

**FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET
REQUEST FOR AFRICA**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA
AND GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY**

OF THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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C O N T E N T S

	Page
Van Hollen, Hon. Chris, U.S. Senator From Maryland	1
Rounds, Hon. Mike, U.S. Senator From South Dakota	3
Phee, Hon. Mary Catherine, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC	5
Prepared Statement	7
Putman, Dr. Diana, Acting Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Africa, U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington, DC	8
Prepared Statement	9
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD	
Responses of Ms. Mary Catherine Phee to Questions Submitted by Senator Chris Van Hollen	28
Responses of Ms. Mary Catherine Phee to Questions Submitted by Senator Tim Kaine	30

FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET REQUEST FOR AFRICA

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2022

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA
AND GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:13 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Chris Van Hollen presiding.

Present: Senators Van Hollen [presiding], Kaine, and Rounds.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator VAN HOLLEN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy will come to order.

I want to start by recognizing my colleague and partner on the committee, Ranking Member Rounds, and thank him and his team for all their work and collaboration.

It is a honor to welcome our two witnesses, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Molly Phee, and Acting Assistant Administrator in USAID's Bureau for Africa, Dr. Diana Putman. Welcome to both of you.

Today, we will focus on the Biden administration's Fiscal Year 2023 budget request for AFRICOM. The full slate of Africa's policy priorities across nearly 50 countries in sub-Saharan Africa cannot be distilled into just one hearing and we will not be able to address every item in the budget.

Fortunately, the full Senate Foreign Relations Committee has invested considerable time in addressing many of the issues that impact the African states with recent hearings focused on the Sahel region, food security, and security assistance, as well as hearings earlier this year on Ethiopia and Sudan.

We may look for some updates on some of those areas, but we have covered a lot of territory in the earlier hearings and I appreciate the work of our colleagues through that process.

I also want to highlight that 1 year ago this subcommittee organized and held a hearing on trade and investment in Africa where we discussed the real promise and the potential of African states now and into the future.

We explored practical ways to bolster U.S. investment in African states and harness the power of targeted economic engagement to

unlock opportunity, build prosperity, and bolster security both on the continent and here in the United States of America, and I hope that same spirit will drive today's conversation on the budget.

I think we all know that new opportunities in Africa are growing and continue to grow at a rapid pace. In the next 30 years, the population of the entire African continent is expected to double and one-quarter of the world will live in Africa by the year 2050.

It is also the continent with the greatest number of young people with 60 percent of Africans under the age of 25, and this wave of young people provides new opportunities for innovation, for consumption, technology, and growth.

Of course, it also brings challenges, making sure that there are job opportunities and the resources are there to serve that growing population, and those are opportunities and challenges faced not just in those countries and not just on the continent, but where we all share an interest around the world.

Today, I hope we can address several key themes through the lens of the budget that are central to seizing these opportunities, meeting the challenges, and strengthening our relationship with African states: First, by looking at how we can help promote peace and security; second, how we can address the most pressing and urgent challenges of food insecurity, global health crises, and climate change through development and humanitarian aid; third, how we can position the United States as the partner of choice for African states by strengthening our bilateral economic ties and fully utilizing the tools that we have available to promote trade and investment, including tools like AGOA, which I think will be up for reauthorization in a few years, Prosper Africa, Power Africa, and Digital Africa; and fourth, what we can do to promote democracy, fend off the forces of autocracy, and stand up against violations of human rights.

I would like to just briefly end by dwelling on the final point because this is an issue of crucial importance in the ongoing fight between democracy and autocracy as that battle unfolds around the world, not just in Ukraine, but everywhere else including on the African continent.

I am deeply concerned about the democratic backsliding in Africa. We saw this acutely in Sudan where a peaceful revolution leading to a democratic transition was thwarted by an unconstitutional military takeover.

According to Freedom House, fewer than 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa are considered "free." The Council on Foreign Relations asserts that more Africans live under fully or partially authoritarian states than at most points in the last two decades.

This trend toward autocracy has been accelerated by the pandemic and by the growing influence and pressure tactics from other autocratic nations like China and like Russia, which attempt to use economic incentives and disinformation to export their models of authoritarianism to developing countries.

This includes opaque security agreements that prop up undemocratic regimes, economic investment that is really used as leverage and debt traps for African countries, but used to help silence them from taking action at the U.N. or other bodies about Chinese

human rights abuses, Russia weaponizing its grain exports to Africa, which we see right now as we gather.

That said, I have been optimistic about democratic bright spots and I think it is important to dwell on the positive as well as the challenges. We see positive developments in countries like Botswana, Ghana, South Africa, Namibia, and others.

Moving forward, we must ensure that we are strengthening our relationships with these states while encouraging others to adopt policies that allow for greater democracy and freedom.

I am glad that President Biden will be hosting leaders from across the African continent here in our nation's capital on December 13 to help move these objectives forward, and my ranking member on the committee, Senator Rounds, and I have been very invested in the YALI program and hope to make that program permanent through authorization.

Let me just close by urging our witnesses here today to focus on many of these issues, but obviously we will have a great back and forth with questions.

Again, a lot to cover. We will not get to all of it today.

We are grateful for your being here today, and let me turn it over to Ranking Member Rounds.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE ROUNDS,
U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH DAKOTA**

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is a pleasure to serve as the ranking member here today and to work with you, Mr. Chairman, and your team as we do this hearing on the Biden administration's Fiscal Year 2023 Department of State foreign operations and related programs budget request for sub-Saharan Africa.

Last month, the NSC previewed the Biden administration's Africa strategy to this committee. That strategy is aspirational, as many strategies of this sort are, but today we are talking about one of the central topics of importance in implementing an Africa strategy, financial resources.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how the fiscal year budget request sets up the State Department and USAID to implement President Biden's Africa strategy.

The staff at our embassies and USAID missions on the continent are critical for the implementation of the new Africa strategy. Unfortunately, it is no secret that our embassies and USAID missions in Africa are some of the most critically understaffed in the world.

I am eager to hear more about staffing in the context of this budget request and want to know if there is more that Congress can do to help make sure posts in Africa are adequately staffed with well qualified members of the Foreign and Civil Service.

I am glad to see that the White House has finally announced dates for the second U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit. That is December 13 through 15 of 2022.

I hope it will be an opportunity for substantive engagement with our Africa partners on important topics that also have budget implications for discussion today, including economic engagement, democracy and human rights, food security, and peace and security.

Within the Fiscal Year 2023 budget request for Africa there is funding for a number of regional initiatives that I am sure will be part of the discussion at the summit, some long-standing such as the Power Africa and Young African Leaders Initiative, which have strong bipartisan support.

I was also happy to partner with Senator Van Hollen to introduce the YALI Act of 2021 in the Senate last year. Others are new, like Digital Africa. I look forward to hearing more about plans for this new initiative today.

Another regional initiative I hope to discuss today is Prosper Africa, a Trump administration program that has been fully embraced by the Biden administration. Prosper Africa has bipartisan support here in the Senate. I am eager to hear from USAID and the State Department about the current state of Prosper Africa.

Over the last 2 years we have seen some dramatic backsliding of democracy in Africa, as Senator Van Hollen has indicated, most clearly demonstrated by numerous coups without a single case of return to constitutional democratic rule.

We have also seen some encouraging democratic victories such as the peaceful democratic transfer of power in Zimbabwe. Our support to democracy, human rights, and governance in Africa is a relatively small portion of our budget, but perhaps one of the ways in which the U.S. best supports our African partners to build strong, resilient, citizen-oriented institutions.

I am looking forward to discussion about how the resources requested for Fiscal Year 2023 will be put to impactful use.

Finally, we have had a number of discussions including last week in a full committee hearing about the impact of the war in Ukraine on food security around the globe. Certainly, Africa is one of the hardest hit regions, but food security is about more than emergency food aid.

It is about making sure that our partners are resilient to shocks, including through domestic agricultural production. We also know that some of the areas hardest hit by the global food crisis are also beset with conflict and instability like South Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia.

I look forward to discussion about how the Fiscal Year 2023 budget request addresses these root causes of food insecurity beyond catastrophic shocks currently being felt in the region.

I look forward to today's conversation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator Rounds.

Now I will introduce our witnesses for today.

Ambassador Molly Phee was sworn in as United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs on September 20 of last year.

She has worked to advance the administration's strategic priorities in African nations through efforts to support stability, good governance, and self-reliance in African states and advance trade between the United States and Africa.

She served previously as the Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation from 2015 to 2017 and represented the United States abroad as our ambassador to South Sudan.

As a career member of the United States Foreign Service she has held posts in Ethiopia, Sudan, Jordan, Egypt, and Kuwait. Amba-

sador Phee has also served as Acting Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Deputy Security Council Coordinator at the U.S. mission at the United Nations, and director for Iraq on the National Security Council.

She is a graduate of Indiana University and earned a master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. It is great to have you back. Thank you.

Dr. Diana Putman is the Acting Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Africa at USAID where she oversees efforts to improve access to health services, support democratic institutions, encourage business growth, and strengthen communities on the African continent.

Dr. Putman has worked for USAID for 39 years and is a career member of the United States Foreign Service with posts in Timor-Leste, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Tunisia, Tanzania, Kenya, and Jordan.

In addition, Dr. Putman spent 3 years on detail at the U.S.-Africa Command where she oversaw humanitarian health and pandemic response activities and was acting senior development advisor for significant periods of time.

