



# Joint Regional Strategy

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**Bureau of African Affairs  
Bureau for Africa**

**FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**

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## 1. Executive Statement and Mission Statement

### Mission Statement

The United States strives to strengthen our partnerships across Africa in ways that serve U.S. interests, African interests, and the interests of people worldwide by promoting sustainable prosperity, democracy, and security toward a more peaceful and mutually beneficial future for the people of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy for Africa (JRS or Strategy) charts a course for development and diplomacy to mutually reinforce and build on the complementary strengths of each organization. State and USAID represent a powerful force for positive change and the capacity to build upon networks of institutions and individuals across the continent as well as in international organizations and the private sector. The JRS articulates a key framework through which diplomatic, development, and defense efforts can advance shared objectives in an integrated approach to national security. It provides policy guidance to all U.S. government agencies and enumerates the core objectives, operational model, and modern architecture needed to implement the policy<sup>1</sup>.

The Africa JRS follows the framework of the Interim National Security Strategy (INSS) and the still evolving State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) and articulates four strategic U.S. government goals for engagement in the region: 1) Advance peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa through U.S. leadership and revitalized alliances and partnerships to address challenges in security, stability, and democracy; 2) Increase mutually beneficial economic growth, trade, and investment; 3) Strengthen democracy, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity to build strong, accountable, and democratic institutions; and 4) Build Africa's resilience to meet post-pandemic challenges and promote inclusive development.

The United States cannot achieve our goals around the world—whether that is ending the COVID-19 pandemic, building a strong and inclusive global economy, combating the climate crisis, or revitalizing democracy and defending human rights—without the engagement and leadership of African governments, institutions, and citizens. This strategy lays out how the United States intends to proactively use diplomatic and development resources to partner with Africans across these goals, making it possible to respond to economic shocks and promote growth; expand U.S.-Africa trade and investment; prevent instability and the spread of violent extremism; advance democracy; combat preventable diseases and save lives; create productive

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<sup>1</sup> Programs and activities implemented by State and USAID in support of the JRS for Africa comply with numerous Executive Orders and policy requirements promoting diversity and inclusion across the spectrum of planning and programming. Such requirements include conducting gender analyses to inform strategic planning and project design; disaggregating person-level data by sex and other demographic variables to help measure and advance equity; and tracking annual budget attributions and performance results by a variety of Key Issues in annual Operational Plans (OPs) and Performance Plans and Reports (PPRs) to document the promotion of diversity and inclusion across the region.

opportunities for Africa's youth; and engage countries in Africa to realize a more resilient future.

World headlines often fail to reflect the significant progress being made in many fields across the region. Against great odds, several countries in recent years have held democratic elections followed by peaceful transfers of power. The trend toward epidemic control of HIV/AIDS is on the rise while the incidence of tuberculosis and child mortality continues to decline. Initiatives such as Power Africa and Prosper Africa have laid the groundwork for a new generation of regional economic growth and entrepreneurship that is contributing to the gradual advance of countries from low-income to middle-income status.

At the same time, the region is troubled by a number of natural and manmade challenges. The diversity of Sub-Saharan Africa is evident not only in the economic realm, with wide variance in per capita income and financial sector development across its 49 countries, but also across the spectrum of political stability, from well-established democratic governments to fragile and volatile regimes that struggle to provide basic services and security, as evidenced by the concerning number of coups and other extra-constitutional changes in government over the last year. While noteworthy centers of business, technology, and innovation exist across the continent with significant interest and investment from global institutional and strategic investors, the pandemic has had profound impacts on political and economic prospects, as well as on the well-being of Africans. Further, climate change and its impact on regulatory and investment patterns has emerged as a significant challenge, both locally and internationally, with the potential to slow much-needed drivers of change and growth. These variations and differences significantly influence diplomatic engagement, regional integration, and the delivery of development assistance.

The threats posed by violent extremists, by criminals, and by internal armed conflict have the potential to destabilize nations and regions, to undermine development, and to ignite humanitarian disasters. They also undermine governance and threaten human security. Perceived and real failures to deliver social services, healthcare, education, financial and natural resource management, and security contribute to a lack of state legitimacy in many countries. These conditions will challenge African governments and peoples, as well as our interests. They also present opportunities to employ renewed partnerships and increasing public advocacy for criminal justice and security sector approaches that respect human rights, as well as greater accountability for abuses.

