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Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, thank you for your continued support and interest in humanitarian assistance around the world. Today, I want to highlight the unprecedented humanitarian needs globally and talk about how the U.S. government is working to save lives.

In 2017, we are confronted with massive humanitarian crises around the world, which demand an immediate, substantial, and creative response. In just over a decade, the number of people in need of humanitarian aid has more than doubled. There are more than 65 million displaced people today—numbers we have not seen since World War II. We are also facing the most serious food security crisis in the modern era. Famine likely occurred in parts of Nigeria late last year and was declared in South Sudan this year; Somalia and Yemen are likely to be next.

Much of the humanitarian need today is man-made – a result of civil war, instability, and unresolved political disputes within fragile states. In countries like Syria and Iraq, violence and insecurity are causing a record number of internal and cross-border displacements, and aid workers are saving lives at great risk to their own.

Humanitarian funding requirements for 2017 are likewise higher, currently estimated at \$22.6 billion, more than double the funding requirements from just five years ago.

In countries experiencing conflict, humanitarian organizations cannot easily reach people in need because of ongoing violence, host countries' rules and regulations, unexploded ordnance, and limited communication and transportation infrastructure. These challenges are compounded by aid obstruction and attacks on relief convoys and aid workers. As a result, running an effective response has required ever-increasing flexibility, innovation, and efficiency on the part of the international humanitarian community.

Thanks to generous support from Congress, the United States has been the world leader in humanitarian response. The assistance we provide represents the best of America's values of goodwill toward those who suffer. Moreover, despite these challenges, USAID strives to make the best use of those resources, aiming to prevent, mitigate, and respond to humanitarian crises around the world. U.S. leadership in this area demonstrates extraordinary global reach and impact, helping to improve our national security by strengthening relationships with nations and people around the world, particularly in conflict-prone areas. Additionally, even as we respond to today's humanitarian crises, our strategy is also to prevent tomorrow's crises, by building up resilience and focusing on small interventions in fragile states before they become failed ones.

We respond to disasters by providing food, safe drinking water, shelter, emergency medical care, and the tools to rebuild. USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance alone responds to an

average of 65 disasters in more than 50 countries every year. USAID serves as the United States' first responder to global crises and an iconic symbol of American compassion around the world. Recall the images in 2014, when USAID deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to West Africa to lead the U.S. response to the worst Ebola outbreak in history. Along with the U.S. military and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States helped to bring an end to the epidemic. When Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti this past fall, USAID pre-deployed a DART prior to landfall to immediately provide food, water, and shelter, as well as scale up hygiene and sanitation interventions to mitigate the increased risks of cholera.

The United States is the single largest donor of humanitarian aid to the Syrian and South Sudanese people, and is feeding more than 1.3 million people in South Sudan each month. The U.S. government is also the largest single provider of humanitarian assistance to Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin, where Boko Haram has driven more than a million people from their homes, creating one of the largest displacement crises in Africa. In Yemen and the Horn of Africa, USAID continues to mobilize robust responses to help families on the brink of starvation. Our assistance is saving lives and protecting important development gains.

Over the last 10 years, USAID has deployed 33 DARTs, including a record six DARTs deployed simultaneously in 2016. We currently have four DARTs deployed to meet urgent humanitarian needs in Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, and Nigeria. The extraordinary has sadly become the everyday.

Today, I'd like to briefly walk through the major crises we're seeing in 2017, describe the challenges we face, and talk about how USAID is responding.

SOUTH SUDAN

In Africa, despite seeing many development and global health gains from our investment in development, several countries remain of great concern. More than three years of horrific violence in South Sudan has transformed the world's youngest nation into one of the most food-insecure countries in the world. Despite our efforts throughout the conflict to stave off famine, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF and others, conditions have continued to deteriorate and famine was declared in two counties on February 20. The United States is gravely concerned by the declaration of famine in parts of South Sudan and by the significant scale of humanitarian need throughout the country. An estimated 5.5 million people—nearly half of South Sudan's population—will face life-threatening hunger by July.

