's organizational structure to strengthen its critical prevention and response efforts around the world. With these additional resources, USAID will establish Global Health Security programs and staff in additional countries and invest in programs to detect future infectious disease outbreaks. These program and staff resources will enable USAID—in partnership with interagency partners, other nations, international organizations, and public and private stakeholders—to build country capacities to prevent avoidable epidemics, detect threats early, and respond rapidly and effectively to disease outbreaks and other critical infectious disease threats (including reducing antimicrobial resistance) in an effort to prevent them from becoming national or global emergencies.

*Question.* What specific actions should we be taking with our partners to strengthen health security and ensure we are prepared for the next pandemic? How does this budget support such efforts?

Answer. The President's FY 2022 budget request emphasizes the importance of USAID re-establishing partnerships with host countries, interagency partners, other nations, international organizations, and non-governmental stakeholders to build countries' capacities to prevent avoidable epidemics, detect threats early, and respond rapidly to disease outbreaks and other critical infectious disease threats, so as to prevent them from becoming national or global emergencies.

Consistent with National Security Memorandum-1, USAID believes the following areas present opportunities to work with our partners to strengthen global health security:

- USAID will continue to build country capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats through the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) and related programs. USAID will utilize the additional resources to expand country capacity building projects into new countries and regions, spanning Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America—implementing a One Health approach working across the human health, animal health, and environmental sectors.
- USAID will replenish the Emergency Reserve Fund to the pre-pandemic level, ensuring the Agency is ready to respond rapidly to infectious disease threats.
- USAID's request will support the objectives of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (the ACT Accelerator). This initiative consists of four components with real world impacts: diagnostics, therapeutics, vaccines (commonly referred to as COVAX), and the Health Systems Connector.

*Question.* How has USAID leveraged the lessons learned from years of successful work in combating infectious diseases overseas? How specifically has USAID leveraged the PEPFAR, TB and Malaria platforms, networks and lessons learned to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic? What is the strategy for applying lessons learned from the work of the Office of Infectious Disease moving forward and can you give us some timeframes for defined results?

Answer. The U.S. Government has leveraged and continues to leverage numerous programs and initiatives to help partners prepare for and respond to COVID-19, including through the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), and U.S. Government tuberculosis (TB) control programs. USAID will continue to leverage these and other existing investments and networks to respond to COVID-19 and prepare for future outbreaks.

- In FY 2020, GHSA programs utilized past investments and platforms to support partner country COVID-19 response activities, including contact tracing, risk

communication and community engagement, and coordination of public health response efforts. Partner countries that were provided assistance through GHSA were able to build upon the related health security platforms and programs to mount their COVID-19 responses. For example, in Thailand, Cambodia and Nepal, scientists and their networks of laboratories trained by USAID projects quickly mobilized to rapidly detect SARS-CoV-2 in early human cases by using laboratory protocols to detect new viruses before specific tests for COVID-19 were broadly available. Additionally, animal health laboratories strengthened by the USAID projects were able to provide much-needed surge capacity for testing of human samples during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Many of USAID's implementing partners that receive PEPFAR funding for HIV/AIDS services have received COVID-19 funds for response activities, including case management, oxygen, diagnostics and laboratory support, supply chain strengthening and vaccine readiness technical assistance activities. For example, the EpiC and RISE projects have been providing COVID-19 assistance in a variety of the above-mentioned activities in more than 50 countries, including Nigeria, Eswatini, El Salvador, Ghana, Kazakhstan, India, Indonesia, Mozambique and Philippines. USAID has leveraged PEPFAR-funded partners to expand access to medical oxygen through the procurement and distribution of oxygen-generating equipment and related consumables and durables, along with site preparations to ensure the equipment is properly installed and necessary clinical and non-clinical technical assistance to train facility-level staff on the use and maintenance of this equipment. Partners have helped strengthen and improve clinical management of COVID-19 patients, including training and mentorship for physicians, nurses, biomedical engineers, community health workers, and other members of interdisciplinary health care teams. Tools and resources have been developed and disseminated in all areas of COVID-19 case management, including IPC, home-based care, triage, mental health and psychosocial support, as well as procurements completed for essential equipment and supplies. In Thailand, for example, training was provided on post COVID-19 care and support to strengthen the knowledge and skill of the peer community workers in order to provide appropriate care and support to people who recovered from COVID-19 infection.
- USAID's TB investments have strengthened the ability of partner countries to detect and prevent the spread of other airborne infections, such as COVID-19, including bi-directional screening and testing for TB and COVID-19, identifying cases through joint contact investigations, and supporting the expansion of digital X-ray screening tools and introduction of genotyping technology in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Africa. In many countries, TB staff are also working on COVID-19 responses because they have the necessary skills. To mitigate COVID-19's devastating impact on TB services, USAID developed 9-month TB targeted efforts in seven high TB burden countries. However, as COVID-19 surges in these countries, USAID anticipates potential setbacks. USAID will continue to leverage existing investments and networks to respond to both TB and COVID-19 and prepare for future outbreaks.
- PMI, led by USAID, adapted its programming to respond to COVID-19 and to support the development of global guidance for malaria programs to adapt to COVID-19. PMI-supported service delivery platforms are being used to diagnose and manage fevers and report on progress related to both malaria and COVID-19. PMI central and bilateral partners have also built on malaria investments to encourage behaviors to combat COVID-19. PMI support to strengthen laboratory surveillance to monitor for insecticide and malaria drug resistance is being leveraged for rapid detection and surveillance of COVID-19 in multiple countries.

#### CENTRAL AMERICA

*Question.* What steps can USAID take to strengthen the relationship between civil society organizations and governments in the region specifically as it relates to improving democratic governance?

*Answer.* USAID is reinvigorating efforts to engage with local partners and deepen locally-led development approaches. Local civil society organizations (CSOs) have a nuanced understanding of a country's current and historical context, including the formal and informal rules of the game that shape how governance functions in the country. CSOs are aware of the political actors and their interests at all levels, allowing CSOs to identify potential levers and opportunities for reform. In addition to providing direct support to CSOs working to strengthen democratic governance,

USAID also collaborates with CSOs to strengthen their internal leadership, management, governance, and technical capacity. This approach builds CSO capacity to develop and implement policy, advocacy, and partnership strategies and identify and engage government stakeholders, maximizing the impact and sustainability of their work.

Beyond the provision of resources and technical assistance, USAID coordinates with our interagency partners to facilitate collaboration and dialogue between CSOs and governments; publicly expresses support for constructive CSO initiatives that may be viewed as threatening to entrenched interests; and, where necessary, supports physical and digital security measures for CSO leaders and staff facing harassment and threats.

In El Salvador, USAID is building the capacity of, and supporting local CSOs to fight back against closing civic space. This includes fostering collaboration among CSOs and coordination with local universities, thorough analysis of the country's legal framework related to CSOs, the review of draft laws, the development of proposed reforms, and the facilitation of well-informed, unified CSO communications with government officials and other domestic actors on proposed and enacted legislation. This includes newly elected legislators who are unfamiliar with international law on freedom of association or Financial Action Task Force recommendations, the internationally endorsed global standards against money laundering and terrorist financing.

In Guatemala, USAID is facilitating conversations between youth and Government of Guatemala (GOG) staff managing La Ruta, a government-led dialogue with Indigenous Peoples to strengthen governance, security, and prosperity in areas with high levels of outward migration and illicit trafficking. USAID also supports CSO implementing partners to complement and reinforce efforts under La Ruta, including formal agreements with the Social Welfare Secretariat and mayors' offices on cost-sharing, government certification of CSO-provided vocational and technical training programs, and public resource grants for service provision.

At the start of 2021, USAID supported a new campaign in Guatemala called "Safe Return to School" led by the local non-profit FUNSEPA. This partnership among USAID, the Government of Guatemala, and local civil society has gained additional support from the U.S. Department of Defense and the private sector. The campaign provides schools in Guatemala with the tools they need to safely reopen while also preventing the spread of COVID-19 and creates an opportunity for a trusted civil society organization to be at the planning and decision making table with the Ministry of Education.

In Honduras, USAID is creating dialogue opportunities between CSOs and the Government of Honduras (GOH) to advance the priorities of vulnerable populations. These dialogues are focused on creating conditions for more inclusive electoral processes. USAID is also supporting local CSOs to strengthen their institutional capacity to combat corruption and impunity in Honduras in cooperation with the GOH. For example, through a subgrant to the Association for a More Just Society (ASJ), USAID is working with the Public Ministry to increase access to justice and improve the efficiency of the security and justice sectors.

Additionally, USAID is working with local citizen oversight organizations to engage with municipal governments to improve the quality of services. For example, within the 40 western Honduras target municipalities of the Honduras Local Governance Activity, 38 citizen transparency commissions monitored the distribution of essential COVID-19 prevention supplies (masks, hand sanitizer, gloves) to approximately 97,993 households, equivalent to more than 400,000 individuals.

USAID/Honduras provides support to the National Anticorruption Council (CNA) to strengthen its institutional capacity so that it remains a credible and independent actor capable of combating corruption and impunity in Honduras. During FY 2020, CNA provided technical assistance to nine GOH institutions, including the Honduran Social Investment Fund (FHIS), on transparent procurement practices. CNA also provided oversight to FHIS to ensure the proper use of public resources in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, CNA trained 333 public officials and 132 non-governmental organization representatives in accountability, transparency, and advocacy.

*Question.* Beyond the assistance USAID is dedicating to strengthen democratic governance in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, what actions does USAID need to take, and perhaps more importantly how do our diplomatic approaches need to evolve to enshrine democratic principles in these countries?

*Answer.* USAID is actively working to bring in new partners and perspectives through more flexible and responsive grant and contract mechanisms and creating spaces for dialogue, consultation, and feedback. For example, the practice of mean-

ingly engaging youth in the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of projects and activities that concern them—such as youth violence prevention initiatives—is increasingly institutionalized. Similarly, the recently established Northern Triangle Task Force holds regular consultations with local and international civil society organizations. Moreover, the Agency is strengthening cross-sectoral and interagency approaches to corruption and democratic backsliding. Additionally, USAID developed a mission-wide anti-corruption strategy in Honduras, and USAID participates in regular interagency rule of law discussions and collaborates with interagency stakeholders at the Embassy in Guatemala. In El Salvador, USAID responded to the removal of all five magistrates of the Supreme Court’s Constitutional Chamber and the removal of Attorney General by redirecting funding from the associated institutions and establishing benchmarks for re-engagement with the Government.

*Question.* What immediate and long-term policies, programs, and actions are required to advance prosperity, combat corruption, strengthen democratic governance, improve civilian security, enhance the rule of law, and strengthen migration management?

*Answer.* In accordance with President Biden’s February 2, 2021, Executive Order, USAID is collaborating with interagency partners on forthcoming strategies that both address the critical factors pushing Central Americans to migrate and strengthen multilateral efforts on migration management. This includes corruption, which remains a pervasive and systematic challenge to country development throughout Latin America and which feeds into and exacerbates the migration crisis. Throughout the region, corruption drives crime, violence, and migration; fuels transnational criminal organizations—including gangs and cartels; contributes to environmental degradation; and contributes to democratic backsliding. And around the world, rampant and systemic corruption is preventing governments from making greater progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and meeting the needs of their populations. Data suggests corruption impacts and undermines the rule of law (ROL), citizen trust, and country competitiveness and investment, while driving increased risks of bribery and links to global crime. Under President Biden’s leadership, countering corruption is a U.S. foreign policy priority, which he noted “rots democracy from the inside and is increasingly weaponized by authoritarian states to undermine democratic institutions.” Underscoring this commitment, on June 3, the President issued a National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/06/03/memorandum-on-establishing-the-fight-against-corruption-as-a-core-united-states-national-security-interest/>) establishing the fight against corruption as a core U.S. national security interest. And in order to meet this moment, I have stood up a new Anti-Corruption Task Force to strengthen, elevate and integrate anti-corruption across USAID’s work, and to feed into broader U.S. Government efforts to counter this scourge.

We are still early in this process, but already well underway in exploring new lines of work or modalities, mechanisms and partnerships. We know that this will require new ways to expand both our local and global partnerships in order to empower civil society activists, investigative journalists, and grassroots anti-corruption reformers. USAID already does a lot of work in this space, but we know we need new ways to expand and diversify our partner base. We will also seek the development of new partnerships with the private sector, academia, and groups beyond “the usual suspects” in order to expand the stakeholder base for combating corruption. We will also prioritize exploring new regional and global programming, especially as a way to strengthen our ability to address the globalized aspects of corruption, including illicit finance and transnational organized crime. In line with the NSSM and planned USG Anti-Corruption Strategy we will explore ways to pivot USAID programming to tie into broader USG efforts by other agencies. And finally, we will also explore new modalities to enhance USAID’s rapid response capacity and help us support the journalists and activists who expose corruption, seize on opportunities to push legal or regulatory reform, and strengthen the independence of oversight institutions.

I look forward to working with Congress to implement these strategies and to receiving your feedback in the coming weeks and months.

*Question.* What will USAID do to galvanize support for a credible electoral process in Haiti?

*Answer.* USAID is currently supporting pre-election activities that are intended to lay the foundation for upcoming legislative and presidential elections. These activities focus on improving electoral administration, strengthening the competitive-

ness of political parties, educating voters on electoral processes, promoting electoral transparency, and ensuring inclusive voter participation.

USAID is providing more than \$3 million to the Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening, which includes the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems.

USAID is providing technical assistance to Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) through this consortium to build the capacity of electoral authorities to conduct credible elections. This includes technical assistance for strategic planning, information technology, and training for CEP staff, the Communal Electoral Office and the Departmental Electoral Office staff.

*Question.* What support is USAID providing to address the extraordinarily high levels of gender-based violence amongst internally displaced persons living both in camps as well as with host families. The UN has reported on a rise in offers of "sex for shelter."

*Answer.* USAID prioritizes preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) from the outset of crises in recognition of the critical impact this type of violence has on the lives of women and girls. It remains central to our efforts, as part of immediate and life-saving activities during all stages of humanitarian response. USAID funding towards GBV programs around the world have continued to increase reaching nearly \$95 million in FY 2020. USAID funded 102 humanitarian assistance awards in FY 2020 that supported field-level GBV prevention and response and an additional 8 contributed to global research, policy, and capacity-building addressing GBV in emergencies. Collectively, these interventions supported over 3.3 million people in 27 countries and at the global level.

USAID humanitarian assistance, such as programming in camps and host communities in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Ethiopia, DRC, Somalia, South Sudan, Haiti, and Burma, prioritizes GBV activities that include a core package of assistance to adult and child GBV survivors. These services include case management, safety planning, group-based and individual psychosocial support, establishment of community-based safety patrols or resource collection groups, women's empowerment activities, access to justice or legal aid, and mobile-based support or activities to reach populations unable to access facilities in central areas.

COVID-19 has led to a dramatic increase in GBV, specifically intimate partner violence, what experts are now calling a 'shadow pandemic.' In recognition, USAID is supporting humanitarian partners to directly address pandemic-related GBV needs. Practically, this means adapting GBV services for the COVID-19 reality, which may include equipping social workers to provide support over the phone or through virtual platforms, amplifying staffing of domestic violence and other GBV hotlines, and training for health responders to safely and compassionately support GBV survivors.

These approaches reflect USAID's commitment to the protection and empowerment of women and girls in all humanitarian assistance: USAID has a comprehensive set of safe programming and GBV risk mitigation requirements for partner organizations implementing humanitarian assistance programming. This has resulted in humanitarian partners designing assistance activities in ways that mitigate risks, enhance more protective approaches across all sectors (including the provision of shelter assistance), and minimizing the potential for sexual exploitation or abuse. Humanitarian shelter and settlements programs specifically must consult with and ensure safe accommodation for women, girls, and at-risk groups, and take into account the privacy and safety needs of all beneficiaries, ensure they are able to safely access shelter assistance, incorporate approaches into shelter programming that enable women and girls to build or pay for safe shelter, and minimize the potential for those responsible for overseeing or managing the provision of shelter to abuse that position of influence or power. As part of GBV risk mitigation requirements partners are encouraged to enhance links with and referrals to GBV programming, supporting women and girls with more immediate access to information, empowerment activities, and support. Every humanitarian program that USAID funds requires robust complaints and feedback mechanisms specific to sexual exploitation and abuse to be in place, along with an implementation plan for those feedback mechanisms.

*Question.* The United States has invested significant amounts of funding in Haiti over the past decade. Can you please describe what, if any, lessons the agency has learned from our experiences thus far? Is there anything that the international community can and should do differently from an assistance perspective?

Answer. We have seen important results in USAID/Haiti's programming; for example, a 23 percent reduction in infant and maternal mortality between 2012–2017, or the provision of Haiti's only 24-hour supply of reliable electricity paid for by Haitian citizens. At the same time, our own evaluations and external audits indicate where foreign assistance has fallen short of achieving sustainable development outcomes. Prompted by this data and the deepening crisis over the past 2 years, we have sought a new development approach.

In preparation for the renewal of USAID/Haiti's Strategic Framework, the Mission conducted widespread consultations with Haitian civil society, private sector, government officials, other donors, Haitian Foreign Service Nationals, U.S. Congressional staff, and former diplomats and development officials who have served in Haiti—to collect lessons learned and chart a new path for our work in Haiti. The Mission also consulted Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports, evaluations, and other studies, to gather insights and recommendations.

We expect our new strategic framework will incorporate the following development shifts:

- A new focus on people, communities and systems representing a fundamental shift away from the U.S. Government's post-earthquake model of partnership with the central government and prior emphasis on high-visibility, large-scale infrastructure initiatives that did not sufficiently plan for sustainability.
- Greater localization of our work and engagement of new partners—particularly with civil society and faith-based organizations who have a track record of delivering for their communities.
- A focus on building resilience across the portfolio. Shocks, man-made and natural, are so frequent and recurring in Haiti as to be a part of the development landscape. Given this, our new strategic framework calls for the Mission to integrate, layer, sequence and better coordinate our programming, especially with regard to humanitarian and food assistance, education, water, sanitation and the agriculture sector to ensure that our investments are mutually sustaining and supportive. In addition, we recognize that our humanitarian assistance must go beyond helping people after a disaster or conflict. As such, we are expanding efforts in disaster risk reduction to help communities better prepare for disasters and reduce their impact.

*Question.* What efforts are underway to prevent a humanitarian disaster in Tigray?

Answer. USAID is committed to providing humanitarian assistance to people in need in Tigray. U.S. humanitarian aid totals nearly \$488 million since the Tigray crisis began. USAID funding provides emergency food assistance, health and nutrition services, shelter, safe drinking water, and critical programs to protect the most vulnerable people.

Unfortunately, we continue to see a de facto blockade with limited entry of humanitarian goods or personnel. Despite official Government of Ethiopia approval of convoys and United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights into the region, delays and murky explanations from the Government of Ethiopia have led to the UN and aid agencies facing major challenges with ground and air access to deliver supplies to Tigray. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has also expanded fighting, moving into Afar and Amhara regions and causing further conflict-related impediments.

USAID, along with the interagency, continues to advocate with parties to the conflict and fellow donors at various levels on the need for a negotiated ceasefire and unimpeded humanitarian access. USAID is also evaluating all possible avenues for getting assistance to those in need. Our teams in Washington, DC, and in the field are working on this day and night to try to get assistance to Ethiopians on the ground.

*Question.* What measures is USAID taking to protect its partners and personnel operating in Tigray?

Answer. USAID takes its responsibility for the safety and security of its personnel very seriously. We are committed to ensuring that staff members are protected and have access to the requisite safety and security training, guidance, and equipment.

A comprehensive safety and security plan exists for Tigray field personnel, providing guidance and defining standard operating procedures around potential threats in-country, related to transportation, health, crime, hazards, and other risks. All USAID staff, including the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), fall under Chief of Mission authority and follow the security guidance of the Regional

Security Officer (RSO). Additionally, psychological support is provided to staff through USAID Staff Care services.

USAID partners are required to submit specific and localized safety and security plans that address the unique threats and vulnerabilities faced by local and national staff and must budget to support the safety and security of its personnel based on those plans. Our technical experts review these plans to ensure they meet our minimum standards.

USAID is also funding the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) in Tigray in order to support partner safety and security.