Here at home, Dr. Putman has held posts on both the Newly Independent States Task Force and the Democracy Working Group for West Bank Gaza Task Force at USAID, and holds degrees in anthropology from Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania and a master's in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College.

As you can see, both of our witnesses have a great depth of knowledge and experience. Welcome to both of you.

Why do we not start with you, Assistant Secretary Phee.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MARY CATHERINE PHEE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. PHEE. Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen, Ranking Member Rounds. It is my pleasure to see you again to discuss the Biden-Harris administration's Fiscal Year 2023 budget request.

My opening remarks will review the resource requests and then we are looking forward to a conversation about specific countries of interest.

I would like to start by expressing our deep appreciation to Congress for the supplemental funding for Ukraine, which included over \$5 billion specifically to mitigate the global food security impacts of Russia's invasion.

To date, more than \$1 billion in humanitarian food security assistance from the additional supplemental has been provided to countries in Africa. An additional \$337 million will be used for the Feed the Future Initiative and other programs to meet the immediate needs of people in Africa suffering from food insecurity exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

This budget request will reinforce the actions by Secretary Blinken and his team to build partnerships across Africa in support of U.S. interests and our shared goals with African leaders and peoples.

State and USAID remain focused on advancing peace and security, promoting democracy and human rights, supporting economic

growth, and building resilient societies. The State and USAID joint regional strategy and the forthcoming U.S. strategy towards sub-Saharan Africa will guide our diplomatic and development work.

We are also, as you noted, preparing to host a U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit in December. President Biden's budget request of \$7.8 billion for the State Department and USAID will provide us with the resources needed to continue to elevate our engagement and build upon our previous efforts.

With this funding, we will continue working to fulfill our commitment to provide COVID-19 vaccines. To date, we have provided more than 160 million doses to 44 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. We have provided more than \$2 billion in COVID-related assistance for emergency health and humanitarian support.

Because the pandemic underscores the need for additional investment to strengthen African health systems to deal with future challenges, we are requesting \$5.7 billion, including \$3.8 billion for PEPFAR.

Simultaneously, we are relentlessly working to mitigate the continuing economic impact of the pandemic including by increasing engagement with the American private sector and engaging young people across the continent.

This request includes funding for administration initiatives for the Leaders Summit, including boosting trade and investment through our signature U.S. Government programs such as Prosper Africa and Power Africa.

It includes funding for a new digital initiative to expand affordable and inclusive digital connectivity and a request to scale up YALI regional leadership centers.

As we discussed earlier this month, recent extra constitutional changes of government in several African countries highlight the need for greater investment in democracy and governance programming, and increased development assistance to target underlying social, environmental, and economic deficiencies.

The President's request includes \$285 million to strengthen democratic institutions, promote respect for human rights, and directly respond to the democratic backsliding across the continent that you identified, Mr. Chairman.

We are requesting increases in democracy funding as well as resources to promote health and economic growth to advance the Sahel strategy. In support of these shared priorities, the President's budget includes \$438 million to strengthen the ability of African regional and subregional organizations, government institutions, and civil society to better confront state fragility and armed conflict.

We appreciate your commitment to and dedicated resources in support of the Global Fragility Act and are working hard to bring that project to life.

None of these critical efforts, however, would be possible without our greatest resource, our people. It is an honor and a privilege for me to represent the incredibly talented dedicated public servants that work tirelessly every day to build and advance U.S. relationships in Africa.

This fiscal year we will add 30 new positions that will serve as an important start in reinvesting in our people and strengthening

our capability to achieve our desired policy outcomes, but as you noted, Senator Rounds, this staffing start is inadequate to properly address the complex challenges in front of us, so we will also be requesting 95 new positions.

In partnership with this committee, I welcome your counsel, resources, and flexibilities from Congress as we carry out this important work. As you know, funding for sub-Saharan Africa is heavily earmarked. There is only a limited amount of discretionary funding for bilateral and regional priorities to meet dynamic situations.

Additional discretionary programming would enable us to seize opportunities and respond quickly to rapidly changing conditions.

In closing, let me share my thanks for your support in upholding our shared commitment to advancing democracy, inclusive prosperity, and national security as the benchmarks for the U.S.-Africa partnership.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Phee follows:]

Prepared Statement of Ms. Mary Catherine Phee

Chairman Van Hollen, Ranking Member Rounds, it is a pleasure to see you again and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Biden-Harris administration's FY 2023 Budget Request. Before I start, I would like to express my appreciation to Congress for the additional supplemental funding for Ukraine, which included over \$5.1 billion specifically for addressing the global food security impacts of Russia's invasion. To date, more than \$1.27 billion in humanitarian food security assistance from the additional supplemental has been provided to countries in Africa. An additional \$337 million will be used for the Feed the Future initiative and to help address the immediate needs of people suffering from food insecurity exacerbated by the Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Thank you.

This Budget Request will continue to advance the priorities of the Administration and the Secretary of State to build partnerships across Africa in support of U.S. interests and shared goals of African leaders and their citizens. State and USAID remain focused on advancing peace and security, promoting democracy and human rights, supporting economic growth, and building resilient societies through our efforts to combat climate change, strengthen good governance, and promote healthier lives. The State and USAID Joint Regional Strategy and the forthcoming U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa will guide the diplomatic and development work of posts and staff based throughout the region. We are also preparing to host the second U.S. Africa Leaders' Summit in December. President Biden's budget request of \$7.8 billion will provide the resources needed to continue to elevate our engagement and build upon our successes.

With this funding, we will continue working to fulfill our commitment to provide COVID-19 vaccines. To date, we have provided over 169 million doses to 44 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. We provided more than \$2 billion in COVID-related assistance for emergency health and humanitarian support. The pandemic continues to underscore the need for investment to support African health systems and we are requesting \$5.7 billion, including \$3.8 billion for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Simultaneously, we are relentlessly working to mitigate the continuing economic impact of the pandemic, including through increased engagement with the American private sector and especially engaging young people across the continent in these efforts. This request includes funding for Administration initiatives ahead of the U.S. Africa Leaders' Summit, including support to bolster trade and investment through signature U.S. Government programs like Prosper Africa and Power Africa. It includes funding for a new digital initiative to expand affordable and inclusive digital connectivity and the scaling up of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Regional Leadership Centers.

As we discussed during a hearing earlier this month, recent extraconstitutional changes of government in several countries highlight the need for greater investment in democracy and governance programming and more development assistance that targets underlying social, environmental, and economic deficiencies. The President's Request includes \$285 million to strengthen democratic institutions, promote respect for human rights, and directly respond to democratic backsliding across the

continent. We are requesting increases in democracy funding along with health and economic growth funding to advance the Sahel Strategy. To that end, the budget also requests \$440 million to continue Feed the Future programs to address global hunger, nutrition, strengthen social safety nets and food insecurity. This coupled with the emergency supplemental funding will help to offset the impact of sharply increasing food prices and market disruptions.

In support of these shared priorities, the President's Budget includes \$438 million to strengthen the ability of African regional and sub-regional organizations, government institutions, and civil society to better address state fragility and armed conflict. We appreciate your commitment to and dedicated resources in support of the Global Fragility Act. We will utilize these critical resources to prevent and reduce conflict in priority countries that include Mozambique and those in Coastal West Africa.

None of these critical efforts, however, would be possible without our greatest resource: our people. It is an honor and privilege to represent the incredibly talented, dedicated public servants that work tirelessly every day to build and advance U.S. relationships across sub-Saharan Africa. This fiscal year, we will add 30 new positions that will serve as an important start in reinvesting in our people and providing the resources needed to achieve the policy outcomes we seek. Still, as our partnerships on the African continent grow, more positions are needed to sufficiently address the complex problem sets we are tackling in DC and abroad; therefore, we are requesting 95 new positions to advance the foreign policy priorities mentioned and to provide support to our overseas posts.

In partnership with this Committee, I welcome additional input, resources, and flexibilities from Congress as we carry out this important work. As you know, funding for Sub-Saharan Africa is heavily earmarked. There is only a limited amount of discretionary funding for bilateral and regional priorities; discretionary programming would enable us to seize opportunities and respond quickly to rapidly changing conditions. In addition, we welcome additional resources to continue addressing the dire global food security crisis and expand our efforts to counter Russian misinformation. As stated earlier, the funding to date has been invaluable for our programs and personnel overseas.

In closing, let me reiterate my appreciation to this Committee for your frequent engagements with me and my team. Throughout our conversations, I have greatly valued your support in upholding our shared commitment to advancing democracy, inclusive prosperity, and national security as the benchmarks for a successful U.S.-Africa partnership.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Madam Ambassador.
Next, we will turn to Dr. Putman.

STATEMENT OF DR. DIANA PUTMAN, ACTING ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR AFRICA, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC

Dr. PUTMAN. Good afternoon, Chairman Van Hollen, Ranking Member Rounds, and distinguished members of the subcommittee.

I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss the Fiscal Year 2023 President's budget request for the U.S. Agency for International Development Bureau for Africa and I, too, want to thank you for the generous supplemental to deal with the crisis in Ukraine, which is having major impacts on the continent of Africa.

The United States has partnered with the nations of Africa for decades, working alongside African governments, regional institutions, civil society, and the private sector to address challenges, foster opportunities, and improve people's lives.

