

**Questions for the Record Submitted to,
USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment
Assistant Administrator Michelle Bekkering**

Chairman Lynch Questions for Michelle Bekkering
Question 1: Evaluating Effectiveness
Question 2: Resources for implementation
Question 3: Unmet Budget Requirements
Question 4: Additional Appropriations
Rep. Jackie Speier Questions for Michelle Bekkering
Question 1: Humanitarian Exemption for UNFP
Question 2: Gag Rule and WPs Principles
Rep. Virginia Foxx Question for Michelle Bekkering
Question 1: Success in 2023 and Beyond

**Questions for the Record Submitted to,
USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment
Assistant Administrator Michelle Bekkering by
Chairman Stephen F. Lynch (#1)
Subcommittee on National Security
House Committee on Oversight and Reform
Thursday, July 23, 2020**

Question:

The U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security Strategy (WPS Strategy) states that each Department and agency responsible for executing the strategy should include, “measurable goals, benchmarks, and timetables for their proposed WPS initiatives as part of their implementation plans, in addition to estimating resource requirements.”

USAID’s Women, Peace, and Security Implementation Plan describes multiple agency-specific indicators to monitor implementation of the WPS Strategy.

Has USAID identified agency-specific targets and goals for evaluating the effectiveness of its Women, Peace, and Security activities and foreign assistance programs? Has USAID identified timelines for achieving these objectives?

Answer:

USAID is committed to robust efforts in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning to support the full implementation of the WPS Strategy and the effective stewardship of taxpayer resources. Demonstrating measurable results, reassessing and adjusting underperforming programming, and harnessing learning to inform future planning are integral to USAID’s mission.

The U.S. Government adopted a set of interagency WPS metrics to measure progress on achieving the WPS Strategy’s ambitious goals by 2023. As part of its WPS Implementation Plan, USAID developed a complementary Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework that builds on the interagency WPS metrics and includes agency-specific indicators tailored to the Agency’s humanitarian and development assistance efforts. In the coming year, USAID will work with other Departments, as well as internally, to refine and establish clear definitions and

targets for newly developed interagency metrics and agency-specific indicators in USAID's Implementation Plan. Similar to the time-bound training commitments outlined in USAID's WPS Implementation Plan, these targets will reflect specific benchmarks and timelines for achieving objectives.

The metrics are designed to be iterative and it is USAID's expectation that they will be adjusted as internal and partner capacity grows, allowing for the adoption of more outcome-oriented metrics over time. As part of its learning, USAID will strive to establish approaches that help the Agency and the U.S. Government increasingly move beyond outputs (e.g., number of women trained) to measure critical outcomes (e.g., influence of women in conflict prevention and political transition processes).

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment
Assistant Administrator Michelle Bekkering by
Chairman Stephen F. Lynch (#2)
Subcommittee on National Security
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Question:

In addition, USAID's implementation plan only states, "DCHA will work with the Office of Budget and Resource Management (BRM) and the U.S. Department of State's Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources (F) through established processes to meet the operational and programming requirements of WPS implementation throughout the budgeting process."

Has USAID conducted any evaluations or assessments to identify resource requirements to implement the WPS Strategy?

Answer:

USAID recognizes that embedding Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in our Agency business model is the best way to ensure that efforts are systematic, sustainable, and resourced as part of the Agency's overall development and humanitarian assistance mission. USAID leverages multiple entry points in the USAID Program Cycle to integrate WPS objectives and activities in the Agency's strategies, budgets, and programs. In addition, USAID tracks planned spending on WPS activities in the annual budget and operational planning process. This financial data informed the development of USAID's WPS Implementation Plan, including the identification of geographic and sectoral gaps highlighted in the Plan, and will continue to support WPS budget and program planning going forward.

The Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS) requests specific resources to catalyze implementation of the WPS Strategy through innovative field programs designed to promote women's participation and leadership in peace and security processes and to improve the protection of women and girls from violence in conflict and crisis-affected countries. CPS

also uses WPS funding to build the capacity of USAID staff to integrate WPS objectives in their work through training, technical assistance, and learning activities.

Several new commitments in USAID's Implementation Plan will improve the Agency's ability to assess and meet resource requirements for implementation of the WPS Strategy. For example, the Agency plans to review centrally-managed funding streams for conflict prevention and stabilization such as the Complex Crises Fund (CCF) to ensure this funding effectively supports women's participation and empowerment. USAID is also working to ensure that WPS objectives are a central component of efforts to implement the Global Fragility Act.

Additionally, USAID has developed a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Framework that builds on the interagency WPS metrics established to measure progress in achieving the WPS Strategy's goals by 2023. The USAID MEL Framework includes agency-specific indicators tailored to the Agency's humanitarian and development assistance efforts. In the coming year, USAID will work with other Departments, as well as internally, to establish targets for the interagency metrics and agency-specific indicators in USAID's Implementation Plan.