*Question.* The Administration's request represents a 10 percent reduction from FY20-enacted levels of support, which makes sense given some of our current issues with the Ethiopian Government. How are we reprioritizing where and how we invest in the country?

*Answer.* USAID's Mission in Ethiopia uses a Country Development Cooperation Strategy that integrates learning and adaptation throughout the strategy's execution timeline. USAID will continue to ensure disaster risk management and resilience are integrated into its development approach. By extension, the USAID Mission will also continue to prioritize areas with poor development indicators such as food and food security programming to ensure Ethiopia is addressing the basic needs of its people. As a reflection of the changing relationship with the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray crisis, USAID's Mission in Ethiopia has already pivoted portions of its development portfolio and will continue to explore near-term operational pivots as opportunities arise. Longer-term, the Mission will also engage in a strategic review within the year to reassess the nature of the development partnership with the Government of Ethiopia. This review will be used to determine where additional strategic pivots are required to ensure our partnership with the Ethiopian people continues.

*Question.* How will the budget support efforts to reach out to civil society in areas outside Addis to underserved and underrepresented groups throughout Ethiopia?

*Answer.* Expanding space for civil society throughout the country will continue to be an objective within the Mission's larger strategic framework for years to come. With inclusive political dialogue at the national and subnational levels essential to Ethiopia's long-term stability, civil society will play a key role in making sure Ethiopian voices are heard at all levels of this process, and in monitoring and holding government and other actors accountable for human rights abuses, when and where they occur. Our Mission in Ethiopia is continually evaluating new avenues to strengthen the voices of civil society actors throughout the country, not just in Addis.

*Question.* How does this budget request support activities meant to respond to the ongoing needs that will result from the many incidents of gender-based violence that occurred in the course of the conflict in Tigray—and similar incidents that may have and may be occurring elsewhere in the country?

*Answer.* I am deeply concerned about ongoing gender-based violence, including sexual violence, and the needs of women and girls in Ethiopia. USAID humanitarian programming in Tigray includes protection services for survivors as an integral part of our response, including safe spaces, psychosocial support, and case management. USAID funding also supports the expansion of GBV case management support, training for social workers and community-based case workers, providing dignity kits to GBV survivors, and establishing child-friendly spaces, among other activities. The humanitarian budget request supports the provision of lifesaving assistance, including ongoing needs resulting from GBV in Tigray, around the country, and in other complex emergencies worldwide, noting that the complex emergencies around the world far outstrip our ability to meet all the needs.

Beyond the Tigray response, USAID/Ethiopia is working with various civil society organizations (CSOs) and partners to enhance their capacity for gender equitable approaches in improving participation, inclusion, and accountability. USAID/Ethiopia supports GBV prevention and response measures across multiple development activities as well as in COVID-19 and disaster response programs. This includes work to strengthen the ability of women and women-led civic organizations to meaningfully engage with government bodies and to advocate for improvement and implementation of legislation against GBV. This includes activities that promote reflection, dialogue, and behavior change around school related gender-based violence within the development portfolio. USAID/Ethiopia is also providing spaces for men and boys to engage in social and behavior change that promotes healthy and gender-equitable masculinities. USAID supports civic actors and media advocates to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and to create safe spaces for par-

ticipation of women and marginalized people in the local governance process. USAID also promotes the importance of women's leadership and meaningful participation in peace building and conflict resolution.

*Question.* Sudan's civilian-led transition is at a critical inflection point and the \$700 million assistance package that we are providing to the country will be an important pillar of support. Have you reviewed the Mission staffing pattern in Khartoum? Are you confident that the USAID mission in Khartoum is robust enough to implement and oversee the amounts coming its way?

*Answer.* USAID's current staffing level in Sudan is based on years of gradual programmatic and staffing declines that resulted from the 2011 separation of Sudan and South Sudan, as most development assistance shifted to South Sudan. However, the assistance budget increases that began in FY 2019 along with the \$700 million supplemental will require an expanded staffing effort on the ground. Plans are in place to deal with the short- and longer-term staffing needs to ensure effective implementation of programs.

*Question.* What analysis has USAID conducted on how to best support the civilian-led transition, and how will this analysis inform the prioritization of both the \$700 million assistance package and the FY22 request?

*Answer.* The initial spend plan for the \$700 million assistance package reflected an approach that considered the priorities of the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the USG as well as existing programming. The analysis that went into this plan was largely based on engagements with GOS officials, the U.S. interagency, civil society leaders, and other key actors, such as donors and NGOs, that are on the front lines dealing with Sudan's challenges.

*Question.* In Afghanistan, as the security environment grows increasingly precarious, it remains critically important that the U.S. continue to provide assistance to the Afghan people. At the same time, accountability for programming that assistance will remain essential. How are you rethinking the provision of USAID assistance in Afghanistan so that USAID is able to accomplish both—help those most in need, while ensuring that the assistance is not subject to waste or corruption?

*Answer.* USAID faces an increasing level of complex, interrelated risks posed by fraud, waste, and abuse. Identifying and prioritizing known risks and existing internal controls are critical in determining a balanced approach to risk management. The launch of USAID's 2021 Anti-Fraud Plan is an important step in managing this balance, understanding how well the Agency is assessing and managing fraud and supporting enhanced performance on Agency goals and objectives.

In Afghanistan, USAID and its implementing partners are well experienced at delivering effectively in the challenging Afghan security environment and we have developed systems of monitoring. Through this multi-tiered approach and third-party monitoring efforts, we will continue to provide programmatic oversight as needed wherever and whenever USAID partners and programs operate. If the security environment affects USAID partners' and programs' ability to operate, third party monitoring efforts will correspondingly adjust.

*Question.* If the Taliban were to take control through the use of violence, which appears to be where we are headed, will USAID continue to provide assistance?

*Answer.* The United States is the largest single donor of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, and we remain committed to ensuring every Afghan's basic needs are met. This includes providing life-saving humanitarian assistance including: food assistance; health; humanitarian coordination and information management; multi-purpose cash assistance; nutrition and protection support; shelter and settlements; disaster risk reduction; logistics; and water, sanitation, and health assistance; and continuing to support development programs in Afghanistan that support the country's healthcare, education, and livelihood sectors. Through our assistance, we seek to ensure human rights—including women's rights—are upheld, Afghan civil society and media remain operational and unrestricted, access to basic and higher education are strengthened, and that every Afghan is able to access critical health care services.

USAID programs in Afghanistan will adhere to all applicable legal requirements. As needed, we will work with the interagency to determine how we and our partners are able to provide assistance. USAID partners are required to report all incidents of diversion, fraud, waste, and abuse to USAID's Office of Inspector General. USAID centrally monitors these reports, and USAID Afghanistan staff continually assess such incidents to ensure that our assistance is reaching those for whom it is intended and that our partners have effective mitigation measures in place to help safeguard against similar incidents.

*Question.* As USAID ramps down operations, our Afghan partners are especially vulnerable and face immense security risks. What is your plan for assuring the security of these individuals who have worked arm-in-arm with USAID for many years?

*Answer.* As the largest civilian assistance donor to Afghanistan, USAID remains committed to our enduring partnership with the Afghan Government and people. We remain committed to a peaceful and prosperous future for all Afghans.

USAID is not ramping down operations. USAID will continue to implement programs under its active strategy where conditions permit while also pivoting over the short- to medium-term toward basic needs and services, food security and livelihoods, and womens' rights. In addition, given the increasing displacement of Afghans around the country, USAID is delivering humanitarian assistance based on need and where access and security allow.

For further details on the SIV process and Operation Allies Refuge, we defer to the Department of State.

*Question.* Regarding Syrian border crossings. What further steps can USAID take, in conjunction with the UN and NGO partner organizations, to protect humanitarian supply lines across northern Syria and plan for continuity of operations, given these constraints and the short-time horizon?

*Answer.* USAID welcomes the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) passage of UNSC Resolution 2585 re-authorizing the Bab-al-Hawa crossing for 6 months, with a 6-month extension following the issuance of the Secretary General's report. Despite the positive outcome—gained with significant backing and advocacy from the United States—USAID is already planning for next year to ensure continuity of operations. USAID's efforts will continue to include robust advocacy for keeping Bab-al-Hawa open, reiterating the need for additional crossings, and reviewing and supporting all other possible modalities for supporting people in need. There is no alternative to match the scope and scale of UN cross-border assistance, making it a keystone of the humanitarian response in Syria that the UNSC must continue to authorize.

*Question.* Does the Administration still plan to work with Turkey on an alternative cross-border mechanism as publicly referenced by U.S. Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield?

*Answer.* The Administration was pleased that United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2585 passed unanimously by the UNSC on July 9, re-authorizing the Bab-al-Hawa crossing for 12 months—6 months with a 6-month extension following the issuance of the Secretary General's report. Its passage avoided a humanitarian catastrophe by allowing the UN to continue to deliver lifesaving assistance to northwest Syria. Despite this positive outcome, USAID is already planning for next year's reauthorization process. The Administration will use the next 12 months to explore all possible contingencies in coordination with our allies and partners, including Turkey. Regardless of these efforts, we know there is no alternative to match the scope and scale of UN cross-border assistance, particularly in northwest Syria where it is a vital lifeline for vulnerable people.

*Question.* I am concerned by the lack of a comprehensive strategy for this [Syrian] 10-year conflict and the implications of that disengagement for our regional and European allies and Israel.

*Answer.* USAID acknowledges the challenges of the prolonged Syrian conflict. Given the vastly different regional operating environments in Syria, U.S. Government assistance advances three complementary, mutually supporting goals: 1) the enduring defeat of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS); 2) the alleviation of human suffering; and 3) preserving the current ceasefires and cessations of hostility as we work towards a lasting, political resolution.

The United States leads the D-ISIS coalition and has made clear our intention not to withdraw from Syria prematurely and to remain engaged with European and Israeli allies. USAID will continue its engagement with donor partner countries and multilateral organizations to alleviate human suffering in Syria. The United States has raised more than \$300 million from coalition donors to support critical U.S.-led stabilization programs including new contributions since January 20, 2021. Since 2011, the United States has provided nearly \$13.5 billion in humanitarian assistance and more than \$1.3 billion in stabilization assistance to the people of Syria, allowing USAID to carry out programs to restore essential services and livelihoods in Syria.

*Question.* While U.S. stabilization assistance may help guard against ISIS resurgence, how does it factor into the Administration's broader Syria strategy including supporting a UN-facilitated political transition?

*Answer.* Given the vastly different regional operating environments in Syria, U.S. Government advances three complementary, mutually supporting goals: 1) the enduring defeat of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS); 2) the alleviation of human suffering; and 3) preserving the current ceasefires and cessations of hostility as we work towards a lasting, political resolution, per United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254. As a member of the National Security Council, USAID is directly involved in the policy planning process for Syria.

USAID's current stabilization assistance is largely confined to northeast Syria (NES), in an effort to create a more prosperous, democratic, and viable alternative to ISIS and regime-mismanagement. The U.S. Government will not provide stabilization or reconstruction assistance in regime-held areas until a credible political process leads to constitutional reform, UN-supervised elections, and a peaceful, political transition in accordance with UNSCR 2254. Our programming also seeks to promote an improved relationship between the citizens of NES and their officials, increased participation of women and underrepresented populations in governance, and support to civil society to serve as a check on government. Stabilization assistance also is helping NES to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and expands Syrians' access to essential services. Lastly, our stabilization programs acknowledge the effects of climate change by working with Syrians to improve their agricultural practices such as livestock production, water management, and crop management. These are all vital components to the stabilization of Syria; in that they equip the Syrian people with the necessary tools to build a better future for their country.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the situation at al-Hol camp in Northeast Syria, where thousands of women and children are being kept in inhumane conditions, potentially reinforcing the extremist ideologies that characterized ISIS' rule? Is the level of U.S. resources being applied to upholding security and humanitarian conditions at al-Hol and similar camps sufficient?

*Answer.* USAID and its interagency partners have a shared interest in the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and repatriation of foreign nationals from al-Hol as soon and safely as possible to prevent recruitment by extremists and radicalization of vulnerable populations, as well as to restore normalcy for children who comprise the majority of camp residents and are the most at-risk of abuse and exploitation. USAID supports partners to respond to the humanitarian needs of populations in al-Hol, including food assistance, health services, protection, and water and sanitation to meet basic needs. However, prolonged displacement, protection risks, and violent acts—assassinations, smuggling, and attempts to indoctrinate children into extremist ideology—require an interagency and international approach.

USAID and State will prioritize programs that ensure the lasting defeat of ISIS, support the restoration of daily life for IDPs who chose to return, and promote accountability for human rights violations. USAID will continue to closely track the security and humanitarian conditions at al-Hol and similar camps to ensure that security conditions improve and the humanitarian nature of displacement camps is preserved.

*Question.* With Yemen on the brink of famine, the Administration's decision to restart assistance programs in northern Yemen and its recent pledge of \$157 million in humanitarian assistance, appropriated for Yemen in the American Rescue Plan, are welcome sign of U.S. leadership. What is your assessment of the steps USAID has taken, in coordination with the UN and other international donors to ensure that the Houthis are not able to divert or place unacceptable conditions on international assistance?

*Answer.* Following a year of collective donor action on benchmarks for non-interference in humanitarian assistance, and subsequent Houthi progress on those benchmarks, USAID lifted its partial suspension of non-governmental organization (NGO) humanitarian programs in northern Yemen on March 21, 2021. In lifting the suspension, USAID established new, stringent parameters for our partners that strengthen program oversight, while ensuring that the Houthis continue to facilitate timely access for USAID partners.

Many of our NGO partners have been able to resume programs under these new parameters, including enhanced monitoring requirements to track attempted interference. The United Nations (UN) World Food Program has also started biometric beneficiary registration which has been an important tool to ensure the food is getting to those most in need. As of July 14, 6 of 14 NGO partners, reaching approxi-

mately 790,000 beneficiaries, have resumed humanitarian assistance under these stringent parameters. We are working closely with other NGO partners to support the resumption of their operations as we continue to advocate for unfettered humanitarian access countrywide in coordination with other donors and the UN, which has maintained robust advocacy through direct engagement with the Houthis. As we did throughout the partial suspension, USAID continuously monitors for Houthi interference and our partners' access to populations in need to ensure that humanitarian assistance supported by the U.S. Government reaches those for whom it is intended.

*Question.* Given the lack of sustained U.S. diplomatic and development personnel in Yemen over recent years, what steps is USAID taking to ensure that taxpayer-funded assistance is properly monitored?

*Answer.* We place the highest priority on taxpayer funds appropriately, effectively, and for their intended purpose and require our partners to have proper safeguards and risk mitigation systems to support the provision of humanitarian aid to those who need it most. USAID also uses third-party monitoring to conduct external, independent review and verification of our humanitarian and development programs in Yemen and we will take action when needed. Findings from our oversight of USAID-supported programs in Yemen led us to partially suspend non-governmental organization (NGO) humanitarian assistance awards and fully suspend our development awards in northern Yemen in March 2020 due to Houthi interference in our partners' operations.

In response to Houthi progress in meeting donor-established benchmarks for improving the operating environment, NGO partners' statement that they would be able to deliver programs without undue Houthi interference, and the urgent need for lifesaving assistance, USAID resumed support for humanitarian programs in March 2021 under strict new operational parameters. The new parameters are intended to enable NGO partners to deliver humanitarian assistance rapidly without interference, include new monitoring requirements to track interference, and give USAID the flexibility to adjust or terminate funding to specific activities or programs, as necessary. The UN World Food Program has also started biometric beneficiary registration which has been an important tool to ensure the food is getting to those most in need. USAID plays a leading role in galvanizing other donors and the UN to continue robust advocacy efforts both with the Houthis and the Republic of Yemen Government to maintain unfettered access to people in need of assistance.

USAID has pivoted development programming exclusively to non-Houthi controlled areas in southern Yemen, where we work with the Republic of Yemen Government, development partners, the private sector, and civil society to provide greater access to basic social services and economic opportunities, building more responsive local and national institutions, and supporting conflict mitigation at the local level.

*Question.* I am concerned with Lebanon's rapidly spiraling economic crisis, which has pushed a majority of Lebanese into poverty and the inability of Lebanon's political elite to form a government to address the challenges facing the country. How will USAID meet the spiraling humanitarian needs in Lebanon while pushing the Lebanese government to form an empowered government that works for its people and makes much needed economic reforms?

*Answer.* We share the concern regarding the economic crisis, which is compounded with the other crises, within Lebanon. In response, USAID has supported vulnerable Lebanese households with emergency food assistance to over 620,000 people affected both by COVID-19 and the Beirut port explosions. USAID redirected Economic Support Funds (ESF) to provide short-term employment opportunities on municipal projects for 150,000 people. This activity decreases the cost-of-service provision (water and electricity), while also creating income. USAID redirected funding to provide food parcels to more than 175,000 crisis-affected children in vulnerable communities.

Our team of development and humanitarian experts continues to monitor the situation on the ground to assess how USAID can engage with our critical implementing partners most effectively to respond to the needs of the Lebanese people.

We agree continued humanitarian assistance does not reflect a sustainable strategy and underscore the need for critical reforms and the strengthening and expansion of social protection systems. While USAID's assistance can provide temporary relief to crisis-affected households and businesses, systemic economic and political reform is necessary to address the drivers of the crisis and prevent economic collapse and state failure.

*Question.* Azerbaijan and Turkey's aggression towards Armenia created significant humanitarian needs. I am concerned that the Administration's request does not

meet the challenge on the ground, which I hope will be rectified through the appropriations process. Why is the Administration's funding request for Armenia considerably low, given the continued needs in the country?

*Answer.* USAID has provided humanitarian assistance for those affected by the conflict while also supporting regional peacebuilding initiatives that safeguard the lives, livelihoods, and freedoms of the local population. Throughout the crisis in Nagorno Karabakh (NK), USAID has adapted its programming to effectively respond to the complex humanitarian crisis resulting from this fighting and assist the over 90,000 displaced persons that arrived in Armenia from NK. USAID is coordinating closely with the Department of State and interagency partners on the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations affected by the fighting in and around NK.

*Question.* I appreciate the Agency's focus on improving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and establishing an office to achieve those ends. Please explain more precisely the role this office will play at USAID?

*Answer.* On June 25, 2021, the Biden administration announced a new Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Government that proposes to strengthen the Federal Workforce by promoting diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. This Executive Order (EO) seeks to address long-standing disparities in the hiring and promotion of people from underserved communities across all federal agencies. USAID is committed to complying with this Executive Order and is pleased to note that many of the following actions are currently under consideration or already complete: the Administrator signed the Agency's 2021 DEIA Strategic Plan on the first day of her tenure in May 2021. The Office of the Administrator will update the strategic plan and the corresponding year 1 Implementation Plan based on the results of the internal equity assessment completed by the Agency in October 2021. This Plan will also be aligned with the new Government-wide DEIA Strategic Plan published by the Office of Personnel Management in November 2021; however, the gap between strategies outlined in USAID's Plan and the Government-wide Plan is minimal. The Agency will submit the updated Strategic Plan in March 2022, per EO 14035 DEIA in the Federal Workforce and will update the corresponding Implementation Plans at that time.

USAID's Respectful, Inclusive, Safe Environment (RISE) learning, and engagement platform is another important DEIA tool. RISE content and programming includes foundational knowledge and skills related to both USAID's workplace and programs. This includes content focused on: defining respect and civility; promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion by exploring implicit biases and unpacking micro-messaging; promoting employee accountability; preventing harassment and misconduct, including sexual misconduct; promoting inclusive development approaches in USAID's programs; integrating basic safeguarding measures in our programs to protect beneficiaries from harm, including sexual exploitation and abuse; advancing safety and security; and promoting staff wellness and resilience. Since June 2020, more than 2,500 discrete USAID staff have participated in RISE trainings, seminars, and events. This number includes more than 380 senior leaders, including 40 percent of all USAID leaders posted overseas. The platform trains approximately 280 people a week and continues to expand.

In collaboration with the RISE platform, the OCRD/DEIA Division created an Agency-wide diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility Trainer Task Force consisting of over 20 trainers with facilitation and training expertise to support the Agency. The Task force leads a suite of five unique DEIA core trainings for employees worldwide. These sessions are open to all hiring mechanisms and managed through USAID University. Training content focuses on foundational knowledge around key DEIA concepts such as inclusion, empathy, bias, micro-messages, celebrating diversity, and promoting equity. Since the Agency resumed DEIA training in April 2021, the Agency has delivered 744 total training sessions provided to 419 individuals across all hiring mechanisms, and 74 training sessions provided to 39 senior leaders.

