

**Written Statement of Administrator Samantha Power,
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
before the
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
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Introduction

Thank you Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Graham, Chairman Leahy and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 President's discretionary request for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The global challenges we face today cast a large shadow over our lives. A persistent pandemic has left nearly 3.5 million dead, swelled the ranks of the extreme poor for the first time since the late 1990s, and exposed the pervasive inequities that continue to fray societies across the globe. Authoritarian regimes like China and Russia are acting more aggressively each year, 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 1983-4 famine killed over 1 million people. While these troubles trend and crises erupt in faraway places, we cannot ignore that they can impact our lives here.

These are not positive developments, but as an American, I am very glad that USAID is uniquely positioned to confront them all, 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. Our investments help support civil society under stress, shore up democratic institutions, address the drivers of violent extremism and the root causes of conflict and migration, meet the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, build resilience to extreme weather patterns caused by a rapidly changing climate, and combat the spread of infectious diseases. When we fight COVID-19 abroad, we stem the rise of variants that can possibly lead to 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.

The Biden-Harris Administration's FY 2022 budget request for foreign assistance funding fully or partially implemented by USAID is a reflection of the critical importance of development and humanitarian assistance in advancing U.S. interests around the world. However, the staggering level of global need, particularly amid the worst pandemic in a century, far outstrips any one country's ability to meet it. The discretionary request will allow the United States to lead on the global stage, and to leverage our activities to inspire our allies and private sector partners to contribute more to end the pandemic and mitigate its effects, to meet urgent humanitarian needs, and to support programs that will strengthen economies, educate and feed those in need, and promote dignity and security around the world.

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. The President's FY 2022 discretionary 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's mission is to make the world safer, healthier, more democratic, and more prosperous. The Agency was created as a tool in America's arsenal to combat malign actors who sought to prey on people's fears and desperation following the devastating impacts of World War II. We are facing similar 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 development, defense, and diplomacy are all vital components of our foreign policy, as reflected by his decision to elevate the USAID Administrator as a standing member of the National Security Council. I take that responsibility seriously and vow to be a fierce advocate 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 and Strengthening Global Health Leadership

In order to keep Americans safe, mitigate the risk of new variants, and rebuild our economy, we must fight the pandemic everywhere it exists. Our global health leadership is evident in USAID's response to emergency requests for support in partner countries. In my first days as Administrator, I have witnessed the resolve our teams have shown in India and Nepal to deliver live-saving personal protective equipment, oxygen, and medicines to communities throughout the region as they battle a ferocious 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 they count on USAID support to help keep them alive.

The U.S. will also lead in ensuring that the world gets vaccinated. President Biden's recent commitment to provide 80 million doses overseas by the end of June 2021 represents five times more than any other country has shared to date. 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, 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 leads the charge 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 discretionary request will expand the number of countries USAID works in to strengthen global health security, 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, 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, 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

We must move far more aggressively to address the global, existential threat posed by climate change, including assisting communities to anticipate, respond and recover from increasingly intense shocks. President Biden has called the climate crisis “the number one issue facing humanity.” Climate change is a national security threat—leading to conflict, hunger, displacement, droughts and other severe weather disasters. It also risks undermining decades of progress in global health and economic growth, exacerbating global inequities, and increasing the need for humanitarian aid. These threats do 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 fifty 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 over 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 outside the United States, with about two-thirds of these emissions coming from developing countries. 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. Overall, USAID 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 harms, as well as integral partners who have committed to cutting emissions and strengthening climate adaptation and resilience. Our programs support countries as they seek to anticipate and manage disaster risks, 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, across the world, the cause of democracy is currently on its back heel. Amid the 15-year democratic decline globally documented by Freedom House, nine more countries slipped into a state of autocracy in the last five 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. The pandemic has also tested the ability of fragile democracies that are trying to respond 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 order to try to take the country down the path to democracy.

The FY22 discretionary request provides an increase in overseas funding for democracy programming to meet this moment. First, we need to bolster our “Rapid Response” capacity to quickly seize on opportunities to bolster 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 and civil society actors fighting corruption and promoting accountability. 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. By the same token, we will continue to provide support for governments to align regulatory frameworks for emerging technologies with democratic values. 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. Finally, we are building the resilience of democratic institutions by supporting the separation of powers, including independent judiciaries and electoral institutions and stronger legislatures.

President Biden pledged to host an international Summit for Democracy so that democratic governments can align on efforts 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 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 have been 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 discretionary request supports 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 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 and build better lives for their families. Through whole-of-government initiatives like Feed the Future, we are addressing the root causes of poverty and hunger. Increased agricultural higher incomes and improved 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 trampling 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 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 for global humanitarian assistance, and we will continue to leverage 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, and we continue to raise alarm bells over the lack of funding to address food insecurity in Ethiopia, Madagascar, South Sudan, and Yemen.

In the Tigray region of Ethiopia, the scale of humanitarian need is staggering. After more than six 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. We used our existing programs, including rapid response mechanisms, to provide food and health commodities, while also adapting to access constraints by pre-positioning aid.

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 later this year. This is a man-made catastrophe and it needs to end. Eritrean Defense Forces need to leave Tigray, and the Government of Ethiopia needs to immediately allow for unhindered humanitarian access and the protection of civilians in Tigray. Senators, 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 six 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 five 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 discretionary request enables USAID to continue its humanitarian leadership. We will not just respond to crises, but invest in resilience 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 others 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. Some of the world's largest economies, including the U.S., have had to shut down to focus on stemming the spread of the virus. 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.

The FY 2022 discretionary request will bolster our work to strengthen the rule of law and increase transparency, which will make 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 has 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 and harnesses their capabilities. We must also strengthen the Agency to maximize our impact and build institutional capacity commensurate with USAID's role as a national security agency.

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. 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.

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 expand access to professional development and learning opportunities and equip our managers with the tools to lead talented and diverse teams. 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.

Advancing Peace and Stability

The number and diversity 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. We cannot promote global prosperity while rocks, bullets, and mortars are flying through the air. However, USAID assistance can lay the foundation for lasting peace and create conditions on the ground for long-lasting security.

USAID implementation of the U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) is helping advance women's meaningful participation in preventing and resolving conflict, countering violent extremism, and building long-term stability, while also promoting the protection of women and girls' human rights; access to humanitarian assistance; and safety from gender-based violence, abuse, and exploitation around the world. Our military alone cannot solve these challenges; USAID assistance is a much more cost-effective way to ensure peace and security. As former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said, "Development is a lot cheaper than sending soldiers." We will maximize 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.

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 have move aggressively to tackle these challenges in order to build a more stable and prosperous future for all of us. Thank you.