

Statement of Assistant Secretary Linda Thomas-Greenfield
House Appropriations Committee: Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
April 29, 2014

Madam Chairwoman, Representative Lowey, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Department of State in support of the Administration's FY 2015 budget request for Africa. It is an honor for me to follow Secretary Kerry's presentation to this Committee last month and to provide further detail on U.S. assistance to Africa.

As Secretary Kerry noted, we deeply appreciate the role this Committee and Subcommittee play in helping the American people understand why foreign affairs matter to them. Advancing the values and interests of our country and promoting stability in the world does matter to our citizens, whether it results in jobs and economic opportunity, connections between communities, or the safety and security we aim to achieve.

The Secretary was speaking in a global context, yet we believe his words are applicable directly to U.S. relations with the continent of Africa. For far too long, images of poverty and insecurity have dominated the American perspective on Africa. Yes, these exist in Africa. And I would be remiss today if I did not express my very deep concern with the continued violence and fighting in South Sudan, Sudan, and the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) and with the increasing atrocities committed by Boko Haram against schoolgirls and other innocent civilians of all faiths in Nigeria and across borders of neighboring states. But as in other parts of the world, they are certainly not the whole story of what is happening on the continent. More specifically, those images illustrate only a narrow component of what our partnerships on the continent are trying to address and to achieve.

Tonight Secretary Kerry departs for his first extensive trip to Africa. He will be visiting our partners in Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Angola. The Secretary also will visit South Sudan, a country in which he has been personally invested for a long time, back to when he sat on the other side of hearing rooms as a Senator.

Our FY 2015 budget request reflects the policy priorities set forth in the Presidential Policy Directive for sub-Saharan Africa (PPD) and the State/USAID Joint Regional Strategy for Africa. They are: 1) strengthen democratic institutions,

improve governance, and protect human rights; 2) spur economic growth, trade, and investment; 3) advance peace and security and 4) promote opportunity and development.

The total request for Africa is \$6.9 billion. Of that total, roughly 68 percent (\$4.7 billion) consists of bilateral assistance for 15 policy priority countries: Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

Over the last fifty years, the relationship between the United States and the countries of Africa has evolved dramatically. In each of these priority countries, we are actively pursuing policies of partnership, ways to promote solutions that yield benefits over the long-term for both countries. They are policy priority countries not just because of need, but also because of opportunities we see for mutual prosperity. Moreover, peace and prosperity in these countries will have positive effects throughout the region.

As in previous years, the request includes robust support for three global Presidential Initiatives: Global Health (\$4.8 billion), Feed the Future (\$501 million), and Global Climate Change (\$88 million). It also includes resources to continue support for three Africa-specific initiatives begun in FY 2013: Power Africa (\$77 million), Trade Africa (\$27 million), and the Young African Leaders Initiative (\$10 million).

The FY 2015 budget request also includes the proposal to fund a Peacekeeping Response Mechanism (PKRM). I know that Ambassador Power discussed this during her April 2 appearance before you. I want to add my strong support for the funding of this account. Like many other parts of the world, Africa faces complex crises. The origins of these crises can be political, ethnic, or religious tensions as we have lately seen in the Central African Republic and in South Sudan. Despite our best efforts to plan for contingencies and forecast trends, we do not always know how the next crises will play out. The United States needs to be able to respond quickly and robustly. The PKRM will help us do so.

Our challenge is always balancing near-term and urgent imperatives with our long-term priorities. For that reason, our budget request is focused on providing support in those arenas most critical to stability and growth, such as promoting strong democratic institutions, building security sector capacity, facilitating economic development, and creating lasting connections between the United States and the

people of Africa. As Secretary Kerry said in his testimony in front of this body, “I firmly believe that in this increasingly inter-connected world, global leadership isn’t a favor we do for other countries, it’s vital to our own strength. It’s vital to our security and the opportunities that we can provide to our children.”

Across the board, we are trying to move beyond outdated models for aid and focus on the objectives that link us with the private sector, African governments, local NGOs, civil society, and citizens as partners. This must be the way forward, in terms of budget realities and in recognition of how our relationships with African partners have evolved.

Strengthen Democratic Institutions, Improve Governance, and Protect Human Rights

Support for democracy, good governance, and respect for basic rights are the keys to stability and security. That stability is what attracts investors and allows economic growth, which in turn can help stave off further conflict. Every day at our Missions across Africa, we work with governments, political parties, electoral commissions, and civil society groups in pursuit of these goals. An election is by no means the only marker of a successful democracy, but it is a powerful one that resonates both inside and outside a country’s borders.

In 2014 alone, there will be 14 executive elections taking place on the continent. Another 17 will take place the following year. To be a true representation of people’s will, elections must be free, fair, and transparent. Citizens must be allowed to cast their votes freely based on their conscience. All votes must be counted, and results made public in a timely manner to be accepted by both the public and those running for office.