*Question.* I know the Agency keeps statistics and undertakes evaluations to determine how well USAID is doing to promote DEI. Are you aware of how this may be happening, particularly as it relates to promotions among the USAID Senior Foreign Service?

*Answer.* Yes. USAID is committed to a workforce that at all levels reflects the diversity of the United States. Approximately 48 percent of all career hires (Civil Service and Foreign Service) over the past year were from racial or ethnic minority groups, and less than 7 percent were persons with disabilities. USAID has invested in its Foreign Service (FS) recruitment and hiring processes, resulting in the

onboarding of extraordinarily diverse, talented employees. In addition to recruitment, USAID's focus on DEI extends to retention and promotion opportunities. The GAO's adjusted analysis of USAID data on FS promotions in fiscal years 2002 through 2017 could not conclude that there was a statistical relationship between racial or ethnic minority status and promotion from these ranks, including promotions into the Senior Foreign Service. (See GAO-20-477). GAO did not conduct an analysis on employees with disabilities. USAID data from the FY 2020 MD-715 Report (<https://www.usaid.gov/open/md-715/fy-2020>) shows us that USAID's Senior Foreign Service is less racially and ethnically diverse than our total workforce and there is significant underrepresentation of persons with disabilities. As a result, USAID redesigned the FS promotion process beginning in 2019 and continuing into 2021. USAID plans to publish a report in December 2021 on the historical trends in promotion rates by race and ethnicity and sex/gender. The report will be based on 5 years of promotion statistics for promotion-eligible FS employees and will report will provide a more direct reflection of the impact of the new promotion processes. USAID is also conducting a barrier analysis to understand where barriers to employment opportunities, including in FS promotions, may exist in USAID policies, programs, and practices.

*Question.* Will you commit to having USAID explain these metrics and methods for improving DEI to this Committee?

Answer. USAID is committed to transparency and accountability as it relates to the data we collect and analyze in our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility programs. A key component of this transparency is identifying and addressing data gaps that perpetuate an incomplete picture of DEIA at USAID. USAID stands prepared to implement and utilize credible, up-to-date methodologies to analyze data and draw conclusions that inform future DEIA initiatives and priorities.

*Question.* Given the "brain drain" that occurred over the last few years, how is the Agency approaching the need to replace expertise and how is it approaching recruiting new, but seasoned talent?

Answer. USAID is working to attract and retain the brightest minds that will help the Agency achieve its mission. USAID is engaging and recruiting diverse quality talent through targeted outreach and recruitment events. These efforts will expand and maintain partnerships with organizations serving underrepresented groups (URG) to source eligible candidates for employment opportunities. USAID recognizes that the approach will provide additional opportunities to reach talent pipelines from non-traditional sources including community colleges, high schools, alumni groups, and professional organizations. USAID will establish a candidate repository database to support the non-competitive employment referral process to increase the hiring of persons with disabilities (PWD) and veterans. Announcements issued via USAJobs will solicit candidate resumes for non-competitive employment consideration to supplement outreach and recruitment efforts.

USAID has a strong hiring pipeline and approach and anticipates reaching its targeted staffing levels in FY 2021 for the Civil Service (CS) and Foreign Service (FS). As of June 2021, USAID reached 96 percent of the CS hiring target and 91 percent for FS employees onboard. Additionally, 210 CS candidates are in the hiring pipeline and USAID is identifying a broader pool of approximately 350 FS candidates that will ensure a sufficient talent pool is available to maintain backstop-specific rosters of candidates who are fully cleared. USAID also received over 20,000 applications to the Foreign Service between March 2020 and March 2021. This will ensure USAID is well-positioned to hire for attrition to maintain the targets and to surge as needed across specific backstops.

*Question.* USAID's greatest asset is the international development and humanitarian experts on staff. How are you establishing a culture where the Agency's actions are based on the insights and talents of its experts?

Answer. The USAID Leadership Philosophy guides leadership development programs and practices across the Agency. The Philosophy embodies what it means to be a leader for everyone USAID employs, irrespective of position, level, or hiring mechanism, by articulating a common understanding of desired leadership practices and behaviors that all staff should demonstrate. USAID's Leadership Philosophy enables leadership at all levels to foster a culture of respect, learning, and accountability. At USAID, we believe leaders:

- *Inspire:* Leaders cultivate a passion for mission in ourselves and our partners, and champion a collective vision.
- *Listen:* Leaders create opportunities for all voices and perspectives to be heard and valued in an environment of trust.

- *Develop Leaders*: Leaders strengthen the workforce through continuous learning and regular coaching and mentoring.
- *Promote Well-being*: Leaders are mindful and care for the well-being of ourselves and others.
- *Innovate*: Leaders encourage informed risk-taking and inspire curiosity, creativity, and innovation.
- *Act and Empower*: Leaders make informed decisions, delegate authority, communicate the decision-making process openly, and ensure timely action.
- *Advance Accountability*: Leaders hold themselves, colleagues, and team accountable for doing what they say they will do.

USAID is committed to fostering a culture that utilizes and elevates the expertise of our international development and humanitarian experts.

*Question.* I understand politics has a role in establishing priorities, what are you doing to assure that policy solutions and strategies for solving problems are guided by evidence and expertise and are relatively free of politics?

*Answer.* Consistent with long-standing practice, all of USAID’s policies and strategies are expected to be evidence-based. The Agency’s internal regulations governing policy development (ADS 200) establish a strong evidence base as one of four principles that all policies and strategies must embrace, defining “evidence-based policy” as:

... grounded in research, analysis, and conclusions supported by evidence. Evidence-based policies accurately reflect the current state of knowledge in a particular field and current practices and approaches.

To ensure that standard is upheld, USAID regulations require that before they are finalized, development policies must undergo internal and external peer review through formal periods of internal consultation and public comment.

Building on a long history of using evidence for program management, USAID’s Evaluation Policy (2011) was one of the first of its kind among federal agencies, and the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016 was based in part on that policy. USAID is also implementing the Foundations for Evidence-based Policy-making Act of 2018 and has completed an assessment of evidence capacity at all levels of the Agency as required under that Act. In addition, USAID’s Program Cycle Operational Policy integrates evidence into all program planning and management processes. Operating Units have clear guidelines and requirements for assuring the quality and responsible use of data to guide program design and adaptations.

In 2019, the Office of Management and Budget determined that USAID was one of only three agencies out of 22 that were fully compliant with their standards for transparency and accountability. In 2020, the evidence-in-government advocacy organization Results for America ranked USAID second in their Federal Standard of Excellence, an annual assessment of the evidence practices among nine major Departments and Agencies.

*Question.* China’s growing presence and influence in the economic development of developing countries reaches far beyond its neighbors—The Belt and Road Initiative is present on nearly every continent. What is USAID doing to counterbalance China’s economic influence, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia?

*Answer.* USAID plays a leading role in the Prosper Africa initiative, which is a whole-of-government effort across 17 participating departments and agencies—about our shared commitment to Africa. Prosper Africa’s integrated, multi-channel messaging campaign, which includes the rollout of the new Prosper Africa brand at *prosperafrika.gov*, is a critical tool for counterbalancing PRC influence across the continent. Because businesses don’t invest in what they can’t see, Prosper Africa makes opportunities visible—reducing misperceptions of risk, driving private sector interest, and fostering new connections between U.S. and African businesses, investors, and workers.

Through Prosper Africa, the USG works to unlock billions in U.S. private capital flows to promote Africa’s economic development, providing governments with high-quality, private financing as an alternative to PRC-backed financing arrangements. U.S. investments under Prosper Africa follow an affirmative development model as opposed to those from the PRC: they contribute to local job creation, greater transparency, local economic development, citizen empowerment, climate-smart solutions, and improved labor and environmental standards.

Since launching the initiative in June 2019, the USG has helped to close 500 two-way trade and investment deals across 44 African countries for an estimated value

of \$47 billion. This includes an estimated \$21 billion in U.S. exports to Africa, equivalent to 100,000 American jobs. USAID has also built a \$10 billion pipeline of institutional investment deals. By tapping into U.S. institutional investors—the largest pool of underutilized capital in the world—Prosper Africa both drives investment in Africa and bolsters the pensions of American workers.

USAID is partnering with the U.S. and African financial services sector to strategically deploy blended financing resources to develop cost-effective trade and investment financing tools that position U.S. and African firms to better compete with firms receiving subsidized loans, including those from the PRC. Prosper Africa also helps American companies compete on an even playing field by sharing timely information on new opportunities, providing comprehensive packages of assistance, and fostering trade and investment policies that promote transparency and competition. This includes targeted engagement and technical assistance for small and medium-sized businesses, including those led by women and members of the African Diaspora across the United States, to drive job creation and foster shared prosperity. Through these activities, Prosper Africa demonstrates U.S. competitiveness abroad and creates jobs at home, advancing a foreign policy that serves the American middle class. USAID's upcoming \$500 million Africa Trade Initiative will increase the level of technical assistance available for American and African firms alike.

Weak rule of law, lack of transparency and lack of accountability within Central Asian government institutions allow the PRC to advance its interests with predatory loans, one-sided trade arrangements, and corruption. Many governments owe a substantial percentage of their total external debt to the Export-Import Bank of China, especially Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic with each owing around 50 percent of their total external debt to the PRC. Central Asian governments are beginning to recognize the perils of China's growing economic influence, including in the 5G digital space, and are seeking alternative financing, trade, and investment options to diversify away from the PRC.

In alignment with the whole-of-government Central Asia Strategy, USAID programming promotes Central Asia's economic independence by: developing roadmaps for long-term debt-reduction strategies, including external debt owed to the PRC and Russia; improving the business enabling environment by strengthening the rule of law, transparency and accountability; promoting media literacy, independent media and investigative journalism to offer fair and balanced coverage of economic affairs; providing alternative trade and investment channels, especially intra-regionally within Central Asia; supporting economic diversification; increasing energy independence; and, supporting regional integration, self-sufficiency, and independence from PRC malign influence.

*Question.* How does USAID account for China's—actual or potential—economic development presence in countries where USAID has a mission?

*Answer.* USAID works with our partner countries and the private sector to identify sustainable alternatives to development needs than those offered by the People's Republic of China's (PRC) non-transparent development model. USAID works to leverage additional resources and catalyze private sector investment in its partner countries across a wide variety of sectors that are of key interest to the PRC, including infrastructure, energy, agriculture, and digital connectivity. USAID provides technical assistance to governments and works with the private sector to help advance reforms to laws, regulations, and policies to ensure fair and open market competition, and level the playing field for legitimate players. On infrastructure particularly, USAID works closely with partner governments to build their capacity to plan, budget for, implement, and manage climate-resilient, sustainable, transparent, and high-quality infrastructure projects. We also work to advance the leadership of new development partners, such as the India-led Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. These efforts are often a viable alternative against the PRC's Belt and Road initiative, enabling countries to better determine their infrastructure needs.

*Question.* At \$455 million, Colombia represents the Administration's largest country request for Latin America, underscoring the continued priority that the U.S. places on this strategic partnership. What are USAID's programmatic priorities in Colombia and how will the budget request help address the major challenges facing Colombia, including the ongoing social unrest and combating the COVID-19 pandemic?

*Answer.* In Colombia, USAID programs fully support the Administration's "whole-of-government" approach to implementing the historic 2016 Peace Accords, focusing program investments on governance, citizen security and rule of law in former conflict areas known as "Peace Geographies." Increases in funding continue to address the regional Venezuelan migration crisis, support efforts to expand state presence,

and create the right conditions for economic opportunities to flourish, including by promoting alternative livelihoods in areas of high coca production.

Since the Venezuela Regional crisis began in 2018, USAID has provided \$453 million in humanitarian assistance in Colombia. This humanitarian assistance included emergency food, health, and other direct assistance for Venezuelan migrants, refugees and host communities. USAID also prioritizes multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance for Colombian internally displaced individuals, as well as food assistance for COVID-affected Colombians.

In support of Peace Accords implementation, our USAID portfolio priorities in Colombia are land titling, rural economic development, ethnic community support, human rights and rule of law activities.

United States' COVID-19 support to Colombia continues and has expanded testing to vulnerable communities and helps increase their access to high-quality care. USAID has established biosafety and infection prevention protocols and strengthened the Colombian health systems' resiliency to withstand future shocks. Testing, tracing and isolation plans and strategic communication were also devised to assist individuals outside of the Colombian health system.

USAID also continues to assist in mitigating ongoing social unrest. In Cali, Medellin, and Bogota, we are facilitating ongoing dialogue between various strike organizers' leadership and Colombian officials.

*Question.* Does the budget's climate program numbers represent an amalgamation of programs that are otherwise covered by Development Assistance, Economic Support Fund, and other accounts?

*Answer.* The USAID FY 2022 climate budget request consists of funds from the Development Assistance; Economic Support Fund; and Assistance for Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia accounts.

*Question.* Will you please provide the Committee a crosswalk of the amounts and programs the Administration considers climate programs, including a delineation between requests for programs that are existing programs (but have a climate action nexus) and new programs, and any requests for programs or activities that are new?

*Answer.* The FY 2022 President's Budget Request includes \$642 million in the adaptation, renewable energy, and sustainable landscapes program areas, which is \$208 million above the FY 2021 operating year budget. The additional \$208 million requested increases funding for existing programs, and to start new programs in high-priority countries.

Starting new adaptation, renewable energy, and sustainable landscapes programs in additional countries will be based on technical criteria. For example, USAID partner countries that are highly vulnerable to climate change that lack strong governance and economic capacity to adapt to and recover from natural disasters and other climate-related impacts would be adaptation priorities; high-and growing-emitter countries would be priorities for renewable energy; and countries with globally important forests and other landscapes—especially if they are threatened by land use change—would be sustainable landscapes priorities.

Additional direct adaptation funding would enable the Agency to mobilize additional adaptation financing, support partner country implementation of their National Adaptation Plans, and allow for mainstreaming of climate considerations across non-climate USAID development programming such as democracy and governance, health, and water. Adaptation-funded climate research and analysis, pilot programs, and technical staff can pave the way for adaptation actions that contribute to the success and sustainability of other development sectors' results.

FY20 - FY22 FUNDING/REQUEST TABLE:

<i>(\$ in millions)</i>	FY 2020 653(a)	FY 2021 653(a)	FY 2022 PBR
<b>Total USAID</b>	<b>\$477</b>	<b>\$434</b>	<b>\$642</b>
Adaptation total	\$174	\$156	\$205
<i>Of which, Direct</i>	\$60	\$56	\$139
<i>Of which, Indirect</i>	\$114	\$99	\$66
Renewable Energy	\$175	\$166	\$246
Sustainable Landscapes	\$128	\$112	\$191

*Question.* How is USAID looking to improve its support for the adaptation needs of countries and communities that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change?

*Answer.* The FY 2022 request includes a significant increase in direct adaptation resources for USAID to expand successful existing programming and launch new initiatives. These efforts will support the adaptation needs of countries and communities most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. USAID's FY 2022 Adaptation Request, including direct and indirect adaptation funding, is \$205 million, which is \$49.5 million above the FY 2021 653(a) level—this includes an increase of \$82.9 million in direct adaptation resources. The additional FY 2022 adaptation resources will be crucial to ensuring that USAID can elevate and mainstream climate change adaptation across all USAID development programming. USAID is further advancing efforts to expand diversity and inclusion throughout its programming, including by prioritizing communities most vulnerable to climate change. These efforts will be outlined in USAID's forthcoming Climate Strategy, which is anticipated to be released in November 2021.

With additional FY 2022 resources, USAID will be able to increase technical support to the field to strengthen existing development and humanitarian programming by enhancing overall resilience to the effects of climate change, and ensure new programs support adaptation objectives.

Direct adaptation funding will further allow USAID to expand support to partner countries to achieve adaptation objectives included in their Nationally Determined Contributions and execute National Adaptation Plans and other adaptation priorities. USAID's investments in climate change adaptation include: mobilizing public or private sources of funding and/or financing for actions that increase resilience to climate-related risks; improving access to or use of weather and climate information and early warning systems for decision-making to reduce climate-related risks in climate-sensitive areas or sectors; supporting formal and informal governance and management processes to address climate-related risks, including engagement, planning, policy, strategy and budgeting; and supporting actions that increase resilience to weather- and climate-related risks at the community, national, and global scales.

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RESPONSES OF SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES RISCH

*Question.* The budget includes a request for \$1 billion for global health security, “to prevent, detect, and respond to future biological threats and pandemics.”

How should these resources be managed and prioritized?

*Answer.* The President's FY 2022 budget request demonstrates the importance of USAID's work in partnership with host countries, interagency partners, other nations, international organizations, and non-governmental stakeholders to build countries' capacities to prevent avoidable epidemics, detect threats early, and respond rapidly to disease outbreaks and other critical infectious disease threats, to prevent them from becoming national or global emergencies.

Consistent with National Security Memorandum-1, USAID believes these resources should be prioritized in the following areas:

- Build country capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats through the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) and related programs. USAID will utilize the additional resources to expand country capacity building projects into new countries and regions, spanning Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America—implementing a One Health approach working across the human health, animal health, and environmental sectors;
- Replenish the Emergency Reserve Fund to the pre-pandemic level, ensuring the Agency is ready to respond to infectious disease threats; and
- Support the objectives of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT Accelerator). This initiative consists of four components with real world impacts: diagnostics, therapeutics, vaccines (commonly referred to as COVAX), and the Health Systems Connector.

*Question.* Do you agree with the President, the Secretary of State, and the Coordinator for Global COVID Response and Health Security that the Department of State must play a leading role in policy coordination of these funds?

*Answer.* President Biden has laid out a global health security coordination structure in National Security Memorandum-1, which places the NSC at the center of coordination and has strong roles and responsibilities for the relevant Departments and Agencies, including the Department of State, Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and USAID. USAID works closely with the Department of State, the CDC and others to ensure we are positioned to prevent or respond to future pandemics. Ensuring that the U.S. Government is optimally postured and USAID is bringing to bear our unique capabilities, not just in health but also in crisis response and broader development expertise, is one of my top priorities. I agree we need to take a hard look to identify ways to enhance our impact both globally and within the U.S. Government.

USAID agrees that the Department of State has a critical role in the U.S. Government's broader global health security effort to oversee and lead diplomatic strategy and ensure that global health security policies and programs are consistent with U.S. foreign policy.

*Question.* Should the United States engage in highly risky public health research—such as gain-of-function research—in cooperation with countries that do not have adequate biosecurity standards, that have violated or failed to uphold the International Health Regulations, or where the United States cannot certify that such country is in compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention?

How does USAID ensure that its research and development grants are fully vetted and do not flow to partners or sub-grantees engaged in such research?

*Answer.* USAID does not fund gain-of-function research. Furthermore, USAID has not funded or conducted any studies or experiments anywhere in the world that would make viruses more lethal or transmissible in humans.

USAID provides clear guidance to all Global Health Security (GHS) programming requiring implementing partners to adhere to rigorous safety protocols. USAID requires regular reporting on implementing partners' activities supported with our funding. This reporting is closely monitored by USAID staff to ensure compliance with U.S. Government regulations pertaining to GHS research.

*Question.* Have you asked the Agency to conduct an analysis of whether any U.S. foreign assistance—whether appropriated to and implemented by USAID, appropriated to USAID and transferred to CDC, or appropriated to the State Department and transferred to USAID—has supported entities that conduct gain-of-function research or research that presents a dual-use concern?

Will you commit to conducting a thorough review and providing documentation to this committee?

*Answer.* USAID funding has never been used for gain-of-function research. Furthermore, USAID has not funded nor conducted any studies or experiments anywhere in the world that would make viruses more lethal or transmissible in humans.

USAID will continue to provide oversight of awards made with appropriated funds to monitor activities and the use of funds—ensuring compliance with U.S. Government regulations pertaining to global health security research.

*Question.* The budget proposes a substantial increase for Family Planning and Reproductive Health (FP/RH), through both bilateral aid programs and contributions to the UN Population Fund.

