

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
GAYLE E. SMITH
NOMINEE FOR ADMINISTRATOR
UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
JUNE 17, 2015

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. It is a privilege to come before this committee, and I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their trust and confidence.

I would also like to thank my family—my mother, who is watching from Columbus, Ohio, my brother Jay and sister-in-law Marianne, Ben and Sarah, and my father and sister, who though they may not be with us, will always be part of a family that has supported and encouraged me—a family from which I draw strength and humor each and every day.

Since being nominated, I have had the opportunity to consult with several members of this Committee, and I have appreciated your guidance and counsel to ensure that USAID remains the world's preeminent development agency. From the humanitarian emergency in Syria and ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine, to the pressing needs in Central America and the Ebola virus in West Africa, today's world demands creative solutions to increasingly complex problems.

Over the past two Administrations, we have seen unprecedented bipartisan support for the Agency's key initiatives, from global health and food security to humanitarian assistance and science and technology—as well as a recognition that the Agency's work must be informed by a rigorous use of evidence and data to guide decision-making. These are principles that have driven my own approach to international development across a thirty-five year career, and principles that I will continue to uphold as Administrator, if confirmed.

In this time of great need and opportunity, USAID is working with a diverse array of partners to end extreme poverty, foster sustained and inclusive growth, and promote resilient democratic societies, both as an expression of our values and to help build them into peaceful, open, and flourishing partners of the United States.

If confirmed, it would be an honor and privilege to support the USAID mission alongside the selfless men and women who serve the American people in some of the world's most challenging environments.

With more than 9,000 men and women and a strong field presence in over 80 countries, USAID is uniquely positioned to flexibly respond to humanitarian crises with agility and to provide enduring leadership to solve the world's most intractable development challenges – all for less than one percent of the federal budget.

Over the past five years, USAID has embraced a new model of development shaped by data and evidence that brings together an increasingly diverse community – private sector companies,

entrepreneurs, local civil society organizations, universities, NGOs, and communities of faith – to deliver meaningful results.

By using assistance to support capacity building and reform critical policies, the Agency has led a government-wide effort to mobilize domestic and foreign private sector investments, including more than \$10 billion of private commitments through Feed the Future and more than \$20 billion through Power Africa. USAID has worked with entrepreneurs through its Global Development Lab to develop new technologies that address longstanding development challenges. It has partnered with a vibrant implementing partner community here in the United States that has made its own pledges to support reconstruction in Haiti, economic development in Africa, and global food security. And it has elevated the importance of local solutions, investing in the role and wisdom of partners on ground.

Against this backdrop, USAID has responded to an unprecedented number of humanitarian crises spawned by earthquakes and typhoons, droughts and famines, the Ebola epidemic, and chronic and new conflicts. In the past year, the Agency has simultaneously operated an unprecedented five Disaster Assistance Response Teams, bringing new knowledge and creativity to bear, whether by building resilience even while providing emergency relief or adapting data and technology to enable a faster and more efficient response.

USAID has taken great strides to improve operations, increase transparency, embrace accountability and ensure that the Agency is both responsive and responsible. There is much more to be done, but as someone who has worked with and observed this Agency and our foreign assistance programs for decades, I can sincerely offer that it is well on a path of reform and revitalization that is yielding and can yield greater and more potent returns for the United States and millions of men, women, and children around the world.

I believe that we share the view that both development and responding to humanitarian crises are in our national interests and that these pursuits reflect our values. I also believe that we share the view that we need a strong, capable, effective, and responsible USAID to pursue these interests and values. It would be an honor to serve as the USAID Administrator, and to turn my qualifications and experience to the task of leading the Agency.

Over a thirty-five year career in development and international affairs, I have spent two decades in the field, much of that time well outside capital cities. As a journalist for the BBC, American and European outlets, I spent months at a time in active war zones, covering conflicts that had escaped the world's attention.

I have consulted for the World Bank, UNICEF and major American foundations. I have worked with several NGOs, including members of the World Council of Churches when they mounted a cross-border emergency relief operation during the Ethiopian famine. I co-founded two NGOs, and today, the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network and the ENOUGH Project remain active and effective advocates for a robust U.S. policy in support of development and human rights.

I have served on a congressional commission—the Helping to Enhance the Livelihood of People around the Globe (HELP) Commission—which was established to review U.S. foreign aid, and I worked for USAID, based in East Africa. I have served two presidents, as Senior Director for African Affairs on President Clinton’s National Security Council staff and as Senior Director for Development, Democracy, and Humanitarian Affairs under President Obama. I have travelled and worked with former President Carter and provided advice and assistance to President George H.W. Bush’s National Security Council staff.

Over the last six years, as a member of the Obama Administration, I have coordinated Administration policy on global development and foreign assistance programs, democracy, governance and anti-corruption efforts, and humanitarian crisis response.

Early in my tenure, I spearheaded efforts to develop the Presidential Study of Global Development Policy and the first-ever Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development, which elevated development alongside defense and diplomacy as pillars of American foreign policy.

Responding to humanitarian crises has been a significant focus of my time at the National Security Council, including the Nepal earthquake, major typhoons in Asia, the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

Working with departments and agencies, including USAID, I have assumed the primary role at the National Security Council for all major development priorities, including Feed the Future, Power Africa, ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic, maternal and child health, the Open Government Partnership, and the Partnership on Illicit Finance. I have co-led, with colleagues, the development of the Global Health Security Agenda, the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, and the President’s Stand with Civil Society Initiative.

Should I have the honor of being confirmed, I will pursue four priorities.

First, I will focus the Agency on programs that are achieving results and will be selective about initiating new commitments. Further, I will work with Congress to institutionalize these programs. I will also work with this Committee and other stakeholders to pursue meaningful food aid reform that will enable us to reach more people, more quickly, in times of need—all while maintaining our historic partnership with U.S. farmers and maritime.

Feed the Future and the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition have together elevated food security on the global agenda, registered direct impact on reducing poverty and improving nutrition, and mobilized billions of dollars in direct assistance and private resources. In 2013 alone, Feed the Future reached more than 12.5 million children with nutrition interventions and helped more than 7 million farmers and food producers use new technologies and management practices on more than 4 million hectares of land. If confirmed, I will ensure that Feed the Future and related nutrition programs continue to deliver these evidence-based results.

With a long-term goal of doubling access to cleaner, reliable, and efficient electricity in sub-Saharan Africa, Power Africa has already brought more than 4,100 megawatts worth of power

transactions to financial close and raised over \$20 billion from more than 90 private sector partners. At the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, President Obama tripled our initial goal to 30,000 megawatts, aiming to bring electricity to 60 million homes and businesses in Africa. If confirmed, I will support Power Africa as it closes more power transactions, partners with additional businesses, and expands into new countries.

If confirmed, I will continue the Agency's leadership in the global effort to end preventable child and maternal deaths. USAID has led an international coalition that developed targeted action plans in 24 priority countries that will save the lives of 15 million children and 600,000 women by 2020. I will also work closely with the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, and international and local partners to ensure that USAID does all it can to contribute to a goal that is within reach: ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Second, I will provide the leadership, guidance, and tools needed to enable USAID's staff in Washington and the field to deliver against our most urgent priorities. This includes expanding the Agency's work and impact on democracy, rights, and governance by securing and mobilizing additional resources to strengthen institutions and the rule of law, support and build the capacity of civil society organizations, enable free and fair elections, foster dialogue and promote transparency, and build on the successes of, for example, the recent elections in Nigeria. This also means, as I have discussed with several of you during our consultations, expanding the Agency's impact on human trafficking and corruption, laying the groundwork for the success of a critically important strategy for Central America, and ensuring an equally important transition in Afghanistan.

Third, if confirmed, I will act quickly to ensure that the Agency maintains global leadership and agility in responding to increasingly complex humanitarian crises around the world. In 2014 alone, USAID responded to 49 disasters in 42 countries. In addition to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, these included major crises in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Central African Republic, and, most recently, the earthquake in Nepal.

The Agency has developed an effective relationship with the Department of Defense, which has on multiple occasions deployed in support of USAID. USAID also continues to build the capacity and resiliency of governments to respond to disasters themselves. When a natural disaster strikes or a humanitarian catastrophe is imminent, the Agency is and should be among the first on the ground to help those in need, and in a world rife with crises, I believe it is critical to ensure that USAID remains one step ahead.

Fourth, and perhaps most important, I will focus on further strengthening the institution. That means building on the reform agenda launched by Administrator Rajiv Shah. This will involve expanding the capacity of the Agency to mobilize resources and engagement from other partners; to draw on science, technology, and innovation to address development challenges; and to increase investment in effective local solutions.

Strengthening the institution involves tackling some of the management and operational challenges facing an agency that manages resources across over 80 countries, often in complex

environments. It is my view, and one that is shared by the staff of USAID, that the Agency must ensure that American taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly. It must identify successful programs, learn from prior mistakes, apply lessons learned, and share best practices—all in an open and transparent way. If progress is not being made, it must take corrective action or terminate projects.

USAID has already implemented critical reforms to safeguard taxpayer dollars, ensure greater accountability and oversight, and focus on sustainable results. In 2013, the Agency issued new guidance for awarding contracts that increased the weight of past performance in identifying potential contractors. Its new compliance unit has already executed over 200 suspension and debarment actions since its inception in 2011. If confirmed, I will build on these and other components of the reform agenda that strive to make the Agency more accountable to Congress and the American people. I will always be fully transparent about what is working and what is not, and I will ask for your help in solving problems and seeking opportunities.

Strengthening USAID also means supporting and listening to its people, both here in Washington and overseas. These are men and women with knowledge, institutional memory, and invaluable insight. Indeed, they take on some of the most daunting tasks and aspirational missions one can imagine, all on behalf of our government and our country. It is my goal to give them the visibility, respect, and gratitude that they deserve.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the Committee: should I have the honor of serving as Administrator, you have my word that I will be ambitious but focused; that I will not downplay challenges but seek your help; that I will strengthen a growing bipartisan consensus on development that serves us and the world so well; and that I will pass on to my successor an Agency that is strong and effective, responsive and responsible, and transparent and accountable—an Agency worthy of its dedicated men and women and those around the world that they aim to serve.