Even before the famine declaration, people were dying of hunger—driven from their homes by violence, and many forced to eat water lilies and wild grasses to survive. Innocent civilians are targeted by violence from armed actors on all sides of the conflict and have little to no access to basic services. The fighting has disrupted markets and harvests, and the South Sudanese people—having exhausted all their resources—are left with little or nothing to survive. Many South Sudanese face a choice no one should have to face—stay where they are and starve, or run for their lives, potentially into mortal danger, so that they can find food.

As we have said repeatedly, this is a man-made crisis and the direct consequence of prolonged conflict. We hold all the warring parties—including the government, the opposition, and affiliated armed groups—responsible for the hostilities that upend and, even worse, target civilian lives and livelihoods. More than 3.5 million South Sudanese have been displaced from their homes, and the exodus of 1.6 million South Sudanese into neighboring countries—including into conflict areas of Sudan—shows the desperation they face as the geographic scale of the conflict spreads. Schools have emptied out leaving 1.8 million children out of school and 17,000 recruited into armies. In the month of January alone, more than 90,000 South Sudanese fled their country, many to neighboring Uganda. The Bidi Bidi refugee settlement, which did not even exist seven months ago, has rapidly swelled to become one of the largest refugee camps in the world, home to more than 750,000 South Sudanese refugees.

USAID did not wait for a famine declaration to intervene in South Sudan, and we will continue to respond to save as many lives as possible.

The United States has provided more than \$2.1 billion since 2013 to help the South Sudanese people. We deployed a DART in December 2013 to lead the U.S. humanitarian response to the crisis, which remained in place through the July 2016 violence. Throughout the crisis, and ramping up over the past six months, the U.S. has responded with comprehensive humanitarian assistance, including food, safe drinking water, emergency medical care, critical nutrition, as well as emergency shelter and relief supplies. So far in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, we have provided nearly 100,000 metric tons of food assistance, at times using mobile teams to reach populations in famine, who are also under threat of violence.

Our health and sanitation interventions are critical because we know that people don't only die in large numbers from hunger, but from the diseases to which they succumb when hunger weakens their immune systems, leaving them susceptible to deadly but largely preventable diseases. Our assistance is also helping to provide psychosocial support to survivors of gender-based violence, give children a safe place to learn as an alternative to fighting, and reunify families separated by fighting.

However, significant challenges remain. Our partners continue to face security and access challenges that make our life-saving operations more dangerous and complex. Bureaucratic impediments, numerous checkpoints, weather-related obstacles, and limited communication and transportation infrastructure have restricted humanitarian activities across South Sudan. Additionally, aid workers have been harassed, attacked, or killed, and relief supplies are looted. According to the UN, at least 72 aid workers have died in South Sudan since 2013. We call on all parties to allow safe, rapid, and unhindered access to people and places most in need. All parties to this conflict must stop impeding humanitarian response efforts and allow relief workers to save lives.

NIGERIA

The savagery of Boko Haram has triggered a humanitarian crisis in Nigeria and surrounding countries in the Lake Chad Basin region, displacing over 2 million people and leaving more than

10 million individuals in need of humanitarian assistance.

Food assistance and nutrition continue to be the most critical needs in northeast Nigeria. More than 5.1 million people face severe food insecurity in northeastern Nigeria, particularly those displaced in Borno State, where famine already likely occurred in 2016. Though insecurity limits access and information gathering, there are signs that a famine may be ongoing in parts of the state that humanitarian actors are unable to reach. As access improves, humanitarian agencies are encountering communities with dire levels of hunger and malnutrition, particularly among children.

This crisis involves numerous other tragedies and protection issues. We hear reports of families without shelter and on the brink of starvation, vulnerable women and girls forced to trade sex for food to keep their families alive, men and boys forcibly recruited into Boko Haram or killed, and children whose worlds have been shattered after months of captivity by Boko Haram. We have had reports of girls as young as eight years old being used as suicide bombers. Yet, the severe and heartbreaking needs of these vulnerable communities far exceed the resources available to help them.