Finally, USAID will pursue a WPS Learning Agenda that reflects the Agency's focus on the Journey to Self-Reliance and strong integration with the Agency's core MEL efforts for crisis, conflict, and stabilization. For example, USAID is applying Complexity-Aware Monitoring and Evaluation to pilot programs focused on women's engagement in countering violent extremism (CVE) and supporting research on underlying factors that drive conflict-related sexual violence, which adversely affects women and girls. Outcomes from the WPS Learning Agenda will shape how USAID targets existing resources and inform future resource

requests, such as efforts to scale-up successful pilot programs in priority countries linked to U.S. national security.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment
Assistant Administrator Michelle Bekkering by
Chairman Stephen F. Lynch (#3)
Subcommittee on National Security
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Question:

Has USAID identified any unmet budget or foreign assistance requirements to successfully implement the WPS Strategy? The House-passed version of the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies (SFOAA) funding bill for Fiscal Year 2021 provides \$130 million to implement the WPS Strategy.

Answer:

WPS is critical to achieving USAID's development mission of enabling countries to break cycles of conflict and instability and move beyond assistance. The implementation of WPS is not limited to one bureau, but rather something that we strive to integrate across the breadth of the Agency's work on crisis and conflict. In the past two fiscal years, the Agency has invested over \$200 million in programming aligned with the WPS Strategy. This includes \$27 million in incentive funding for new activities since 2017 that are designed to advance women's meaningful participation in peace and political processes, address the needs of those affected by violent extremism, and increase the protection of women and girls in areas of crisis, conflict, and instability. This incentive funding is designed to leverage other USAID and donor resources and to catalyze innovation and learning to address WPS priorities. While USAID has not identified unmet needs or requirements at this time, we acknowledge the \$130 million dollar directive for the WPS Strategy in the House-passed version of the FY 2021 SFOAA and welcome the

opportunity for continued engagement with Congress to ensure successful implementation of the Strategy's goals moving forward.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment
Assistant Administrator Michelle Bekkering by
Chairman Stephen F. Lynch (#4)
Subcommittee on National Security
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Thursday, July 23, 2020**

Question:

How does USAID plan to use additional appropriations to implement the WPS Strategy?

Answer:

The U.S. Government has supported WPS efforts for a decade. The primary executing Departments and Agencies already have funds in their existing budgets for initiatives in this area. In FY 2018 and FY 2019, USAID invested over \$200 million in programming aligned with the *WPS Strategy*. This includes \$27 million in incentive funding for new activities since 2017 that are designed to advance women's meaningful participation in peace and political processes, address the needs of those affected by violent extremism, and increase the protection of women and girls in areas of crisis, conflict, and instability. This incentive funding is designed to leverage other USAID and donor resources and to catalyze innovation and learning to address WPS priorities.

USAID is committed to effective stewardship of taxpayer resources for WPS initiatives by making strategic investments aligned with U.S. national security interests, demonstrating measurable results, and adjusting or ending underperforming programming.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment
Assistant Administrator Michelle Bekkering by
Representative Jackie Speier (#1)
Subcommittee on National Security
House Committee on Oversight and Reform
Thursday, July 23, 2020**

Question:

The Administration purports to care about women and girls yet has undermined their access to basic health care globally. It defunded the U.S. contribution to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), which works in over 150 countries to provide access to voluntary family planning, end maternal deaths, combat gender-based violence, and halt harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM. UNFPA has been a lifeline during the pandemic. In Yemen, it provided food and hygiene and dignity kits to people under quarantine. In South Sudan, it recruited midwives to support the anticipated surge in demand for health care. Yet, the U.S. is absent in its support. I led a letter signed by over 110 of my colleagues urging the Administration to issue a humanitarian exemption to allow UNFPA to be eligible to apply for emergency supplemental funding to support global efforts to address COVID-19.

What would the impact of a humanitarian exemption for UNFPA be? Does the Administration recognize that women cannot truly be equal without being able to control their own bodies?

Answer:

The U.S. Government (USG) is committed to helping ensure the safety and well-being of women and girls around the world. USAID considers protection of women and girls, along with health, shelter, food assistance, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), as priorities in COVID-19 humanitarian response programming in more than 20 countries. Specifically, USAID is supporting programs to directly address pandemic-related gender-based violence (GBV) needs in humanitarian contexts, including establishing or expanding Women and Girls' Safe Spaces, adapting group-based and individual psychosocial support services, equipping social workers to provide support over the phone or through virtual platforms, amplifying staffing of domestic violence and other GBV hotlines, establishing "help desks" at health

facilities, and training and supporting health responders to safely and compassionately support GBV survivors.

Further, USAID's humanitarian COVID-19 supplementary funding prioritizes continued access to basic health care for women, children, and newborns. Lessons learned from past epidemics and outbreaks show that maternal and child mortality and morbidity increase during large-scale disease outbreaks. In anticipation of this trend, USAID supports partner organizations, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to ensure maintenance of ongoing health care support for women, children and newborns. This includes support for COVID-19 adaptations for and access to Basic and Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric Care in Yemen and South Sudan. While USAID does not presently partner with UNFPA to provide humanitarian assistance, USAID provides funding through other NGO and UN partners, including Save the Children, Doctors of the World, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Medical Corps (IMC), and UNICEF. This includes life-saving case management (such as safety planning) and psychosocial care for survivors of GBV, GBV prevention and risk reduction activities, critical maternal and child health supplies and associated training, and funding of GBV sub-cluster coordination. In 2019, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance dedicated nearly \$85 million towards emergency life-saving GBV programs around the world. This is a \$11 million increase from the previous year, an upward trend since 2013.

USAID will use reprogrammed funds previously earmarked for UNFPA for voluntary family planning, maternal, and reproductive health activities, subject to the regular notification procedures of the Committees on Appropriations. Overall, women's equality and empowerment depend on inputs and outcomes across several spheres, and at the individual, community, and

national levels. USAID's robust programming in multiple regions and sectors, including health, agriculture, crisis and conflict, democracy and governance, education, economic growth, and the environment provides ample opportunities to ensure that the Agency's work contributes to achieving women's equality and empowerment.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
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Representative Jackie Speier (#2)
Subcommittee on National Security
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Thursday, July 23, 2020**

Question:

In one of his first acts as President, President Trump reinstated and expanded the Global Gag Rule which has jeopardized the health and wellbeing of women and girls around the world. As a result of this rule, providers must choose between U.S. global health assistance and the ability to give their clients accurate and comprehensive information and access to their reproductive options.

A recent report from the GAO highlighted that the global gag rule has resulted in the denial of more than 50 global health awards, spanning HIV/AIDS, family planning, maternal health, tuberculosis and even nutrition programs. Another recent study in the medical journal The Lancet found that previous global gag rules have decreased contraceptive access by 14 percent, increased pregnancies by 12 percent and abortions by 40 percent.

How does the Global Gag Rule compare with the principles outlined in the Women, Peace and Security Strategy?

Answer:

The Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance (PLGHA) policy is designed to ensure that U.S. taxpayer funds do not support foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning. As the world's largest bilateral donor to global health programs, the United States remains committed to helping women and their children thrive, particularly in countries where the need is greatest. The PLGHA policy does not reduce the amount of global health assistance the U.S. government makes available. The vast majority of our implementing partners have agreed to comply with the policy, and they continue to work with us. USAID recognizes that women and children are vulnerable to violence in crisis and conflict settings, and through the U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), we implement strong safeguards to prevent and address gender-

based violence (GBV) through our programming. The Agency has provided critical health care, psychosocial support, legal aid, and economic services to more than six million survivors of gender-based violence since 2017. In FY 2019, the Agency directed approximately \$85 million towards life-saving GBV programs in our humanitarian assistance efforts around the world. This represents an \$11 million increase from the previous year and a continuing upward trend since 2013. For example, the Agency has supported a core package of assistance to adult and child GBV survivors in Iraq, Somalia, and South Sudan, including activities such as case management, safety planning, group-based and individual psychosocial support, community-based safety patrols, and legal aid. Further, USAID's humanitarian response continues to robustly support maternal and child health in crisis settings.

The Administration is confident that we will continue to meet our critical global health and WPS goals, while preventing U.S. taxpayer dollars for global health assistance from directly or indirectly supporting foreign non-governmental organizations that perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning abroad.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment
Assistant Administrator Michelle Bekkering by
Representative Virginia Foxx (#1)
Subcommittee on National Security
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Question:

I strongly identify with the Trump Administration's Women, Peace, and Security Strategy goals of reducing barriers that limit opportunities for women to serve in leadership positions. In fact, I offered an amendment to last years' State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill that would have increased funding for gender equality programs that are designed to increase leadership opportunities for women in other countries where discrimination is baked into the laws and policies of those countries. Unfortunately, the Rules Committee didn't make my amendment in order, but I remain committed to advancing opportunities for women here in the United States and around the world.

As you know, the WPS Strategy's line of effort Four aims to encourage partner governments to adopt policies to improve participation of women in decision-making institutions.

My question to all of you is, in your opinions, what would a successful implementation of line of effort four look like by 2023 and in the years beyond?

Answer:

Thank you for your continued support of gender equality and women's empowerment programming. USAID's new Implementation Plan has established commitments under each Line of Effort outlined in the WPS Strategy. Successful implementation of Line of Effort Four would be evident when the governments of our partner countries adopt similar policies and plans to the WPS Strategy, that increase their capacity to improve the meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes. Such outcomes would include commitments aligned with increasing women's meaningful participation in decision-making processes and institutions; increasing their participation and exercise of agency and leadership in conflict resolution and transitional justice; development of equitable legal and regulatory governance, legislative, and judicial frameworks; and inclusive civic engagement processes.

The Agency's current implementation of Line of Effort Four includes a partnership with the African Union to hold the governments of Member States across the continent accountable for their commitments under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, including to increase women's participation at all levels of decision-making processes. Through support for a Continental Results Framework, the Agency has contributed to an increase in the number of the governments of Member States that have adopted National and Regional Action Plans for the implementation of the WPS agenda from 16 to 23 in the last four years.