Too often we see crooked tactics, electoral tampering, or vote selling or buying. Or worse, there may be violence or intimidation. But it’s not just what happens on election day that matters. Equally vital to the democratic process is the regular and peaceful transfer of power. It means accepting results of elections and not responding with violence or preempting fair elections by changing the rules in the middle of the game. That’s why we call on all elected leaders and candidates to reject these practices. We tell citizens directly that they can demand better from their politicians and political institutions. Constitutions should not be altered to favor incumbents, and elections should not be delayed as a power-saving tactic. Democracies that do not know regular transfers in power, are democracies only in name.

In the run-up to Mali's historic 2013 elections, we worked with a youth association of popular musicians, DJs, TV personalities on a concert series and community discussions about civic responsibility and voting, accompanied by an SMS drive to encourage high youth voter turnout. In Cameroon, a small grant led to the posting of voter rolls on the Internet, creating greater transparency and allowing voters to verify that they were in fact registered.

In Kenya last year, concerted efforts helped avoid a repeat of the 2007-2008 post-election violence. The *My Life, My ID* campaign helped a half million young people obtain identity cards required to vote. Other campaigns helped youth in 25 counties create a plan for how to take action and contact authorities in the case of violence. In Madagascar, we provided funds to the Carter Center to observe and help ensure that the first elections since the 2009 coup would be free and fair. We were very pleased to have the country's new Prime Minister in attendance this week at the swearing-in of a new group of Peace Corps Volunteers. These are just a few examples of how our budget resources are being turned into concrete action in support of strong democratic institutions.

Spur Economic Growth, Trade, and Investment

In the context of economic growth, trade, and investment, we are mindful of and inspired by an important fact that the Secretary mentioned last week as he launched the second Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review or QDDR at the State Department. "It is not a small thing that 11 of 15 nations that used to receive aid from the United States are now donor nations." This is a transformation we want to see expand to Africa as well. It will not happen overnight, but we know there is great opportunity. Africa is home to eight of the ten fastest growing economies in the world. The new initiatives launched by the President, Power Africa and Trade Africa specifically, are key to turning these opportunities into long-term growth and prosperity.

Still today in 2014, more than two-thirds of sub-Saharan Africans lack reliable access to electricity. Power Africa is designed to address those needs, through partnerships between the United States, African governments, the private sector, and other partners like the World Bank and African Development Bank. The goal is to add 10,000 megawatts of cleaner, more reliable energy and to expand electricity access to 20 million households and businesses in six target countries. This is a big effort, not one that any government or investor can do alone.

Improved access to power is literally the switch that so many businesses need to grow and flourish.

Trade between countries in sub-Saharan Africa is extremely low, only 11 percent of the total trade, due to high tariffs, time consuming customs procedures, and inadequate infrastructure. In developing Asia, regional trade constitutes 50 percent of total trade. The goal of Trade Africa is to reduce those trade barriers in order to strengthen economic ties between African countries, starting in East Africa, as well as with the United States and other global markets.

Also important to our relationship with Africa is the renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act before September 2015 and ideally much sooner.

Advance Peace and Security

For now Africa is home to pockets of ungoverned spaces that offer safe haven to those who want to prey on local populations, destabilize legitimate governments, exploit natural resources, and use terror tactics for political motives. International actors, including those who seek to do harm to the United States, its citizens, and its interests, also take advantage of areas of insecurity and ineffective governance.

We are concerned about the continued violence perpetrated by al-Shabaab, al-Qa'ida in the Lands of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, and other terrorist groups. Through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PRACT), we are seeking to strengthen the political will and capacity of governments and communities to resist these groups.

We cannot prevent every terrorist attack, but we can ensure that states are better prepared to work together and respond. For example, in 2012 and 2013, African forces – many of them U.S.-trained – responded to the situation in Mali and worked alongside the French military to push back AQIM from safe havens in northern Mali. The intervention left AQIM scattered, fractured, and demoralized. And then, Malians took to the polls in a historic democratic election – an election that was a powerful rebuke to the restrictive rule and violent extremist ideology that AQIM and its allies imposed.

Through our bilateral relationships as well as through our engagement in the UN Security Council, we are focused on enhancing the capabilities of our African partners to respond to and prevent crises. We do that through training and

equipping security forces so that they can deploy where needed and sustain those missions in a way that demonstrates professionalism and effectiveness, and ensures the security of civilians.