The Fiscal Year 2023 budget request for Africa takes its key policy considerations from the State-USAID joint regional strategy for Africa and from the interim National Security Strategy guidance.

The strategy details four strategic goals for engagement in the region: increased mutually beneficial economic growth, trade, and investment; advance mutual peace and security interests; strength-

en democracy, human rights and good governance; and promote inclusive country-led development.

The Fiscal Year 2023 total funding request of \$7.767 billion for foreign assistance accounts is a reflection of the critical importance of development and humanitarian assistance.

Increased trade and investment between the United States and African nations brings high-quality financing, products, services to African nations, and creates jobs on both continents while giving African businesses more open access to U.S. markets.

The request of \$100 million for Prosper Africa will enable the U.S. to compete on a new scale, expanding the U.S. private sector's engagement in Africa's fast-growing markets and partnering with firms on innovative programs.

The request of \$100 million in funding for Power Africa will allow for accelerated energy access for the nearly 600 million Africans who still lack it and to lead on driving Africa's transition to cleaner renewable energy sources.

To advance mutual peace and security, the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget request reflects the need to strengthen the intent and objectives of key initiatives such as the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership and the Global Fragility Act.

The request of \$284.9 million in democracy funds will support a broad range of U.S. objectives with partner countries and regional organizations.

This budget request places inclusive country-led development at its center. As African countries continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, USAID will provide robust funding that strengthens local health systems and health security.

The President's request for Africa allocates approximately \$3.83 billion for PEPFAR and \$1.84 billion for other health programs including malaria, tuberculosis, and maternal and child health.

The Fiscal Year 2023 request of \$249.7 million for climate recognizes this and will ensure African countries are building capacity to adapt to climate change.

To catalyze agricultural-led growth, improve nutritional status, and reduce future humanitarian needs, the budget request of \$440 million for agriculture includes assistance for 19 countries and five regional operating units implementing Feed the Future.

This funding will respond to the global food security crisis driven by supply chain shocks that stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine.

While the narrative about Africa is often dominated by its challenges, it is a continent better characterized by resilience and transformation, and with your support we look forward to building a promising future together.

Thank you, and I look forward to responding to your questions.
[The prepared statement of Dr. Putman follows:]

Prepared Statement of Dr. Diana Putman

Good afternoon Chairman Van Hollen, Ranking Member Rounds, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 President's budget request for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Africa.

The United States has partnered with the nations of Africa for decades, working alongside African governments, regional institutions, and civil society to address

challenges, foster opportunities, and improve people's lives. Today, our world is at an inflection point. On the key issues we face—from the COVID-19 pandemic, to the climate crisis and food insecurity, to conflict and mass displacements, to global struggles to prevent democratic backsliding and preserve gender equality and human rights—Africa is essential to our collective progress.

Africa's increasing integration into global markets, demographic boom, and thriving culture of entrepreneurship present a remarkable opportunity for the United States to invest in Africa's future, and thereby our own future. We have the chance to progress beyond the pandemic and begin building a better, stronger, more secure, and inclusive strategy for African nations and the United States.

The FY 2023 budget request for Africa takes its key policy considerations from the State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy for Africa and from the Interim National Security Strategy guidance. The Strategy details four strategic goals for engagement in the region: 1) Increase Mutually Beneficial Economic Growth, Trade, and Investment; 2) Advance Mutual Peace and Security Interests; 3) Strengthen Democracy, Human Rights, and Good Governance; 4) Promote Inclusive Country-led Development.

The FY 2023 funding request of \$7.767 billion for foreign assistance accounts fully or partially implemented by USAID is a reflection of the critical importance of development and humanitarian assistance. Overall, the FY 2023 request is a 4.6 percent increase over the FY 2022 request level. It includes vital assistance to respond to the increasing importance of development priorities and continuing and protracted humanitarian crises across sub-Saharan Africa. The request will allow the United States to lead, and in leading, allow us to mobilize allies, organizations, and private sector partners to contribute more to the causes critical to our nation's interests.

INCREASE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL ECONOMIC GROWTH, TRADE, AND INVESTMENT

Increased trade and investment between the United States and African nations brings high quality financing, products, services, and expertise to African nations, creates jobs on both continents, and gives African businesses more open access to U.S. markets. Through Prosper Africa, USAID is committed to strengthening trade and investment ties between African nations and the United States, and spurring responsible private investment at a scale that could never be matched by foreign aid alone.

The FY 2023 request of \$100 million for Prosper Africa will enable the U.S. to compete on a new scale, expanding the U.S. private sector's engagement in Africa's fast-growing markets and partnering with firms on innovative programs that will allow the U.S. to create a positive alternative to the People's Republic of China's often-attractive but dangerously non-transparent financing offers. Funds will mobilize billions more of investment in African economies and support hundreds of thousands of jobs beyond what is possible at current funding levels. USAID will expand our private sector-led approach to advance recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and bolster resilience to global shocks from the further invasion of Ukraine and climate change. Prosper Africa's work will engage businesses and investors led by young people, women, and the African Diaspora, as well as small businesses, which are powerful job creators and the lifeblood of our economies.

The FY 2023 request of \$100 million in funding for Power Africa will allow Power Africa to accelerate energy access for the nearly 600 million Africans (75 percent of global total) who still lack it and to lead on driving Africa's transition to cleaner, renewable energy sources. Power Africa supports critical reforms to bolster transparency, increase competition, and enhance host country partners' technical capacity. The initiative promotes mutual economic prosperity between the U.S. and African partners via technical expertise, innovation, investment, and enabling environment reform. With a strong emphasis on renewable energy and achieving the pledged climate ambitions of both the U.S. Government and African leaders, the goal of Power Africa remains to advance universal energy access—adding 30,000 megawatts and 60 million connections by 2030. This work is complemented by USAID's regional trade and investment activities that continue to focus on building a strong enabling environment for economic growth for African countries.

ADVANCE MUTUAL PEACE AND SECURITY INTERESTS

USAID investments save lives, strengthen economies, prevent and mitigate fragility, promote resilience, and enhance freedom around the world. The Agency's work complements the efforts of the Departments of State and Defense, helping reduce threats to both Africans and Americans at home and abroad. The FY 2023 budget request reflects the need to support the intent and objectives of key initia-

tives such as the Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership, the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism, and the Global Fragility Act. Through these efforts, we also advance women’s meaningful participation in preventing and resolving conflict, countering violent extremism and terrorism, and building post-conflict peace and stability, all important elements of the U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security.

STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

In large part due to years-long trends of democratic backsliding and rising autocracies, we are at a critical moment for the United States and fellow supporters of democracy around the world. Now is the time to unite in the pursuit of a freer, more prosperous world. This is especially true in sub-Saharan Africa, where 93 percent of the population now lives in “Partly Free” or “Not Free” countries per the 2022 Freedom House rankings.

The FY 2023 request of \$284.9 million in democracy funds will support a broad range of U.S. objectives with partner countries and regional organizations, and will stabilize and build democratic institutions; strengthen respect for human rights, good governance, and effective service delivery; enhance gender equality and social inclusion; and address causes of fragility and violence. These funds will also empower local partners, provide transparency in political systems, and address authoritarianism and disinformation through activities like strengthening independent media and digital technologies.

To address the projected doubling of population in Africa by 2050 to 2.2 billion people and to set them up for success, USAID will create opportunities for Africa’s children and youth with programs that increase equitable access to foundational learning and encourage talented youth, such as through the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). The FY 2023 request level of \$20 million for YALI will expand opportunities to support transformational local leaders who contribute economically to their communities and advocate for peace, security, and democratic governance.

PROMOTE INCLUSIVE COUNTRY-LED DEVELOPMENT

Finally, this budget request places inclusive, country-led development at its center. As African countries continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, USAID will provide robust funding that strengthens local health systems and health security. The President’s FY 2023 request for Africa allocates approximately \$3.83 billion for PEPFAR, and \$1.84 billion for other health programs including malaria, tuberculosis, and maternal and child health.

Sub-Saharan Africa is vulnerable to natural resource degradation and the effects of climate change, including shocks from extreme weather events. The FY 2023 request of \$249.7 million for climate recognizes this and will ensure African countries are building capacity to adapt to climate change while growing their economies and optimizing the use of natural resources and human capital in a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable manner.

To catalyze agriculture-led growth, improve nutritional status, and reduce future humanitarian needs, the FY 2023 request of \$440 million for agriculture includes assistance for 19 countries and five regional operating units implementing Feed the Future. This funding will respond to the global food security crisis driven by supply chain shocks that stem from the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s war on Ukraine. These funds will also enable the expansion of Feed the Future to eight new target countries in addition to the existing 12. These target countries reflect interagency consensus on where U.S. Government investments can achieve sustainable reductions in poverty, malnutrition, and hunger while meeting the statutory requirements under the current Global Food Security Act.

It is crucial that USAID engage more frequently and sustainably with a broader and more inclusive range of partners. That’s especially true of the community-led organizations and companies based in the countries in which we work. Our approach to community-led development builds on more than a decade of the Agency’s prior experience working directly on localization. It devolves more power and leadership to local actors, elevates diversity and equity in our partnerships, and addresses some of the systemic and operational constraints at USAID. We have created intentional shifts in the way we design and implement our programs, placing local communities and stakeholders in the lead, and we continue to integrate this approach throughout our work.