Investments in health and education are critical. Sub-Saharan Africa has the leading rates of mortality among every population group, accounting for nearly half of all global child deaths and more than half of all maternal deaths annually. Our work strengthening national health systems in Africa will remain important to Africa's economic growth. Progress in maternal and child health as well as combatting the HIV/AIDS epidemic has led to continued improvement in health outcomes. Furthermore, African governments' ability to deal with emerging disease threats, like COVID-19 and Ebola, will remain critical to ensuring Americans' safety. Despite

gains in access to education, Sub-Saharan Africa is the worst-performing region globally for primary school enrollment, completion, and literacy. Our work will support our partner countries in strengthening their capacity to deliver quality learning opportunities for children and youth.

Much of the African population relies on natural resources for their livelihoods. Many African fisheries are on the verge of collapse from over-harvesting. Expanding agricultural land use, over-hunting, wildlife trafficking, and extractive industries are consuming Africa's natural resources. Land use change exacerbates desertification. We will increase our focus on sustainable intensification to grow more food on less land, climate change and its impacts that increase competition for scarce resources, extreme weather, and the likelihood of political instability and conflict in affected areas.

Despite progress in some countries, gender inequality continues to be pervasive throughout many facets of society, culture, institutions, and governments across Africa. These gender-based inequalities restrict African economic, security, governance, health, and education progress. Gender inequalities in Africa are costly and undermine the effectiveness of U.S. assistance and diplomacy. Without the full, equal, and meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls, in all their diversity (from herein to be captured under "women and girls"), Africa cannot meet its development objectives. Studies have shown investing in women and girls is one of the most powerful forces for improving standards of living and developing vibrant civil societies—yet women's leadership, unpaid labor, and meaningful contributions remain undervalued. We will continue to implement the new National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality; the Women, Peace, and Security Strategy; the Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally; and the suite of other gender and inclusive development-related strategies and policies in development or being updated. We will elevate our use of an intersectional lens, ensuring persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, Indigenous Peoples and ethnic or religious minorities, and leaders of other historically or systemically marginalized communities are meaningfully engaged<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, official development assistance to Africa is outpaced by foreign direct investment and remittances. Private sector and diaspora investments will increasingly power the engines of growth. We will build a more stable and inclusive global economy through new and ongoing initiatives—such as Build Back Better World (B3W), Power Africa, and Prosper Africa—to invigorate trade and investment to develop new opportunities for the U.S. and African private sectors and help countries transition from development assistance to self-reliance.

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<sup>2</sup> In addition, a number of Executive Orders and Acts guide our efforts in this area: E.O. 14020 Gender Equity and Equality; E.O. 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government; P.M. #NSM-4 Advancing the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons around the World; and the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

## 2. Bureau Strategic Framework

**Bureau Goal 1:** Advance peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa through U.S. leadership and new and revitalized alliances and partnerships to build resilience to address challenges in security, stability, and democracy.

- **Bureau Objective 1.1:** Strengthen the capability of multilateral and regional organizations, government institutions, and civil society to prevent worsening state fragility and the emergence of armed conflict.
- **Bureau Objective 1.2:** Improve the capacity and will of security forces, including defense and civilian security sector actors, to identify and respond to ongoing transnational threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism, organized crime, maritime insecurity, and border insecurity.
- **Bureau Objective 1.3:** Support institution building in the security sector by addressing the immediate causes of conflict through engagement, training, or programming.
- **Bureau Objective 1.4:** Enhance shared U.S. and African values grounded in dignity and human rights to prevent, respond to, and investigate alleged incidents by security sector actors.

**Bureau Goal 2:** Increase mutually beneficial economic growth, trade, and investment.

- **Bureau Objective 2.1:** Encourage improvements to business enabling environments and enhanced trade and investment between the United States and Africa through whole-of-government engagement.
- **Bureau Objective 2.2:** Expand African capacity and technological innovation to foster effective participation in global markets.
- **Bureau Objective 2.3:** Improve economic governance and regional integration for trade and investment, including the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

**Bureau Goal 3:** Strengthen democracy, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity to build strong, accountable, and democratic institutions, sustained by a deep commitment to human rights and to generate greater peace and prosperity.

- **Bureau Objective 3.1:** Promote accountable, transparent, and democratic governance by empowering key reformers and actors to promote access to justice, strengthen checks on executive power, and incorporate citizen-responsive governance to reduce corruption and improve the delivery of public services.

- **Bureau Objective 3.2:** Promote and protect fundamental human rights for all people, including marginalized populations by improving equality and inclusion to advance human rights, bolster civil society capacity, and support independent and professional media.
- **Bureau Objective 3.3:** Protect and promote democratic values and leadership, competitive political processes, as well as freedom of speech and assembly. Increase participation of women, youth, LGBTQI+ persons, and other marginalized groups in democratic processes. Promote open dialogue among civil society actors, governments, and the communities they serve.