How will you ensure USAID compliance with current law, which prohibits the use of U.S. foreign assistance to perform or promote abortion, support involuntary sterilizations, or lobby for or against the legalization of abortion overseas?

Answer. USAID commits to ensuring compliance with the law and all legislative and regulatory requirements related to family planning activities and prohibitions on abortion. The Agency has worked for decades to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, including the Helms and Siljander amendments.

USAID will continue to work closely with field missions and implementing partners to ensure awareness of and compliance with statutory and policy requirements applicable to their programs. USAID ensures quality of care and compliance through routine monitoring of program implementation and regular provision of training on the requirements.

*Question.* The American Rescue Plan (ARP) provided \$10 billion for the international COVID-19 response absent clear guidance and guardrails. USAID subsequently committed to implementing these funds in a manner that is consistent with the Foreign Assistance Act and long-standing provisions of the annual State Department, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill.

Does this commitment include the long-standing pro-life protections included in the Foreign Assistance Act and the annual State Department, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill?

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* When will USAID provide to this Committee a complete, detailed spend plan for the funds received through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) for the international COVID-19 response?

How much has been obligated and expended to date, where, and for what purposes?

How, if at all, has the FY 2022 request been impacted by the influx of billions of dollars in supplemental emergency funds for COVID-19 relief?

Answer. The Administration has released the U.S. COVID-19 Global Response and Recovery Framework, which outlines five objectives, key areas of action, and lines of effort that guide the funding decisions for programs and activities of government departments and agencies implementing our global response. In addition, the Department of State and USAID submit a Congressionally-mandated report every 60 days on COVID funding, including obligations and disbursements by operating unit.

USAID is working to adapt existing programming to combat some of the challenges raised by the pandemic, primarily through longstanding development programs that support food security and nutrition, economic growth, education, and democracy, rights, and governance. Funding in FY 2022 will continue to support these longstanding USAID programs and development objectives.

*Question.* USAID is managing U.S. contributions to COVAX.

Are you satisfied with COVAX's performance to date?

Answer. COVAX has performed as well as could be expected in light of ongoing constraints to the global vaccine supply. While COVAX is below its original delivery projections, as a result of shortfalls in global vaccine production and disruption to its planned supplies, actions such as the G7 vaccine commitment to finance and provide more than 2 billion doses from the United States and G7 partners by the end of 2022 are critical to enabling the success of COVAX. The U.S. cannot beat this pandemic alone. Distributing COVID-19 vaccines through COVAX remains essential to ensuring that low-and-middle-income countries around the world have access to the vaccines necessary to save lives and end the pandemic.

*Question.* How is USAID ensuring that COVAX is working expeditiously to get shots in arms while guarding against waste, fraud, and abuse?

Answer. USAID provided the recent \$4 billion contribution to Gavi in tranches, which allowed USAID to ensure Gavi/COVAX obtained the funding needed from other donors to scale up global vaccine access, while closely monitoring COVAX's performance. USAID also participates in Gavi's Audit and Finance Committee, and, as a part of that, regularly reviews the risks involved in procuring and delivering COVID-19 vaccines. Gavi/COVAX has multiple methods for receiving reports of fraud, and all allegations are handled by Gavi's Audit and Investigation team led by the Audit and Investigation Managing Director and Whistleblower Compliance Officer. This unit investigates allegations of misuse within Gavi and in Gavi-supported programs in the country. USAID will continue to use its oversight role to strengthen efforts against waste, fraud, and abuse.

*Question.* How is USAID ensuring that U.S. financial contributions to COVAX are not used to underwrite the purchase and distribution of substandard Chinese COVID-19 vaccines, particularly following the announcement on Sunday that COVAX would, in fact, begin making major purchases of Chinese vaccines?

*Answer.* The generous U.S. contribution to COVAX was not used to purchase vaccines made in China. The full U.S.-provided \$4 billion had been allocated by COVAX prior to the facility's decision to purchase Sinopharm and Sinovac, and there are no further U.S. financial contributions to COVAX planned at this time. USAID will continue to signal concern about procurement of lower efficacy vaccines, and urge China to pick up its fair share of the global burden on vaccine access.

*Question.* Under what circumstances would U.S. bilateral vaccine contributions be more appropriate than contributions via COVAX?

*Answer.* USAID is proud to support the White House-led initiative to help vaccinate the world, which includes vaccines provided through COVAX and bilateral methods. Both multilateral and bilateral efforts are essential to fighting this pandemic around the world. Vaccine donations through COVAX bring benefits like increased efficiency, speed, and risk protection through utilization of COVAX's existing allocation and legal frameworks. They also build on the supply chain and logistics infrastructure of organizations like UNICEF and PAHO. Bilateral contributions can be targeted to local priorities and make use of USAID staff and networks in-country.

*Question.* What, exactly, is the U.S. COVID-19 vaccine sharing strategy and why has it been so difficult for Congress to get real-time, detailed information about it?

*Answer.* USAID is proud to support the White House-led initiative to help vaccinate the world and end the pandemic. No one is safe until everyone is safe, which is why the first objective of the *U.S. COVID-19 Global Response and Recovery Framework* is to accelerate widespread and equitable access to and delivery of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccinations. The Administration's provision of 500 million Pfizer doses to be shared globally via COVAX, as well as an additional 80 million doses from the U.S. supply, illustrates the Administration's commitment to this objective. The White House is leading these efforts through its COVID-19 Task Force, with substantive input from USAID and others in the interagency. USAID remains committed to providing Congress with information and updates on our ongoing efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Question.* Ancillary medical supplies, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and syringes, are critical to the global vaccination effort.

- How does USAID ensure that countries receiving donated COVID-19 vaccines from the United States have the adequate PPE and syringes needed to safely complete vaccination campaigns?
- Does USAID take into consideration and/or leverage existing Federal contracts with domestic manufacturers of ancillary supplies when sourcing for global pandemic preparedness aid?

*Answer.* For vaccines donated through COVAX, COVAX helps to ensure syringes and other critical ancillary materials are included with the vaccines that are delivered. For bilateral donations, recipient countries need to ensure an adequate supply of syringes and ancillary equipment. USAID support for country readiness and delivery programs will help to address these aspects of planning and preparation. The U.S. Government will continue to track the availability of syringes globally and help support countries that have identified the availability of syringes as a constraint to administering vaccines.

While USAID regularly collaborates with other U.S. Government and U.S. state agencies for securing medical equipment, supplies, and pharmaceuticals in support of the global COVID-19 response, USAID has not procured vaccine ancillary supplies domestically. USAID has received and shipped donations of such commodities from federal and state agencies as part of COVID-19 relief.

*Question.* Are you satisfied with the performance of the Global Fund's COVID-19 Response Mechanism to date?

Does it concern you that only 28 percent of the funds provided to the Global Fund's COVID-19 Response Mechanism have been used to protect against backsliding in the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria?

*Answer.* The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (Global Fund) has generally responded well to the request made by the U.S. Government, together with the global community, to play a critical role in financing country COVID-19 response efforts. Building on its existing platform, the Global Fund quickly estab-

lished systems and processes to request, review and approve COVID-19 and HIV/TB/Malaria mitigation plans for more than 100 countries, which are on track to implement more than \$3 billion at the country level by the end of August 2021.

However, COVID has taken a toll and exacerbated the impacts of the three diseases. For example, as a result of COVID-19 and associated measures to control it, 1 million fewer people in the 23 countries where USAID focuses TB programming had access to TB diagnosis and treatment in 2020, compared to 2019 (which represents a 23 percent decline). Approximately 55 percent of COVID-19 cases in Global Fund-eligible countries are in high TB burden countries with the largest TB case notification declines. USAID coordinated with the Global Fund on urgent TB recovery efforts in seven of these countries. However, as of July 1, 2021, only four percent of the COVID-19 Response Mechanism funds are going towards mitigating COVID-19's impact on TB. Further action is needed from the Global Fund to recover from these continued setbacks. In other areas, USAID is working with the Global Fund to support efforts to mitigate COVID-19's impact on the three diseases, including around supply chain, but Global Fund implementation efforts could be accelerated.

*Question.* How, if at all, is USAID working with the Global Fund's COVID-19 response mechanism to de-conflict and leverage emergency spending to strengthen health systems more broadly?

*Answer.* USAID has staff participating on the Global Fund's COVID-19 Response Mechanism grant application review committee, providing TB, malaria and COVID-19 expertise. (The Department of State's Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator is representing the U.S. for HIV/AIDS.) These staff work to ensure that Global Fund grant priorities complement U.S. Government bilateral funding. USAID's HIV, TB, and malaria programs are also coordinating closely with the Global Fund to maximize investments for the longer-term benefit. For example, investments in community health and supply chain systems not only strengthen overall workforce capacity for the immediate COVID-19 response, but they also contribute to response capacity for malaria or other infectious disease programs in the longer term.

*Question.* The United States is the global leader in responding to humanitarian crises around the world. Yet, from Northern Yemen to Tigray, humanitarian workers are increasingly under attack. Access is being constrained by armed actors and bureaucratic processes. Organizations are being harassed. Convoys are being attacked. Warehouses are being burned and looted. While it is in the interest of the United States to continue providing humanitarian aid, it is not in our interest to see that aid used as a weapon against the innocent men, women, and children it is meant to support.

- The budget proposes to increase disaster assistance and food aid. How do you intend to ensure that it actually reaches its intended beneficiaries, and is not used as a weapon by armed actors and governments against perceived opponents?
- How do you propose to expand humanitarian access in Tigray and Northern Yemen, for example?
- Is the manipulation and/or denial of life-saving aid to vulnerable populations a crime against humanity and, if so, how do you intend to hold those who bear the greatest responsibility accountable?

*Answer.* USAID has developed due diligence systems to help ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches those for whom it is intended—children, women, and men who are in urgent need of aid—and to decrease the likelihood that such assistance will result in transactions with sanctioned entities.

We work closely with our partners to collect performance and situational data to monitor activities and gather information from different sources to verify assistance is reaching targeted areas and beneficiaries. USAID staff closely and systematically track reports, are in regular direct communication with partners, and immediately follow up on any reported issues.

Implementing partners are required, under their awards, to provide regular program updates on the progress of their activities and any security concerns, and we require partners to report any diversions, seizures, or losses immediately. USAID humanitarian partners are required to adhere to strict protocols for engaging with any armed group, which include the temporary or permanent suspension of programs in the face of interference by armed actors.

Atrocity determinations for specific cases are made by the Secretary of State. USAID is committed to delivering humanitarian assistance in accordance with international humanitarian law and the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence. We continue to work with colleagues in the Department

of State and the international community to promote adherence to international humanitarian law and these principles and ensure life-saving assistance reaches those who need it. In areas of conflict, we have repeatedly called on government leaders to ensure humanitarian access. USAID and the broader U.S. Government have also repeatedly called for accountability for those who are violating human rights and committing atrocities. These advocacy efforts will contribute to broader accountability efforts led by the Department of State.

#### NORTHERN YEMEN

While interference in aid operations has been most egregious in northern Yemen, obstruction—particularly bureaucratic delays and delays at the port, visa denials, and the withholding of necessary approvals for partners to deliver aid—continues to be a challenge throughout the country and is increasing in the south. We are working closely with the U.S. State Department, specifically the Special Envoy's (SE) Office, to collectively advocate for a lasting peace process with all parties to the conflict, and in the interim, ensure our humanitarian partners have the access and ability to reach those in need impartially and quickly. We are grateful for the SE's recent and continuing efforts to ensure that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Government of Yemen allow the free flow of fuel imports into Hudaydah Port to ensure Yemenis have access to basic services and humanitarian assistance. As you know, only a political solution will address the root problems to end this crisis.

We are working closely with other NGO partners to support the resumption of their operations as we continue to advocate for unfettered humanitarian access countrywide in coordination with other donors and the UN, which has maintained robust advocacy through direct engagement with the Houthis. As we did throughout the partial suspension, USAID continuously monitors for Houthi interference and our partners' access to populations in need to ensure that humanitarian assistance supported by the U.S. Government reaches those for whom it is intended.

#### TIGRAY

In Tigray, we have seen a de facto blockade with limited entry of humanitarian goods and personnel since the Government of Ethiopia unilateral ceasefire on June 28. Despite official Government of Ethiopia approval of convoys and UNHAS flights into the region, delays and murky explanations from the Government of Ethiopia have led to the UN and aid agencies facing major challenges with ground and air access to deliver supplies to Tigray. The TPLF has also expanded fighting in recent weeks, moving into Afar and Amhara regions and causing further conflict-related impediments. With the ongoing conflict and bureaucratic delays, humanitarian assistance can not possibly get to scale. Without fundamental improvements to access into Tigray, the region is on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe. In coordination with the interagency, USAID continues to press on all parties to the conflict to allow humanitarian access into and throughout the region and is pursuing potential contingency options should access continue to be blocked.

*Question.* The UN's Global Humanitarian Appeal of \$36.1 billion for 2021 is the largest in history.

What is USAID doing to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. humanitarian assistance, so we can spread our aid dollars farther, while also leveraging other donor support to meet historic humanitarian needs?

*Answer.* USAID and the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) work together to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. Government humanitarian assistance. The U.S. Government seeks to use our humanitarian assistance and diplomatic resources to leverage other donors' contributions, maximize the impact of the funding we provide to humanitarian operations, and advance programs that will reduce humanitarian costs in the future.

One major area of focus is improving our United Nations (UN) partners' accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. USAID and State are driving system-wide efforts, including through the Grand Bargain—an agreement between donors and humanitarian aid organizations—to optimize the use of U.S. public resources through management cost reductions, joint needs assessments for prioritized humanitarian appeals, and strengthened measures to achieve greater accountability, transparency, and collective action.

Finally, USAID and State coordinate strategically with traditional donors, build partnerships with and cultivate greater investment by non-traditional donors and the private sector, and work towards expanding the overall donor base. This work includes advocating in public fora and through private channels for increased humanitarian burden-sharing and consulting with implementing partners on how to

expand their funding base, including encouraging partners to pursue new and innovative financing partnerships and mechanisms.

*Question.* The budget proposes to move \$170 million from the Food for Peace (FFP) program, which is administered by USAID and funded through the annual Agriculture appropriations bill, to the International Disaster Assistance Emergency Food Security Program (IDA–EFSP), which was authorized by Congress through the Global Food Security Act, is administered by USAID, and is funded through the annual State Department, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Budget justification documents suggest that this is intended to provide greater flexibility for market-based food assistance—such as vouchers, biometrically verified electronic transfers, and locally or regionally procured commodities—which often is more timely, less costly, and more locally appropriate than commodities procured and shipped from the United States.

- What is the current cost-per-beneficiary differential between U.S. procured and shipped Food for Peace commodities versus food assistance provided through the IDA–EFSP?
- What factors drive these cost differentials?
- What is the current time differential for deliveries of U.S. procured and shipped Food for Peace commodities versus food assistance provided through the IDA–EFSP?

*Answer.* Recent data indicates that cost efficiencies between IDA–EFSP and FFP Title II programming are highly dependent on context and program design, and generalizations have proven challenging. While often used to compare the cost efficiency of various food assistance modalities (which include cash, vouchers, locally or regionally procured commodities, or U.S. commodities), cost-per-beneficiary figures are influenced by the size and frequency of resource transfers. In lieu of the cost-per-beneficiary metric, USAID utilizes cost-per-metric-ton (MT), which allows for inclusion of multiple variables when comparing modality options. In an analysis of 3 years of award data, the average cost per MT for Title II U.S. commodities was \$1,133. The average cost per MT for all market-based food assistance modalities (cash, vouchers, and locally or regionally procured commodities) was \$1,046. Using this same metric, USAID conducted a comprehensive cross-modality cost efficiency study which covered 444 activities across multiple fiscal years. One of the primary findings was that it is risky to make global-level assumptions around the efficiency of various modalities given the substantial variation of efficiency at the country-level. Global averages do not allow for a nuanced understanding of metrics across the countries where we program. USAID’s approach has been to more routinely examine cost-efficiency at a country level in order to accommodate this nuance. This is further institutionalized through the USG Modality Decision Tool (attached) ([https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/USG\\_MDT\\_Final\\_2017.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/USG_MDT_Final_2017.pdf)) which requires implementing partners to consider cost as a key decision point when selecting modalities.

This comprehensive USAID cost-efficiency study on modalities and their cost drivers showed that food assistance costs are often driven by context, type of emergency and scale, rather than the modalities themselves. For example, responses with predictable recurring annual needs with established partnerships and pipelines (i.e. refugee settings) or those with substantial lead time (i.e. slow-onset, drought) were significantly more cost-efficient than rapid on-set disasters and complex emergencies. On average, responding to a rapid onset disaster costs twice as much as a slow onset disaster such as drought. Similarly, findings indicated that programming irrespective of modality tended to be more expensive in certain regions of the world. For example, programming in Latin America and the Caribbean was on average 33 percent more expensive than East Africa. The variability of cost effectiveness of any single modality due to local contexts and market conditions underscores the value of flexible humanitarian funding—USAID is at its best when it can use the right tool in the right place.

The procurement and delivery of Title II Food for Peace packaged commodities takes an average of 147 days. Of that timeframe, the average shipment duration, from the U.S. load port to an international discharge port, is 45 days. For fiscal year 2021 to date, shipment durations have ranged from 21 to 113 days. Vessel availability, port operations, transshipments, distance, and other factors all contribute to a variance in shipment durations. For ongoing cash-based programming utilizing mobile money or debit cards, resources can be transferred to beneficiaries days after funds are obligated. The change proposed in the FY 2022 budget would allow USAID to use the right tool at the right time, delivering assistance to beneficiaries in days rather than months.

*Question.* The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has released a memo which, among other things, directs the new OMB Made in America Office to “review how best to ensure agency compliance with cargo preference requirements to maximize the utilization of U.S.-flag vessels, in excess of any applicable statutory minimum, to the greatest extent practicable.” This is likely to increase pressure upon USAID to exceed existing cargo preference requirements for food aid under the Food for Peace Act, notwithstanding the fact that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) repeatedly has found that such requirements significantly increase the cost of food aid while failing to advance the purposes of the Cargo Preference Act of 1954.

- Do you agree that U.S. cargo preference requirements for food aid have outlived their statutory purpose?
- Is USAID working with OMB to mitigate the deleterious impact of U.S. cargo preference requirements on food aid?
- How would an increase of cargo preference requirements impact the ability of USAID to meet historic levels of need for food aid?

*Answer.* USAID takes its responsibility to comply with the Cargo Preference Act seriously, and understands and values the services that U.S.-flag vessels provide. However, in many cases, the U.S.-flag fleet cannot meet USAID’s transportation needs for food assistance commodities due to a lack of competition, availability of ships, or irregular service to certain destinations. Many of the countries facing the greatest levels of food insecurity are also some of the most challenging and high-risk operating environments. As such, the flexibility to procure the most appropriate and cost-effective ocean freight service should remain a part of the Agency’s toolkit.

USAID is committed to working with Congress and the interagency, including OMB, to make USAID’s food assistance programming as effective and efficient as possible. The COVID-19 pandemic and mitigation measures have only compounded the effects of climate-related disasters and complex emergencies, creating unprecedented global humanitarian needs. For example, an estimated 23 million additional people will require emergency food assistance compared to 2019. Each food assistance modality (U.S. in-kind food, locally and regionally procured food, and cash-based programming) is critical to USAID’s ability to respond appropriately to each crisis.

USAID pays almost 50 percent more per metric ton (MT) to ship commodities on U.S.-flag vessels than foreign-flag vessels. An increase in cargo preference requirements would directly result in increased transportation costs for food assistance programs, which would reduce the amount of resources USAID can dedicate to purchasing commodities and reaching beneficiaries with life-saving assistance.

*Question.* The United States is by far the most generous donor of humanitarian, global health, and development assistance globally. Much of that assistance—including for the World Food Program, UNICEF, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and others—is provided through USAID as grants or contributions to multilateral organizations. Last Congress, I introduced the Multilateral Aid Review Act to assess the value of U.S. taxpayer investments in multilateral entities, including the UN and its affiliated agencies.

Would you support a comprehensive review of U.S. investments in multilateral organizations, as part of an effort to ensure that such investments are efficient, effective, and aligned with the national security, humanitarian, health, and development interests of the United States?