Since late 2016, the UN and NGOs have scaled up emergency operations. Agencies, such as WFP and UNICEF, have begun using rapid response mechanisms to conduct faster needs assessments and deliver supplies. In January, WFP reached more than 1 million people in northeast Nigeria with in-kind food assistance or cash-based transfers—quadrupling their September 2016 caseload. Relief organizations have also expanded nutrition programs, including activities that train community volunteers to help screen and refer malnourished children to health centers.

Despite clear progress, the global emergency response is still not meeting all of the widespread needs due to the scale of the crisis and the persistent insecurity that thwarts humanitarian operations. Faced with threats of ambushes, suicide attacks, gender-based violence and improvised explosive devices, our partners are bravely putting themselves in danger to deliver aid to those who need it most. They must be allowed to continue their important work without fear of violence. As we scale up our humanitarian response to this crisis, we must work with the Government of Nigeria and the governments around the Lake Chad Basin to do more to open up access to the communities that have been most impacted by the fight against Boko Haram.

HORN OF AFRICA DROUGHT AND POTENTIAL SOMALIA FAMINE

The Horn of Africa is facing increasingly severe drought conditions that are quickly exceeding many people's ability to cope. The scope of these conditions are so great that relief agencies estimate that up to 15 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya are facing food and water shortages.

The U.S. government is most concerned about Somalia, where decades of conflict have compounded the effects of drought. Six years ago, nearly 260,000 Somalis died in a famine triggered by the Horn of Africa's worst drought in 60 years—half of them children under five.

Today, experts are warning that famine is again possible in the coming months if drought conditions persist, purchasing power continues to decline, and insecurity prevents relief actors from reaching populations in need. An estimated 6.2 million people—more than half of Somalia’s total population—currently require urgent humanitarian assistance.

Against this backdrop, it is important to recognize there are important differences between the region’s 2011 food security crisis and now. Today, host governments—primarily Ethiopia and Kenya—are actively coordinating their national response efforts, with international support now required primarily to finance the scale of the government-led responses. Families are now more resilient and better able to cope with the effects of the drought. Humanitarian actors have greater access to vulnerable communities.

This is thanks in part to the long-term investment the U.S. government has made in East Africa to help households, communities, and countries become more resilient to droughts and extreme weather shocks through programs that expand economic opportunities, strengthen natural resource and drought cycle management, and improve health and human capital. A 2012 study by the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) in Kenya and Ethiopia estimated that, over a 10-year period with two large droughts, every \$1 invested in resilience would result in \$2.90 in economic benefits consisting of reduced humanitarian spending, avoided asset losses, and increased development benefits.

Nonetheless, multiple consecutive years of severe drought have overwhelmed many communities’ local response capacity and ability to cope. Most significantly in Somalia, preventing famine now requires an immediate, rapid scale-up of international assistance.

Our investments are aligned with country-led efforts such as the Government of Kenya’s Ending Drought Emergencies initiative and Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme. We are already seeing dividends, including in the way these governments are proactively responding to and managing the current drought.

We are also ramping up support to host governments’ drought-relief efforts by utilizing existing development resources to complement emergency assistance. In addition to providing immediate food assistance, malnutrition treatments, and water, sanitation, and hygiene support, we have modified long-term development activities and injected additional resources to further mitigate the drought’s impacts.

I plan on traveling to the region, including Somalia, in the coming weeks to better understand the situation so that we are in a stronger position to respond should the crisis worsen.

YEMEN

Further, the U.S. is gravely concerned about the risk of famine in Yemen, where the scale of food insecurity is staggering. More than seventeen million people—an astounding 60 percent of the country’s population—are food insecure, including seven million people who are unable to survive without food assistance. This makes Yemen the largest food security emergency in the

world.

The primary driver of this food crisis is the ongoing conflict that broke out in March 2015. Commercial trade has also been hampered by the fighting, which is particularly devastating in a country that imports 90 percent of its food and most of its fuel and medicine. The food that does make it to markets continues to be increasingly expensive, with some foods doubling in price, as supplies dwindle. For one of the poorest countries, these price increases dramatically affect people's ability to buy food and are further exacerbating the food security situation.