**Bureau Goal 4:** Build Africa’s resilience to meet post-pandemic challenges and promote inclusive development.

- **Bureau Objective 4.1:** Strengthen African health systems and mobilize global actors to prevent, detect, and respond to current and future health security threats, and to accelerate reductions in preventable deaths.
- **Bureau Objective 4.2:** Accelerate equitable, inclusive, and accessible actions to address the climate crisis, build the capacity to adapt, and foster resilience to climate-related environmental changes.
- **Bureau Objective 4.3:** Reduce hunger, malnutrition, and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa by transforming Africa’s food systems for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, strengthening equitable and accessible resilience capacities, and climate adaptation and natural resource management, and the enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth.
- **Bureau Objective 4.4:** Build the skills of Africa’s current and next generation to adapt to longer-term economic, social, and environmental change.

**Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1:** Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and infrastructure in a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and accessible manner.

### 3. Bureau Goals and Objectives

**Bureau Goal 1:** Advance peace and security in Sub-Saharan Africa through U.S. leadership and new and revitalized alliances and partnerships to build resilience to address challenges in security, stability, and democracy.

- **Bureau Goal 1 Description:** The security problems confronting African countries are vast, varied, and complex. The sheer diversity across the continent means that the people of Africa experience insecurity differently based on many factors, including where they live, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, class, occupation, and other intersecting identities. Yet the continent has enormous potential and Africa's rich marketplace of ideas hold the promise to unlock the human potential and agency of all its people. We acknowledge our historic ties with Sub-Saharan Africa and renew our commitment to advancing peace and security as equal partners in a prosperous future that is built back better. To accomplish this, we must address challenges in security, stability, and democracy by first identifying root causes of violence and building resiliency from the ground up.

Only governments widely considered legitimate, with professionally trained security forces, can neutralize threats, provide physical security to protect their citizens, protect human rights, advance gender equity and equality, prevent gender-based violence, preserve access to justice, resist impunity, address corruption, and allow space for transparent political dispute resolutions. Through engagement, training, programming, or joint exercises, AF will demonstrate U.S. leadership and advance peace and security in the region in the next three to five years.

Goal 1 also aligns with the JSP Goal 1, the Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR), and the 2020 United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability.

**Bureau Objective 1.1:** Strengthen the capacity of multilateral and regional organizations, government institutions, and civil society to prevent worsening state fragility and the emergence of armed conflict.

- **Bureau Objective 1.1 Justification and Linkages:** Over the next three to five years through this JRS, and over the next decade via alignment with the broader goals of the Global Fragility Act (GFA), and other programming AF will assist our partners to address the root causes of fragility with an increased focus on conflict prevention and implementation of the GFA.

Fragility is characterized by a state's failure to provide security and basic services to its population and where the legitimacy of the government is widely questioned by the citizenry. To address these root causes, programming will apply early warning systems,



data collection and dissemination, and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts. The sub-objectives supporting objective 1.1 are designed to reduce fragility by promoting investments in legal foundations and institutions, border security, gender equity and equality, women's access to security careers, data collection and identifying indicators and establishing warning systems that can lead to early response and mitigation of emerging conflicts.

Objective 1.1 links with JSP Strategic Objectives 1.3, 1.4 as well as the Global Fragility Act.

- **Bureau Objective 1.1 Risk Considerations:** State fragility, corruption, poor economic governance, institutional weaknesses, unsustainable management of natural resources, gender inequality and other social inequalities, and poverty place many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa at a disadvantage in dealing with global problems such as pandemics, natural disasters, and price shocks. These underlying conditions fuel conflict and fragility. Much of Sub-Saharan Africa remains marginalized from the global economy. Security threats, such as terrorism, coups, insurgencies, inter-ethnic and inter-state conflict, fuel gross violations of human rights and disrupt economic security and development in many Sub-Saharan Africa countries. This situation is exacerbated by weak and unprofessional security services in some countries.

In this fragile setting, the economic impact from hazards such as natural disasters, flooding, droughts, and infectious diseases exacerbate national-level state fragility. People experience fragility differently based on their identities. Fragility and conflict often exacerbate the inequalities women, girls, and other systemically marginalized populations face, which can contribute to expanding state fragility. Worldwide in 2021, eleven of the fifteen countries with the highest levels of fragility as measured by the Fragile States Index were in Africa.

We will maintain robust monitoring and evaluation capabilities to ensure that we identify and document programmatic failures and successes and integrate lessons-learned into follow-on efforts. We will continue to ensure that U.S. programming is implemented in strict accordance with regulations like the Leahy Law, thereby denying security assistance to units and individuals associated with gross violations of human rights.

**Bureau Objective 1.2:** Improve the capability and will of security forces, including defense and civilian security sector actors, to identify and respond to ongoing transnational threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism, organized crime, maritime insecurity, and border insecurity.

