

FY'20 Testimony for House Appropriations Subcommittee for State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs -- Peter Yeo, President, Better World Campaign

Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, Members of the Subcommittee—thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of a robust foreign affairs funding in FY'20. The accounts funded by this legislation support U.S. assessments for the UN regular budget, UN peacekeeping operations, and several other critical UN activities, as well as bilateral and multilateral global health interventions. We recommend \$2.596 billion for the Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) account, \$553.8 million for the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) account, and \$1.484 billion for the Contributions to International Organizations (CIO) account. We also support the inclusion of language that enables us to pay our contributions to UN peacekeeping at the full assessed rate. We believe the U.S. should continue to support funding for UN agencies on the front lines of humanitarian emergencies, like the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) at \$54 million, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) at \$132.5 million, and UN Women at \$10 million. We also support our bilateral and multilateral global health, humanitarian and development programs like polio (\$59 million, including \$7.5 million in the Economic Support Fund), malaria (\$755 million), the Global Fund (\$1.56 billion), Gavi (\$290 million), bilateral gender programs (\$1.90 billion), and bilateral family planning (\$746 million).

Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA)

The UN was founded to help preserve international peace and security, promote economic and social development, and advance universal human rights. Overall, the UN has been a critical forum to which the U.S. has repeatedly turned to advance its interests, promote its values, and spread the financial, military, and technical burdens of confronting transnational challenges.

This is particularly true with regards to UN peacekeeping. Peacekeeping operations are authorized by the UN Security Council (UNSC), and since the U.S. is a permanent, veto-wielding member of that body, in effect no mission can be deployed without first receiving our support. The U.S.—under both Democratic and Republican administrations—has repeatedly advocated for the creation of new peacekeeping missions or the expansion existing ones. For example, when President George W. Bush took office in January 2001, there were just over 47,000 UN peacekeepers serving in the field. By the time he left office in 2009, that number had more than doubled to 98,000, in large part because he pushed for large new missions in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Haiti, Timor-Leste, and Darfur, among others.

The reasons for the long history of bipartisan support for peacekeeping are manifold. Countries undergoing armed conflict provide fertile ground for the growth of extremist groups and organized crime, threatening U.S. national security and economic interests, and feature human rights abuses and levels of human deprivation that are an affront to the values of the American people. By pursuing a broad range of measures—including protecting civilians, disarming and demobilizing combatants, facilitating humanitarian assistance, monitoring ceasefires, and supporting democratic elections—peacekeepers help stabilize fragile states, prevent civil wars from metastasizing into full-blown regional conflicts, and decrease the likelihood that dormant conflicts will flare up again. Peacekeeping missions are also extremely cost-effective when compared to other forms of military intervention, having been found to be eight times less expensive than the deployment of U.S. forces by a 2018 GAO report. Finally, peacekeeping is a

case study in the benefits of international burden-sharing: the U.S. only contributes several dozen uniformed personnel to UN missions, with the remaining 90,000 currently serving in the field coming from more than 120 other countries.

Many UN peacekeeping missions have successfully completed their mandates over the years. For example, UN missions in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, and Liberia made significant contributions to stability before being withdrawn in 2005, 2017, and 2018, respectively. At the same time, the UN is currently confronting serious challenges in a number of other places. In South Sudan, peacekeepers are still protecting nearly 200,000 civilians who have fled a devastating civil war and sought refuge at UN bases, even while a shaky peace agreement has taken effect. In Mali, UN forces working to secure the country's vast northern areas have increasingly come under threat from armed extremist groups, including a regional affiliate of al-Qaeda, with more than 100 personnel killed in militant attacks. UN peacekeepers are also working to protect civilians from armed groups in DR Congo and the Central African Republic and prevent a flare-up of hostilities along the Israel-Lebanon border. As a result, continued financial support for UN peacekeeping remains vital to our national interests.

UN peacekeeping operations are financed through member state assessments, determined by a complex formula that takes into account several economic indicators and is also used to determine assessments for the UN regular budget. The five permanent members of the UNSC are assessed at a slightly higher rate than what they would otherwise pay for the regular budget, however, because of their veto power over the establishment of peacekeeping missions. Assessment rates are renegotiated by the UN General Assembly every three years, and the current U.S. rate of 27.9% represents a reduction from the 1990s, when it paid nearly 32%. Meanwhile, China's rate has ballooned from just 3.1% in 2008 to 15.2% in 2019.