We are also supporting the African-led African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to take the fight to al-Shabaab, hobble its recruiting efforts, and eliminate its threat to the region and to U.S. interests. By supporting the African Union (AU)'s effort to counter the Lord's Resistance Army, or LRA, we are helping enhance regional cooperation and the capacity to counter cross-border threats. With our support, the AU's regional Task Force has significantly degraded LRA capabilities, increased defections, and improved protection and resilience of local communities.

The AU welcomed the U.S. effort in the Central African Republic, where "just in time" transport of Rwandan and Burundian forces to join the African-led International Support Mission (MISCA) ensured that these valuable peacekeepers were able to mitigate some of the violence in December and January. We are also providing vehicles, personal protection, radios, and other items to help protect the MISCA forces and make them more mobile. There is, of course, much more work to do to protect civilians in Bangui and throughout the country.

The Department's request to fund the Peacekeeping Response Mechanism (PKRM) is designed for this purpose - to ensure we have the ability to respond to urgent and unexpected peacekeeping requirements without impacting ongoing, planned peacekeeping activities. This fund is critical in Africa, the region where 80-85 percent of the world's peacekeepers are deployed. It would strongly signal to the AU that the United States is looking to provide sustainable and predictable resourcing for regional peace operations. As such the PKRM is an important tool to support African immediate responses to crises with logistics and equipment. This more predictable support also allows us to press back against premature calls to transition regional operations to more expensive UN-mandated peacekeeping operations.

We are also encouraged by recent progress in the Great Lakes region, including through the regional peace process to implement the UN-brokered Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework, signed by 13 African countries and aimed at resolving the root causes of conflict in the region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Through increased pressure from the DRC military and the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), and increased political involvement, including from our Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Russell

Feingold, the DRC successfully ended an 18-month rebellion by the M23 armed group last year. We strongly supported the UN Security Council's decision to approve a 3,000 troop-strong intervention brigade within MONUSCO in order to beef up the mission's ability to neutralize armed groups, including the M23. Additionally, we are now seeing further progress in the Great Lakes through a political dialogue initiated by Angola. This regionally led and owned peace process is a promising sign in a region often known more for cross-border conflict than cooperation.

Whether natural or man-made, crises exact a devastating human toll. Amongst many urgent situations, we are working to address what's happening right now in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. As we work with South Sudan's neighbors and regional bodies on a political solution, we are directly supporting the South Sudanese people. In South Sudan, we have provided more than \$411 million in Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014 to assist victims of the conflict, including internally displaced persons and those who have fled to neighboring countries. For the Central African Republic, we are providing more than \$91 million in humanitarian assistance. This is in addition to commitments and support I mentioned before that we are providing to MISCA.

Promote Opportunity and Development

With one in three Africans between the ages of 10 and 24, and approximately 60 percent of the population below the age of 35, we are just beginning to see the transformative power of youth on the continent. The conversation about this so-called youth bulge can be one about needs, the cost of education, risks of unemployed or marginalized youth, but it can also be a conversation about opportunity. That opportunity is where the Department of State and USAID focus much of our energy.

Thanks in large part to support for vaccine research and distribution, child mortality has dropped by nearly a third and maternal mortality by 41 percent over the past 20 years. For the first time since the epidemic struck, the numbers of Africans infected with HIV is decreasing, partly due to assistance provided by PEPFAR.

In less than a year, the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, a joint initiative among the United States and other G8 countries, has resulted in commitments from more than 140 companies to invest more than \$3.7 billion in African agriculture. We are requesting just over \$500 million in Feed the Future

funding in FY 2015 and with it, we will tailor our contributions to the Alliance and other food security programs to reflect local needs and opportunities.

The FY 2015 request continues strong support for basic education in Africa, and we are supporting opportunity and development and reaching out to youth specifically through the Young African Leaders Initiative or YALI. YALI is the President's signature initiative for engaging youth across the continent. This summer, 500 young people from across Africa will travel to Washington, D.C. to participate in YALI's Washington Fellows program. When they return home, the Fellows will have internships in their own countries. We will support their networking, professional development, and mentoring opportunities, so that they can spread their ideas and knowledge among their peer group, who will represent the next generation of leadership on the African continent

The response to this program has been overwhelming. We received nearly fifty thousand applications for these 500 slots. So we know there are youth out there who are interested in engaging with us and we hope to expand the size of the Washington Fellows program in the coming years. We are very excited to meet these Fellows and to develop programs for the thousands of other young African leaders who want to be part of the President's YALI Network.

I know Secretary Kerry is looking forward to meeting with young people on the continent later this week as well.

On a final note, President Obama has invited African Heads of State to Washington for a two-day Leaders Summit in August. It is the first time that a U.S. President has done so. We are deep in the consultative process with our colleagues from each of these countries to determine ways to make this summit one of concrete outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to brief the panel today on the FY 2015 request for assistance to Africa. I would be delighted to take your questions.