CONCLUSION

While the narrative about Africa is often dominated by its challenges, it is a continent better characterized by resilience and transformation. We saw this in the in-

novations that sprang up to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, the resilience shown by individuals experiencing negative outcomes of climate change, and the thousands of voices that have spoken out to safeguard democracy. These actions all illustrate the spirit of Africa and USAID, and with your support, we look forward to building toward that promising future together.

Thank you, and I look forward to responding to your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Dr. Putman.

We will lead off and take turns. The other members will join us possibly, but let me start with a question for you, Ambassador Phee, that also has a component for Dr. Putman at USAID.

It has been a little while since we have had a hearing in this committee that covered the situation in Sudan. I was in Sudan in May of last year with Senator Coons at a very hopeful moment after the peaceful revolution and a lot of excitement about the transition toward democracy at that time.

That, of course, has been derailed with the repressive crackdown. We saw just last week security forces killed more than 30 people and injured a hundred during clashes with protesters.

If you could update us on where we are in terms of using our policy levers to try to put Sudan back on the road towards stability and democracy and, Dr. Putman, back in I think it was 2020, we appropriated \$700 million to support various programs in Sudan, money that was channeled through USAID.

I know that a lot of that was put on hold. Some of it was redirected to other purposes to make sure that it did not flow through the regime, but if you could both address what we are doing in terms of our policy and what we are doing with our resources there, beginning with Ambassador Phee.

Ms. PHEE. Thank you very much.

We share the disappointment of the Sudanese people that the transition to democracy fell off the track.

Since January, there have been intensive discussions throughout the country on how to move forward and restore a civilian-led transitional government.

We helped energize a trilateral or tripartite process that involves the U.N. mission in Sudan, an AU mission in Sudan, and the regional organization IGAD. They held over a thousand meetings with different Sudanese to discuss how to identify a new path forward to restore the transition.

That process, however, has lagged and in June of this year I traveled to Khartoum, in part because I was concerned about the looming economic challenges and I was concerned that if the Sudanese did not find a way forward to restore their transition, that political process could be quickly overwhelmed by economic problems, which are very grave and serious and exacerbated by their dependence on commodities from Russia and Ukraine.

I am happy to report to you today that conversations among the parties have intensified and this is, I think, in large part due to the strength and inspiring resilience of the youth and the people of Sudan who continue to resist military rule.

Right now, there are serious conversations underway between the military and the different components of civil society.

As you may have seen in recent days, both General al-Burhan and General Hemetti have each issued statements claiming that

they are committed to leaving politics and to establishing a civilian-led government.

The discussions have accelerated. They are looking at the difficult issue of the role of the military during a transition. There are positive ideas being exchanged.

We, in concert with our troika partners, issued a statement on July 14 suggesting guidelines or benchmarks that would be needed to be seen in any agreement that they reach.

These include that, again, the government—transitional government should be civilian-led and have broad-based nationwide support. There should be a clear timeline for free and fair elections, procedures for selecting a transitional prime minister and other key officials, and a dispute resolution mechanism to avoid future political crises.

Most importantly, as I said, there must be full clarity and oversight about the military's role and responsibilities and that the military cannot define those roles and responsibilities unilaterally. They must be agreed to by the civilians.

We continue to work with our partners in Sudan, both Sudanese and external parties, to encourage completion of these active and dynamic discussions on a new constitutional arrangement to restore the civilian-led transitional government.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you for updating us on that—on your efforts.

Dr. Putman.

Dr. PUTMAN. Sure. Thank you for the question.

Just to let you know, briefly, that of the \$700 million appropriated by Congress, we have allocated \$108 million of that, \$30 million for programs focused on human rights, elections, agriculture, and conflict mitigation, and \$78 million for transition initiatives that support civil society.

Prior to the military takeover, we had been working with the government, but we have pulled back and we are not doing any activities with the government at all at this point.

We are having consultations with staffers of the full committee to actually discuss what will be done with the rest of the funding at this point in time.

Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that.

There is the question of whether it is put to other purposes within Sudan or reprogrammed elsewhere, at least until things change in Sudan, but we look forward to continuing those conversations.

Senator ROUNDS.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to both of our witnesses for your opening statements.

Secretary Phee, Africa is home to the most critically understaffed diplomatic corps in the world. I am glad to hear that this budget addresses some of that and that they are requesting some new positions.

However, it seems to me that the State Department is having trouble just staffing the positions that already exist. How will adding new positions address the understaffing of positions that already exist in Africa?

Just to kind of push the conversation a little bit, what is the department doing to encourage more qualified Foreign Service Officers to bid on positions and serve in Africa?

Finally, what can Congress do to help make sure those posts that are in Africa are adequately staffed and staffed with well-qualified members of the Foreign and Civil Service?

Kind of a broad ranging question, but, really, I think, to the heart of some of the challenges that you are facing right now.

Ms. PHEE. Thank you very much for your concern about this issue.

We would all be more influential and impactful if we had more personnel resources, and as you know well, sort of the first ring of this problem is that the State Department as a whole is understaffed because of a previous freeze in staffing and failure to hire to address attrition.

If you consider us a free market where people move to different regions of the world, every region and also here back in Washington we are suffering from insufficient staffing.

Then the question becomes, first, how do we address that. That is the Administration's strategic staffing initiative, which I referred to.

Then the second question is what can we do in the Africa Bureau to attract more talent and to encourage Foreign Service Officers to serve in Africa, which is an enormous opportunity and privilege, given the opportunities and the strength of the peoples in Africa.

The good news I have for you is that the situation across the bureau is not as dire as it is in the Sahel, which we just discussed a few weeks ago. If you will allow me, if I look at the numbers—and the numbers that we have are a little bit confusing because they are a snapshot in time.

For example, I have numbers from last week. Some people might be on leave, but we have in AF, as we call it, we have about 1,757 authorized positions overseas and 1,527 of those positions are staffed. Globally for the bureau, it is not as dire as it is in the Sahel and also in Sudan, where we also have shortages.

We have different options to address the challenges. As you know, in unaccompanied posts or in countries with poor educational or medical facilities it is hard, depending on where you are in your life cycle in your family, to bring certain colleagues to posts.

We look at financial incentives. We have pioneered in the AF Bureau what we are calling the spoke bidding experience so that we are actually sitting down and speaking with interested bidders about different options throughout the continent, specifically reaching out to talented officers to encourage them to come in.

I think it is a combination of financial incentives, helping address a family or individual's particular needs, finding a post that works for them in Africa, focusing on recruitment within the State Department and the continuing support we see from our leadership about—and from you that Africa matters for itself and our country and to encourage people to serve there.

Those are some of the types of steps we are taking.

Senator ROUNDS. Do we really have to kind of take a look more at focusing? I know there are some areas where we consider them

hardship or areas where flat out people just are not applying because there is other places that they would prefer to be, and yet, we need qualified individuals here.

Does Congress need to take steps to give direction or guidance with regard to filling these in the near future or are we going to see improvements in the filling of these here in the next few months?

Ms. PHEE. I am not sure about the time frame, but I genuinely believe if the State Department as a whole had more people that Africa would attract that talent.

I think we saw in the past 20 years and particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, when we use financial incentives we were able to attract individuals to serve.

I am personally interested in looking at financial incentives that would encourage a 2-year assignment. I think it is very difficult to build relationships, which is the heart of what we do, in a 1-year assignment.

That would be my preference for applying financial resources.

Senator ROUNDS. Then one last question on it. Do you have the resources to be able to make those financial commitments at this time?

Ms. PHEE. No.

Senator ROUNDS. Then would that not be something that we need to address?

Ms. PHEE. Yes, but that, of course, is not something that I—as you know, I, individually, can address. That would be part of the Administration's request and its partnership with you.

Senator ROUNDS. I recognize that I am out of time, but my point being we recognize that you have a challenge in filling these and that you have identified, perhaps, one way to do that, but if you do not have that tool available to you, you will not get it done. My question straightforward is do we need to make some modifications or policy recommendations that would allow you to do what you have just suggested?

Ms. PHEE. To the best of my understanding, Senator, and with the support of the State Department leadership, which is also focused on this question, I think it is a question of resources both in hiring and providing incentives.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Ms. PHEE. Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator Rounds, and we look forward to working with you to try to provide some of those incentives.

Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen, Senator Rounds, and thank you to the witnesses for your important service.

Virginia has a fairly sizable Ethiopian diaspora community and they are very, very focused on the challenges there.

As you know, since the war in Ethiopia began in November of 2020 there have been two million displaced, tens of thousands of deaths. Observers have found credible reports of human rights abuses including ethnic cleansing, massacres, sexual violence, and the U.N. reports that the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia has

significantly deteriorated this year, leading to dire humanitarian needs across the country.

Compounding these humanitarian needs driven by war there has been a prolonged drought. Twenty-nine million people are estimated to need humanitarian assistance and protection this year, compared to 23.5 million last year and 8.4 million in 2020.

In May of 2021, the State Department—and this is, Ambassador Phee, a question for you—the State Department restricted some assistance to Ethiopia based on conflict and human rights-related concerns.

How much and what type of assistance was affected by the freeze and of that assistance what activities, if any, have since resumed?

Ms. PHEE. Thank you, Senator.

As you know, we have focused intensively on trying to stop the war. That was the number-one priority in order to stop the grave human rights violations committed by all fighting forces.