- **Bureau Objective 1.2 Justification and Linkages:** Over the next three to five years, AF will assist its partners to degrade the capability of terrorist groups, including ISIS and al-Qa'ida affiliates, and to counter other transnational threats in Sub-Saharan Africa that threaten U.S. interests.

The sub-objectives supporting objective 1.2 prioritize programs to assist African partners in working together to weaken and disrupt transnational threats and groups that threaten stability; highlight that non-governed and less-governed areas especially on borders drive insecurity by providing safe haven for malign actors; and focus on overall professionalization of security services including the valuable contributions of women as security agents and guarantors.

Objective 1.2 aligns with JSP Strategic Objectives 1.4, 3.1, and 3.2 to fight the root causes of conflict. We stand with African partners to take offensive counterterrorism actions.

- **Bureau Objective 1.2 Risk Considerations:** Countering the spread of transnational threats requires a proactive rather than a response-driven approach.

AF must be intentional about broadening its strategic approach to security in Sub-Saharan Africa by addressing challenges related to remote and poorly governed spaces that continue to provide refuge to violent extremists and terrorist organizations. Weapons smuggling in multiple regions strengthens VEOs and fuels regional instability. Narcotics trafficking, trafficking in persons, wildlife, and other illegal smuggling continue to be major destabilizing influences on the continent, particularly in East and West Africa's littoral zones fueling corruption and violence.

**Bureau Objective 1.3:** Support institution building in the security sector by addressing the immediate causes of conflict through engagement, training, or programming.

- **Bureau Objective 1.3 Justification and Linkages:** In coordination with other Department bureaus, the interagency, and likeminded partners, AF will address root causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa by codifying bilateral security partnerships, countering narratives that divide and radicalize local populations, and promoting better understanding of social and economic challenges contributing to radicalization. The sub-objectives supporting this objective prioritize funding and programs to assist African partners to solidify the legal foundations of law-and-order institutions; support women, peace, and security (WPS) goals; further professionalize security service delivery; and provide technical skills that enable mission execution. Professional and cultural exchanges, including youth programs, the U.S. Speaker Program, Sports Diplomacy, the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), and American Spaces provide opportunities to share U.S. expertise in areas such as countering violent extremism, respecting human rights, promoting good governance, and strengthening the rule of law.

Objective 1.3 links with JSP Strategic Objectives 1.4, 1.5, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.5

- **Bureau Objective 1.3 Risk Considerations:** U.S. efforts to address the root causes of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa are complicated by competition with outside entities.

**Bureau Objective 1.4:** Enhance shared U.S. and African values grounded in dignity and human rights to prevent, respond to, and investigate alleged human rights violations and other incidents by security sector actors.

- **Bureau Objective 1.4 Justification and Linkages:** Over the next three to five years, AF will promote reforms for transparent, accountable, and capable criminal justice systems in partner nations to prevent gross violations of human rights and strengthen public trust in the justice and security sectors. AF supports self-reliant security systems, processes, and institutions in partner states so they can support stability, democracy, and good governance in their country and region. The sub-objectives supporting this objective prioritize utilizing foreign assistance and diplomatic engagement to strengthen military and civilian justice systems, as well as increasing the participation of women and vulnerable populations in security services and decision-making.

President Biden's invitation to 17 African governments and members of the private and public sectors to participate in the Summit for Democracy and Year of Action is an opportunity to advance human rights, counter authoritarianism, combat corruption, and promote respect for marginalized communities. Renewed bilateral engagement with countries that have experienced political transformations, also offers new opportunities to develop institutional frameworks to advance human rights and fight corruption.

Objective 1.4 links with JSP Strategic Objectives 1.4, 1.5, 3.1, and 3.2

- **Bureau Objective 1.4 Risk Considerations:** Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa has escalated and is spreading.

Where AF fails to engage or provide security assistance in line with our values, we leave the door open to elements affiliated with global competitors, such as private security companies that utilize heavy-handed tactics and commit human rights abuses.

## **Bureau Goal 2:** Increase mutually beneficial economic growth, trade, and investment.

- **Bureau Goal 2 Description:** The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on human life and brought major disruptions to economic activity across the world. As a result, the World Bank predicts that economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa will decline from 2.4 percent in 2019 to -2.1 to -5.1 percent in 2020, the first recession in the region in 25 years. This reversal of recent and projected growth trends underscores the importance of Department and USAID efforts to support inclusive economic growth in the region.