*Answer.* USAID works extensively with multilateral organizations and often relies on those organizations to advance USAID and broader U.S. Government development and humanitarian priorities, particularly in the areas of global health and emergency preparedness and response, including food and nutrition security; water, sanitation, and hygiene; and protection in humanitarian contexts. Pursuant to USAID operational policy, the Agency regularly reviews the organizational capacity of individual multilateral organizations (identified as Public International Organizations or “PIOs” within Agency policy) to identify and help mitigate the risks of waste, fraud, and abuse of USAID resources, prior to entering into funding arrangements with such organizations. These reviews are informed by the organizations’ internal policies, audits, and guidelines; as well as external evaluations and international assessments of these organizations. This includes assessments conducted by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), in which the U.S. Government regularly participates as a MOPAN member. The Agency would welcome the chance to brief you and your staff on this review process.

*Question.* Whether Foreign Service, Civil Service, Foreign Service Limited, Foreign Service National, or other, USAID's most valuable asset is its people. Unfortunately, with at least 22 different hiring mechanisms and outdated assumptions about how specific missions, bureaus, and offices should be supported, the agency is in desperate need of a modernized strategic staffing plan that is flexible and adaptive to today's challenges. The budget request includes an increase for USAID's operating expenses and proposes to increase the number of Foreign Service Limited positions, including for global health and humanitarian assistance.

- When will we see a comprehensive strategic staffing plan that aligns positions, skills, and resources across the agency, transparently and effectively streamlines hiring mechanisms, and reduces reliance upon costly Participating Agency Service Agreements (PASAs) to fill positions for which the participating agency has no business recruiting (such as USDA hiring democracy officers, for example)?
- Will an increase in direct-hire positions be paired with a decrease in contractors?

*Answer.* USAID is committed to strengthening its global workforce to advance the Agency's mission and national security priorities. However, USAID's staffing has not increased at the same rate as its programmatic needs and requirements. USAID has complex requirements and needs to increase the size and agility of its career workforce while also streamlining non-career employment mechanisms. To enable data-based decision-making and analysis of the workforce and strategically allocate staff, the Agency developed innovative tools for data analytics and workforce planning, including the Talent Analytics tool and overseas comprehensive workforce planning model.

Although USAID is on track to reach its hiring target of 1,850 Foreign Service (FS) and 1,600 Civil Service (CS) employees by September 2021, USAID estimates its real staffing requirements to be 2,500 FS and 2,250 CS employees. To meet these staffing requirements, the Agency would need Operating Expense (OE) appropriations for an additional 650 FS and 650 CS employees. The increase in direct-hire positions in many cases would be off-set by a decrease in contractors, particularly in bureaus such as BHA where the Agency has long had to rely on contracted positions to fulfill long-term institutional roles that should be carried out by Direct Hires. However, in other areas, USAID is not appropriately staffed to meet requirements, regardless of mechanism. In these cases additional direct-hire positions would come in addition to other staffing mechanisms currently performing the work. Examples of this are climate change and procurement (Acquisition and Assistance) expertise.

*Question.* Members of the Biden administration, including President Biden himself, have stated, "Africa is a priority."

Do you feel that the President's proposed budget reflects that sentiment? If so, how?

*Answer.* The FY 2022 request for Africa is \$7.4 billion, \$202.7 million (approximately 3 percent) above the FY 2021 653(a) levels, and a \$2.4 billion (approximately 32 percent) increase from the FY 2021 Request for Africa.

The FY 2022 request advances U.S. policy priorities in Africa by addressing conflict; strengthening democratic governance; improving global health and combating epidemics; promoting gender equality; supporting trade and energy transformation; and addressing climate change.

The PBR supports democratic developments and promotes stability in countries facing or recovering from conflict, including Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan. The FY 2022 request for Sudan is \$84.4 million, an increase of \$72.4 million from the FY 2021 PBR.

The Request continues critical economic growth investments including \$57.5 million (a straight line from the FY 2021 653(a) level) for Power Africa to increase access to electricity; and \$77 million (nearly quadruple the FY 2021 653(a) level of \$21.0 million) for Prosper Africa to open markets for American businesses and accelerate two-way trade.

The request expands assistance to Africa to address climate change from \$76.7 million in the FY 2021 653(a) to \$111.0 million in the FY 2022 request.

*Question.* *Prosper Africa:* In the FY 2022 request, the Biden administration prioritizes Prosper Africa, a whole-of-government initiative to expand two-way trade and investment in Africa started under the Trump administration, at a level of \$77 million (\$2 million more than the FY 2021 request and nearly double the FY 2020 actual budget figure). Still, resources for Prosper Africa remain limited and USAID

will need to prioritize strategic countries and sectors to encourage U.S. investment and trade. Moreover, a number of countries with complex political, economic, and conflict dynamics, including Zimbabwe, South Sudan, and Somalia, are wholly unsuited for strategic investment under Prosper Africa.

How does USAID intend to prioritize the use of finite resources for Prosper Africa?

Answer. Geographic and economic sector focus will be guided by a combination of U.S. and African Government priorities and private sector interest. Specific criteria for prioritizing operational and programmatic resources across different countries will vary based on individual department and agency mandates. However, common criteria include:

- Size and attractiveness of the market to private sector
- Government interest in enhancing and strengthening trade ties with the United States
- Enabling environment reform trajectory
- U.S. Government (USG) presence and engagement
- High-level USG policy priorities

*Question.* Do you agree that countries like Zimbabwe, South Sudan, and Somalia are unsuited for strategic investments under Prosper Africa? Do you commit to excluding such countries from Prosper Africa programming in FY 2022?

Answer. USAID does not currently plan to program Prosper Africa funds in these countries. We will consult with the committee on any future planning programming and in accordance with and all special notification requirements.

*Question. Sudan:* At the end of 2020, the U.S. committed to providing Sudan with 420,000 MT of wheat annually for 4 years, as an incentive for joining the Abraham Accords. While the U.S. already has met its first-year commitment, current proposals to fund the second year commitment by raiding previously appropriated economic support funds (ESF) for democracy and governance, agriculture, and water, sanitation and hygiene are deeply concerning.

Does the President's FY 2022 budget adequately budget for U.S. wheat commitments to Sudan under the Abraham Accords while preserving funding for democracy and governance, agriculture, and water, sanitation, and hygiene?

Do you agree with the decision not to fund U.S. wheat commitments to Sudan wholly through USDA's Food for Progress program, which arguably was created and continues to exist for the exclusive purpose of opening markets and advancing reform?

Answer. The 4-year wheat commitments under the Abraham Accords are dependent on Sudan continuing on its path towards democracy. Should it become necessary to find funding for this commitment, USAID will work with OMB and the inter-agency to advocate that all resource options are on the table, including the USDA Food for Progress program.

*Question. Democracy and Governance:* Should the United States invest in the strengthening of political institutions in Africa, particularly political parties?

Is it a worthy investment for USAID to support political party strengthening projects in countries like Nigeria, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, and Kenya? In each of these countries, political parties are central actors to their countries' political processes, but no dedicated USAID party strengthening programs exist.

Answer. USAID works with political institutions in many African countries to make them more effective, democratic, and responsive to citizens. Among the most important political institutions are political parties, which we fully recognize play key roles in representation, policy formulation, and providing choices for voters. USAID's long experience in supporting political parties has taught us much on how they develop positions on issues of public concern, stimulate public discourse, aggregate interests, formulate governing platforms during election campaigns, and ultimately play a central role in governance.

Early this year, USAID revised our Political Party Policy that reaffirmed the importance of political party assistance as part of democracy promotion. The updated policy reaffirms that our programs are guided by two key principles: we support representative, multiparty systems; and we do not seek to determine election outcomes.

USAID has conducted political party assistance programming in numerous countries in Africa over the past three decades, including Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Liberia. USAID programming supports the development of viable democratic parties as an essential actor in representative democracies and their peaceful participation in elections and political processes.

In countries like Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Kenya, with upcoming national elections, USAID is identifying gaps, challenges and opportunities in the democracy, human rights, and governance areas to develop programming that meets priority needs. While USAID is not currently supporting standalone political party programs in these countries, political party leaders and activists are key stakeholders that our Missions are engaging through their broader elections and political processes programs. Decisions on whether to support political party programming at a given time in a particular country are context-specific and based on a number of factors. These include alignment with the USG country strategy; an assessment of the willingness and capacity of parties to receive such assistance; the degree of political space in the country; the availability of funding; and the extent to which other donors are already supporting political party development.

*Question.* Somalia and Liberia are the top priorities for democracy and governance funding in FY 2022 for Sub-Saharan Africa, at \$17 million and nearly \$16 million, respectively.

Does this prioritization adequately reflect USG priorities for supporting democratic and governance processes in Africa, particularly given the poor performance by Somalia in planning for and conducting direct elections (and subsequently an indirect selection process) in 2020 and 2021?

*Answer.* The request prioritizes support for African partners that promote democratic ideals, support fiscal transparency, undertake economic reforms, and foster legitimate, transparent, and inclusive political systems that respond to citizens' needs. The African continent has made important gains in democracy and institution building; however, these gains are fragile.

Somalia's critical challenges require long-term initiatives that will address underlying human development, governance, security, and economic challenges facing a country emerging from more than two decades of conflict. Somalia's stability is important to security in the broader Horn of Africa region and is crucial to U.S. national security interests. While the 2020–2021 electoral process in Somalia has been disappointing due to the government's inability to secure direct elections, Elections are only one part of USAID's DRG strategy in Somalia. The mission has prioritized addressing the conditions that allow violent extremism to take root and spread by focusing on grievances arising from poor governance, the absence of justice, and exclusion from political, social, and economic opportunities.

The United States has enjoyed a long and enduring relationship with Liberia. USAID has made important gains toward establishing democratic order and putting in place those institutions critical to long term prosperity and security. The Ebola Virus outbreak of 2014–2015 exposed the vulnerabilities of government institutions, as well as the economy, to unexpected shocks. These vulnerabilities require long-term commitments from the U.S. USAID's democracy and governance support, particularly election-related assistance, demonstrates our commitment to free, fair, and credible elections in 2023 building on the positive trajectory after Liberia's historic 2017 general elections and first peaceful transfer of power in over 70 years.

*Question. Ethiopia:* Ethiopia's democratic and development trajectory changed significantly with the ascension of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the seemingly historic reforms that followed. At that time, many U.S. officials hailed a "once in a generation" opportunity to affect change in Ethiopia, and the United States responded in-kind with significant investments in the country's development, including in elections, economic and political reforms, agriculture, among other areas.

- Given Ethiopia's rapidly changing conflict dynamics, political landscape, and tense bilateral relationship with the United States over the past year, how does USAID plan to adjust its overall assistance planning to the country?
- Do you believe that the requested conflict mitigation and stabilization funding for Ethiopia (\$2.69 million) adequately reflects the priority that the United States has placed upon resolving the conflict in Tigray and addressing other conflicts in Ethiopia?
- What is USAID's long-term approach to supporting Ethiopia while responding to immediate humanitarian and other assistance needs? Can we do both simultaneously, and if so, what are the primary long-term and short-term assistance priorities for Ethiopia?

*Answer.* As a reflection of the changing relationship with the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray crisis, USAID has already pivoted portions of our development portfolio and will continue to explore near-term operational pivots as opportunities arise. Longer term, our Mission in Addis Ababa will continuously reassess the nature of the development partnership with the Government of Ethiopia and will use

this to determine where additional pivots are required within its development objectives to ensure our principled support for the Ethiopian people continues. Given the evolving challenges, opportunities and diplomatic relations with Ethiopia, USAID will not provide any direct financial resources to the Government of Ethiopia. USAID plans to continue Global Health and Food Security programs as those represent long-term investments and the needs and opportunities remain relatively similar. We will shift our Democracy, Governance and Human Rights funding away from supporting the government where appropriate, and scale back non-Food Security Economic Growth funding.

We recognize the challenges related to conflict mitigation programming in Ethiopia. The request reflects a careful balancing of resource needs in multiple countries across Africa and the world and our assessment of what we can regionally do programmatically in the current security and political environment. The Mission's current strategy places special emphasis on recurring disasters and conflict vulnerability. The Mission's approach has been to try to address key vulnerabilities through a resilience approach across sectors and development objectives. In addition, the Mission has built in conflict-sensitive approaches to activities through use of "conflict modifier" language in awards to ensure that development activities can respond to shifting needs as conflicts or other potential crises arise.

USAID Ethiopia's Country Development Cooperation Strategy operates based on a disaster-development nexus to ensure disaster risk management and resilience are integrated into its development approach. USAID will continue to mitigate the worst aspects of the Northern Ethiopia crisis and support viable and inclusive political dialogue. In the short-term, USAID is increasing humanitarian assistance to address needs in Northern Ethiopia, and shifting some resources and activities within existing development programs to complement humanitarian activities in the region. Our Education program, for example, is poised to support the rebuilding and recovery of the education system in Northern Ethiopia once access opens up. At the same time, we will continue a country-wide program in health, food security, humanitarian assistance and other sectors to address ongoing needs.

*Question. Power Africa:* In the face of growing Chinese influence and investment, and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there arguably has never been a more important time to advance U.S. strategic programs to reduce energy poverty, support transformative energy development, and stimulate economic recovery in Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, the President's FY 2022 budget request proposes to reduce by 26 percent funding for one of the most important instruments the USG has in its arsenal to accomplish these goals—Power Africa—while simultaneously imposing carbon caps and renewable energy mandates that inevitably will push developing economies in sub-Saharan Africa closer to China.

Is reducing energy poverty in sub-Saharan Africa a priority for USAID? If so, how can that reasonably be accomplished while the Administration redirects funding for Power Africa to undefined climate change objectives and abandons the bipartisan, bicameral agreement on an "all-of-the-above" approach under the historic Electrify Africa Act?

*Answer.* Power Africa will continue to increase access to power and the use of clean energy, as well as support investments in regional renewable energy programs in sub-Saharan Africa. Competing and urgent needs that arose as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic and its secondary impacts, conflict, and other crises necessitated difficult tradeoffs in our FY 2022 funding request. We believe our work through Power Africa, which leverages investments from U.S. and global partners, including the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, will be able to achieve strong and lasting results with the resources requested.

In line with the Electrify Africa Act, Power Africa targets resources to develop and offer the best tools, services, and solutions from the private and public sector, including its 12 USG agency partners, to promote transparent market-driven energy development in sub-Saharan Africa. This approach builds the essential regulatory reforms and procurement practices to support a prosperous and democratic future.

*Question.* How much of the USAID portion of the FY 2022 budget request will be dedicated to Indo-Pacific region? Please provide the absolute dollar amount and the percentage of the total.

*Answer.* The FY 2022 Request includes \$1.2 billion (\$1.6 billion State and USAID) in foreign assistance to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific, of which \$287 million is Global Health funding (3.95 percent of the overall FY 2022 USAID request). These funds will strengthen democratic institutions, unlock private-sector led economic growth, and improve natural resource management. Working alongside allies and partners, U.S. assistance programs will reassert forward-looking global leader-

ship and engage China from a position of collective confidence and strength, combat climate change, reduce the risk of cyber threats, foster democracy resilience and human rights, support inclusive economic growth and COVID-19 recovery, and improve natural resource management.

*Question.* How much proposed USAID funding will go towards economic programs in the Indo-Pacific region?

*Answer.* Of the \$4.7 billion in economic growth (EG) in the FY22 budget request, USAID proposes \$297.8 million to support EG activities in the Indo-Pacific region. Funding will help combat the secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic through improving private sector productivity; trade; agriculture; workforce development; and addressing environmental impacts consistent with the Administration's Indo-Pacific Framework. In addition, we expect that EG funding requested for the Democracy, Development, and Innovation Bureau and the Resilience and Food Security Bureau will also support their activities in the Indo-Pacific region.

*Question.* Of the \$2.8 billion requested for democracy, rights, and governance (DRG), how much will go towards the Indo-Pacific region?

*Answer.* Of the \$2.8 billion requested for DRG across State and USAID, \$280.6 million will support DRG activities in the Indo-Pacific region. To promote just and responsive governance in the Indo-Pacific, USAID is working to: promote the integrity of electoral processes; support the independence of media and information integrity; protect human rights, including civil and political rights; foster accountability and transparency, including fighting corruption; strengthen the rule of law; and strengthen civil society.

*Question.* Will USAID energy programs provide any support to countries seeking to develop natural gas markets, relevant infrastructure, and supporting policy and regulations?

*Answer.* To align with E.O. 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, USAID is creating procedures for evaluating all assistance that may lead to increased consumption of fossil fuels over a certain threshold, including natural gas. Per draft energy guidance being developed by the National Security Council, all new programming that supports increased consumption of fossil fuels will have to be justified on national security, development, or energy access grounds. Ongoing programming supporting the natural gas sector will be unaffected.

*Question.* Will you commit that no climate change funding in this budget request will go to China?

*Answer.* Yes. USAID is not requesting any climate change funding for China in the FY 2022 Budget Request, nor does it intend to create or implement any climate change programs in China.

*Question. Afghanistan:* In addition to the \$266 million in humanitarian assistance pledged on June 4, Secretary Blinken has also expressed his intent to work with Congress to obligate an additional \$300 million in civilian assistance for Afghanistan. While the Department works to inject hundreds of millions in foreign aid into Afghanistan—a reflection of its purported desire to recalibrate the bilateral relationship by investing more in development and assistance lines of effort—USAID OIG plans to scale back its presence in country, reducing staffing and closing its sub-office in Kabul. All of this is occurring as the Taliban continues to make rapid advances on the ground. According to the Wall Street Journal, the U.S. intelligence community now assesses the government in Kabul may fall in as little as 6 to 12 months after the U.S. and NATO military withdrawal, potentially triggering a humanitarian and security crisis.

- In light of the deteriorating security climate, how does USAID plan to sustain the gains made over the past 20 years, particularly as it pertains to the hard earned rights of women and minorities?
- As we look to recalibrate our bilateral relationship with Afghanistan, what more can be done to support the development of health, education, female empowerment, and government transparency?
- How does USAID plan to effectively conduct oversight of U.S. foreign assistance programs in Afghanistan given its diminished presence on the ground?

*Answer.* USAID plans to support early recovery, basic needs and services, including health and education, food security and livelihoods, and womens' rights. In addition, given the increasing displacement of Afghans around the country, USAID will continue to deliver humanitarian assistance using International Disaster Assistance (IDA) based on need and where access and security allow.

The U.S. Government continues to urge the Taliban to provide access to schools, employment and freedom of movement for all Afghan women and girls. Our programs will continue to support those goals. USAID provides on-going and strategic program oversight despite security restrictions in Afghanistan. Monitoring and oversight measures taken in Afghanistan include: vetting of implementing partners (IPs), multi-tiered monitoring efforts, and financial controls. USAID will continue to use third-party monitoring to provide programmatic oversight where our partners and programs operate. These third-party monitors are local partners to each region and have been capable of accessing USAID programs across the country. If the security environment affects USAID partners' and programs' ability to operate, third-party monitoring efforts will correspondingly adjust to fit within the new operating status of programs to ensure the safety of on-the-ground staff.

*Question.* West Bank & Gaza: Since January 2021, the Biden administration has re-established relations with the Palestinian Authority (PA) and announced nearly \$360 million in planned U.S. assistance. This move has occurred despite the lack of progress in PA reforms, including its toxic so-called "pay to slay program."

- Please detail how USAID plans to address the PA's ongoing support for terrorism in the region, while also ensuring the needs of the Palestinian people are met, including by supporting the PA's ability to deliver basic services.
- How does USAID plan to maintain effective oversight of the nearly \$360 million in planned assistance for the West Bank and Gaza? Does this include ensuring all U.S. assistance is consistent with applicable U.S. law, including Taylor Force Act?
- Can you commit to working with the Israelis to ensure any U.S. Government funds that support "reconstruction" efforts in Gaza are allocated in a manner that is consistent with U.S. and Israeli national security interests, and does not in any way benefit Hamas, politically or otherwise? Please explain, in detail, your plans for ensuring appropriate levels of coordination with the Israeli Government on the disbursement of such funds.

*Answer.* The Biden administration is opposed to the prisoner payment system and has consistently urged the Palestinian Authority to end this practice. The Department of State leads on this issue. USAID's assistance in the West Bank and Gaza is implemented in strict compliance with the Taylor Force Act and other applicable laws.