I am happy to report to you that in January of this year the government effectively ceased air operations in Tigray and there has been a durable effective cessation of hostilities between the parties since March.

We continue to encourage talks between the parties to consolidate that important beginning.

The second critical need was humanitarian access. As you know, we intensively engaged the parties on improving humanitarian access in Tigray and we have achieved enormous success with our partners at USAID and our implementing partners, and I am happy to report that this week the government has started to allow duty-free import of fuel from Djibouti to assist in the humanitarian response in the north.

That is about 2 million liters per month and that fuel was the sort of critical last step to ensuring the humanitarian assistance got moved around Tigray to people in need.

Services still have not been restored in Tigray so that remains an area of concern that we continue to work on.

Thirdly, on human rights and accountability, we have been working to arrange for the U.N. Human Rights Commission of Inquiry to visit Ethiopia. That visit took place this week to start discussions about accountability. That is a very critical step forward.

I think we are in a much better place today than we were in May of 2021. The most, I think, important program from the Ethiopian perspective was because of the way we have structured AGOA, we were forced to end AGOA because they were not meeting the commitments under AGOA.

Those are the benchmarks that we are now looking at to review whether or not we could resume assistance, whether it is our development assistance, which I will defer to Dr. Putman, or other types of engagement that we effectively ceased during the conflict.

Is that—

Senator KAINE. That is a good way to get started. I am going to follow up.

How much assistance—this is a budget hearing of the State and USAID budget for Africa—how much assistance requested for Fiscal Year 2023 would be focused on mitigating or resolving conflict

in Ethiopia or helping people there, both from the State Department and the USAID perspective?

Ms. PHEE. I do not have those numbers, but I am focused on getting them in a position where they will be available. I will come back to you on that.

Senator Kaine. That would be great.

Then from the USAID perspective, talk a little bit about what we are doing to ameliorate the suffering on the ground today.

Dr. PUTMAN. Thank you, Senator.

As you know, USAID has put a tremendous amount of money into humanitarian assistance. We have provided more than \$1.2 billion in humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia since the crisis began, including nearly \$590 million from USAID and more than \$26 million from the U.S. Department of State this fiscal year.

We have just made a new announcement that we will be providing another \$488 million in critical humanitarian assistance that will be both for northern Ethiopia, but particularly in the areas affected by the ongoing drought, which is basically unprecedented.

We also have—because of Congress' willingness to allow us to use notwithstanding authority, we have been able to continue a large amount of our development assistance to Ethiopia, but we are not providing assistance through the government. We stopped all of that assistance when the conflict began.

We are able to continue doing life-saving work in food security, in health, COVID response, those sorts of activities, and we have been able to maintain that as well as a focus on educating children.

Senator Kaine. Thank you. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator Kaine, and thank you for raising that.

I do want to pick up a little bit on the Ethiopia situation.

Ambassador Phee, I want to thank you for your personal efforts. I know how much time and effort you have put into trying to bring the parties together to seek a political solution.

As I understand the current state of play, you have got the government that appointed their negotiating team. You have the TPLF that appointed negotiators as well.

There is a dispute as to who should be—what should be the forum for these negotiations with the TPLF wanting the Kenyan President Kenyatta to mediate and Ethiopia asking that the mediator be the African Union.

Number one, is that an accurate description of this current state of play and what are we doing to resolve it? It seems to be something we should be able to help them overcome if they are both interested in getting to the negotiations.

Ms. PHEE. Thank you.

First, I would observe that, generally speaking, Kenya and Ethiopia have positive relations, including Prime Minister Abiy and President Kenyatta.

I do not think—I think it would have been very possible to work out an arrangement where Kenya hosted these first public talks.

As you are aware, I am sure, because we are all excited about it, the presidential election in Kenya is on August 9 and it is our

expectation that a natural focus on that event may be affecting the scheduling of these talks.

Fortunately, our new envoy for the Horn, Ambassador Mike Hammer, will be in Ethiopia this week and he will be having discussions with the parties to see what we can do to move forward on those talks.

That is the current state of play.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, and thank you for mentioning AGOA.

As you know, in other conversations I have raised my concern that the freezing of AGOA impacts the people throughout Ethiopia. It does not specifically punish the government. It hurts farmers no matter where they live and other entrepreneurs.

I am glad that you are taking a look at that and making a determination about whether or not that freeze can be lifted and, as I understand it, you have the authority—you, the President, the Secretary, have that authority once you make such a determination.

Is that right?

Ms. PHEE. I think USTR would say they have a primary voice in this discussion.

The interagency is looking closely at that and I know members of Congress are interested as well. We will try and find a way forward that meets, I think, the interests and concerns of all parties involved.

The points I outlined to Senator Kaine are, as you know, components of the AGOA criteria that we are measuring. Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Yes. Thank you.

Dr. Putman, let me turn to the request for the Digital Africa program.

This committee has been—is, I think, more familiar with Power Africa and Prosper Africa. This is a new request.

Could you speak a little bit to how USAID plans to invest the \$20 million that you are requesting for Digital Africa?

Dr. PUTMAN. Yes. We are very excited about working in the digital domain.

There are three components, and one is to expand affordable and inclusive digital connectivity, the second is to build digital resilience, and the third is to grow human capital through digital approaches.

When my staff gave me that I said, what on earth are you talking about? Because when I look at this, I see it as, essentially, saying we are talking about building the infrastructure, getting the internet and all the infrastructure that is needed onto the continent and expanding that and access to it.

Secondly, really thinking about the enabling environment and hoping to build an enabling environment that will allow, we hope, more of a democratic approach to the internet than we are seeing in some of the authoritarian regimes, which are trying to move into this space.

Then, lastly, training and getting particularly young people who, as you so rightly stated, are over 60 percent of the continent's population, giving them access to the skills needed to work in the digital space.

It is infrastructure, enabling environment, and people.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. My time is about to expire here. I may pick up on in the next conversation because, again, I support this initiative. Twenty million dollars is not a lot of money when you are talking about connectivity for the African continent, and when you compare it to the investments that some of our competitors and adversaries are making in the digital space in Africa, this is a small amount.

Again, I appreciate the request. I just think it will require a longer conversation about what we really hope to achieve in this space and whether you can also be helped by other parts of the U.S. Government like the DFC, but let me turn it over to Senator Rounds.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I think that both you and Senator Kaine have touched on the issues in Ethiopia and I would like to follow up just a little bit with Secretary Phee.

The Administration officials have described the U.S.-Africa relationship as an enduring partnership and Secretary Blinken has asserted that it is time to start treating Africa as the major geopolitical player it has become, but the U.S. Government has cut off Ethiopia from AGOA, recognizing we have guidelines and so forth. Prime Minister Abiy is the duly elected leader. He won the elections. The Tigrayans, who had been in power, were ousted—Tigrayans in the northern part of the country. Now we find a civil war and there have been atrocities committed.

Rather than setting back and looking at the duly elected government of Ethiopia as being just exactly that, we seem to now set aside that recognition in this particular case, whereas in Ukraine, where we have a duly elected leader and we support that duly elected leader, we seem to play a different game in Africa with another duly elected leader.

Is there a difference in policy here that we should consider and perhaps reflect on?

Ms. PHEE. Senator, we have been engaged with Prime Minister Abiy.

You will recall that President Biden spoke with him in January to encourage the cessation of the bombing campaign in Tigray and a move towards resolution of the internal conflict.

I had the privilege of traveling to Ethiopia in January and meeting with the Prime Minister. Our previous Special Envoys—Jeffrey Feltman, David Satterfield, now Mike Hammer—have the opportunity to meet with him.

Our Chargé d'affaires, Ambassador Tracey Jacobson, meets with him and members of his government and we are working to support efforts in Ethiopia to address the unrest that is not only in northern Ethiopia, but also affects, as you know, the Amhara and the folks in the Oromo region, and as Dr. Putman talked about, the drought.

Administrator Samantha Power was just in the Horn of Africa and announced I think it is a billion dollars in aid for the countries in the Horn including Ethiopia that are suffering from drought.

I think it is fair to say that we are seriously engaged with the government and with other parties in Ethiopia to help them get back on their feet.

When I spoke with Prime Minister Abiy, I told him that I did not want to be the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs while there was a broken Ethiopia and a broken U.S.-Ethiopia relationship.

All of our efforts are designed to help ameliorate the suffering that has—the people of Ethiopia have endured to promote stability and to put them back on their feet.

I would say I think we are legitimately and seriously engaged.

Senator ROUNDS. I am pleased to hear that you are making progress. I think Prime Minister Abiy, being the duly elected prime minister, deserves our attention and our support and hopefully we will be able to help them resolve the challenges that they face.

On another issue—and this is for both you and for Dr. Putman—this budget reduces funding for water and sanitation programs by nearly 40 percent from the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget although diarrheal disease, cholera, and other waterborne diseases remain threats in the region.

At the same time, the fiscal year 2023 request proposes a \$174 million increase for climate change initiatives focused on clean energy and sustainable landscapes.

It would appear to me like the Biden administration is prioritizing its climate change agenda over global health programs.

Have Africans asked us to reprioritize our foreign assistance away from health programs and towards combating climate change?

Dr. PUTMAN. Senator, I am not familiar with all the details of the changes in funding.