The United States seeks to spur economic growth, trade, and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa by adopting new trading relationships, countering unfair trade practices, facilitating new market opportunities through the Prosper Africa and Power Africa initiatives and publicize U.S. interest in expanding trade relationships to African publics. In support of Prosper Africa, the United States will identify and promote new opportunities for U.S. and African businesses and investors to increase trade and mobilize private capital; work with African governments and the private sector to strengthen business enabling environments and investment climates; modernize and synchronize USG services to provide coordinated support that meets private sector needs; and other interventions that promote competitiveness, trade diversification, and economic growth. Power Africa will continue to work in partnership with African governments and private sector, multilateral, and donor partners to increase investment in and access to reliable, affordable power—an essential input to increase the competitiveness of African products in international markets. These efforts, combined with Feed the Future activities to improve agricultural productivity, domestic market linkages, and women’s empowerment in agriculture, food security, and nutrition are critical components of our efforts to accelerate broad-based economic growth and reduce poverty. We will enhance and elevate the economic empowerment of women and girls, in all their diversity, within and across all initiatives, recognizing that women and girls, LGBTQI+ people, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and other systemically marginalized populations are overrepresented among Africa’s economically poorest people. This is due to political, cultural, structural, and legal barriers that limit their entrepreneurship and employment.

This goal links to the JSP Goal 2 and the USG COVID-19 Framework Objective 4.

**Bureau Objective 2.1:** Encourage trade and investment between the United States and Africa through whole-of-government engagement.

- **Bureau Objective 2.1 Justification and Linkages:** The relationships between the United States and African countries should not be defined as donor-recipient relationships, but rather as relationships based on mutually beneficial engagement. Most African countries have fast-growing youth populations, burgeoning middle classes with appetites for high-quality American goods, and increasing regional integration that creates ever-larger markets. Many U.S. businesses, particularly those in the energy, medical, agricultural, technology and service sectors, are highly competitive in Africa. Despite the strong economic opportunities, a core set of constraints limits U.S. trade and investment flows to Africa, as well as those from Africa to the United States. For instance, U.S. firms are constrained in entering or expanding in African markets due to a lack of familiarity with African markets and the difficulty in accessing timely, accurate, and reliable market information or intelligence on specific firms or opportunities. African businesses also face challenges trading and investing in the United States, resulting from U.S. perceptions of African business capacity, risk, and a lack of information on U.S. consumer expectations and the regulations on product quality. Access to the financing and equipment required to meet U.S. commercial needs for volume or timeliness of supply is also a key constraint. Meeting these U.S. market demands requires access to expertise, new technologies, and financing. African publics also need to be better informed of the scope of our existing trade relationships and desire to expand them in an effort to counter the perception that China is more willing to do business with Africa.

Through Prosper Africa, we will increase domestic business outreach activities and provide platforms for African leaders to showcase their opportunities for private sector investments, and for U.S. companies to showcase their products and services. We will leverage the full range of USG investments and utilize USAID's private investment platform to catalyze private capital for investments with potential for expanding markets for U.S. companies and for development impact. We will also engage with members of the African diaspora in the United States, who demonstrate increased levels of interest in investing on the continent.

Similarly, through Prosper Africa we will leverage interagency and private sector partnerships to deepen the commercial relationship between U.S. companies and investors and their African counterparts and help foster business enabling environments that are more conducive to investment. We will continue to work through the interagency to participate in the Commerce Department-led President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa (PAC-DBIA) to facilitate increased trade and

investment between the United States and Africa. We will expand direct communication between our interagency Embassy Deal Teams and U.S. companies, through which will develop targeted advocacy with African governments on prioritized business environment impediments to spur investment and job creation.

Objective 2.1 aligns with JSP Strategic Objectives 2.1, 2.3, and 2.4.

- **Bureau Objective 2.1 Risk Considerations:** Achievement of this objective will be impacted by economic conditions such as market stability, macroeconomic policy, country debt ratios, and currency management. This objective also considers the limitations of the USG to work efficiently with African government counterparts to address complex regional and global issues that affect the trade and investment climates, including climate change, security issues, and health. These largely exogenous risks were considered by the interagency and reflected in the design of initiatives such as Prosper Africa and the USAID Africa Trade and Investment Activity, which target both country-level and transaction-level constraints. This dual focus is itself a risk mitigation strategy. For example, these interagency initiatives provide support across sectors and regions, allowing for more flexibility to respond to changes in macroeconomic conditions and generating tangible benefits for individual businesses regardless of country-level developments beyond our control. However, we will also work to address macro-level constraints through partnerships and technical support, for example to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and other regional economic bodies.

**Bureau Objective 2.2:** Expand African capacity and technological innovation to foster effective participation in global markets.

- **Bureau Objective 2.2 Justification and Linkages:** Improving capacity to produce and export goods that are diverse, competitive, and meet global standards will allow African firms and individuals to access and benefit from global markets. We will work to expand this capacity by addressing key constraints to infrastructure, technology, and the full participation of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), entrepreneurs, women, and marginalized communities in the economy.