The Department of State and the USAID Mission in the West Bank and Gaza (WBG) have a long-standing, 15-year-old, robust partner vetting process to mitigate the risk that U.S. Government resources could inadvertently support Hamas or other terrorist groups. Trained counterintelligence professionals screen the personally identifiable information of key individuals of organizations and individual beneficiaries, who meet the vetting requirements outlined in Mission Order 21, against public and U.S. Government databases at the FBI-managed Threat Screening Center. Additionally, USAID partners in the WBG have aggressive risk-mitigation systems in place aimed at ensuring U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance is reaching those for whom we intend.

As is the case around the world, the United States will provide assistance in the West Bank and Gaza through experienced and trusted independent partners that distribute aid directly to people in need. USAID also closely coordinates with the GOI Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) on all USAID activities in the West Bank and Gaza. All materials entering Gaza for use on a USAID funded activity are transported through the Kerem Shalom crossing, which is arranged and approved by COGAT. USAID adheres to all GOI requirements for approving materials entering Gaza and for end-use monitoring.

*Question.* Syria: What does the future of [humanitarian] assistance to Syria look like? How can we effectively provide relief to millions in need without a sufficient number of UN border crossing points?

We know that there is no replacement for cross-border mechanisms to deliver humanitarian assistance in Syria, and that cross-line assistance is costly, ineffective, and prone to manipulation. How will you ensure that U.S. assistance is not routed through Damascus and instead delivered directly to those in need?

*Answer.* Rising humanitarian needs and an increasingly complex operating environment continue to pose significant challenges for humanitarian actors throughout Syria who continue to reach the most vulnerable at great risk to themselves. The July 9 reauthorization of cross-border assistance through United Nations Security Council Resolution 2585 provided crucial relief for the Syrian people, but it does not completely fill the vast needs on the ground. That is why it is vital for the United

States to continue to advocate for unimpeded humanitarian access through all possible means—including continued authorization and expansion of UN cross-border access and unhindered cross-line assistance. USAID has zero tolerance for fraud, waste, or abuse by any parties to the conflict, including the Assad regime. All USAID humanitarian assistance is implemented through independent humanitarian organizations—UN agencies and NGOs—to reach those most in need in line with humanitarian principles. No U.S. assistance is routed through the Syrian Arab Republic Government.

*Question. Venezuela:* The authoritarian regime in Cuba has reportedly developed its own COVID-19 vaccine. Can you confirm that USAID will not provide any direct or indirect support to a COVID-19 vaccination campaign in which the Cuban vaccine is used?

- Can you confirm that USAID will not provide direct or indirect support to a vaccination campaign in Venezuela that is non-transparent and discriminatory?
- Can you confirm that USAID support for the World Food Program in Venezuela will not strengthen the ability of the Maduro regime to exert control over the Venezuelan people?

Answer. USAID has not provided and has no plans to provide direct or indirect support to a COVID-19 vaccination campaign in which any Cuban vaccine is used. Cuba has not published its trial data for its vaccines, nor has the vaccine received an emergency use listing or authorization from the World Health Organization.

In addition, USAID can confirm that there are no plans to provide direct or indirect support to a COVID-19 vaccination campaign in Venezuela, where current vaccination efforts are non-transparent and discriminatory. If at any time in the future USAID does provide COVID-19 vaccination support, it would only be if there was an equitable and transparent National Deployment and Vaccination Plan.

USAID support for the UN World Food Program—an independent humanitarian operation—(WFP) in Venezuela is intended to address the emergency food needs of vulnerable Venezuelan children impacted by the crisis. All USAID-funded humanitarian activities in Venezuela are and will continue to be guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and operational independence. Furthermore, WFP's clear branding and messaging at the community level about their association with the UN and international donors prevent the regime from receiving reputational benefits. WFP has identified geographic areas for assistance based on the results of its emergency food security assessment. WFP is currently piloting its food assistance program in the State of Falcón, eventually expanding to more locations based on needs outlined in the food security assessment. Falcón is among the five states in the country with the highest prevalence of severe food insecurity. WFP is maintaining its own independent supply chains and food distributions and WFP has indicated no instance of interference by the Maduro regime during this pilot program.

*Question. Central America:* The Administration has announced \$310 million in foreign assistance to Central America before formally submitting the Central America Strategy required by law and without explaining what benchmarks, if any, it has established to meaningfully reduce illegal migration from the region.

- When can we expect to receive this Strategy?
- Can you explain how the Strategy more closely ties our U.S. assistance to deterring illegal migration to the U.S.?

Answer. The Root Causes Strategy that was requested by Congress in the FY 2021 Appropriation Bill is receiving final review within the U.S. Government and we anticipate the strategy will be released by the White House in the near future.

Per President Biden's February 2, 2021 Executive Order, USAID collaborated with interagency partners on forthcoming strategies that both address the critical factors pushing Central Americans to migrate and strengthen multilateral efforts on migration management. I look forward to working with Congress to implement these strategies and receive your feedback in the coming weeks and months.

*Question.* Over the past 30 years, the U.S. Government and USAID have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to help build and reform Georgia's judicial system. Still, the country's judiciary is moving, and quite rapidly, in deeply troubling direction. Georgia's judiciary is increasingly controlled by a clan of judges who see their first goal as protecting their position, and who will sell their services to the highest bidder. Still, USAID programs and tenders go ahead, pumping money into a project that has clearly failed.

Will you commit to re-examining the current program of judicial reforms that USAID is running in Georgia, and to develop an assessment as to whether the current projects are truly the best way to help Georgia move forward?

Answer. USAID continues to implement a broad program of support for democratic reforms in Georgia, including activities focused on improving judicial independence, which remains an area where much work remains to be done. While progress in the judicial sector is fragile and subject to intermittent setbacks, USAID considers there to have been substantive improvement in the sector since USAID programs began, including during recent years. USAID programming in Georgia is also closely monitored and coordinated with our State Department colleagues to ensure appropriate stewardship of USG funding, including performance monitoring and evaluations. I would welcome the opportunity for further discussion of Georgia's challenges and achievements in this area.

At the same time, Georgia is a steadfast and critical partner of the United States in the Caucasus region, and this partnership has long been one of mutual benefit and support, most importantly in countering the Kremlin's attempts to thwart Georgian independence and expand their sphere of influence through military aggression, intimidation, and misinformation. We are committed to continuing to support Georgia in becoming more democratic, more prosperous, and more able to defend the rights (including the legal rights) of its citizens throughout its internationally recognized territory. U.S. foreign assistance programs are an integral part of furthering U.S. strategic interests in Georgia.

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RESPONSES OF SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN CARDIN

*Question.* America's leadership in both landmine/unexploded ordnance removal and war victim's assistance are vital tools in the development tool box. However, coordination between programs run by the State Department's Bureau of Political Military Affairs and USAID remains limited and inconsistent. While the State Department supports demining programs that employ thousands of former combatants, war widows, and other people vulnerable to extremist recruitment from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka, the potential of these investments to contribute to USAID's strategy to counter violent extremism remains poorly understood. At the same time, State Department demining programs have provided millions of acres of land for safe use in fragile settings, but these efforts are rarely coordinated with USAID agricultural programs and other interventions which could maximize their development impact. Similarly, the Leahy War Victims Fund administered by USAID could achieve greater impact if it were aligned with priority demining programs in Libya, Yemen and elsewhere to offer hope to war victims while the State Department invests in addressing the immediate explosive threat.

Will you commit to work with the State Department to break down the silos between demining and development and ensure that these programs and their implementing partners work in close cooperation?

Answer. Yes, USAID is committed to strengthening coordination with the State Department's Bureau of Political Military Affairs (PMA) to ensure our implementing partners and beneficiaries benefit from these enhanced efforts on risk education, landmine/unexploded ordnance removal, victim assistance, and other key development sectors such as land rights, agriculture, and countering violent extremism. USAID, through the Leahy War Victims Fund (LWVF) and the Senior Advisor for Rehabilitation (based in the Inclusive Development Hub in the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation) will strive to maximize impact and efficiency in priority countries.

To help breakdown silos between demining and development, USAID intends to:

- Hold coordination and strategy meetings with PMA/Weapons Removal and Abatement;
- Hold discussions with the PMA, USAID/Middle East Bureau, and representative(s) of the LWVF to identify opportunities for future programming; and
- Work together with the State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations to address countering violent extremism efforts globally. Under USAID's new Senior Advisor for Conflict Integration, these efforts now include intra- and interagency coordination across regional and pillar bureaus in both agencies.

*Question.* Given the urgent needs for humanitarian and rights-based support to Burmese civil society operating in Burma and along the Thailand-Burma border,

what is USAID doing to ensure that funds are going to local organizations and that they can be used with the flexibility necessary to address the rapidly changing situation on the ground?

Background: USAID has shifted approximately \$42 million from work that would have gone to the Government of Burma, to “support and strengthen” civil society. There are concerns that much of this money is going to beltway-based organizations and that there is not a focus on easing some of the restrictions that keep local civil society in Thailand and Burma from accessing the funds.

Answer. The \$42.4 million funds redirection announced by the White House on February 11 comprised only the FY 2020 bilateral funding available to USAID/Burma when the coup began. Additional shifts were made to central and regional programs as well as adjustments for FY 2021 funding. USAID’s long-standing relationships with local civil society, political actors, ethnic representatives, and media have allowed us to work closely with local and international counterparts to facilitate critical work and discussions between the various elements of the emerging democracy movement.

Since February 1, USAID/Burma has issued more than 50 new subawards and urgent modifications to existing development awards to enable local organizations to respond to the coup, augment local partners’ roles, or continue related activities. More than 20 additional subawards to local organizations are under active development and consideration and include grants for coup-response work such as legal defense for exiled journalists.

*Humanitarian assistance:* In FY 2021, USAID has scaled up its humanitarian assistance to address the needs of people displaced by coup-related violence in the southeastern region, including populations displaced near the border with Thailand, as well as in Chin State. In addition, with prior year funding, USAID is supporting the OCHA-managed Myanmar Humanitarian Fund, which is providing assistance through local and international organizations to provide urgent assistance to newly displaced people in the southeast.

USAID has provided humanitarian assistance to meet the most urgent needs of displaced and conflict-affected populations in Burma, including providing food, water, sanitation, health, nutrition, essential household items, and cash assistance. Funding also supports strengthened coordination activities for the humanitarian community to improve critical response decisions. USAID humanitarian awards include geographic flexibility, which enables partners to quickly shift target locations and respond to new needs as they arise. Implementing partners are led by seasoned international organizations experienced in the delivery of humanitarian assistance in complex environments and who work predominantly through experienced local organizations throughout target areas.

*Question.* How is USAID addressing the critique of the development aid model that leads to such small amounts going to local groups and the correlating critique that local groups have such little say over how the money gets allocated?

Answer. USAID is addressing the complexities of localization at the policy, strategic, and operational level—but this also requires that USAID make smart, context appropriate, choices. USAID continues to work to improve our collaborative methodologies and to standardize practices that bring local actors to the table, and when possible, the head of the table. The Agency is working to build co-creation and co-design into more procurement vehicles, and to use tools that leave the design of the activity to a later part of the process where local actors can lead. The Agency remains committed to working with new, nontraditional, and local partners directly and indirectly. USAID/Burma has more than 100 local sub-grantees.

*Question.* Given the COVID-19 outbreak in Myanmar and along the border, is USAID positioned to provide vaccine support, particularly through Myanmar ethnic health organizations that are leading the response in border areas?

Answer. USAID is providing substantial assistance to IDPs and other vulnerable communities in the southeastern areas of Burma bordering Thailand. USAID has development and humanitarian assistance programs in those border areas, which includes work responding to COVID-19 and laying the groundwork for subsequent vaccine deployment.

USAID/Burma is supporting the U.S. Embassy to lead discussions with other diplomatic missions on the UN’s proposed plan for COVID-19 testing, care, and vaccinations, which would require limited regime contact to be able to import, store, and distribute commodities, as well as allow ethnic health and non-governmental organizations and local private sector to support implementation.

While USAID is looking at cross-border options to increase the provision of assistance in southeastern Burma, there are complex political and operational challenges,

including complicated technical requirements for transporting COVID-19 vaccines, that inhibit the use of cross-border operations for assistance at scale. Currently, USAID is able to reach IDPs and other affected populations with development and humanitarian assistance working from within Burma by leveraging partnerships with local civil society networks and local ethnic health organizations.

*Question.* More than 90 percent of the world's learners have been impacted by COVID-19-related school closures, and history has taught us that the longer students are out of school, the less likely they are to return. This is even more relevant for vulnerable groups, such as girls and children with disabilities. You have stated that USAID is committed to making education systems more resilient and equitable, including by leveraging partnerships like the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW). However, the President's Budget Request proposed funding Basic Education at below FY 2021 enacted levels. Specifically, how will USAID support global education and leverage these complementary partnerships?

*Answer.* USAID is committed supporting basic education, which has gained urgency in light of COVID-19 impacts. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States implemented a combination of immediate response efforts to mitigate learning loss and psychosocial impact, as well as medium- to long-term investments to build more resilient and equitable education systems and societies with the capacity to better manage future shocks and prevent learning loss. Despite widespread school closures, USAID collectively reached more than 25.4 million learners in 57 countries through international basic education programs—and expanded access to high-quality education for all in FY 2020. For more information on USG response to impacts of COVID-19 on the education sector, please see the newly released report, U.S. Government COVID-19 International Basic Education Response.

Complementing our bilateral education work are USAID's critical partnerships with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Education Cannot Wait (ECW), and other key education stakeholders. USAID provided technical and leadership support to GPE and ECW's COVID-19 response. USAID Missions continue to work with GPE, ECW, and all stakeholders in supporting our country partners in responding to COVID-19 to mitigate learning losses, return to learning, and equip education actors and institutions to be increasingly resilient.

*Question.* 128 million conflict-affected children lack education services, denying them the right to an education and making them more vulnerable to violence, trafficking, child labor, child marriage, and recruitment by armed groups. Education Cannot Wait (ECW) delivers rapid, collaborative responses to the educational needs of children and youth affected by crises and is the first global movement and fund dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises. In 2020, ECW activated its First Emergency Response funding window to re-program current grants and deliver nearly \$100 million in new funding to 26 countries in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. ECW relies on support from donors like the U.S. Can you talk about USAID's education work in conflict and crisis settings and how ECW complements this work?

*Answer.* Working to ensure that children and youth, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable, have increased access to quality education is one of four priorities in USAID's Education Policy. This priority includes reaching children and youth in conflict and crisis settings. For example, in Northeast Nigeria, where access to educational opportunities due to the Boko Haram insurgency and the resulting displacement of families and communities have been disrupted, USAID activities provide continuity of education, improve the quality of teaching and learning, increase equitable access to education, stabilize institutional capacity to deliver education, and integrate peacebuilding and safety into school communities.

Building on USAID's bilateral work, the Agency's contributions to Education Cannot Wait (ECW) furthers our ability to help provide safe, relevant, and quality education in conflict and crisis-affected settings. ECW has a reach and a response time that leverages and complements USAID's bilateral development investments by pooling the financial resources of traditional and non-traditional partners to respond to the dynamic needs of crisis and conflict-affected contexts. ECW also tests interventions and aggregates learning to improve the global knowledge base of what works in education in emergencies benefitting all actors in the sector, including USAID.

USAID Missions understand this unique role ECW plays. For example, USAID's Mission in Burkina Faso recognized the value add of ECW and will use its funding to contribute to ECW's Burkina Faso Multi-Year Resilience Programme. USAID supports ECW at both the technical and political levels through roles on the High-

Level Steering Group, Executive Committee, and at the country-level through the Local Education Group or the Education Cluster, a donor coordination group.

*Question.* As Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on State Department and USAID Management, International Operations, and Bilateral Development, my Subcommittee has responsibility for reviewing the budget and operations of the State Department and USAID. The absence of U.S. Government leadership in the UN Joint SDG Fund, the sole funding vehicle for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, has undermined its ability to raise the financing needed to accelerate their implementation globally. Unfortunately, the President's budget omitted specific support for the UN Joint SDG Fund which is why I requested that the Subcommittee include a line item of \$50 million in funding for the UN Joint SDG Fund. American leadership of the Joint SDG Fund would also enable the U.S. to prioritize initiatives relating to SDG 16, which in my view is the key to achieving all the other sustainable development goals, as it seeks to develop "peaceful and inclusive societies . . . provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

- a. How can USAID play a role in ensuring that SDGs are achieved by 2030, especially SDG16?
- b. How does USAID aim to promote SDG16 in its 2022 budget proposal?

*Answer.* USAID is committed to robust engagement and leadership on the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While USAID has not made a commitment to the UN Joint SDG Fund, USAID programs contribute to the implementation of the SDGs as the Agency's programming guidance calls for our assistance programs to take into account host country sustainable development strategies, most of which are framed around the SDGs. As such, in key technical areas such as food security, health, water and sanitation, inclusive economic growth and education, as well as in gender, rule of law, and tackling inequality, USAID's programs align well with—and directly contribute to—specific SDGs.

USAID strongly supports SDG16, including through our extensive support for programs to strengthen democracy, human rights, and governance; address democratic backsliding; and strengthen justice systems that uphold the rule of law. USAID also works to strengthen country capacities to combat corruption, including through prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution, and international cooperation.

With Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 resources, USAID intends to increase the Agency's support for implementation of SDG16 by:

- *Reinvigorating democracy, human rights, and governance* to address democratic backsliding and broadening support for human rights and rule of law, while increasing engagement with multilateral partners. USAID's FY 2022 budget request includes \$2.8 billion across USAID and the Department of State for democracy, human rights, and governance programming.
- *Escalating our fight against corruption*, including through prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution, and international cooperation. The FY 2022 request includes \$50 million for a major new anti-corruption initiative, which will allow the Agency to ensure targeted and new responses to address illicit finance, transnational organized crime, and strategic corruption, in line with specific SDG16 targets. In addition, I have established the Anti-Corruption Task Force to develop a fuller agenda in this area.
- *Bolstering our "rapid response" capability* to quickly seize opportunities to strengthen democracy throughout the world when there is an unexpected political opening or an attempt to roll back democratic progress. The FY22 request includes \$60 million for the Complex Crises Fund to respond to such scenarios, as well as others that present a high risk of instability, in addition to a \$100 million request for the Democracy Fund.
- *Advancing our fight against digital repression and disinformation*, and supporting independent journalists and media outlets facing closing space. The FY22 request includes \$30 million to counter disinformation, encourage information integrity and effective investigative journalism, and protect at-risk journalists.
- *Countering Foreign Malign Authoritarian Influence* by increasing the resilience of partner countries specifically targeted by disinformation, weaponized corruption, election interference, and the suppression of independent media, often with support from other anti-democratic global powers. This would be a likely focus of the \$135 million request to cover major deliverables of the Summit for Democracy that President Biden has called for.

- *Strengthening Policy and Programming* by emphasizing compliance with SDG16 and supporting more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies in the forthcoming USAID Rule of Law Policy, integrating SDG16 targets and indicators in assistance activities, and integrating SDG16 in USAID's rule of law trainings and technical tools.

*Question.* Middle East Partnership for Peace Act: Last year, Congress appropriated \$250 million over 5 years for the Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act, or MEPPA. I was pleased to see the Administration include MEPPA in its FY22 Budget Request. MEPPA funds critically needed people-to-people programming and joint economic partnerships between Israelis and Palestinians.

- a. What is the status of MEPPA's implementation? When do you anticipate the first tranche of obligated funds to be disbursed?
- b. What can Congress do to assist USAID in expediting implementation, given the recent violence?
- c. What do you believe are appropriate and productive uses of these funds to help build the circumstances where a two-state solution can be reached?
- d. I understand that there are numerous nations who are interested in partnering with the United States in this endeavor. Can you elaborate on your conversations with foreign governments and if the Biden administration intends to explore this multilateral interest?

*Answer.* MEPPA opens up incredible possibilities for positive change at an urgent moment for Israelis and Palestinians. Engagement between the two sides is sorely needed and I am hopeful that this law will help contribute to an expansion of a constituency for peace and a future where communities with deep historical divides work together. USAID is working diligently, alongside colleagues at the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the Department of State, to prepare for the launch of MEPPA by the end of the year. We are currently focused on standing up the Advisory Board and readying programming under the Partnership for Peace Fund (PPF) to launch immediately after the Congressionally-authorized date of December 27, 2021.