I know that sometimes our requests are based on making trade-offs between where the Administration has new priorities and where we have seen interest on the part of others, including your committees.

I think we are trying to determine how best to balance everyone's different priorities in this arena.

Senator ROUNDS. This particular one kind of stands out because this is one area in which, I think, our aid to these areas within Africa has been appreciated and very clearly accepted while at the same time it appears that the change—the dramatic change in the funding—and we know we have got limited funding in Africa right now.

I would just ask you to go back in and look and see if, perhaps, this particular challenge might be one that we could take a second look at.

Dr. PUTMAN. Yes. I just want to mention very briefly that we do look at—one of the issues in Africa is the increased droughts and so partly we are trying to look at how do we address that through our data adaptation programming, which would allow us to then better respond to some of the health needs as well as the economic needs.

Senator ROUNDS. I understand that there is a long-term desire to address climate change and the focus within the Administration, but it would seem to me that judgment would suggest that if we really want to help these folks in Africa in the near term that we not do it at the expense of taking care of those programs, which

have been appreciated and accepted by them, including for water and sanitation programs.

It seems to me that that is kind of a tough place to have the reduction at, but I would appreciate having that discussion continued on, okay?

Ms. PHEE. Senator, I will defer to USAID to look at the WASH numbers, and you are absolutely right, I think we have all experienced the positive impact that WASH investment has had for our African partners and friends.

To your direct question as to whether we have been asked for climate change support, I can tell you we have.

Most recently, in mid-May I joined Secretary Blinken in New York where, you may recall, we hosted several meetings on the food security crisis and we invited African ministers to come and speak with us in a separate group in that day of sort of a big focus on this issue and I will tell you, they said to us—and I do not think that we were expecting this—they said, first of all, thank you very much.

As Americans, you always show up and help us in crisis. We really appreciate it, but what we are really concerned is about having sufficiency and resiliency as we go forward in the medium term and the long term, and we are quite concerned in particular about the impact of climate change on our agricultural production.

Senator ROUNDS. I do not mean to be argumentative—and my time has expired, but I would just make it a point I think if you said we are going to reduce the amount that we are going to provide you for water and sanitation programs and we will put it into climate change, I think you might have had a different response.

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time has more than expired.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Sure. Sure. Not a problem.

Look, I want to pick up on that because I did want to address the issue of food security and especially in the Horn of Africa, where it is most acute.

We have had a number of hearings. I think we know, we need to make sure the world knows, that a lot of people's immediate food insecurity on the African continent and in the Middle East and elsewhere is a direct result of Putin's war in Ukraine and the fact that he has tied up over 20 million tons of grain in the port of Odessa, but we also know that, especially in the Horn of Africa, we have seen a long drought and ongoing food insecurity.

While we address the immediate challenges that have been brought on by Putin's war we also want to focus on the long-term issue, and I imagine some of that climate change money can go to address some of those mitigation pieces. I do think it is important to get the details.

Can you both speak to our long-term strategy as opposed to our sort of immediate relief efforts when it comes to food insecurity?

Because obviously in the moment we provide, through the World Food Programme and other programs direct food assistance, but the ultimate goal is to increase agricultural production in these countries and obviously continuing droughts make that harder, but there are new agricultural techniques that can help.

Can, maybe, you both speak to our efforts in that area?

Dr. PUTMAN. Senator, I welcome the question.

My father is actually an agriculturalist and we started in Africa in 1965 and so I have seen tremendous changes.

First of all, we are seeing an expansion of the numbers of Feed the Future countries. The new countries will all be in Africa. That is very important, but a former Ethiopian minister of agriculture many years ago started talking about the importance of looking at climate change actually on the continent and saying that to the African researchers themselves we have to start looking at alternative crops for when we see different countries' climates warming up and starting to develop the new technologies including drought-resistant seeds, figuring out new micro irrigation schemes, better ways to feed livestock.

All these new techniques, as well as the ability to trade seeds and technologies across countries.

While we are seeing that adoption, it is not going to scale fast enough and so the resources that we are getting and we are requesting for agriculture are really intended to scale that up in a whole range of countries.

The other area to look at—again, my dad, not just an agriculturist, but actually a livestock man—I did my work—all my work in my graduate days with pastoralists in Africa—is looking at those places where pastoralism will be able to continue and thinking about providing alternatives to those pastoralists that are interested in looking at new forms of livelihoods.

We are very much committed to and focused on increasing agricultural production in Africa across a wide range of countries.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you for that.

Let me—well, we talked about food insecurity. I want to briefly ask you for an update on our effort to fight COVID.

Obviously, part of this budget includes our efforts to work with our African partners to address a whole range of diseases on the continent and it is really important we not forget about them, neglect those, as we move forward.

If you could give us a brief update on our efforts with respect to fighting COVID on the African continent. My understanding is at this point there is plenty of supply of vaccines, but the issue is the distribution and getting vaccines into people's arms and that is part of building out a health network in these countries—a public health infrastructure.

Could you just speak to where we are on that?

Dr. PUTMAN. Absolutely. We are totally committed to getting shots into arms and the Global VAX effort is aimed explicitly at that, at trying to work with countries to speed up getting those shots into arms—using existing health systems, but getting the vaccines out to those people who are willing to be vaccinated.

People talk about vaccine hesitancy and often we have discovered when we really looked into it that it is less the hesitancy, but people not having the ability to get to the locales where the vaccines are available or the community health workers not having the additional incentives to take on this challenge.

We are working on that in a range of countries.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that.

I mean, I think this is a global effort to address the pandemic and make sure that we save lives, especially in those countries where there may not be access to the antivirals and therapeutics we have here, but it is also, of course, directly in our interest because we have witnessed that, I believe, most of the variations that have developed to date arose in Africa—in African countries.

I think it is important that the American people and the American taxpayer recognize that, yes, we want to provide public health resources as a country that has been focused on health, but it is also in our direct interest to do so.

Senator Rounds.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to touch base a little bit on what Chairman Van Hollen has talked about here with regard to the food shortages that have been caused by the war in Ukraine, and the Russia-Ukraine war clearly has exacerbated the preexisting food security crisis in parts of Africa.

I would like you, first of all, to perhaps describe what you see as the current impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the limitation on their ability to bring out the grain that, really, a huge amount of Africa depends on.

I want to do it in this light. Right now, Africans have been receptive or, I should say, I hope they have been receptive to our point of view on Russia's role in not only increasing the insecurity with regard to food, but also what is going on with the Wagner Group right now and the fact that they are there right now in a real malign way.

How do we go about addressing and sharing with our friends in Africa: number one, Mr. Putin is causing a food shortage that they will see now this year; but second of all, there is a malign influence, not just from Russia, but from China as well, but specifically with the Wagner Group, and how do we go about addressing that as a part of this discussion about where the problems are coming from?

Ms. PHEE. Thank you for raising that question. That is an area where we are putting a lot of intensive focus, given current events.

Very simply, the Russians are trying to weaponize food and we are, through your generosity and the generosity of the American people, are responding in a different way.

We are trying to help solve the problems with this supplemental. That is a really powerful message. Administrator Power's trip this past week begins to share that message publicly. I expect travel in the next 2 weeks of other senior officials to get that message out on the continent.

We also took on the canard that our sanctions were disrupting the movement of trade and we have looked specifically at the challenge of the suspension of the SWIFT system and are working now to respond to any African company or government that is having trouble. We have essentially established a help desk if there really is a problem because of the SWIFT suspension. We can help find a workaround.

Two weeks ago, the AU held a summit in Zambia. My principal deputy, Ervin Massinga, attended for us and had the opportunity to speak both with the AU Commission as well as many African

foreign ministers who were attending, and he had serious discussions with them about Wagner, about Prigozhin.

He found that many of them are very aware and share our concerns, and we intend to continue those consultations to make sure that our African partners have the information that we have.

Thirdly, we are working to do better in the—to countering Russian disinformation and misinformation and get our message out. Those are some of the ways in which we are trying to respond to the challenge.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Dr. Putman, would you like to add anything to that?

Dr. PUTMAN. Yes. I would like to mention just that, as Ambassador Phee said, I think we do not always get our messages out to everyone in a country and so frequently the technical ministries, for instance, in Africa know exactly what we are doing in the health or the education or the food security sectors, but the senior leaders in countries are not always aware of the full breadth and depth of American assistance.

I think we are making new plans to try to ensure that knowledge is there at the top echelons and also expanding our public messaging campaigns out to people in local communities, again, so they recognize how much of the assistance they are receiving is the generosity of American taxpayers.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Dr. Phee, what is the Digital Africa Initiative?

Ms. PHEE. We have a lot of programs that try to get at infrastructure. For example, we are concerned about agriculture. If African countries do not have roads or railroads or ports to move goods in and out, they are not going to be successful.

I think we are looking at digital as the same type of modern infrastructure that will help move ideas and markets. That is why there is a focus on that.

I think you are right to be concerned about the modest amount for the initial foray, but that will only be one component of the U.S. Government effort. You know we have the great tools of DFC, of MCC, and Prosper, and those tools also look to see where they could contribute to build out the digital infrastructure.

We should also be working more with the American private sector and that is underway. I heard the skepticism in your voice. I share that skepticism, but I think there is more we can do and we can mobilize all the tools at our disposal.

Thank you.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Rounds.

Look, I think this is a frustration we all share and I want to sort of get at it a somewhat different way.