While African women face significant challenges accessing resources, they provide the majority of labor input and are key to unlocking the continent's economic potential. The UN estimated in 2016 that gender inequality costs Sub-Saharan Africa \$95 billion a year. AF will seek to reinvigorate initiatives like the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP), which will promote women's economic empowerment by providing professional networking, business development, financing, and trade capacity building opportunities for a network of women entrepreneurs and women's business associations across Africa. The Academy of Women Entrepreneurs (AWE), currently

operating in 16 AF countries and boasting more than 2,000 AF alumni, empower women to fulfil their economic potential and create conditions for increased stability, security, and prosperity for all. The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) includes a Business and Entrepreneurship track as part of its Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF) and continent-based Regional Leadership Centers (RLCs), in addition to providing courses on entrepreneurship and women's empowerment through its more than 600,000-strong online community. Other initiatives such as the continent-wide USAID Africa Trade and Investment Activity aim to promote business growth, increase trade both regionally and to U.S. markets through AGOA and the AfCFTA, create better business environments, and generally empower African women entrepreneurs to become voices of positive change in their communities.

By addressing other factors that impact the competitiveness of African firms, such as access to reliable energy sources and the availability of digital ecommerce and other payment platforms, we will work to create better enabling environments for entrepreneurs, MSMEs, women and youth, and traditionally marginalized populations, including disabled persons. For example, digitization of cross-border trade will help reduce gender-based violence experienced by women at border crossings. Ensuring equitable access to e-commerce will be particularly important as economies respond to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic.

Objective 2.2 aligns with JSP Strategic Objective 2.3, and 2.4.

- **Bureau Objective 2.2 Risk Considerations:** Potential risks to the achievement of this objective include possible decreases in global, regional, or country-specific demand for goods and services during the JRS implementation period, as well as the potential adverse impact of sub-optimal business enabling environments on regional or individual economies. Achievement of this objective will depend on global market and price stability, fair and open markets, and the appropriate skills, technology, and financial capital needed to facilitate greater African access to and participation in global markets. Other risks include persistent gender inequalities and other systemic social inequalities and vulnerabilities that continue to limit the full economic participation of women and other systematically marginalized groups. Recognizing these risks, the interagency initiatives that address this Objective will take a dual approach: addressing systemic barriers preventing African firms and individuals from succeeding in global markets, while also fostering tangible opportunities to help them do so.

**Bureau Objective 2.3:** Improve economic governance and regional integration for trade and investment.

- **Bureau Objective 2.3 Justification and Linkages:** Projected to account for about 20 percent of the world population by 2030, Africa will play an increasingly important role in the global economy. Though longstanding development and security challenges will continue to complicate growth, rapid urbanization combined with economic integration efforts such as AfCFTA will make Africa's expanding market more accessible and attractive to U.S. businesses. Stronger economic governance and regional integration create larger markets that improve economies of scale; reduce transaction costs for local, regional, and global trade; and make large-scale infrastructure projects more attractive to investors. We will engage with regional economic communities, national governments, the AU, other multilateral entities, and international financial institutions to promote regional integration and reduce barriers to trade and investment flows across the continent. We will continue to promote specific efforts in African countries to reduce the time and cost to trade in areas, including addressing technical barriers to trade and improving the infrastructure related to trade facilitation such as transport infrastructure, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and testing facilities. We will also encourage and provide opportunities for Sub-Saharan Africa's increasingly influential private sector, as well as the U.S. private sector, to engage governments and encourage the adoption of necessary reforms.

Our embassies will remain at the forefront of this effort, working daily with our African partners to improve economic governance and encourage strong public financial management, with particular emphasis on those countries that are now benefitting or will soon benefit from additional income from extractive resources. Recognizing that the private sector is a powerful voice for improved investment climates and good governance, we will continue to encourage the private sector at the national and sub-national/local levels to push for reform, including by working closely with U.S. Chambers of Commerce and other private sector groups in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Objective 2.3 aligns with JSP Strategic Objectives 2.1 and 2.2.

- **Bureau Objective 2.3 Risk Considerations:** This objective factors in the risk of inadequate political will or consensus across countries in the region. As such, partner countries may adopt protectionist trade policies, fail to fully proceed with needed governance reforms, or align themselves with actors and practices at odds with the principles of economic transparency and regional integration.

The impact of these risks is mitigated by our engagement broadly across the region so that progress with some countries can proceed even if stalled in other countries.