Unfortunately, since the mid-1990s, U.S. law has arbitrarily capped U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping at 25%. This policy is anachronistic and unnecessary: since 2000, the U.S.'s regular budget contributions have been subject to a 22% ceiling agreed to by the UN, an arrangement that no other developed country benefits from. Because a country's regular budget assessment rate is one of the key determinants of its peacekeeping assessment, the regular budget cap keeps the U.S. peacekeeping rate at a significantly lower level than what it otherwise would be. According to a document released by the State Department in January, without this ceiling, the U.S. would be obliged to pay 27% of regular budget and 33% of peacekeeping costs.

While Congress has frequently waived this requirement in annual appropriations bills, since FY'17 it has declined to do so, causing the U.S. to accrue \$750 million in peacekeeping arrears. The effect of these underpayments is quite worrisome: the UN is currently facing a significant and growing cash crunch, with the result that countries who provide troops to peacekeeping missions—including U.S. partners and allies like Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Egypt, and Indonesia—are not being fully reimbursed for their contributions. If these arrears are allowed to continue building, they will affect the ability of peacekeeping forces to deploy into the field, compromising their ability to fulfill their responsibilities.

This state of affairs is untenable and should be addressed by Congress. As a result, we request funding for CIPA sufficient to cover our FY'20 assessments and pay back our cap-related

arrears. We also request that language be inserted into the FY'20 SFOPS bill lifting the 25% cap both for FY'20 and retroactively for FY'17-FY'19.

Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)

We also request funding for PKO, at a level that includes funds sufficient to pay U.S. assessments for the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). UNSOS is a significant source of equipment and logistical support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). First deployed in 2007, AMISOM works alongside Somalia's nascent security forces to defeat al-Shabaab—an al-Qaeda linked terrorist group that has carried out a number of devastating attacks both inside Somalia and throughout the wider region—and extend the authority of Somalia's federal government. These activities are closely aligned with U.S. national security priorities, particularly as the Trump administration has expanded the U.S.'s own military presence and activities inside Somalia since taking office.

Contributions to International Organizations (CIO)

CIO funds U.S. assessments for the UN regular budget (UNRB) and more than 40 other UN and non-UN international organizations, including NATO, the International Atomic Energy Agency, World Health Organization, and Organization of American States. The entities funded by CIO advance a full range of U.S. national security, economic, and global health priorities.

The UNRB is essential to the overall functioning of the UN, providing a reliable source of funding for many of the organization's core activities outside of peacekeeping. These include political missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and other key countries, working to facilitate democratic elections, coordinate the distribution of humanitarian and development assistance, and support the development of strong, effective, and accountable governing institutions. The UNRB also finances efforts to ensure international implementation and compliance with sanctions adopted by the UNSC against terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al-Qaeda and rogue states like North Korea. These activities are manifestly in the national security interest of the United States and, much like peacekeeping, are an excellent example of international burden-sharing: other UN member states pay 78% of their costs.

Expanding Access to Global Child Immunizations

Immunization has saved the lives of more children than any other health intervention in the last 60 years, responsible for averting approximately 2.5 million deaths each year. Since its inception, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has partnered with developing countries and mobilized support from the U.S. Government, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the private sector and pharmaceutical industry, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank and others, to help immunize more than 700 million children. Requested FY'20 support for Gavi will help immunize an additional 300 million children between the 2016-2020 strategic period, saving an additional 5 to 6 million lives. We request \$290 million for Gavi for FY'20, level funding from FY'19.

Complementing Gavi's work, U.S. financial support for UNICEF helps the agency reach and save the world's most vulnerable children. For more than 60 years, UNICEF has been a leader in immunization, partnering closely with the U.S. and other countries to increase vaccine coverage equity and access. In 2017, UNICEF procured 2.5 billion doses of vaccines for over 100 countries, reaching nearly half of the world's children under the age of five. This included

support to vaccinate 176 million children against measles between 2014-2017. We request \$132.5 million for UNICEF for FY'20, level funding from FY'19.

