

Global Health Technologies Coalition Outside Witness Testimony for the Record
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Appropriations Committee
US House of Representatives
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US Agency for International Development Global Health Programs FY 2014 appropriations

Chairman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the fiscal year (FY) 2014 appropriations funding for the US Agency for International Development (USAID). We appreciate your leadership in global health, and we hope that your support will continue. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC), a group of over 25 nonprofit organizations working together to advance US policies that can accelerate the development of new global health innovations—including new vaccines, drugs, diagnostics, microbicides, multi-purpose prevention technologies, and other tools—to combat global health diseases and conditions. The GHTC members strongly believe that to meet the world's most pressing global health needs, it is critical to invest in research today so that the most effective health solutions are available now and in the future. We also believe that the US government has a historic and unique role in doing so. My testimony reflects the needs expressed by our member organizations, which include nonprofit advocacy organizations, policy think-tanks, implementing organizations, product development partnerships (PDPs), and many others.¹ We strongly urge the Committee to continue its established support for global health research and development (R&D) by (1) sustaining and supporting the US investment in global health research and product development, (2) instructing USAID, in collaboration with other agencies involved in global health, to prioritize R&D in all international development programs, and (3) requiring leaders at the State Department and the USAID to join leaders of other US agencies to develop a five-year cross-

¹ Global Health Technologies Coalition. <http://www.ghtcoalition.org/coalition-members.php>.

government strategy for global health research and product development, and to ensure that global health R&D is robust, efficient, coordinated, and streamlined.

Critical need for new global health tools

Every day, more than 35,000 people die from AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), malaria, and other neglected diseases around the world. For example, in the African region, maternal, newborn, and child mortality, along with a broad array of vaccine-preventable and other communicable diseases, remain urgent concerns. The health detriments these diseases cause, even when not fatal, have profound impacts on other areas such as economic stability and access to education. These issues highlight the urgent need for sustained investment in global health research to deliver new tools to combat these devastating diseases. Where drugs and other health technologies exist for these diseases, many have grown ineffective due to increasing drug resistance and toxicity or are costly and difficult to administer in poor, remote, and unstable settings. In other cases, the needed tools to prevent, diagnose, and treat these diseases simply do not exist. While we must increase access to proven, existing drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and other health tools to tackle global health problems, it is just as critical to develop the next generation of tools to fight existing disease and address emerging threats such as dengue and drug-resistant TB. There are several very promising technology candidates in the R&D pipeline; however, these tools will never be available if the support needed to continue R&D is not supported and sustained.

Leveraging the US capacity for innovation

US investment in global health R&D has generated great success in treating devastating diseases and improving the lives of millions through new technologies. Past US investments contributed to such breakthroughs as the MenAfriVac[®] meningitis A vaccine, which has already saved thousands of lives and is on course to save over \$500 million in the next decade; and the distribution of more than 150 million doses of the child-friendly malaria drug Coartem[®] Dispersible, which is estimated to have saved 340,000 young

lives from malaria. In fact, the US government was involved in the development of over half of the forty-five new global health technologies rolled out in the last decade.

Global public health science is now at a critical juncture, with 365 new global health products in the research pipeline as of April 2012. US government supports R&D efforts for 200 of these candidates. In the next five years, researchers are expecting groundbreaking new technologies. The potential impact of this research is enormous. For example, at current rates of HIV infection, a vaccine with just 50 percent efficacy, given to 30 percent of the population in low- and middle-income countries, would avert 5.2 million new infections over the first decade. Additionally, a new shortened treatment course for TB could reduce transmission by 10 percent by 2050, preventing eight million infections and two million deaths in Southeast Asia alone.

Much of the support from the US government for global health R&D comes from federal agencies such as Department of Defense, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes for Health (NIH), and USAID. These agencies demonstrate a continued commitment to innovation for global health products. Each of these US agencies works with a range of academic, nonprofit, private-sector, US government, and international partners to advance global health R&D, bringing much-needed and unique skills, resources, and expertise. One method of collaboration through the private sector is through PDPs. PDPs are a unique form of public-private partnerships established to drive greater development of products for neglected diseases. They work in close partnership with academia, large pharmaceutical companies, the biotechnology industry, and with regulatory and other government agencies in developing countries, and have developed and licensed over 15 products to date.

Innovation as a smart economic choice

Global health R&D brings lifesaving tools to those who need them most; however, the benefits are much broader than preventing and treating disease. It is also a smart economic investment in the United

States, where it drives job creation, spurs business activity, engages academic institutions, and benefits the health of American citizens. Sixty-four cents of every US dollar invested in global health research goes directly to US researchers, many of which conduct their research at US universities. As just one example of the many states positively impacted by global health R&D, the bioscience and life sciences industries in New York employ 80,000 people in the state, many of which are global health researchers. In 2011, New York received more than \$2 billion in NIH grants, more than half of which went to universities and nonprofit research centers. Global health research is important to American health; both dengue and Chagas disease have made resurgences in some states, and malaria and TB cases are on the rise as the world becomes more interconnected by international travel.

USAID has been an important partner in product development for global health, and must continue its role. New initiatives such as the Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact and the elevation of the Office of Science and Technology are helping to spur innovation from new sectors of American expertise. The recent release of USAID's five-year strategy for health-related research was a welcome sign of the agency's prioritization of science, technology and innovation. However, there are areas of USAID's global health portfolio where additional research is needed. For instance, R&D for neglected tropical disease (NTD) treatments and vaccines could bolster USAID's current NTD program. Such investments can ensure that the progress made in the past several years, thanks to increased support from the United States, is not reversed. USAID should also support research for new TB vaccines, as well as new vaccines and medical devices to support maternal, child, and reproductive health.

Recommendations

Support for global health research that saves lives around the world—while at the same time promoting innovation, creating jobs, and spurring economic growth at home—is unquestionably among the nation's highest priorities. In keeping with this value, the GHTC respectfully requests that the Committee do the following:

1. Sustain and support US investments in global health research and product development. As there is no specific line item in the federal budget that dictates funding levels for global health R&D, it is important to protect the US investment in the entire global health program account of the USAID budget, as well as fully fund each disease-specific account, while also honoring US commitments to multilateral global health programs. USAID should include research for new technologies to improve health in each of its global health programs, including R&D for new tools to fight NTDs, vaccines for TB, and innovations that support maternal, child, and reproductive health. We ask that this support not come at the expense of robust funding for the entire set of poverty-focused humanitarian and development accounts within the State and Foreign Operations budget.

2. Request that leaders at the US Department of State and USAID work with leaders at other US agencies, including the NIH and the CDC to ensure that efforts in global health R&D are coordinated, efficient, and streamlined. To accomplish this, the State Department and USAID should join other US agencies in developing a five-year strategy to coordinate all US global health research and product development efforts. This strategy should include transparency mechanisms designed to show what global health R&D efforts are taking place and how US agencies are collaborating with each other to make efficient use of the US investment.

3. Direct that the results of these initiatives should be reported on to Congress and be made publicly available. We are pleased that USAID has released a new strategy on health-related research, and request that regular reports on the progress of said strategy be available to Congress and the public. We ask that these reports include information on all US government agencies involved in global health R&D, including all R&D at USAID.

On behalf of the members of the GHTC, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Committee for the opportunity to testify.