**Bureau Goal 3:** Strengthen democracy, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity.

- **Bureau Goal 3 Description:** This goal remains a critical policy and assistance priority for State and USAID in Sub-Saharan Africa. Strong, accountable, and democratic institutions, sustained by a deep commitment to human rights, remain the most reliable avenue to long-term peace and prosperity. We will support democratic institutions; improve governance; increase access to justice; strengthen accountability; reduce corruption; enhance women's political participation, leadership, and gender equality; and promote inclusive human rights for all people to help states and communities foster legitimate, inclusive political systems. Addressing issues of political and social exclusion and inequalities, human rights violations and abuses, endemic corruption, and improving public service delivery can counter democratic backsliding. These efforts also provide the greatest opportunity to ensure the human dignity of all persons in Sub-Saharan Africa is respected through positive health outcomes, equitable access to education, freedom from discrimination and violence, social resiliency, economic opportunity, and equitable access to justice.

It is a positive trend to see elections adopted as the norm in the region; however, it is troubling to observe the increasing frequency of electoral events in some countries contributing to democratic backsliding rather than consolidation. We will encourage the development of strong, effective, and independent institutions, to include the justice sector, legislatures, elections administration and dispute resolution bodies, and media, as well as a robust civil society, all of which are important to a healthy democracy. We will continue to elevate women's substantive participation in democratic processes and institutions and support policies designed to increase the percentage of women holding elected and appointed offices at regional, national, and local levels. Fundamental to improving women's meaningful political participation is removing systemic, institutional, and cultural barriers, including gender-based violence against women in politics. We will also encourage increased participation of other marginalized communities, including but not limited to LGBTQI+ persons, ethnic and racial minorities, Indigenous Peoples, refugees and displaced persons, and persons with disabilities. These efforts are necessary for sustainable progress in the other three strategic objectives.

Despite significant democratic strides across Sub-Saharan Africa, fragile gains must be supported over time to ensure consolidation and sustainability. USG programming in the region spans a wide range of country situations, from autocracies to fragile and post-conflict states to consolidating and well-established democracies. Although elections have become a regular occurrence, there are still too many countries where elections are far from legitimate, free, fair, or inclusive, constitutions are manipulated to allow leaders to stay in office, and where the transition to democracy is uneven and

slow, with leaders and other stakeholders who resist relinquishing power. In many countries, corruption is endemic, and state institutions and civil society remain weak. Media houses are often under-resourced and subject to official censorship or pressure to self-censor, dramatically limiting the media's ability to perform its meaningful oversight role.

Recognizing the foundational importance of democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) to sustainable development, this Strategy seeks to advance these principles in Sub-Saharan Africa by promoting equitable access to justice and accountability, respect for human and civil rights, particularly for systemically marginalized populations, credible and legitimate elections, gender equality, civil society that represents and advocates on behalf of diverse populations, and democratic governance that is both transparent and accountable to its people. Working in partnership with sub-Saharan African governments, like-minded diplomatic and development partners, and civil society, our support aims to strengthen governance institutions, protect the democratic and development gains that have been made in the region, and prevent democratic backsliding. We will continue to find creative and effective ways to build integrated, cross-sectoral programs that improve democracy and underscore the importance of good governance and respect for human rights while achieving positive development outcomes.

Interagency coordination is critical to ensuring our efforts are consistent and complementary across the USG. Through our work with the multiple Interagency Policy Committees and working groups relevant to the region, and with the support of the National Security Council, the Africa Bureaus at the Department and USAID lead the diplomatic and development initiatives to support this goal. Other significant interagency partners include the Departments of Justice and Labor, which are working on justice sector programming and labor-related human rights issues respectively, as well as the Department of Defense, which will continue to emphasize the need for professionalized, human rights respecting security partners on the continent. We also coordinate our efforts with international financial institutions, the UN, African Union, regional economic communities, civil society, and the private sector, where applicable. In addition, our Elections and Democracy Working Group will continue to provide a forum for consultation with non-governmental stakeholders regarding our efforts to advance and institutionalize democratic norms and processes.

JRS Goal 3, Strengthen democracy, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity supports USG efforts under JSP Goal 3. In particular, our efforts under JRS Goal 3 also support our partners in building the capacity and commitment needed for countries to lead their own development efforts under JRS Goal 1, Goal 2, and Goal 4.

**Bureau Objective 3.1:** Promote accountable, transparent, and democratic governance

- **Bureau Objective 3.1 Justification and Linkages:** The United States will continue efforts to support and empower key reformers and institutions of government at all levels to promote access to justice, improve accountability mechanisms, strengthen checks on executive power, deliver public services, and incorporate citizen-responsive and socially inclusive governance practices. A key pillar of this work is to reduce corruption and its corrosive effects on democratic institutions and the people they serve.