Two years of conflict has disrupted more than Yemen's food supply. Two million people have been forced to flee from their homes and nearly 70 percent of the country is in need of humanitarian assistance. The ongoing fighting makes it that much harder for Yemenis to find good health care, safe drinking water, and adequate nutrition. To reach people in need, our humanitarian partners are navigating active conflict, checkpoints and other access constraints, bureaucratic impediments, and heavily damaged infrastructure. Together, this increases the risk for malnutrition - particularly for children. Currently, the UN estimates that more than 460,000 children are severely malnourished.

Despite these obstacles, USAID and our partners are able to reach millions of people with life-saving aid, and USAID continues to mount a robust humanitarian response. Last month, USAID partner WFP reached nearly five million people with emergency food assistance. Our programs provide food vouchers and nutrition services. Mobile health clinics bring much-needed emergency medical services in a time when nearly 15 million people lack access to basic health care. We are also providing hygiene kits safe drinking water, and improved access to sanitation services to fight malnutrition and stave off disease. For children especially, the toll of conflict can have lasting effects. Our mobile protection teams provide treatment to children throughout the country.

There is no doubt that our humanitarian programs are saving lives. According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, without the large-scale, international humanitarian assistance currently being provided to partners in country, the food security situation would be significantly worse across Yemen.

SYRIA

Now entering its seventh year, the Syrian conflict is the largest and most complex humanitarian emergency of our time, driving record levels of displaced persons. One in five people displaced globally is Syrian. The emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) exacerbated an already protracted crisis in Syria, where the Assad regime has waged an unrelenting campaign of bloodshed against its own people for over six years.

Inside Syria alone, more than 80 percent of the population—or 13.5 million people—need humanitarian assistance. According to the UN, roughly seven million people are unable to meet basic food needs, and one in three children are out of school, risking a lost generation of talent, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

The United States has been working to help Syrians and the communities that host them since the crisis began. There are approximately 4.8 million Syrian refugees in neighboring countries, placing incredible strain on our Arab, Turkish, and European allies and partners. The United States has provided nearly \$6 billion to date, in addition to development funding for Syria's neighbors.

At great personal risk, our heroic partners are doing everything possible to meet the immediate needs of Syrians across borders and conflict lines—reaching millions of people across all 14 governorates of Syria.

USAID is working through its partners to provide monthly food assistance to approximately five million Syrians, including four million beneficiaries inside Syria and one million refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey.

In times of crisis, shelter and safe drinking water are critical to survival. In fiscal year 2016, USAID improved water and sanitation for more than two million people across Syria. During the winter months, we provided blankets, plastic sheeting, and other supplies to help families brave the cold. In the midst of daily barrel bombs, more than five million patients were treated at nearly 400 U.S.-supported medical facilities across Syria over the past two years. We're also supporting protection programs to help prevent gender-based violence, reunify families, and provide psychosocial support to children who have witnessed the horrors of war.

Our partners continue to face significant security and access challenges that make our life-saving operations more dangerous and complex. One of our longest-standing partners in Syria, the White Helmets, has lost more than 140 of its volunteers since they began emergency search and rescue operations across the country. Syria also remains one of the most dangerous environments for aid workers to do their jobs. Despite these challenges, we continue to do everything possible to help Syria's most vulnerable people.

IRAQ

Bordering Syria, the humanitarian crisis in Iraq is one of the largest and most volatile in the world, Iraq continues to face challenges in its fight against ISIS, most recently with the ongoing Iraqi-led campaign to retake the city of Mosul. As of March 19, more than 283,000 people had fled the city and surrounding areas, and aid groups are anticipating even more displacement as the front lines shift toward more densely populated residential areas.

Iraq is one of the fastest growing displacement crises in the world, with more than three million people forced from their homes and 11 million in need of assistance—almost one-third of the country's population. WFP estimates that at least 2.4 million people in Iraq require food assistance. Civilians are getting caught in the crossfire, and trauma casualty rates are high, especially in Mosul, where more than 750 people have been treated for conflict-related injuries within a two week period.