For the Advisory Board, I have appointed a Designated Federal Official—who will support the functions and operations of the Advisory Board—and we are finalizing drafts of both the Charter for the Advisory Board and the Membership Balance Plan, documents required per the Federal Advisory Committee Act to legally establish the Board.

Under the PPF, USAID will be able to facilitate assistance awards to local and non-traditional peacebuilding partners (i.e. private sector and/or local faith-based groups) for innovative, adaptive, and locally led development approaches in support of building, expanding, and transforming popular support for peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. The PPF will target a diversity of sectors, including peacebuilding, renewable energy, water productivity, climate resilience, health care, positive youth development, and those that complement the DFC's Joint Investment for Peace Initiative.

Finally, USAID is actively discussing MEPPA with other international donors and exploring opportunities for collaboration and partnership once the Fund is launched.

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RESPONSES OF SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

*Question.* Per Senator Kaine's exchange with Administrator Power at the SFRC hearing on the President's FY22 budget for USAID, the Senator requests that USAID produce a chart comparing vaccine donations around the world, including what the U.S. is doing to demonstrate U.S. generosity, versus what Russia, China and other countries (Canada, Europe, Australia, India, etc.) have contributed.

This chart should reflect total U.S. bilateral donations to each country globally, the mechanisms (bilaterally or through COVAX), cost and source of funding (to include if a loan), the brand or vaccine manufacturer, and support equipment (for example cold storage units or injectors). It should also note what Russia and China and others have provided to that same country and if these vaccines were donated or provided at cost or profit (to the extent that USAID is able to gather this information understanding that Russia and China are not transparent about their distribution).

This chart should be updated and shared with Congress every 60 days.  
Do you agree to provide such a chart to Congress?

Answer. Below please find a chart outlining U.S. donations, by country, as of July 13, 2021. Due to the lack of verifiable, publicly accessible data on China and Russia global vaccine donations and sales, we are unable to provide a chart that directly compares them to U.S. donations.

U.S. Donations as of July 13, 2021, By Country

Country	Vaccines	Delivery Date
Afghanistan	3,000,000	7/7/21
Bangladesh	2,500,000	6/29/21
Bhutan	500,000	7/9/21
Bolivia	1,008,000	7/7/21
Brazil	3,000,000	6/23/21
Colombia	2,500,000	6/30/21
Costa Rica	500,000	7/12/21
Ecuador	2,000,000	6/30/21
El Salvador	1,500,000	7/6/2021
Fiji	150,000	7/12/21
Guatemala	1,500,000	7/7/21
Haiti	500,000	7/13/21
Honduras	1,500,000	6/25/21
Laos	1,000,000	7/12/21
Malaysia	1,000,000	7/2/21
Mexico	1,350,000	6/14/21
Moldova	150,000	7/9/21
Nepal	1,534,000	7/9/21
Pakistan	2,500,000	6/28/21
Paraguay	1,000,000	7/8/21
Peru	2,000,000	6/28/21
Republic of Korea	1,012,000	6/14/21
Sri Lanka	1,500,000	7/13/21
Taiwan	2,500,000	6/18/21
Uruguay	500,000	7/7/21
Vietnam	2,000,000	7/6/2021
<i>Total</i>	38,204,000	

RESPONSES OF SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
 SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

*Question.* The recent warnings of famine and continued lack of humanitarian access to Tigray are extremely concerning. What specific obstacles are USAID partners still facing to reach civilians, and what is urgently needed to fight famine?

*Answer.* USAID believes that famine may already be happening in Tigray. If the conflict doesn't end and humanitarian access does not improve, the already devastating situation will get even worse. The ongoing conflict has left 5.2 million people out of a total of 6 million, approximately 90 percent of the population, in need of assistance.

In response to the acute food needs across Tigray, USAID/BHA is supporting the Catholic Relief Services (CRS)-led Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP), as well as the UN World Food Program (WFP) and other humanitarian partners, to provide emergency food assistance—including commodities such as U.S.-sourced cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil—to vulnerable people in the region. As of July 2021, USAID/BHA has provided CRS-led JEOP and WFP with \$179 million and \$100 million respectively. Combined, the JEOP and WFP had reached nearly 3.6 million people across Mekele and five of Tigray's six zones with food rations from late 2020 to early June 2021.

On June 9, USAID Administrator Samantha Power announced \$181 million in additional funding to respond to the crisis, totaling more than \$360 million in USG funding for the Tigray response in 2021 so far. The USG continues to lead advocacy efforts to increase humanitarian access and scale up the response. This assistance will address food insecurity by providing nearly 100,000 metric tons (MT) of food, sufficient to feed 3 million people for nearly 2 months, as well as fertilizers, seeds, and tools for farmers to replant crops intentionally destroyed by armed actors. The new funding also includes support for protection services, case management for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), safe spaces, programs to reunite separated households, psychosocial support services for women and girls, and training for social workers and community caseworkers. Finally, the assistance will enable additional health and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) support, critically needed to repair damaged or destroyed facilities and infrastructure and restore critical services.

However, we are growing increasingly concerned that the unilateral ceasefire declared by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) on June 28 is resulting in a de facto blockade of Tigray. We are calling on the GoE to restore electricity, telecommunications, and banking activity and to allow the entry of fuel into Tigray. The Semera (Afar) to Mekele route for access into Tigray is our best hope of getting humanitarian assistance to those in need inside Tigray. To deliver urgently needed life-saving assistance, all parties to the conflict must permit unhindered movement of humanitarian supplies, commodities, and personnel into Tigray by road and air.

*Question.* On June 30, OpenDemocracy released an investigative report highlighting that aid donor funds in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania may have been used for anti-gay “conversion therapy” at several USAID-funded health clinics. This is a discredited and dangerous practice that targets LGBTQI+ people and perpetuates stigma and discrimination. What is USAID doing to determine the extent to which global health dollars were used to undermine LGBTQI+ rights in light of this reporting, and how do you plan to strengthen non-discrimination policies to hold implementers accountable to true LGBTQI+ inclusion?

*Answer.* So-called “conversion therapy” and all practices attempting to change an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression are a violation of human rights that is inherently degrading and discriminatory. The U.S. Government opposes these practices. Conversion therapy is a violation of the USG's commitments to “do no harm” and to follow evidence-based practices.

Immediately upon learning of the allegations, the U.S. Government reached out to the implementing partners named in the articles to verify the allegations and conduct an investigation. Individuals and organizations within the LGBTQI+ civil society communities were also consulted. In an interagency process, relevant U.S. Government agencies and each country's USAID mission investigated and assessed the identified implementing partners. The process found no evidence of systematic “conversion therapy” programs or practices at the clinics, and all implementing partners are categorically opposed to the practice. However, the unacceptable actions of some individuals merited changes to prevent further incidents and strengthen protection and support for key populations. The findings of the investigations have informed several efforts to ensure that our programs do no harm and do not enable discriminatory activities.

The U.S. Government is implementing concrete changes, both with the implementing partners as well as in related programming worldwide, in response to these incidents. These changes include working with local LGBTQI+ civil society to strengthen the LGBTQI+ competency of implementing partners services as well as affirming non-discrimination policies by all implementing partners. In addition, community-led monitoring of health services will help the U.S. Government recognize and address similar challenges in the future. Additionally, USAID is currently working to establish an Accountability Mechanism that individuals, communities, civil society, and other stakeholders can use to report concerns about the economic, social, and environmental impact of USAID activities.

*Question.* The continued plight of those displaced by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2020 is troubling. This year, the United Nations launched a 2021 Inter-agency Response Plan for Armenia highlighting the need for \$62 million to support populations affected by the fighting. What plans does USAID have to thoroughly review the needs in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia in order to provide appropriate assistance in line with those needs?

*Answer.* Since September 2020, USAID has provided more than \$4.5 million in total assistance to respond to the complex humanitarian crisis resulting from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and associated COVID-19 resurgence. USAID provided food, shelter, emergency health assistance, and social services to communities displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh in Armenia. This includes \$2.5 million in emergency humanitarian assistance, to provide cash assistance to food-insecure displaced persons and in-kind assistance to host-family households, addressing health, shelter and WASH sectors to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 for displaced individuals and collective shelters.

While the displacement situation is dynamic and continues to evolve, USAID continues to work closely with the Department of State to assess urgent post-conflict humanitarian needs and possible future U.S. Government engagement on an ongoing basis. The agency also continues to seek opportunities to help build constructive cross-border interaction and cooperation as the basis for peace and stability across the South Caucasus.

More broadly, USAID continues to support Armenia's goals to promote a resilient and democratic society, enhance economic growth, and strengthen its energy security.

*Question.* There have been several recent reports of human rights violations against peaceful protesters in Colombia. USAID must support those who seek to have their grievances heard by their government representatives. What activities is USAID supporting to bolster human rights and civil society programs in Colombia?

*Answer.* Across sectors—whether in human rights, justice, governance, environmental protection, ethnic inclusion, or economic development—USAID engages civil society and increases their capacity to represent their communities and advance positive change. In Colombia, USAID currently has 17 awards to local organizations, valued at nearly \$70 million. Those local partners are diverse—local organizations, human rights organizations, victim-led organizations, cooperatives, family and corporate foundations, and academia. Since 2016, USAID provided sub-grants to 655 local organizations, each with a capacity development component, which demonstrates efforts to engage with local partners to advance local solutions.

USAID often serves as a bridge between civil society and the Colombian Government. For example, at the height of the 2021 protests, USAID supported the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) to convene dialogues with 16,000 youth across 157 municipalities. Those dialogues informed the Colombian Government's Youth Pact and inter-agency policy that will invest \$8.7 billion in education, employment, mental health, security, environment, and culture for youth over the next 10 years. USAID is currently helping the Colombian Government to implement those commitments to increase investments in at-risk youth.

The protests also opened new political space for young people in the form of youth councils, which President Duque announced amid the protests. USAID-trained youth leaders were elected to office for the first time and are now leading policy-making in their communities. USAID is supporting the elected councils and other authorities to ensure that they participate effectively in public policy making, continuing to connect them with civil society and the constituents they represent.

In human rights, USAID focuses on the protection of vulnerable populations and the prevention and investigation of human rights abuses. USAID works with the Colombian State and sub-national authorities to strengthen human rights systems, such as the National Protection Unit protection for human rights defenders and Ombudsman Office's Early Warning System. USAID also works closely with civil so-

ciety to elevate their issues to policymakers and adopt “self-protection” methods to analyze and mitigate security risks. USAID specifically worked to improve human rights accountability within the police. Finally, announced after the protests, but the result of long-term technical assistance, USAID helped the Colombian National Police create a human rights monitoring system to monitor internal human rights trends and shape policy to improve accountability. Over 6 years, USAID’s Human Rights Activity provided nearly 90 sub-grants to civil society organizations, universities, and other local partners.

*Question.* Diversity, equity, and inclusion have been cited by President Biden as a top priority for this administration in E.O. 14035. To address this issue requires an honest assessment of the dignity and equality offered by the various hiring mechanisms used to employ staff who often work in war zones and complex emergencies. Is USAID analyzing the disparities across hiring mechanisms within its workforce, and what steps are you taking to improve staff equity? What can Congress do to help in this regard?

*Answer.* USAID is committed to increasing diversity, ensuring equity, improving inclusion, and expanding accessibility (DEIA) across our workplace and operations, in line with major commitments from the Biden-Harris administration. I have prioritized DEIA since my first day in the office, when I signed and approved USAID’s DEIA Strategic Plan. Since that day, I have continued to emphasize the importance of DEIA, while also working to create a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

USAID’s DEIA Strategic Plan includes two objectives related to equity, which emphasize promoting equitable policies and practices across the employment lifecycle (e.g., recruitment, hiring, promotions, compensation, and professional development) that contribute to a more equitable workplace. In response to Executive Order (EO) 14035, USAID, similar to other Federal agencies, is conducting an internal equity assessment that will also support these objectives. Phase 1 of the assessment will be completed by October 2021, and focuses on USAID’s direct hire workforce (i.e., federal employees) as directed by the EO.

Given that Personal Services Contractors (PSCs) and Institutional Support Contractors (ISCs) make up the majority of USAID’s workforce, the Agency has also committed to additional assessment phases that will focus on USAID’s non-direct-hire workforce, including individual PSCs both in the United States and at Missions abroad, ISCs, and other hiring and contracting mechanisms. These mechanisms are governed by distinct legal and procurement frameworks. Our priority is to identify ways to achieve equity within each mechanism, while advancing broader DEIA initiatives to ensure that all members of our workforce feel respected, safe, included, and empowered to achieve our important mission and can thrive in a workplace free from discrimination, harassment and retaliation. Findings and recommendations from Phase 1 of the assessment will be integrated into USAID’s updated DEIA Strategic Plan, as well as the U.S. Government-wide DEIA Strategic Plan.

Internal equity assessment notwithstanding, we have already taken action to advance its DEIA goals, including those centered on workplace equity. I meet regularly with USAID’s various employee resource groups. Last year, the Bureau for Management identified potential options for enhancing equity for contractor mechanisms at the Agency, including increasing the number of Mission cooperating country national PSCs with warrants, providing paid parental leave for U.S. PSCs, and providing all contractors with access to developmental opportunities, such as the Agency’s formal Mentoring Program. USAID is planning an in-depth barrier analysis that will look across the employment lifecycle to identify and address potential roadblocks to workplace equity in policies, programs, processes, and practices and will use the analysis to identify additional actions.

We expanded our support for the Donald M. Payne International Development Fellowship Program, which recruits highly competitive candidates from underrepresented backgrounds to join USAID’s Foreign Service. We are developing several groundbreaking memorandums of understanding with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities as part of a broader push to both recruit from and more closely partner with these important institutions. These are just some of the many actions USAID is taking to advance equity and inclusion within our workplace.

We openly recognize that achieving this ambitious agenda will require dedicated time, resources, and support. I would appreciate continued Congressional support in providing resources to help diversify our workforce and continue expanding support for programs, such as the Payne Fellowship Program. In addition, we would appre-

ciate continued Congressional support to facilitate more robust data collection by removing legal and administrative hurdles.

Congressional support for an exemption to Paperwork Reduction Act requirements related to demographic data collection, particularly related to ISCs and sexual orientation and gender identity, would assist in this regard. I would also appreciate your support for potential authorization language expressing support for our ongoing MSI partnerships. This will help to ensure that we are on track with our goals and commitments.

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RESPONSES OF SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

*Question.* Since this past Sunday, we have seen unprecedented and historic protests across Cuba. Unlike previous protests, Cubans are courageously marching in the streets—not just in Havana, but in more than 31 cities across the island.

It pleases me to see that USAID has, under the direction of Congress, done much to create conditions which empower Cubans to speak out for their rights. I understand that USAID programs have provided humanitarian assistance to the families of political prisoners, educated Cubans on how to circumvent the regime's controls on internet access and raise awareness in the region that the Marxist regime does not, in fact, provide for Cuban's human and social rights.

But, as I stated in my letter to President Biden on Monday, more needs to be done to assist the Cuban people in this historic moment.

What can you tell me of the Agency's plans to further support the Cuban people?

*Answer.* Consistent with U.S. law, USAID's Cuba democracy assistance: 1) provides basic needs assistance (largely food and medicine) to activists, political prisoners, dissidents, and their families; 2) supports and strengthens Cuban civil society; and 3) facilitates the free flow of information.

USAID currently provides basic needs assistance (food, medicine, and hygiene products) to more than 2,400 people on the island, including activists, religious leaders, marginalized communities, political prisoners, former political prisoners and their family members. Given the significant increase in arbitrary arrests and detentions in recent days, USAID anticipates demand for basic needs assistance to political prisoners and dissidents to increase substantially. USAID is in daily contact with partners to assess needs and is prepared to fully fund its three instruments (valued at \$5 million over 3 years) to respond to this population to the largest possible extent.

USAID supports human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democratic values by strengthening civil society through training on leadership skills, advocacy, community organizing, and documenting human rights violations. These efforts empower civil society activists to engage an increased number of Cuban citizens to advocate for greater rights and freedoms. Similarly, documentation of human rights violations will prove instrumental to assemble evidence of human rights abuses in international legal fora.

Additionally, USAID works to increase the free flow of information to, from, and within the island. USAID's support for independent journalists and networks on the island are key to keep the citizenry informed of their rights and of citizen-led actions, as well as the human rights abuses of the Government of Cuba. USAID has helped train hundreds of journalists over the last decade whose work has appeared in major international news outlets.

This programming is particularly relevant at this moment as local advocacy and access to information have proven instrumental in prompting Cubans to resist the regime. Similarly, needs-based assistance provides a lifeline to political prisoners, their families and other dissidents. Once an individual in Cuba has been identified as a dissident, they face harassment, arbitrary detention, and in some cases, are disappeared. These individuals, as well as members of their direct family, are deprived of all state services, food and medicine, and the right to earn an income.

*Question.* I sincerely hope that the Administration acts on my recommendations to provide food and medicine to the people of Cuba. However, any aid that is provided to the people cannot be given through the regime, which will just use these assistance as leverage to control the people.

What controls are—or will be—in place to ensure that humanitarian assistance provided to Cuba will not benefit the Castro-Diaz-Canel regime?

*Answer.* USAID currently has three instruments with U.S.-based organizations to provide needs-based assistance (food, medicine, and hygiene products) to victims of repression, including political prisoners, their family members, and other individ-

uals who are persecuted because of their political or religious beliefs. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the regime's repressive restrictions, USAID partners distributed more than 14,520 pounds of food, medicines, and hygiene products to persecuted activists, political prisoners and family members during the January-March period alone, helping counter the regime's repression tactics. This assistance reached more than 2,400 people on the island including around 500 political prisoners detained in over 40 prisons.

Each organization has protocols in place to individually vet all beneficiaries to ensure that they are imprisoned or persecuted due to political or religious activism. It should also be noted that none of the assistance is channeled through government-affiliated institutions. Rather, assistance is distributed through trustworthy and independent coordinators or religious organizations to ensure it reaches the targeted population.

Given the significant increase in arbitrary arrests and detentions in recent days, USAID anticipates the need for basic needs assistance to political prisoners and dissidents to increase substantially. USAID is in daily contact with partners to assess needs and is prepared to fully fund its three instruments (valued at \$5 million over 3 years) to respond to this population to the largest possible extent.

*Question.* Since these protests started in Cuba, I have been critical of this Administration's delays in voicing its support for the Cuban people. To be honest, most of the initial statements by the Administration severely missed the mark. These protests are not just about severe food and medical shortages—these have been constant facts of everyday life in Cuba for decades. These protests are about the longstanding and deliberate decisions taken by a Marxist-Leninist regime that denies the Cuban people their liberty and life.

Do you agree with the fact that these protests are rooted in the longstanding denial of Cubans' basic rights?

*Answer.* As I stated during my testimony, you have only to hear the cries on the street for freedom; the complaints about the inability to access basic health services at a time of a raging pandemic; the reality that you cannot associate, speak, or do anything freely, to understand the frustrations of the Cuban people. This is a regime that has not ever met its citizens' aspirations for freedom and human rights. Instead, it abuses and represses the rights of its people day in and day out. The Cuban people want to enjoy individual dignity, and the Cuban regime denies them that.

*Question.* As we all saw last week with the tragic assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, the situation in Haiti continues to deteriorate. The U.S. has spent billions of dollars in foreign assistance to Haiti towards these goals, but the results created by this assistance is now under threat.

What is USAID doing to step up assistance to Haiti, especially assistance to local government authorities there?

How is USAID ensuring the safety of its contractors and grantees operating in Haiti?

*Answer.* USAID's Strategic Framework for Haiti, which was informed by extensive consultations with civil society, faith-based organizations, the private sector, government officials, and donors, prioritizes the localization of our aid and the engagement of new partners—particularly, civil society and faith-based organizations with a track record of delivering for their communities. As a starting point, the Agency is making available \$15 million to new and experienced local civil society organization (CSO) partners to drive local, inclusive solutions to Haiti's development challenges, including from those demanding democratic and citizen-responsive governance from the Government of Haiti (GOH). USAID/Haiti has also stood up a new Resilience and New Partnerships Engagement Unit (RNPE) to serve as the Mission's coordinating vehicle to engage with those stakeholders in Haitian society that can complement and multiply the impact of development assistance. Our partnership with the government, at both the local and central levels, will continue to be targeted to areas of demonstrated political will.

