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June 13, 2017

The Honorable Ted Poe  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
House of Representatives

The Honorable David A. Perdue  
United States Senate

## **U.S. Foreign Assistance: Inventory of Strategies at Selected Agencies**

The U.S. government plans to spend approximately \$35 billion on foreign assistance in 2017 to improve the lives and health of millions living in poverty, support democracy, enhance global security, and achieve other foreign policy goals. U.S. agencies that provide this assistance have developed a number of strategy documents to guide their efforts.

You asked us to compile an inventory of U.S. foreign assistance strategies. We focused on the six agencies that administer the largest amounts of foreign assistance<sup>1</sup>: the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the Department of State (State), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Department of Agriculture (USDA). We identified these agencies by reviewing obligations data that the agencies reported to USAID's U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants database for fiscal years 2011 through 2015, which represent the most recent and complete data available for all six agencies.<sup>2</sup>

To compile this inventory, we reviewed agency websites as well as our prior body of work on foreign assistance to identify and obtain available documents and statements relating to agency strategies. We asked key officials at each agency whether they considered the documents we identified to be strategy documents, and we asked them to identify and provide any additional strategy documents; we generally relied on each agency to define what it considered to be strategy documents.<sup>3</sup> We categorized the strategy documents by sector and examined them to

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<sup>1</sup>Office of Management and Budget Bulletin No. 12-01—Guidance on Collection of U.S. Foreign Assistance Data—issued on September 25, 2012, defines foreign assistance as tangible or intangible resources (goods, services, or funds) provided by the U.S. government to a foreign country or an international organization for the purpose of assistance to foreign entities or populations as authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, or any other act. This includes, for example, security cooperation activities implemented by DOD and authorized under Title 10 of the United States Code, as well as security assistance authorized under Title 22 of the code, much of which is implemented by DOD.

<sup>2</sup>As the lead U.S. government agency for international aid, USAID is responsible for reporting official U.S. government foreign aid to Congress and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. To fulfill this responsibility, USAID has maintained an official database for reporting U.S. government assistance to the world, from 1946 to the present. We found this database to be sufficiently reliable for the purpose of identifying those agencies that administer the largest amounts of foreign assistance.

<sup>3</sup>USAID officials distinguished between "strategy" and "policy" documents, stating that the agency updated its directives in October 2016 to clarify that it now defines "policy" as guidance that articulates the agency's position and

identify the agencies involved in developing and implementing them. We excluded two documents that one agency identified as strategy documents because we considered them to be reports on past efforts. Agencies noted that several of the documents we identified were being updated. We did not include country-specific strategies in the scope of our review.

We conducted this performance audit from December 2016 to June 2017 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

### Summary

We identified 63 strategy documents that DOD, HHS, MCC, State, USAID, and USDA have developed to guide their foreign assistance efforts. A number of these documents involved more than one agency. Enclosure I presents our inventory of strategy documents, including the name of each document, the sector involved, and the agencies named in each document as a party to the strategy.

### Agency Comments

We are not making recommendations in this report. We provided a draft of this report for comment to DOD, HHS, MCC, State, USAID, and USDA. Several of these agencies provided technical comments and corrections, which we have incorporated, as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to appropriate congressional committees and to the Secretaries of Agriculture, Defense, Health and Human Services, and State; the Administrator of USAID; and the Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

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sets a specific priority direction for a sectoral or cross-cutting goal or issue and defines “strategy” as guidance that focuses on achieving specific programmatic targets in a sector or cross-cutting area within a specific time period.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-6991, or [farbj@gao.gov](mailto:farbj@gao.gov). Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and of Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in enclosure II.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Farb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jessica Farb

Director, International Affairs and Trade

Enclosures – 2

Enclosure I: Inventory of Six U.S. Agencies' Foreign Assistance Strategy Documents, by Sector

General strategy documents covering multiple sectors or not specific to any single sector

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
Department of Defense Guidance for Security Cooperation (August 29, 2016)	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	In addition to naming DOD, this document refers to "interagency" stakeholders or partners, including "the Department of State," (State) "and other interagency stakeholders." The document names no other agencies.
NEXT: A Strategy for MCC's Future (February 24, 2016) <sup>b</sup>	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	No	None
State Department Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources, Functional Bureau Strategy (2016)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	State officials described this document as an internal management process and improvement strategy.
Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, Enduring Leadership in a Dynamic World (2015)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None
USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014-2025 (May 2014)	No	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	USAID officials noted that this strategy document encompasses multiple sectors, including food security and health.
State/USAID Strategic Plan FY2014-2017 (March 17, 2014)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None
U.S. Global Development Policy (September 22, 2010)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	This document is addressed to multiple agencies and other U.S. government entities involved in foreign assistance. It highlights three priorities: food security, health, and addressing climate change.
State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs/USAID Bureau for Asia Joint Regional Strategy (approved May 24, 2016)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None
State Bureau of African Affairs/USAID Bureau for Africa Joint Regional Strategy (approved April 5, 2016)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None
State Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs/USAID Bureau for Middle East Joint Regional Strategy, FY 2016-2018	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None
State Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs/USAID Bureau for Europe and Eurasia Joint Regional Strategy, FY 2015-2018 (approved April 2015)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None
State and USAID Joint Regional Strategy for South and Central Asia, and Afghanistan and Pakistan, FY 2015-2018 (June 2014)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
State Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs/USAID Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean Joint Regional Strategy, FY 2015-2018	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None

### Business, financial services, and trade-related

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
State Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, Functional Bureau Strategy (approved December 2015)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None

### Conflict prevention and resolution, peace, and security

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
Department of State & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism (May 2016)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None
Conventional Weapons Destruction Strategic Plan, 2017-2019, State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, State Functional Bureau Strategy (approved December 2015)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
U.S. Global Peace Operations Initiative Strategy: Strengthening the Effectiveness of United Nations and Regional Peace Operations, State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Office of Plans & Initiatives, Peace Operations Capacity Building Division (October 2015)	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
National Security Strategy (February 2015)	No	No	No	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	This document was issued by the Office of the President and provided by State. The document does not name any agency but refers to the U.S. military, defense, and homeland security in general terms. According to USAID officials, USAID, State, and DOD are responsible for implementing the strategy.
State Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, Functional Bureau Strategy, FY 2015-2018 (January 2015)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Functional Bureau Strategy, FY 2015-2018 (January 2015)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
State Bureau of Counterterrorism, Functional Bureau Strategy, FY 2015-2017 (January 2015)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
National Strategy for Counterterrorism (June 2011)	No	No	No	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	This document was issued by the Office of the President and was provided by State. It does not refer to any agency by name.
Security Sector Reform (February 2009)	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None

## Education

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
USAID Education Strategy 2011-2015: Opportunity Through Learning (February 2011)	No	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	According to USAID officials, USAID formally extended this strategy to September 30, 2017.

## Energy

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
State Bureau of Energy Resources, Functional Bureau Strategy (approved January 7, 2016)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None

## Environmental protection

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
State Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Functional Bureau Strategy (approved March 22, 2016)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
United States Climate Action Report 2014	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
USAID Climate and Development Strategy: Clean Resilient Growth (January 2012)	No	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	According to USAID officials, USAID formally extended this strategy to September 30, 2018.

## Food aid

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
A Food Secure 2030: Feed the Future, A Global Vision and Call to Action (September 2016)	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	These strategy documents were jointly issued by the agencies shown as well as by the African Development Foundation, the Department of Commerce, the Executive Office of the President of the United States, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the Peace Corps, and the Department of the Treasury.
U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy, FY 2017 – 2021 (September 2016)	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
USDA Strategic Plan FY 2014-2018	No	No	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	This strategic plan covers five strategic goals, one of which addresses foreign assistance.

## Government and civil society (including human rights and women's empowerment)

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, State Functional Bureau Strategy (approved March 27, 2017)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
U.S. Department of State Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment (June 2016)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (June 2016)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>Yes</b>	This document was issued by the Office of the President. In addition to the agencies shown, other agencies referenced in the document as implementers of the strategy include the Departments of Commerce, Homeland Security, Justice, and the Treasury; the U.S. Mission to the United Nations; and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).
United States Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls (March 2016)	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	<b>Yes</b>	This document includes implementation plans for the agencies shown as well as for the Peace Corps.
State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Functional Bureau Strategy, FY 2015-2018 (approved 2014)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>		No	No	None
USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (June 2013)	No	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None
U.S. Government Approach on Business and Human Rights, 2013	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>		No	No	None
United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally (August 2012)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None

## Health

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
2016-2020 CDC Strategic Framework for Global Immunization (May 2016)	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	No	No	None
U.S. Government Strategy for Reducing Transmission of the Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa (draft strategy, September 30, 2015)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes<sup>c</sup></b>	No	<b>Yes<sup>c</sup></b>	The National Security Council, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), USAID, and State developed an interagency strategy that has been revised over time to reflect new information about the 2014 Ebola outbreak and changes in international response efforts. The document names DOD, State, and HHS' CDC.
President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) Strategy 2015-2020 (April 2015)	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	None

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Human Resources for Health Strategy PEPFAR 3.0 (February 2015)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	The primary PEPFAR implementing agencies are the agencies shown as well as the Departments of Commerce, Labor, and the Treasury; and the Peace Corps.
CDC Division of Parasitic Diseases and Malaria Strategic Priorities 2015-2020	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	According to HHS officials, this strategy document covers domestic as well as international programs.
HHS Global Strategy (2015-2019)	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	HHS officials clarified that this strategy document includes foreign assistance and other programs.
Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, State Functional Bureau Strategy 2015-2018	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	The primary PEPFAR implementing agencies are the agencies shown as well as the Departments of Commerce, Labor, and the Treasury; and the Peace Corps.
PEPFAR 3.0 Controlling the Epidemic: Delivering on the Promise of an AIDS-free Generation (December 2014)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
HHS Strategic Plan 2014-2018 (updated March 10, 2014)	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	This is not a discrete document but a series of links on HHS's website. According to HHS officials, the foreign assistance content includes points related to PEPFAR and PMI.
HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response Strategic Plan (February 2014)	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	HHS officials noted that this strategy document is domestically focused but includes foreign assistance.
PEPFAR Blueprint: Creating an AIDS-free Generation (November 2012)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	The primary PEPFAR implementing agencies are the agencies shown as well as the Departments of Commerce, Labor, and the Treasury; and the Peace Corps.
CDC Global Health Strategy 2012-2015 (June 29, 2012)	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	None
USAID's Global Health Strategic Framework: Better Health for Development, FY 2012-2016	No		No	No	Yes	No	No	According to USAID officials, this strategy expired on September 30, 2016. Agency officials are working with USAID's Global Health Bureau to determine if this strategy should be extended, updated, or revised.

### Refugee assistance

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Functional Bureau Strategy (approved February 15, 2017)	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	None
2016-2017 Framework for Cooperation Between the United States Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (signed jointly by State and UNHCR March 14, 2016)	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	None



## Water and sanitation

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
USAID Water and Development Strategy 2013-2018	No	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	

## Sector not specified (countering illicit activities)

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
National Drug Control Strategy 2016 (released January 11, 2017)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	This document was issued by the Office of the President. In addition to DOD, HHS, and State, this document also names the Departments of Education, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Labor, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs; the Internal Revenue Service; the Office of National Drug Control Policy; and the Small Business Administration. A "Companion to the National Drug Control Strategy," dated December 2016, mentions most of these agencies as well as USAID, USDA, and the Department of the Interior.
United States Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs International Narcotics Control Strategy Report: Volume I, Drug and Chemical Control (March 2016)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
United States Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs International Narcotics Control Strategy Report: Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes (March 2016)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Functional Bureau Strategy (approved January 29, 2016)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Functional Bureau Strategy, Calendar Year 2015-2018 (approved January 2015)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None
National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking (February 2014)	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	This document was issued by the Office of the President. Agencies referenced in an implementation plan associated with this document include the agencies shown as well as the Departments of Commerce, Homeland Security, Interior, Justice, Transportation, and the Treasury; the Director of National Intelligence; OMB; and USTR.

### Sector not specified (working with international organizations)

Sector/strategy document <sup>a</sup>	DOD	HHS	MCC	State	USAID	USDA	Other	Comments
State Bureau of International Organization Affairs Functional Bureau Strategy, FY 2015-2017 (February 2015)	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>	No	No	No	None

Legend:

**Yes**= Agencies named in the strategy document or otherwise involved in the strategy, as noted in the “comments” column.

CDC = Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Department of Health and Human Services)

DOD = Department of Defense

FY = fiscal year

HHS = Department of Health and Human Services

MCC = Millennium Challenge Corporation

PEPFAR = President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

PMI = President’s Malaria Initiative

State = Department of State

USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development

USDA = U.S. Department of Agriculture

Source: GAO review of agency strategies and related information available on agency web sites and agency input. | GAO-17-563R

<sup>a</sup>We classified the strategy documents by sector using the sectors developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee; by reviewing the organization charts of USAID and State, the primary U.S. foreign aid and foreign policy agencies, respectively; and by reviewing the strategy documents we received from each of the agencies. Strategy documents shown for each sector are listed from most to least recent, to the extent that we could identify a date or time frame associated with each document. The list excludes a classified State strategy related to countering Boko Haram.

<sup>b</sup>MCC’s mission is to reduce poverty through country-led economic growth. Its policy is to select countries through a competitive process based on specific criteria and to allocate resources by using data-driven analysis, including cost-benefit analysis, rather than by targeting certain sectors. MCC has also collaborated on several multiagency strategies focused on specific sectors, such as empowering women and girls and food aid.

<sup>c</sup>Prior GAO work confirmed the involvement of USAID and several other agencies not named in the Ebola strategy document. See GAO, *Emergency Funding for Ebola Response: Some USAID Reimbursements Did Not Comply with Legislative Requirements and Need to Be Reversed*, GAO-17-35 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 2, 2016).

## Enclosure II: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

### **GAO Contact**

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### **Staff Acknowledgments**

In addition to the contact named above, James Michels (Assistant Director), Kay Halpern, and Gergana Danailova-Trainor made key contributions to this report.

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