

AS PREPARED
Remarks of USAID Administrator Samantha Power
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations Appropriations
FY 2025 Budget Testimony
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Thank you Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Graham, and other distinguished members of the Committee.

In the lobby of the Republic of Korea’s development agency—their equivalent of USAID—they display an old bag of flour from the 1940s, marked with the words: “From the American People.” It’s a reminder of how the U.S. supported them when they were one of the poorest countries on the planet to fight hunger and disease and kickstart economic growth. Today, of course, South Korea is one of the world’s richest nations—and last year spent nearly four billion dollars providing aid to other nations. This year they plan to spend nearly five billion.

The decades that the United States has supported countries in charting their own paths of development have brought extraordinary results—for our partners and for our own people. We’ve helped stop the spread of diseases that threaten us all and develop more resilient, high-yield crops that can feed growing populations. We’ve helped people and nations rise from poverty, and in doing so invested billions in American small businesses and opened up new markets for American products; eight of our top ten trading partners were once recipients of U.S. assistance.

Under President Biden’s leadership and in partnership with this Committee, we are building on that remarkable legacy. In Ukraine, for example, USAID has helped farmers withstand Putin’s attempts to destroy the agricultural sector by getting them the seeds, equipment, and alternative export routes they need—efforts that have helped Ukraine rebound their grain exports to near pre-war levels and helped bring global food prices down 26 percent from their 2022 peak. In Nigeria, we’re providing community health workers with technologies to spot diseases like tuberculosis early, which helped increase TB diagnoses by a third in a single year—so patients can get treatment and outbreaks won’t spread across the planet. Across the African Continent, we are working to connect African and American companies and reduce barriers to trade through the Prosper Africa Initiative—efforts that since 2019 have generated some \$86 billion in trade and investment that builds prosperity for both our African partners and businesses here at home.

Bipartisan support for these efforts makes Americans safer and more prosperous—and provides a critical foundation for American influence and leadership in a world where other global powers are working aggressively to erode U.S. alliances, undermine democracy, and diminish basic rights and freedoms.

For example, the PRC's global lending spree has made it the world's largest debt collector. For every dollar of aid it provides to low-income and middle-income countries, China has provided \$9 of debt, while the opposite is true of the U.S.: for every dollar of debt we provide, we provide at least \$9 of aid. The PRC's assistance tends to be negotiated behind closed doors, fueling corruption, and can demonstrate a flagrant disregard for human rights. To offer one chilling example, through the PRC's efforts to help countries build so-called "Safe Cities," they have provided surveillance and facial recognition technology that can monitor critics, journalists, and activists to at least 80 countries.

We need American leadership to advance models of development and governance that honor freedom, transparency, human dignity, and opportunity for all.

The Biden-Harris Administration's FY 2025 request of \$28.3 billion for USAID's fully- and partially-managed accounts give us the resources to continue that leadership.

With these funds, we will help nations around the world strengthen food security, improve health, and drive economic growth. And we will respond to historic levels of humanitarian need. USAID teams have been working day and night to address the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where nearly the entire population is living under the threat of famine. Add to that ongoing crises in Ukraine, Sudan, and beyond, and continued battering from a growing number of natural disasters during this particularly strong El Niño, and the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance has increased by nearly a third—from 274 million in 2022 to 363 million at the end of 2023. To meet these needs, we will need both the \$10 billion in this budget as well as the \$10 billion in emergency humanitarian assistance in the pending national security supplemental request. Otherwise, we will be forced to make draconian cuts to rations all around the world.

The FY 2025 Request recognizes the need for tradeoffs even as global needs are escalating. And crucially, this budget gives us specific resources to help us deliver even better value for money. Since we inaugurated our new Office of the Chief Economist last July, the team is already expanding our use of rigorous data analysis across the agency to identify the programs with the highest impact per dollar invested so they can be scaled. For instance, they identified a poverty reduction program our Bureau of

Humanitarian Assistance is piloting in Uganda, which is offering a sequenced set of supports like trainings and financial services that help refugees move from requiring humanitarian assistance to earning sustainable livelihoods for themselves. For every dollar we invest, households are seeing over four times the return in economic benefits. We are now expanding the program to other nations.

And beyond maximizing our own resources, we are drawing in new partners through tools like our EDGE Fund—an incentive fund designed to apply the private sector’s unique edge to some of the largest global development challenges. We’re working with companies like Citibank, Walmart, and Johnson & Johnson to boost our impact and drive progress beyond our programs. From FY 2021 to FY 2022 alone, private-sector partner contributions to USAID activities jumped by 31 percent. To continue to drive this progress, we need to keep investing in a workforce that’s nimble and empowered to pursue truly catalytic change.

If we do make these investments, I have no doubt that we can continue America’s extraordinary legacy of leadership in building a more secure, prosperous, and stable world for all.

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