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April 29, 2014

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GRANGER OPENING STATEMENT: BUDGET HEARING ON UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE IN AFRICA

The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs will come to order.

Today, we will hear from the panel before us on United States assistance to Africa. I would like to welcome our witnesses:

- Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Linda Thomas-Greenfield
- Assistant Administrator for Africa, Earl Gast
- Acting Chief Executive Officer for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Sheila Herrling

Thank you all for being with us today.

Today's hearing is very important given the significant funding provided and the challenges facing the continent. There are also many achievements from our investments over the last several years, and I hope we can hear about those successes and learn from them.

\$6.9 billion of the fiscal year 2015 budget request for State and USAID is for Sub-Saharan Africa. That represents 35% of the funds and is more than any other region except the Middle East.

Additionally, all four countries proposed for Millennium Challenge Corporation funding in FY15 are in Africa, and three of those are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa also receives the majority of funds requested for the President's three major foreign aid initiatives and last year the Administration announced three new initiatives for Africa focused on power, trade, and youth leadership.

We have seen proven results from some of the investments already made - such as life-saving programs in HIV/AIDS, malaria, and maternal and child health – and conservation programs that have helped countries manage and protect Africa's unique natural resources.

Our investments pay dividends in public diplomacy. In Africa, opinions of the United States rank among the highest in the world.

With respect to security, our assistance supports activities ranging from peacekeeping missions, counter-terrorism initiatives, and programs to reform and professionalize police and military throughout the continent.

The needs have never been greater. New and troubling conflicts have broken out in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. Long-standing violence continues in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Terrorism remains a significant threat not only to stability in Africa, but to our own national security. I want to hear from our witnesses how the programs we fund address these challenges.

Finally, the United States is responding to some of the most devastating humanitarian crises in years. In Africa alone, conflict, disease, and the threat of famine have put millions at risk, but the cuts to humanitarian assistance in the fiscal year 2015 request do not reflect this reality. I hope our panel can address this discrepancy.

There are a wide range of topics we could discuss today and I expect this will be a very productive hearing. I look forward to hearing about some of the issues I raised and I'll now turn to my Ranking Member, Mrs. Lowey, for her opening remarks.

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