Ambassador Phee, there is polling data that was released in June of this year from a prominent think tank in South Africa that found that among African youths, 77 percent said that China was the most influential “foreign actor on the continent.” The United States was at 67 percent.

My first question is does that surprise you and, if not, if you agree that that is likely accurate, what do you think the reasons are?

Ms. PHEE. Like many big problems, there are probably many contributing factors. I think it is fair to say, perhaps, we have not been in recent years as active on the continent as many of us would like us to be.

I know that China has been extremely active in publicly visible infrastructure projects. That could possibly account for different views there.

I remain convinced that we remain the best partner for Africans. We offer the best model, the best opportunities. We are the best friends, as we have discussed today, for example, with the COVID and food security responses.

That is not a great statistic, but I am confident that we can address the gap that was reflected in that poll and, as I said, you will see very shortly increased senior level engagement on the continent. We will conclude this year with the Leaders Summit.

These are the types of engagement activities that can help turn that perception around.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I want to applaud you on the Leaders Summit. I think that is a way to demonstrate that the United States cares, is involved, and very focused on the continent, but I agree with your assessment, which is that part of this has to do with just our—first of all, our presence on the ground and this is both governmental, private sector, and investment, and I agree and want to work with my colleague, the ranking member, on the staffing issue just in terms of the people power that we have in our embassies and consulates.

I also think it reflects our priorities with respect to a lot of our own public investment, and I remember decades ago we made a lot of investments through USAID in dams, in schools, and libraries, in things that were much more visible and, certainly, as you said, Dr. Putman, more on the minds of the government leaders who are trying to deliver services directly to people.

We moved away from that, and this—I am not criticizing our focus on health care and education and food security, but it is more dispersed.

I am not arguing that we should displace any of that, but I do think we have to come up with the resources to add in this other dimension of investment in infrastructure because I remember years ago landing in Uganda.

The road I drove in from was all just made by China, and I think African countries are recognizing the problems that come with that in terms of debt traps and all the conditions that apply, and our assistance has been much more open.

I mean, we do not attach conditions to health care support or education or any of these other things, but I think in terms of the public mind some of those infrastructure projects that we used to do decades ago did get a lot of attention in those countries and I think it is something that we need to look at more closely.

We had a hearing in the full committee this morning on economic statecraft, and I was actually surprised that none of the administration witnesses, at least in their opening statements—I do not think in questions—raised what I understand is the Biden administration's new big initiative in the area of infrastructure coming

out of the G-7, which is the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment.

I really hope that this is more than just an announcement by these countries, but that we quickly put some meat on the bone. I mean, we are talking \$600 billion over 5 years.

I think I am expressing all of our frustration in those numbers that we see reflected in public polls with respect to our relative influence and we want to turn it around for a variety of reasons.

Maybe you could just speak, Ambassador Phee, to your understanding of how this new partnership for global infrastructure and investment would apply in Africa and our investment opportunities and challenges in Africa.

Ms. PHEE. Sure. We are all very excited about PGII and I believe our African partners are as well. I think the three areas of initial focus, as I understand it, will be critical minerals, ports, and railroads. It would get to, I think, what you are referring to, Senator.

On a different program, I want to tell you that there is a Nigerian delegation in town this week to talk to the MCC—Millennial Challenge Corporation—about an innovative regional program with Benin to build infrastructure between Niamey and Cotonou so to allow movements from the port up into the desert.

We are continuing using these different tools and this new tool, PGII, to get at the very point that you raised.

Senator ROUNDS. Just one serious one here, and it kind of follows up on what the chairman has started talking about here.

The United States worked with China to establish Africa CDC. Unfortunately, as part of its Belt and Road Initiative, China is now building the headquarters where Africa CDC will be located.

We know from China's construction of the Africa Union's headquarters in Addis that the PRC bugged it, used it to spy and otherwise exert influence over the AU's agenda.

What will be the effect of China's construction of Africa CDC headquarters on our influence in the future and should the United States Government consider backing large-scale strategic infrastructure projects like constructing the Africa CDC headquarters in the future, and is this something that we should really take a hard look at and are these types of projects, literally, putting us—can they put us back in front of the populations within Africa similar to what China is trying to do today?

Clearly, we would be a better partner. The question is, is this an area where our resources would be appropriately used, and I think that is a lot of what the chairman is asking as well. Is that the direction we should be considering in the future?

Ms. PHEE. I think in the health sector my assessment would be, starting particularly with the PEPFAR program, we have really helped African health systems develop in a way that is enormously significant.

It is essentially the backbone that helped Africa respond to the COVID pandemic. Through our efforts in the past year, we have, for the first time on the continent, manufacturing facilities for vaccines, which, incredibly, did not exist before.

Now in Kenya, South Africa, and Senegal, there are efforts underway to develop that kind of manufacturing capability.

We have seen South African scientists, who are the beneficiaries of partnerships with American scientists, help identify the new strains that the chairman referred to.

It is, of course, of concern. You are right to raise the concern, but if you compare a building to the decades of our investment and our engagement and, in fact, it was our initiative to help develop an Africa CDC, which the AU Commission has played such an important role in responding to the COVID pandemic, I think the fundamentals in this sector are positive.

The idea of infrastructure does remain potent and powerful to people, as you both have identified, and I certainly think it is something we could review what type of infrastructure would be most beneficial to advancing our interests.

Thank you.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator.

Just on that last point, Ambassador Phee, I want to be really clear. I am not talking about displacing the really important long-term investment we have made in public health as well as food security and education.

I think those are essentials and I think that the people at the grassroots level in these countries, over time, recognize that we have been there to help.

I do think that we need to up our game significantly when it comes to infrastructure investment and that is why I want to—I applaud the \$20 million request for Digital Africa. I do not want to diminish it.

We have got to make sure we have a multiplier effect, you, USAID, working with DFC and others, because when you are talking about competing with—and I know you are not in this, you are competing with the big infrastructure investments of China in the area. Huawei has got a lot of Africa wired.

We just need to, in my view, rethink our whole approach to public infrastructure and work with our private sector partners which I think bring great benefits to making sure that projects are actually carried out in an efficient way and to the long-term benefit of people in Africa.

I know you all share some of the frustrations that we do and I am just grateful for all that you have done.

I do want to close by emphasizing the point that Senator Rounds made regarding our personnel on the ground.

First of all, please, both of you, thank everybody who is at the State Department and USAID for all their work on behalf of our country. It does make a huge difference.

We are here today to try to outline areas where we can do even better by working together, so please thank everybody.

Then I do agree with Senator Rounds about the urgent need to increase our presence—our diplomatic presence in Africa, and so I look forward to working with you and with him and others on ways that we can do that.

Part of that is the overall resourcing of the State Department. You are right, that hiring freeze that was put in place, goodness, probably about 4 or 5 years ago now did have long-term harmful impacts. No doubt about it. We have to regain lost ground.

We want to work with you to do that and to build on it because my view is even the pre-freeze presence in staffing was not sufficient to meet our goals around the country—around the world.

Thank you. I look forward to working with Senator Rounds on that effort and with all of you, and unless you have any other questions?

Senator ROUNDS. Mr. Chairman, no, I do not. I just want to say thank you for the opportunity again today and thank you to our witnesses today.

This is an opportunity that I think you can find bipartisan support, moving forward, in terms of improving our standing in Africa with a number of the different nations.

This is an important area of the world that clearly wants to be our friends and they clearly want our attention, and most certainly it is an area that can be very beneficial to the citizens of the United States as we develop those friendships, those relationships—those business relationships.

We just thank both of you for your service in this endeavor.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. There—of course, as you both well know, there are large parts of the African continent we did not get to today.

We did have a separate hearing on the Sahel recently and thank all of you for your input on that, and we have a lot more conversations and area to cover, going forward.

Again, I do think for today we have covered a lot of territory, thanks to the two of you.

I am going to hold the record open for the subcommittee until close of business, Thursday.

Thank you both very much for your service to our country.

The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:34 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MS. MARY CATHERINE PHEE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

Question. AGOA: The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has been a cornerstone of U.S. trade policy toward sub-Saharan Africa since 2000 by providing duty-free access to the U.S. market for most exports from eligible African countries. AGOA's current authorization expires in September 2025. Total bilateral trade between the United States and Africa has been hovering around an average of \$60 billion for the past 10 years—down substantially from the 2008 peak of \$141 billion.

Why has U.S.-Africa bilateral trade been frozen at these same levels, despite our multiple programs of support and trade preferences, like AGOA and Prosper Africa?

Answer. The peak years of U.S. imports from sub-Saharan Africa were dominated by petroleum imports. Non-petroleum imports from the region have seen a limited increase over the course of the AGOA program, but have not kept up with overall increases in U.S. worldwide imports. There are a number of factors at play, including the recent economic downturn related to the COVID-19 epidemic, a lack of investment in value-added manufacturing, and a lack of capacity to comply with U.S. import requirements.

Targeted U.S. assistance in specific areas has produced positive results. Apparel manufacturing is one example that has been a boon for exports and employment for several AGOA partners. We continue to work with our interagency partners to identify additional strategic opportunities to improve AGOA utilization and overall economic growth.

Question. As we approach the expiration of AGOA's current authorization, what improvements and reforms should we be considering to encourage more investment, help small and women-owned businesses, and assist countries to make better use of the program?

