

**Opening Statement of**  
**Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Molly Phee**  
**U.S. Department of State**  
**House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing**  
**U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa**  
**November 17, 2022**

Thank you, Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member McCaul, Subcommittee Chair Bass, Subcommittee Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished members of the committee.

The Biden-Harris Administration's Africa strategy is based on a simple but important premise: Building a 21<sup>st</sup> century partnership with Africa is critical to meeting this era's defining challenges and achieving results on our shared global priorities. As Secretary Blinken has said, Africa is a geopolitical force that will shape the world's future. The continent is home to the fastest growing and youngest population in the world, enjoys breathtaking ecological diversity, and nurtures vibrant and historic cultures whose past is inseparably intertwined with our own.

The strategy commits to elevating, broadening, and deepening our partnerships with diverse African audiences. We will prioritize listening and acting on what we hear. Even when we have disagreements, we will seize the opportunity to engage and discuss. The Biden-Harris Administration's National Security Strategy and the State Department-USAID Joint Regional Strategy for Africa recognize the profound transformation of the continent, capture the region's importance to U.S. national security interests, and identify how we will boost Africa's ability to maximize opportunities and counter challenges. The upcoming U.S. Africa Leaders Summit is a prominent example of how we are putting this reframing into practice. President Biden also made this point at the UN when he announced U.S.

support for permanent seats on the Security Council for countries in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The strategy's first objective is to foster openness and open societies. Building on the hunger of African publics for foundational values – democracy, transparency, accountability, equity, inclusivity, rule of law, anti-corruption – we will support those who understand that incorporating these values into governance is the best path to unlock the potential and prosperity of individuals and societies.

Choice is also central to our second objective, to deliver democratic and security dividends. Poor governance and abusive security forces render countries vulnerable to instability. We will direct U.S. programming to address the drivers of conflict, strengthen democratic institutions, and invest in the development of local security forces that are capable and accountable. Thanks to Congress, we now have an innovative new tool with the Global Fragility Act.

Poor governance also affords space for malign actors, such as the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group. We are engaging our African partners to counter Russia's malign influence. We are also working intentionally to present our African partners with alternatives to substandard Chinese practices while remaining open to collaboration when U.S., Chinese, and African interests align.

Our third objective is to advance pandemic recovery and economic prosperity. We have provided more than 186 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to 44 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and nearly \$2.7 billion in COVID-related support. The additional resources provided by Congress for food security and humanitarian

assistance have been invaluable in mitigating the compounding effects of Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine.

We are committed to helping our African partners strengthen health systems for the next global health challenge, building on the foundation of decades of investment. One example: in recent weeks, the State Department has been leader in the U.S. government team helping Uganda effectively respond to an Ebola outbreak.

The strategy also includes plans to promote economic growth, especially job creation. We are working through multilateral banks as well as U.S. government programs you know well – the DFC, MCC, Prosper Africa, Power Africa, and Feed the Future. We need to do more and better in this space and we look for your support and guidance as we seek to advance new initiatives, including PGII.

Finally, in line with the fourth pillar, we will support conservation, climate adaptation, and a just energy transition. At COP 27 last week President Biden announced more than \$150 million to accelerate the implementation of the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience across Africa. This funding will help address what African counterparts highlight as their most urgent needs in responding to the climate crisis, such as facilitating access to finance for populations vulnerable to climate change.

We can only meet these ambitious goals by working together and harnessing the pathbreaking spirit of both the American people and our African friends. As we enter this decisive decade, we firmly believe that Africans should and must have a

seat at the table. Our challenges are shared and so too should be our solutions. I look forward to addressing your questions.