Working alongside the Government of Iraq, USAID has provided more than three million internally displaced Iraqis with critical relief commodities, safe drinking water, improved hygiene, sanitation interventions, and emergency shelter materials. Our partner WFP reaches 1.4 million Iraqis with food assistance every month. To help people caught in the violence, USAID is supporting 17 mobile medical clinics, as well as the first fully equipped surgical trauma hospital near the Mosul frontlines. We're also supporting psychosocial programs to help survivors of gender-based violence and families fleeing the brutality of ISIS.

In addition to responding to urgent humanitarian needs, USAID's disaster experts have been preparing for future disasters by closely monitoring the Mosul Dam, which faces a serious and unprecedented risk of failure with very little warning, putting millions of Iraqi lives at risk. Since November 2015, USAID has been working with the Iraqi government on the development and installation of an early warning and national notification system to help at-risk communities get out of harm's way. We've also supported trainings and public awareness campaigns to raise awareness of the risks of a dam breach.

Crosscutting & Institutional Challenges

Throughout the hotspots highlighted, several concerning themes emerge. Protracted, complex crises are taking up increasing amounts of resources, causing unprecedented population movements, and presenting unique challenges, including to U.S. national security.

To address these challenges, we are adapting to increasingly complex environments, and finding ways to provide assistance ever more efficiently and safely, in order to save more lives. USAID is continually seeking ways to make our dollars stretch further, to reach the most people with the assistance they urgently need. This includes everything from providing newly displaced families in Syria with smaller, more portable food packages to using geolocation technology to track assistance all the way to the beneficiary; from introducing retinal scans to verify the right assistance is going to the right person, to making sure our internal operations—including staffing, oversight and implementation—are the best they can be.

We have also worked with our international partners to identify strategic opportunities to make global humanitarian assistance more effective and efficient, including prioritizing needs and reducing duplication and costs. This will make every dollar the U.S. provides work even harder and help more people.

USAID also seeks to prevent and mitigate the impact of conflict and political instability in the recognition that prevention is equally important in addressing the causes of humanitarian crisis and more cost-effective in the long run. These efforts include continuing to improve coordination within the U.S. government, for example, to implement development programs that work with host governments and local communities, in partnership with other donors and the private sector, to build resilience, to support reconciliation, to strengthen responsive governance, and to support peaceful, democratic transitions of power.

What we cannot do is provide a humanitarian solution to a political problem, and we must work

in concert with our colleagues at the Department of State, our partners around the world, and the international community to continue to press for cessations of hostilities and enduring political solutions that bring conflicts to an end. Only then can we move away from the dire human cost of these conflicts and towards prosperity and stability.

Some donors have begun increasing their contributions to address the growing humanitarian needs, but much more can and must be brought to bear. I recently traveled to donor conferences in Oslo and London, where the United States again urged other countries to step up. Further, our commitments to humanitarian efforts also enable us to push for greater transparency and improved efficiencies in the international system, including in the UN agencies. Having a seat at the table lets us influence the direction of a response, and hold others accountable for the efficient use of resources.

USAID estimates that in FY 17 over half of our humanitarian funding will be allocated towards the six major emergencies alone. And as the U.S. government's lead in international disaster response, we must also expect the unexpected, whether from rapid onset natural disasters, disease outbreaks or greater suffering from expanding wars.

We remain committed to providing humanitarian assistance around the world as both a moral imperative and as a direct benefit to the well-being of the United States. As provided in the President's Budget Blueprint, the FY 18 Budget will allow for significant funding of humanitarian assistance. We do expect that we would focus resources on the highest priority areas and continue our efforts to make humanitarian assistance more efficient and effective, while also asking the rest of the world to do more.

I thank you for your time, and look forward to answering your questions.

CLEARANCE PAGE FOR written testimony of Greg Gottlieb for SFRC hearing on humanitarian assistance, March 22, 2017.

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