

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

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Majority (202) 225-5074
Minority (202) 225-5051

January 17, 2024

Atul Gawande, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Administrator for Global Health
United States Agency for International Development
[TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL]

Dear Dr. Gawande:

Enclosed are post-hearing questions that have been directed to you and submitted to the official record for the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic hearing that was held on Wednesday, December 13, 2023 titled “Reforming the WHO: Ensuring Global Health Security and Accountability.”

To ensure a complete hearing record, please return your written response to the Committee on or before Wednesday, January 31, 2024, including each question in full as well as the name of the member. Your response should be addressed to the Committee office at 2157 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. Please also send an electronic version of your response by email to Marie Policastro, Clerk for the Select Subcommittee, at marie.policastro@mail.house.gov.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. If you need additional information or have other questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Accountability staff at (202) 225-5074.

Sincerely,



Brad Wenstrup, D.P.M.
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Raul Ruiz, Ranking Member
Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic

Questions for Dr. Gawande
Assistant Administrator for Global Health
United States Agency for International Development

December 13, 2023 Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic hearing:
titled “Reforming the WHO: Ensuring Global Health Security and Accountability.”

Question from Rep. Miller-Meeks

Last month, journalists at the *Bureau of Investigative Journalism* and *Devex* published an investigation into the largest foreign aid contract in our country's history, a \$9.5 billion contract issued by USAID's global health bureau, which you're now renewing for \$17 billion. Their story showed evidence of fraud, waste, and abuse, and that USAID and the Washington DC consultant managing this project jointly manipulated performance indicators. If part of the purpose of our foreign aid spending is to position the United States as a better partner as compared to China, how do we expect to do that when your bureau is funding projects like this?

1. What are you doing to crack down on corruption and overbilling like this by USAID's biggest government contractors?
2. What are you doing to direct funding for projects like this away from expensive Washington DC consultants and to local actors and the private sector?

**Questions for Dr. Gawande
Assistant Administrator for Global Health
United States Agency for International Development**

December 13, 2023: Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic hearing titled
“Reforming the WHO: Ensuring Global Health Security and Accountability”

Questions from Rep. Michael Cloud

- 1) Per the State Department’s report on federal contributions to international organizations in 2021, USAID awarded several grants to the WHO to “Support collaborative activities with USAID and the World Health Organization (WHO) in a wide range of health-related activities, including infectious diseases, maternal and child health, family planning, safe motherhood and newborn health.”¹ The WHO’s website lists a variety of initiatives under each of these headings, such as breastfeeding, contraception, and infant nutrition. Within its voluntary grants to the WHO, does the U.S. specify funding for particular WHO offices, activities, or programs such as these?
 - a) Does USAID maintain records of such specifications? If so, please provide copies for the last five fiscal years.
 - b) Does USAID report this information to Congress in any form?
- 2) Has USAID specified funds for any WHO project which encourages or pressures countries to alter their laws or policies related to abortion?
 - a) Has USAID specified funds for any WHO project which encourages or pressures individuals to change their views on abortion?
 - b) Has USAID specified funds for any WHO project which attempts to discourage conscientious objection to abortion by healthcare workers or others?²
- 3) Has USAID specified funds for any WHO project which advocates particular laws or policies related to gender identity such as “legal recognition of self-determined gender identity”?³

¹ U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Contributions to International Organizations, 2021,” <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-Report-on-Contributions-to-IOs.pdf>. See pages 54, 77, 79, 80.

² See World Health Organization, “Widening access to quality abortion care from the grassroots up,” September 28, 2023, <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/widening-access-to-quality-abortion-care-from-the-grassroots-up>. See page 4 of linked report on Colombian organization Profamilia: “Based on WHO recommendations, Profamilia designed seminars, workshops and virtual courses. These activities functioned as safe spaces for health workers, based on compassion and trust, in which abortion-related questions and taboos could be discussed, demystified and de-stigmatized. In this way, Profamilia managed to shape an organizational culture clearly linked to the organization’s mission to defend sexual and reproductive rights, and this helped to shift negative attitudes towards abortion and prevent conscientious objection...In its efforts to combat abortion stigma, Profamilia also identified the need to monitor and mitigate the challenges posed by external groups that oppose the provision of abortion care. Profamilia began mapping and analysing such stakeholders; built knowledge about how these groups use social networks; and incorporated risk analysis into all its activities. For abortion cases that pose considerable reputational risk, a specific risk committee at Profamilia was set up to analyse each angle of the case and identify relevant risk reduction actions accordingly.” https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/reproductive-health/abortion/ibp-story-colombia.pdf?sfvrsn=a9b18c5_7.

³ World Health Organization, “WHO announces the development of a guideline on the health of trans and gender diverse people,” June 28, 2023, <https://www.who.int/news/item/28-06-2023-who-announces-the-development-of-the-guideline-on-the-health-of-trans-and-gender-diverse-people>.

- a) Has USAID specified funds for any WHO project which encourages or pressures countries to alter their laws or policies related to legal recognition of gender identity?
 - b) Has USAID specified funds for any WHO project which encourages or pressures individuals to change their views on legal recognition of gender identity or other aspects of gender identity?
 - c) Has USAID specified funds for any WHO project which encourages or pressures countries to alter their laws or policies related to gender transition procedures such as administration of puberty blockers, hormones, or surgeries or which encourages or pressures individuals to change their views on such procedures?
- 4) Before the pandemic, out of all its voluntary contributions to the WHO, the U.S. specified less than 3% each for preventing and controlling disease outbreaks and for emergency operations.⁴ In light of the WHO's failure to prevent and adequately respond to the Covid pandemic and its wasteful use of funds to promote initiatives unrelated to health, has USAID increased the percentage of its contributions for preventing and controlling disease outbreaks, emergency operations, and pandemic prevention?
- a) Does USAID plan to shift more of its WHO contributions toward these purposes?
 - i) If so, by how much does USAID plan to increase the proportion of such contributions?
 - ii) If not, why not?

⁴ Daniel Victor and Christine Hauser, "What the W.H.O. Does, and How U.S. Funding Cuts Could Affect It," *New York Times*, April 15, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/health/who-world-health-organization-coronavirus.html>.