Answer. Our goal is to support responsible and sustainable trade and investment that secures good livelihoods for both Africans and Americans. Supporting small and women-owned businesses are important parts of achieving this goal. We are working with our interagency partners under the Prosper Africa initiative to increase our focus on small and women-owned enterprises to include linkages to the African Diaspora here in the United States. USAID's Africa Trade and Investment Program is working to support these efforts and boost utilization of the AGOA program.

The future of AGOA is a focus of our African partners and I look forward to supporting USTR in any consultations with Congress on this important issue. The AGOA-eligible countries are focused on: 1) addressing the challenges facing AGOA's utilization and trade capacity building efforts; and 2) securing trade and investment relations beyond 2025, including increasing the number of eligible countries and products. The U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit in December will be an excellent opportunity to discuss the future of AGOA, as it will include an AGOA Ministerial meeting led by USTR.

Question. In March, I teamed up with Senators Risch and Rounds to introduce the Somaliland Partnership Act, which encourages the State Department to enhance our cooperation and engagement with Somaliland. We were glad to advance that legislation out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recently and look forward to moving it on the floor as well. I also saw that in May, General Stephen Townsend, Commander of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), and U.S. Ambassador Larry André visited Somaliland to meet with President Bihi and members of his cabinet and tour the Port of Berbera and Berbera International Airport.

How would you characterize the contours of our current engagement with Somaliland and what opportunities do you see to enhance our cooperation in an effort to support broader regional stability?

Answer. The United States recognizes the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Somalia within its 1960 borders, which includes Somaliland. Within that framework, the Administration engages with Somaliland as we do with other regions of Somalia on political, development, humanitarian, and security issues of mutual interest. We have expressed an interest in strengthening cooperation on border security and terrorist watchlisting and are open to expanded cooperation in other areas of interest to Somaliland. AFRICOM has visited Berbera to assess its ability to support the U.S. military pursuant to U.S. national security priorities.

While the Federal Government of Somalia supports U.S. engagement with Somaliland within our single Somalia policy, the disagreement over Somaliland's status is a politically sensitive issue within Somalia and the region. U.S. legislative proposals, like the Somaliland Partnership Act, that encourage the United States to explore a partnership with Somaliland that could circumvent or undermine Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity are strongly opposed by Mogadishu and could jeopardize our relationship with the Federal Government of Somalia, including its support for our current efforts in Somaliland.

Question. Do you support the application of Leahy vetting to Section 127(e) security assistance to ensure that the United States is not supporting foreign forces that have committed gross violations of human rights?

Answer. Leahy vetting is an important tool for ensuring that U.S. security assistance managed by the State Department is not provided to any foreign security force unit or member that is credibly implicated in the commission of a gross violation of human rights. For questions about 10 U.S.C. 127(e) authority, I respectfully defer to the Department of Defense.

Question. I'm concerned that the budget request calls for a sharp decrease in environmental activities in Africa like conservation and countering wildlife trafficking. I led, with 28 other Senators, a letter this year to the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee pushing for strong support to biodiversity programs and countering wildlife trafficking programs. The destruction of tropical forests and commercial trade in wildlife are major drivers of the spillover of zoonotic diseases, such as COVID-19, and threaten to spark future pandemics.

How would USAID support wildlife conservation and counter wildlife trafficking efforts under this budget?

Answer. USAID is committed to robust biodiversity programming, including responsive action to address wildlife trafficking. USAID supports wildlife conservation and works to counter wildlife trafficking through partnerships that focus on protecting threatened species and biodiverse ecosystems, supporting protected and community conserved areas, and reducing conservation crime. Our programs contribute to Agency objectives related to climate, water, food security, governance, conflict, inclusive development, and private sector engagement. USAID programs also work to reduce deforestation, forest degradation, and wildlife trade and consumption in order to mitigate the risk of zoonotic disease spillover, making conservation important for public health, economic resilience, and U.S. national security.

We appreciate and share Congress' interest in conserving wildlife and ecosystems in Africa. The FY 2023 request for biodiversity funds balances this interest with the need to meet numerous priorities across all areas of engagement. To maximize the impact of Agency resources, USAID requests biodiversity funds for missions with the greatest need and ability to combat wildlife trafficking.

Where appropriate, USAID extends the reach, impact, and sustainability of biodiversity investments by designing programs that receive multiple funding streams to address shared challenges, including the root causes of biodiversity loss. We also leverage private sector funding and market influence for greater impact, and work with communities and civil society organizations to efficiently engage and benefit people who rely on nature the most. The FY 2023 request for biodiversity funding in Africa reflects an expectation that integration, private sector engagement, and localization will make each dollar go further.

RESPONSES OF MS. MARY CATHERINE PHEE TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINÉ

Question. How much, and what type of assistance was affected by that freeze?

Answer. In May 2021, the State Department assessed that the restrictions in sections 116(a) and 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA) apply because the Government of Ethiopia (GOE) was engaged in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights. These restrictions cover all security assistance for the country, defined to include Economic Support Funds, and most assistance for the government.

As a result of these restrictions, we have paused State's International Military Education & Training (IMET) and Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) training programs. Ethiopia is also ineligible for Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) funds and the armed forces, police, intelligence, or other internal security forces of Ethiopia are prohibited (under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations—ITAR) from receiving military assistance or defense articles commercially.

While some USAID assistance was paused in the last Administration, the vast majority of USAID programming continues or was resumed at the beginning of the current Administration. Most USAID programs are in the areas of humanitarian assistance, health, food security and education. USAID programs that are still paused include economic growth activities and support to most government institutions in certain areas such as democracy and governance.

Question. Of the affected assistance, what activities, if any, have since resumed? Can you speak to how the U.S. is continuing to support the Ethiopian people directly?

Answer. Ethiopia remains subject to assistance restrictions under sections 116(a) and 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA) due to its engagement in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights. USAID continues to aid the people of Ethiopia where there is an available authority to provide the assistance. The majority of USAID programs are in the areas of humanitarian assistance, health, food security and education and are all ongoing. Recently, USAID expanded education activities country-wide and approved some support to government institutions in climate and environment activities in light of the current drought.

Question. How much assistance requested for FY 2023 would be focused on mitigating or resolving conflict in Ethiopia?

Answer. Resolving the conflict in Ethiopia is a top diplomatic priority. In terms of what we can expect in assistance in FY 2023, the bulk of our programming and financial assistance will go directly toward "basic human needs," which includes direct humanitarian aid, sanitation and medical supplies, and other healthcare necessities. We also plan to support transitional justice and national dialogue organiza-

tions, though the exact funding will depend on how viable these processes prove to be as the year goes on.

Question. Please provide funding data broken out by funding account (ESF, DA, INCLE, etc).

Answer. It is difficult to give exact funding numbers across USG programming given the time and geographic scope of some programs. Where possible, the U.S. Government has resorted to notwithstanding authorities to retain key programs, such as those related to basic human needs, to mitigating and resolving conflict in Ethiopia, or to U.S. national security.

To give one example, State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement recently obligated \$3 million in FY21 INCLE funding for Ethiopia, focused on atrocity prevention and accountability in the rule of law. Some USAID programs, which had been previously paused, have also been deemed to satisfy the basic human needs criteria. State will also continue to provide support via its PISCES border management system.

The interagency has agreed to consult on any new programming if there is any doubt on whether it is subject to the assistance pause.

Question. How is the Department engaging with the government and international partners to prevent this violence, to investigate all credible allegations of these killings, and to hold perpetrators accountable?

Answer. The Department regularly engages at all levels with the Ethiopian Government, both in Addis Ababa and here in Washington. Where the security situation allows, our diplomats in Addis Ababa have made a point of visiting sites in Amhara and Oromia to meet with local populations, civic leaders, government officials, and others. Within the UN Human Rights Council, the United States co-sponsored a resolution mandating the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia to investigate allegations of violations and abuses in Ethiopia committed since November 2020 by all parties to the conflict.

Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice Beth Van Schaack traveled to Ethiopia August 8-9 to reinforce this message. Ambassador Van Schaack and Chargé d'Affaires Ambassador Jacobson met with the deputy prime minister/minister of foreign affairs, minister of justice, federal Supreme Court president, National Dialogue commissioners, and civil society. They stressed the importance of including the voices of the victims and affected communities in transitional justice, accountability for human rights violations and atrocities in Ethiopia, and offered U.S. assistance in pursuit of these efforts.

Question. How is the Department working with the government and other international partners to ensure that Tigrayans receive the humanitarian aid that they need?

Answer. The Department and USAID engage regularly with the Ethiopian Government as well as international partners in Washington and in Addis Ababa to coordinate and advocate for significant, sustained, unconditional, and unhindered humanitarian assistance to all Ethiopians in need. Our embassy works closely with UN humanitarian agencies to assess and fill humanitarian assistance gaps.

We also partner with other stakeholders. The embassy regularly convenes groups of like-minded diplomats to share assessments of the developing situation, coordinate messaging, and encourage increased humanitarian support. Similarly, the Department periodically hosts high-level "Contact Group" meetings for representatives of other concerned nations. Additionally, the Department and USAID conduct joint high-level visits to the conflict-affected areas to advocate for greater access and the unhindered movement of cash and fuel, and restoration of basic services, which are crucial to the humanitarian response. By keeping partner nations on the same page we ensure that the international community presents a united front on the need for the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance.