

**Outside Witness Testimony submission by Jamie Bay Nishi, Director, Global Health  
Technologies Coalition**  
**Prepared for the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs**  
***Addressing USAID***

On behalf of the Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC), a group of more over 30 nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and aligned businesses advancing policies to accelerate the creation of new drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and other tools that bring healthy lives within reach for all people, I am submitting this testimony on fiscal year 2020 appropriations for global health programs at the US Agency for International Development (USAID). We appreciate your leadership in global health, and we hope that your support will continue. To this end, we strongly urge the Subcommittee to continue its established support for global health research and development (R&D) by:

1. Sustaining and supporting US investment in global health research and product development by robustly funding the Global Health accounts at USAID and the State Department. This means rejecting cuts to global health programs called for by the Administration in FY20 and supporting at minimum sustained funding at FY19 levels for each disease or population-specific program under the USAID and State Department global health accounts, and where possible, matching the increased funding levels allocated to these accounts in the House FY20 bill.
2. Instructing USAID—in collaboration with other agencies involved in global health—to prioritize R&D within each of the disease and condition areas under USAID’s Global Health Programs account; and
3. Requiring leaders at the State Department and USAID to work together with other US agencies to develop a whole-of-government global health R&D strategy to ensure that US investments in global health research are efficient, coordinated, and streamlined.

GHTC members strongly believe that in order to meet the world's most pressing global health needs, it is critical to invest in research today so that the most effective health solutions are available now and in the future. Sustainable investment in R&D for a broad range of neglected diseases and health conditions is critical to tackling both endemic and emerging global health challenges that impact people around the world and at home in the United States. My testimony reflects the needs expressed by our member organizations working in nearly one hundred countries.

**Critical need for new global health tools**

While we have made tremendous gains in global health over the past fifteen years, millions of people around the world are still threatened by HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), malaria, and other neglected diseases and health conditions. In 2107, TB killed 1.3 million people, surpassing deaths from HIV/AIDS. 1.8 million people were newly diagnosed with HIV. Nearly half of the global population remains at risk for malaria and drug resistant strains are growing. Maternal mortality is 19 times greater in under-resourced regions than developed countries. One out of every 13 children in Sub-Saharan Africa dies before the age of 5, often from vaccine-preventable and other communicable diseases. These figures highlight the tremendous global health challenges that still remain and the need for sustained investment in global health research to deliver new tools to combat endemic and emerging threats.

New tools and technologies are critical, both to address unmet global health needs and address challenges of drug resistance, outdated and toxic treatments, and difficulty administering current health technologies in poor, remote, and unstable settings. As seen with recent outbreaks of Ebola and Zika, we simply do not have all the tools needed to prevent, diagnose, and treat many neglected diseases – yet the emerging evidence of the impact of an experimental Ebola vaccine candidate currently being deployed in the epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, developed in part with funding from the US government, demonstrates the power of having the right tool at the right time to respond to a health emergency. It is critical to invest in the development of next generation tools to fight existing and emerging disease threats and have tools ready to go when we need them.

### **USAID Contributions to Global Health R&D**

USAID adds tremendous value to US investments in global health R&D, funding late-stage research and advancing product development appropriate for the low-resource settings where they will be used. In addition, USAID’s global presence and unique understanding of the needs of patients in different settings and contexts is key to developing health innovations that are transformative on the ground. We applaud the efforts that USAID has made in fostering innovation in health technologies, including:

- Partnering across government agencies and among private-sector partners to identify breakthrough innovations to combat infectious disease epidemics. USAID’s Fighting Ebola Grand Challenge identified 1,500 innovative technologies to address Ebola, and is funding refinement of 14, including novel personal protective equipment. The Combating Zika and Future Threats Grand Challenge received over 900 crowdsourced proposals and selected 26 projects to fund, cutting across vector control, surveillance, and diagnostics.
- Advancing global health R&D partnerships and leveraging US funding for greater impact. USAID coordinates with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada, the government of Norway, and other donors through the Saving Lives at Birth grand challenge, to develop lifesaving innovations for mothers and newborns. The program has successfully leveraged \$20 million in US government funding to attract more than \$150 million from outside donors, funding a pipeline of 116 innovations aimed at saving the lives of mothers and newborns, with potential to save 150,000 lives by 2030.
- Supporting research to develop safe, effective, and accessible tools to prevent in the developing world—including HIV vaccines and microbicides based on antiretroviral drugs, which have shown tremendous potential to prevent HIV infection in women.
- Playing a key role in the global effort to fight TB by supporting research to develop new therapeutics—including the world’s first child-friendly TB medicines, developed with critical seed funding from USAID and introduced in 2015—and providing expertise on implementation and scale-up of products that are ultimately licensed.

### **Global Health R&D Funding at USAID- Addressing Critical Gaps**

USAID is an important partner in global health product development, and it is critical for the agency to bolster this function of its global health programming. This means that global health programs within USAID require robust funding in order to ensure they have appropriate resources both for on-going programs and forward-looking R&D efforts.

For the vast majority of USAID's global health programming, there are no dedicated funding streams or programs expressly supporting global health R&D. This means that decisions on USAID's investments in new global health technologies—to make programming more successful and efficient, and to further the agency's global health mission—are made at the program level, based on overall funding allocations for each disease or population-specific health area. To ensure research is appropriately prioritized, global health programs need appropriate resources. Funding cuts—such as those proposed in the Administration's FY18, FY19, and FY20 budgets—would put significant strain on USAID's global health programs and jeopardize the agency's ability to balance current programming needs with needs for new drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and other tools to accelerate global health gains.

USAID recognizes the value of global health R&D, and how new global health tools can help finally curb infectious disease outbreaks, end preventable maternal and child deaths, and achieve an AIDS-free generation. The agency's annual report on Health-Related Research and Development is an important tool, in which USAID details its investments in global health R&D across all diseases and accounts and describes how these efforts advance our overarching global health goals. This report is critical to provide insight and transparency into how USAID thinks strategically about R&D investments. Thanks to strong Congressional support for this important oversight mechanism, the Global Health Innovation Act (P.L. 115-411) passed at the end of the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress authorizes the report annually for the next five years. We urge the Subcommittee to include report language in the FY20 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs bill directing USAID to include in the report specific information about health product development goals with details about USAID investments in drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and devices, including collaborations with other federal agencies as well as private sector partners, and timelines for product development.

In addition, while there are areas of USAID's global health portfolio that are leading the way in R&D, there are areas where a lack of resources and prioritization are acute. For example, USAID does not currently incorporate research for new vaccines and preventative technologies for tuberculosis into its programming, despite TB becoming the world's largest infectious disease killer in 2014. USAID also could advance its role in R&D for NTDs. While the agency does important work to provide treatments for five of the most prevalent NTDs, treatment options for the NTDs with the highest death rates, including visceral Leishmaniasis and Chagas disease, are extremely limited. To continue to make progress against all twenty NTDs, USAID should implement a comprehensive NTD R&D strategy to ensure that tools are available to treat all NTDs.

As we continue in uncertain times under this Administration, GHTC stresses the need for USAID to continue to prioritize science, technology, and innovation to advance its global health and development mission. GHTC urges the Subcommittee to continue to stress that USAID's global health programs include and expand R&D for new tools in their programming—including by allocating sufficient resources—and urges the Subcommittee to support expanded annual R&D reporting by USAID, which provides the only oversight policymakers and advocates have into the agency's R&D decision-making processes.

## **Collaboration across the US government**

In addition to USAID, support for global health R&D in the US government comes from the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Biological Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Each of these agencies plays a unique and essential role in moving new global health technologies from concept to reality, and strong interagency collaboration is essential to leveraging limited US government resources and ensuring taxpayer dollars are used most effectively. To this end, we urge the Subcommittee to encourage USAID to work with CDC, DoD, FDA, NIH, HHS, BARDA, and the White House to develop a whole-of-government strategy for global health R&D to coordinate priorities and resources and streamline operations.

## **Investing in global health R&D as a strategic national security and economic decision**

Global health R&D is important for delivering lifesaving tools to those who need them most. However, US government investments in R&D—through USAID and other agencies—yield benefits in addition to humanitarian and development goals. As recent outbreaks of Zika and Ebola demonstrate, diseases know no borders. Health crises abroad can become health crises at home, and it is imperative that we sustainably invest in R&D for a broad range of neglected infectious diseases so that we understand emerging disease threats and have tools ready-to-go when we need them. Global health is American health, and investments in global health R&D are investments in global health security.

Global health R&D is also a smart economic investment in the United States, where it drives job creation, spurs business activity, and engages academic institutions. **\$0.89 cents of every US dollar invested in global health R&D benefits US-based researchers**, many of whom conduct their research at US universities. **US government investment in global health R&D between 2007 and 2015 generated an estimated 200,000 new jobs and \$33 billion in economic growth.**

## **Recommendations**

Global health research that improves the lives of people around the world—while also promoting global health security, creating jobs, and spurring economic growth at home—is a win-win. Recognizing this, GHTC respectfully requests that the Subcommittee: robustly fund the Global Health Programs accounts at USAID and the State Department, at minimum continued funding at FY19 levels, and where possible, matching the increased funding levels allocated to these accounts in the House FY20 bill; call for the expansion of the annual report on USAID's health-related research and development progress report required under the Global Health Innovation Act (P.L. 115-411) to ensure the agency continues to prioritize R&D within each of its global health programs and accounts; and request that leaders at the State Department and USAID work with leaders at other US agencies, including NIH, CDC, FDA, DoD, HHS, BARDA and the White House to develop a whole-of-government global health R&D strategy to ensure that US investments in global health research are efficient, coordinated, and streamlined.

On behalf of the members of the GHTC, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Subcommittee for the opportunity to submit outside witness testimony.