In 2019, USAID established the Partner Liaison Security Operation (PLSO/Haiti) as a tool to enhance communication between USAID and its over 50 implementing partners (IPs) country-wide regarding security information to help better manage and mitigate their respective security concerns. The PLSO/Haiti team provides current real-time information, guidance and updates on security-related safety and disaster preparedness factors throughout Haiti for IPs to help safeguard their staff and operations. PLSO/Haiti provides security related briefings to IPs, conducts virtual and in-person training, travels to IP sites for comprehensive security assessments, and assists IPs in responding to security incidents. The mechanism also has a 24-

hour hotline and real-time text messaging security alert system in English/Haitian-Creole. All IPs are provided with weekly reports that include security tips and current security related news events. The PLSO/Haiti team also conducts regular check-ins with the IPs Chief of Party (COP) staff, is in regular communication with the U.S. Embassy Regional Security Office, and has developed extensive networks of contacts with the Haitian National Police in Port-au-Prince and regional areas.

*Question.* The Duque Government has found that remnants of terrorist organizations (the FARC and ELN) have been using the current, and largely legitimate, protests to stoke violence in places such as Cali. USAID is tasked with promoting stability in this region, particularly with the destabilization from the Maduro regime in Venezuela and these terrorist groups.

How are you supporting the Duque administration in coca eradication, combating narco-terrorism, and preserving all of the progress made after two decades and billions of dollars spent through the immensely successful U.S.-Colombia partnership?

*Answer.* Since the Venezuela Regional crisis began in 2018, USAID has provided humanitarian assistance including emergency food, health, and other direct assistance for Venezuelan migrants, refugees and host communities. USAID also prioritizes multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance for Colombian internally displaced individuals, as well as food assistance for COVID-affected Colombians.

In Colombia, USAID funding continues to address the regional Venezuelan migration crisis, supports efforts to expand the state presence and creates the right conditions for economic opportunities to flourish, including by promoting alternative livelihoods in areas of high coca production. The USAID priorities in Colombia also include land titling, ethnic community support, human rights and rule of law activities.

United States' COVID-19 support to Colombia has expanded testing to vulnerable communities and helps increase vulnerable citizens' access to high-quality care. USAID has established biosafety and infection prevention protocols and strengthened the Colombian health systems' resiliency to withstand future shocks. Testing, tracing and isolation plans and strategic communication were also devised to assist individuals outside of the Colombian health system.

In Colombia, USAID continues to assist in mitigating on-going social unrest. In Cali, Medellin and Bogota, we continue to facilitate ongoing dialogue between various strike organizers' leadership and Colombian officials.

*Question.* In early April, the Biden administration announced that it planned to restart economic, development, and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians. This includes \$75 million in economic and development assistance in the West Bank and Gaza, \$10 million for peacebuilding programs through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and \$150 million in humanitarian assistance for the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

- What are your plans to ensure that no American dollars get into the hands of terrorist organizations or are diverted to pay terrorists?
- Is the Biden administration intending to adhere to U.S. law, including the Taylor Force Act, to ensure that any U.S. dollars you send over are tightly targeted to benefit the Palestinian people and not the Palestinian Authority or Hamas?
- If so, please share how you intend to do so.

*Answer.* USAID provides assistance in a manner consistent with U.S. law, including the Taylor Force Act, ensuring that no assistance is provided to or through terrorist organizations or to the Palestinian Authority. The Department of State and the USAID Mission in the West Bank and Gaza (WBG) have a long-standing, 15-year-old, robust partner vetting process to mitigate the risk that U.S. Government resources could inadvertently support Hamas or other terrorist groups. Trained counterintelligence professionals screen the personally identifiable information of key individuals of organizations and individual beneficiaries, who meet the vetting requirements outlined in Mission Order 21, against both public and U.S. Government databases at the FBI-managed Threat Screening Center. Additionally, USAID partners in the WBG have aggressive risk-mitigation systems in place aimed at ensuring U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance is reaching those for whom it is intended. As is the case around the world, the United States will provide assistance in the West Bank and Gaza through experienced and trusted partners that distribute aid directly to people in need.

*Question.* Training journalists on investigative techniques is necessary to ensure public accountability related to the PRC's export of digital surveillance technology, which is often used to prop up repressive regimes, as well as combat the Chinese Communist Party's other influence operations abroad. Your role—along and in co-

ordination with the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights—is critical on this issue.

Is USAID’s going to support training journalists to counter China’s export of repressive digital surveillance technology and other CCP influence operations?

Answer. USAID’s programming in media assistance began over 30 years ago and we currently have programs in over 40 countries worldwide totaling approximately \$150 million. As part of our media strengthening efforts, we focus on improving the skills of journalists, including building local capacity and resilience to coercive influence. USAID training on investigative journalism requires significant mentoring and entails great personal risk to journalists and is not conducted to promote specific agendas.

*Question.* It has been well documented that COVID–19 compounds the effects of other infectious and non-infectious diseases, like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Since 2017, the U.S. Government has invested more than \$44 billion in addressing these global health challenges. I have always believed that these are worthy causes of U.S. Government spending, but these gains may be at risk.

- What actions is the Administration taking to support countries severely affected by COVID–19 to address the complications COVID–19 causes on populations severely affected by other diseases?
- Particularly, how are we ensuring that our partners and allies in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Africa are able to access what they need to help their citizens and address the toll of the pandemic?

Answer. We must prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID–19. At the same time, we must address its second-order effects, including by supporting overburdened health systems, mitigating negative shocks to households, building community resilience, and bolstering country systems to avert development backsliding in a range of areas. USAID is working closely with partner countries across the world, including in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, to address the range of COVID–19 impacts and the second-order effects. Examples follow from the Agency’s work to implement the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), our work on tuberculosis (TB) control, and the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI).

*PEPFAR and TB in sub-Saharan Africa:* USAID has built on existing HIV/AIDS programming, using PEPFAR partners, to support U.S. Government efforts with African Ministries of Health and partners to rapidly implement COVID–19 case management, monitoring and evaluation, oxygen infrastructure, diagnostics and laboratory, supply chain strengthening and vaccine readiness technical assistance. In South Africa, for example, the U.S. Government, including USAID, leveraged the PEPFAR platform and over 5,000 community health workers to support efforts to control infections and provide clinical care to protect those most vulnerable to COVID–19, including people living with HIV.

USAID’s tuberculosis (TB) investments in Africa have strengthened countries’ capacities to detect and prevent the spread of other airborne infections, such as COVID–19, including bi-directional screening and testing for TB and COVID–19, identifying cases through joint contact investigations, and supporting the expansion of digital X-ray screening tools and introduction of genotyping technology. In many countries, TB staff have been diverted to work on COVID–19 because they had the necessary skills. In South Africa, to mitigate COVID–19’s devastating impact on TB services, USAID urgently developed TB recovery efforts, as South Africa is one of seven high TB burden countries most affected. USAID is also providing technical assistance and support to African countries to restart and adapt immunization service delivery strategies.

*PMI in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean:* Led by USAID, PMI is adapting malaria programs to mitigate the impacts of COVID–19 and reduce backsliding of progress against malaria across PMI priority countries and those in the Americas. Within weeks of the World Health Organization (WHO) declaration of COVID–19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, PMI developed guidance for PMI staff on adapting malaria programs to COVID–19. For example, PMI and USAID’s regional malaria program’s investments have strengthened country-led community health worker platforms in more than 23 countries to deliver malaria interventions and expand surveillance of fever to both mitigate the impact of COVID–19 and accelerate progress in malaria. PMI successfully supported countries to adapt programs to enable them to safely continue and implement large-scale campaigns of preventive interventions, including distribution of insecticide treated mosquito nets and seasonal chemoprevention for children, protecting over 160 million people from malaria in 2020. PMI also worked with global stakeholders and manu-

facturers to minimize supply chain disruptions and increased costs due to COVID-19 for critical malaria commodities including mosquito nets and treatments.

*PEPFAR in Latin America and the Caribbean:* In the region, five countries used \$223,000 in PEPFAR HIV funds to adapt their current programming to respond to COVID-19 through September 2020. Several PEPFAR mechanisms received COVID-19 supplemental funding for 13 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. This support has included donations of medical equipment, technical assistance to train providers on clinical case management, the provision of COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) diagnostic tests, reagents, and sample collection materials, and the creation of communities of practice to share resources and information regarding COVID-19 management.

*Question.* COVID-19 disrupted the education of countless children throughout the world. For children without access to school or distance learning services during the pandemic, learning loss and other harms pose a generational threat. The situation is even worse for children of families that must also contend with the loss of their jobs, or the death of a close family member. This disruption in education threatens to hold back these countries by years, if not decades, in their development.

- How should we respond to disruptions to education in developing countries due to COVID-19?
- How are we working with partner countries to build resilience and prepare for future shocks like COVID-19 that could further disrupt education systems in the future?

*Answer.* Despite numerous challenges in the education sector, the USAID reached more than 25.5 million learners in FY 2020 through international basic education programs designed to improve measurable learning outcomes and expand access to high-quality education for all. In response to the pandemic, USAID is working with partner countries to mitigate the loss of instructional time, prepare for heightened uncertainty, and equip education actors and institutions to be increasingly resilient. For more information on the response to impacts of COVID-19 on the education sector, please see the newly released report, U.S. Government COVID-19 International Basic Education Response (<https://www.edu-links.org/resources/us-government-covid-19-international-basic-education-response>).

*Question.* USAID has a long history of working with faith communities and faith leaders. These are organizations that can often address cultural and religious barriers, as well as gain access in delivering services at the community and household level. In most of the places where USAID works, faith is an integral part of the lives of those we partner with.

- Does USAID intend to change any requirements for faith-based organizations who seek to partner with the U.S. Government through grants and cooperative agreements, particularly with respect to maintaining their religious identity?
- What role does USAID see local faith leaders have in addressing many of these development challenges and how will USAID support that work?

*Answer.* USAID highly values its faith-based partnerships. Consistent with USAID's Rule on Participation by Religious Organizations in USAID Programs at 22 CFR 205.1, religious organizations that apply for and/or receive funding from USAID are free to maintain their religious identity and to carry out their mission so long as USAID funding is not used for explicitly religious activities or in any other manner prohibited by law, and provided that USAID-funded programs are offered separately in time or place from any religious activities.

In humanitarian disasters, local religious leaders and organizations are often first responders to crises and the last line of defense for communities in need. In development contexts, local religious leaders wield their influence across USAID sectors and can be effective partners towards achieving development goals. USAID is committed to maximizing positive development outcomes by ensuring that key community stakeholders and influencers are engaged at all levels. This will be achieved through ongoing efforts aimed at increasing awareness and capacities of USAID staff and implementing partners to engage local faith-based and other community actors.

*Question.* Christians, Yazidis, and other Iraqi communities are still struggling to recover from the genocide committed by the Islamic State. USAID has provided much needed assistance (\$400 million), and the Iraq and Syrian Genocide Relief and Accountability Act passed Congress and was signed into law in 2018.

What is USAID's long term vision for genocide response in Iraq?

*Answer.* The effectiveness of USAID's response in Iraq is underpinned by numerous social and political factors, including the Iraqi Government's willingness and

ability to sustain projects initiated by USAID and international partners. It is important to note that challenges remain including political, security, and economic disincentives for the return of all religious and ethnic minorities to their homes. Despite these challenges, USAID remains committed to supporting the return of these individuals to the communities from which they were ripped away. USAID will continue to advocate that access to justice for survivors and stable and inclusive local governance is critical to build on and extend the gains made so far to ensure future generations can thrive despite Iraq's long-standing struggles.

To that end, USAID is committed to sustained support to all displaced Iraqis—especially persecuted religious and ethnic minorities who were displaced and targeted by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)—to ensure their recovery. USAID's work with interventions with at-risk communities and areas have focused on providing rapid response, repatriation, rehabilitation, humanitarian assistance as well as increasing access to basic services and building resilient communities. This assistance includes rehabilitating essential services, providing psychosocial support, supporting livelihoods, and enabling private sector investment to promote sustainable economic development and dignified employment.

*Question.* What are USAID's plans to provide assistance to other groups that have been recognized by the United States as victims of genocide—like the Armenians, Uyghurs and others?

*Answer.* Guided by the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Prevention Act, USAID seeks to prevent genocide by taking the following measures: result-focused multilateral and diplomatic engagements, early and frequent consultations with civil society and local actors, and improved data analytics and qualitative assessments.

Genocide or mass atrocities can often be predicted ahead of time—malign actors do not generally appear suddenly. Incidents often begin at a much smaller scale but go unnoticed and unaddressed until it's too late. That is why USAID is actively engaging in conducting assessments and pilot interventions to identify at-risk communities and areas where access to basic services are limited or unequal for religious and ethnic minorities. The results will help us understand how to better target USAID programs and establish early warning systems in these communities.

USAID also engages local organizations and civil society organizations (CSOs) on these issues. These partnerships ensure local organizations and CSOs have the tools necessary to understand and report drivers of genocide and other atrocities, which in turn, informs USAID and broader USG programming. A strong network of self-reliant partners will then help us to respond quickly to strengthen communities and prevent violence.

Examples of our current efforts to engage local organizations and civil society groups include USAID's programs in Niger that focus on increasing access to justice and addressing societal cleavages. USAID programs in Burkina Faso build government capacity to prevent and prosecute human rights violations, increase access to justice, and reduce the appeal of violent extremism. USAID also promotes women's participation in peacebuilding by delivering training on conflict mitigation for women in four Democratic Republic of Congo territories. In the wake of the recent conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, USAID is supporting local communities in Armenia to meet the acute and ongoing humanitarian needs of displaced populations and ensure access to critical health and social services. We anticipate that the focus of USAID assistance will transition from emergency humanitarian assistance to longer-term recovery and integration of displaced persons who remain in Armenia. USAID will continue to track conflict-related displacement and humanitarian needs and opportunities to support the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of displaced populations to their home communities as conditions allow. USAID is also supporting persecuted populations that have fled the People's Republic of China, now residing in third countries—for instance Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other religious and ethnic minorities—and has plans to expand this assistance.

*Question.* In the past few weeks, we have seen an alarming deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan.

- What is USAID's plan to address the critical humanitarian and development needs of the people of Afghanistan following the withdrawal of the U.S. military?
- How will USAID adapt to the changing security environment to ensure the continuation of support for the Afghan people?
- What is the plan for USAID implementing partners currently operating in Afghanistan?

- In Afghanistan, we've invested significant resources to expand access to quality education, especially for girls. With the withdrawal of U.S. and coalition forces by August 31 how will USAID step up efforts to protect the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan to an education going forward and build on the important gains we've made for women and girls?

Answer. USAID will continue to implement programs under its active strategy where conditions permit while anticipating pivoting over the short- to medium-term toward basic needs and services, food security and livelihoods, and women's rights. In addition, given the increasing displacement of Afghans around the country, USAID will continue to deliver humanitarian assistance based on need and where access and security allow.

The U.S. Government continues to provide funding to support women and girls and unequivocally to message the importance of women and girl's empowerment participation in all aspects including education, workplace, and political inclusion.

RESPONSES OF SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

*Question.* In the past 2 years, Lebanon has experienced an unimaginable number of crises all at the same time. In addition to the global pandemic and being host to the largest number of refugees per capita, last year Lebanon experienced a massive explosion at the port of Beirut which killed hundreds, injured thousands and left hundreds of thousands of people homeless due to the blast's destruction of their homes. Lebanon has also seen an economic crisis which has resulted in over 90 percent devaluation in its currency, widespread unemployment and poverty. The people are now experiencing shortages of food, fuel, medicine and hope. The economic crisis in Lebanon is truly staggering and has been ranked by the World Bank as one of the top three "most severe crises episodes globally since the mid-nineteenth century." That is why Congress passed a new \$50 million fund in the FY21 bill that would help fund the future leaders of countries in economic crisis—and why we specifically name Lebanon in the report (see below). These funds are designated for trusted American universities, which are essential for not only providing current employment and economic lifelines to tens of thousands of people in Lebanon but also for rebuilding the countries' civil society, building up institutional capacity within the country, preventing "brain drain," and promoting American public diplomacy in a region increasingly being influenced by Iran and China. So far, these funds have not been distributed by USAID.

"REPORT LANGUAGE:

Higher Education.—For purposes of implementing subsection (a)(3), the term 'countries impacted by economic crises' means countries whose economies are adversely affected by political instability, conflict (including in neighboring countries), or catastrophic manmade disasters, such as the port explosion in Lebanon on August 4, 2020. Funds made available under this subsection are in addition to assistance provided by paragraph (2)."

- Can you provide a timeline for the delivery of these funds?
- How much of this funding will go to universities in Lebanon?
- In what form will this funding take?
- What else is USAID doing to support these universities during this difficult time?

Answer. The crises faced by the people of Lebanon go beyond just the August 2020 port explosion and COVID-19. Lebanese people continue to pay the price of the decades of mismanagement, corruption, and bad government, and across the board. USAID's programs seek to support the Lebanese people through programs that help businesses retain staff and assets to build a foundation for economic recovery; empower municipal governments and civil society to deliver vital services; and keep students in school.

USAID has a long history of supporting higher education in Lebanon. While the Agency continues to work on the appropriate allocation and purposes of the funds directed by Sec. 7060(a)(3) of the FY 2021 appropriations bill, it anticipates the majority would be provided for Lebanon, due to these needs.

In addition to this FY21 funding, USAID continues to support higher education in Lebanon through ongoing programming, including the University Scholars Program, which provides merit-and-needs based scholarships for students to attend AUB and LAU, and the Higher Education Capacity Development Program, which

supports Lebanese higher education institutions in improving their administrative, academic, and job-readiness capacity to better prepare graduates for employment and success in the labor market. In response to the pandemic, USAID has supported partner countries, including Lebanon, to mitigate the loss of instructional time through transitions to hybrid and distance learning, prepare for heightened uncertainty, and equip education actors and institutions to be increasingly resilient.

RESPONSES OF SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* USAID's Higher Education Solutions Network, which is overseen by the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI), is focused on connecting academics and development practitioners to enable research to support international development programming.

Several Indiana universities, including Purdue University, Indiana University, University of Notre Dame, and others are working with global partners to advance research under the Network. Despite the success of this higher ed network, the FY 2022 Budget Request does not specify a funding level for it. Were there to be a cut relative to FY 2020 levels, it would work against the success that USAID has had in supporting development-focused research over the past several years.

- a. What is USAID's planned commitment to enhance its support of initiatives in partnership with U.S. universities to develop innovative solutions to global development problems in FY 2022, including through the Higher Education Solutions Network?
- b. How do you intend to leverage USAID's investments in monitoring, evaluation, and research translation, such as those created through the Long-term Assistance and Services for Research Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (LASER PULSE) under the HESN 2.0, to support and strengthen USAID programming moving forward?

*Answer.* USAID is programming \$25 million in FY 2020 funding for HESN to engage higher education institutions in researching, testing, and scaling high-impact development approaches and solutions; building human and institutional capacity between higher education institutions in the U.S. and partner countries; and bringing cutting-edge research and evidence to development programming across Missions and Bureaus.

The LASER program—along with other HESN 2.0 flagship programs such as the Research Technical Assistance Center (RTAC)—has been used widely by USAID Missions, Bureaus, and Operating Units to monitor, evaluate, and plan improvements into their programming. By offering a network of international researchers that can partner with U.S. research institutions, LASER and RTAC have opened doors with regards to on-the-ground evaluations; stakeholder groups involvement, removing language and local dialect barriers, and navigating local custom/tradition considerations. Activities have included:

- Evaluating early grade reading programs for potential replication;
- Studying private sector partnerships for long-term alignment;
- Evaluating the impacts of cultural genocide on ethnic minorities; and
- Examining efforts to determine how to best support learning outcomes for children with disabilities.

Leveraging a decade of experience forging and managing HEI-development partnerships, USAID will continue supporting existing higher education partnerships and catalyzing Mission programming in the field, and to create new and meaningful global HEI partnerships in the coming years through the ongoing expansion and evolution of the HESN portfolio.