At the core of our efforts is the promotion of democratic, transparent, effective, and accountable governments, with institutions that both empower citizens and respond to citizens' aspirations and basic needs. A foundation of citizen-centered and socially inclusive democratic governance is essential to building citizen confidence in a country's future. We will continue to support anti-corruption activities to build investigative capacities, strengthen both anti-corruption and human rights commissions, and promote citizen awareness of individual rights and responsibilities through targeted U.S. programming, training, and educational and professional exchanges. We will continue to partner with gender equality and women's empowerment organizations and strengthen collaboration with leaders representing LGBTQI+ people, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and other socially representative groups. We will focus on developing open, sustainable media that provide a variety of viewpoints and the free flow of ideas and facts, as well as support media efforts to shed light on government accountability efforts and expose corruption. We will also step-up efforts to address the growing phenomenon of exploitation of new information technologies corrupting the information landscape.

This objective aligns with JSP Strategic Goal 3.1.

- **Bureau Objective 3.1 Risk Considerations:** This objective considers the risk political reforms, especially those that increase transparency, accountability, or diversity in representation, and reduce corruption, may face significant opposition or backtracking over time. Efforts across government institutions and civil society will look to create reinforcing mechanisms for supporting reforms in a sustainable manner. Our programs also seek to manage the risks presented by shrinking democratic space in many places across the region that make programs more challenging to implement, limited in scope, costly, dangerous, and/or illegal.

We will give particular attention to efforts that engage systemically marginalized and scapegoated populations, such as, but not limited to, LGBTQI+ people, women's rights advocates, ethnically and politically marginalized peoples and allies. In these circumstances, the Department and USAID use rigorous program reviews to evaluate the cost-benefit of our engagement, as well as the risks to the security of our staff and partners.

**Bureau Objective 3.2:** Promote and protect fundamental human rights for all peoples, improving equality and inclusion.

- **Bureau Objective 3.2 Justification and Linkages:** We will promote the human dignity of all people by advancing human rights frameworks, increasing civil society capacity, and supporting independent media. Our policies will continue to focus on socializing and protecting fundamental human rights and freedoms, particularly of historically and systemically marginalized or persecuted populations, including but not limited to women, LGBTQI+ persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and youth. Our policies and programming will also continue to strive to prevent and respond to gender-based violence across sectors. Our overarching objectives are to deepen popular understanding and commitment to equal rights and address human rights abuses. We support mechanisms to protect human rights, respond to abuses from both non-state and state actors, assist civil society organizations for human rights monitoring activities, and encourage mainstream civil society organizations to be inclusive of the needs of historical and systematically marginalized populations. We will work to prevent human rights abuses and atrocities and support transitional justice processes, with a particular focus on restorative justice mechanisms and longer-term reconciliation. Such support works together to create an inclusive society and foster rights-respecting reconciliation that facilitates collaboration between populations and the government and holds both accountable for abuses.

This objective aligns with JSP Strategic Objectives 3.1 and 3.2.

We will strive to empower all Africans, with particular emphasis on engaging and empowering women and youth, as well as systematically marginalized communities, to constructively shape and participate in their social, political, and economic environments, including through our many youth- and women-focused programs and exchanges. Civil society continues to face challenges to its role in representing and advocating for citizens. We will continue to promote and protect the role of civil society as an essential element of citizen-centered democratic governance. We will support the development of the institutional architecture to provide survivor-centered support to victims, enhance equitable access to justice, improve accountability, promote voices that encourage local dialogue among Africans, foster a diverse civil society, and recognize the value of independent and responsible media.

- **Bureau Objective 3.2 Risk Considerations:** This objective considers the risks of shrinking democratic space in several countries as well as risks created by remote and poorly governed spaces across the region. We evaluate both the programmatic as well as the security risks of ongoing engagement across the region.

As needed, we will adjust our approach and scope while utilizing all the tools of assistance and diplomacy to advance efforts in the region.

**Bureau Objective 3.3:** Protect and promote democratic values and leadership, competitive political processes, and the freedoms of speech and assembly.

- **Bureau Objective 3.3 Justification and Linkages:** The United States will continue to support democratic processes that are participatory, representative, and inclusive. We seek to increase political and civic participation of women, youth, LGBTQI+ persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and other systemically marginalized groups. We seek to promote open dialogue among civil society actors, government at all levels, and the communities they serve. Key to achieving these objectives is the use of targeted exchange programs, such as the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), focused on strategic themes and topics designed to build capacity and empower candidates recruited and selected by the entire Mission.

We will continue our focus on strengthening institutions at all levels to ensure democratic norms and processes take hold. By working with governments and civil society, we will build support for, and institutionalize democratic norms within, all branches of government, with particular emphasis on empowering independent judicial and legislative institutions that exercise checks on executive power. