

State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Outside Witness Hearing

Name: Niranjali Amerasinghe

Title: Executive Director

Organization: ActionAid USA

Written Testimony:

Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the subcommittee,

Thank you for soliciting feedback on the FY21 appropriations process. I am the Executive Director of ActionAid USA, an international development and human rights nonprofit with a strong focus on how climate change is impacting everyday people in poorer countries.

I would like to speak about the critical importance of U.S. support for international efforts on the environment and climate change. ActionAid USA does not receive any financial or in-kind support from the U.S. federal government.

We work directly with smallholder farmers and others in Africa, Asia and Latin America who are most vulnerable to climate impacts – worsening floods and droughts, more frequent and intense hurricanes and other storms, increasing soil salinity – people who, ironically, are also among those least responsible for causing the climate crisis.

As a country that has contributed significantly to the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change, and with the ability to quickly mobilize huge amounts of resources, the U.S. has a moral and legal responsibility to support people living in poverty who are dealing with a crisis not of their own making. And in order to do our fair share to address the root causes of climate change, we must provide financial support for poorer countries to shift their own economies to cleaner pathways.

To this end, we strongly support prior U.S. appropriations for climate mitigation and adaptation programs abroad, and for multilateral institutions such as the Global Environment Facility and the Least Developed Countries Fund. We also strongly support an appropriation for the Green Climate Fund (GCF), about which I would like to say a particular word.

ActionAid, as well as myself in previous professional capacities, have followed the GCF closely since its inception over 10 years ago. It has become a nearly \$20 billion fund, disbursing resources to developing countries around the world to transform economies and support communities dealing with climate impacts. It is not a perfect institution – none are – but it is the best channel we have for ensuring that support is flowing to the countries that need it the most. It is independently governed, features strong environmental, human rights and gender safeguards, and attempts to fund truly transformational projects and programs.

As you know, the Obama administration made a \$3 billion pledge to the GCF, of which \$2 billion remains outstanding. We believe in the importance of the U.S. upholding promises we have made. More importantly, we believe that significant contributions to the GCF are essential if we are to have any hope of keeping climate change to manageable levels. To that end we join with others in seeking a contribution of at least 750 million dollars to the GCF in the next fiscal year, a relatively small amount which would send a strong signal that the U.S. is committed to a global climate solution.

We are also fully supportive of community asks for full funding of U.S. contributions to multilateral institutions like the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), both of which play crucial roles in the areas of global climate diplomacy and science, respectively.

Finally, as just one example of how climate change is linked with issues that are fundamental to the lives and livelihoods of everyone on this planet, I would note that world hunger has been on the rise for three years. In addition to participating in GCF processes, ActionAid is a strong supporter of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), an innovative initiative that delivers funding for climate-resilient, sustainable agriculture where it is needed most.

Like the GCF, the GAFSP brings together contributor and recipient governments, civil society, and expertise from international agencies and development banks to support programs that have the best chance of improving food security outcomes in the long term. As 2021 is a replenishment year for the GAFSP, we request that the United States continue its past support on a slightly increased level, appropriating \$135 million toward a goal of \$675 million over the next 5 years.

Thank you.