Thanks to increased funding by the U.S. and the coordinated efforts of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), the opportunity for a polio-free world is within reach. Because of GPEI partner organizations, cases have dropped 99.9% globally since 1988, and the virus remains endemic to only three countries: Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nigeria. Thirty years ago, there were 350,000 annual cases of wild polio, but in 2018 there were just 33 cases globally, including 21 in Afghanistan and 12 in Pakistan. Thanks to U.S. support, the GPEI partnership has achieved important milestones along the road to eradication, including the phased transition from trivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV) to bivalent polio vaccine (bOPV) in 2016. This successful transition will further reduce the risk of rare instances of vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDPV). If we fail to eradicate polio, within a decade we could see a global resurgence of as many as 200,000 new cases each year. We request \$59 million, including \$7.5 million in Economic Support Funds.

U.S. Leadership in the Fight to End Malaria

In 2000, the global community committed to ending malaria for good, catalyzed by the UN Millennium Development Goals. Subsequently, the rate of malaria-related deaths has plummeted by 62 percent worldwide and among children under five by 64 percent. This progress was made possible by leadership demonstrated by the United States in the fight against malaria through the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), as well as U.S. contributions and partnership with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Hard-fought efforts to alleviate the burden of malaria through cost-effective interventions have led to over 7 million lives saved and a decrease in endemic countries from 106 in 2000 to 87 in 2017.

The remarkable progress achieved to date in fighting malaria is a result of coordinated action between U.S. government bilateral and multilateral programs, country-coordinating mechanisms, multilateral agencies, and private-sector partners. Due to PMI's marked success and bipartisan Congressional support, it has expanded to include programs in 27 high-burden countries in recent years. We request \$755 million for FY'20, which is level funding with FY'19.

The U.S. is also a major contributor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which has provided 759 million insecticide-treated nets and treated 668 million cases of malaria to date. This year, the Global Fund is undergoing its sixth replenishment cycle and in their most recent report, the Global Fund suggests that at least \$14 billion is needed in the sixth replenishment to end the three epidemics. U.S. leadership has been critical, and in order to provide one-third of the Global Fund's financing and encourage increased investment, we request the U.S. contribution rise to \$1.56 billion for FY'20, the first increase in six years.

The gains against malaria achieved globally are fragile and retreating on investment now would not only stall the progress realized to date but create a pathway for the disease to return. In places like Haiti and the Dominican Republic, we are on the cusp of elimination, having seen decreases in cases by more than 50%. Unfortunately, in other countries, drug resistance and collapsing health systems threaten this progress. The emergence of artemisinin resistance in the Greater

Mekong Subregion, for example, threatens the sustainability of recent progress, not only in the region but worldwide. Other threats to previous gains include political instability, as seen in South America where increases in cases are due in large part to the collapse of health infrastructure in Venezuela. To ensure victory in the fight against malaria and keep resurgence at bay, continued U.S. investment and leadership is critical.

Saving Women's Lives and Promoting Gender Equality

Each year, over 303,000 women die from largely preventable complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. Fulfilling the unmet need for family planning and providing quality maternal and newborn care could reduce maternal deaths by 67 percent. As the largest bilateral donor to international family planning and reproductive health programs, the U.S. plays a critical role in providing modern contraceptive services to the 214 million women who currently lack access.

To help meet this need, we request the Committee support our bilateral reproductive health programs at \$746 million and UNFPA at \$54 million for a total of \$800 million. This would put the U.S. on the path to contributing the full \$1.6 billion necessary to meet the unmet need. UNFPA is working in more than 150 countries and serving girls, women and families in humanitarian crises from the Syrian civil war to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, UNFPA's funding was cut due to a Kemp-Kasten determination that was completed without proof or substance. While we hope the Secretary of State revisits the determination, we believe the committee should increase funding for UNFPA in FY'20 to ensure we fulfill the unmet needs of women around the world.

UN Women plays an important role in creating policies to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, empower women, and achieve gender equality. We believe the committee should support UN Women at \$10 million in FY'20 in the IO&P Account. Further robust funding (\$1.90 billion) should be made available to promote gender equality in U.S. government diplomatic and development efforts through programs promoting women's political leadership, implementation of a multiyear strategy to respond to gender-based violence, and supporting the execution and monitoring of a strategy to implement the Women, Peace and Security Act.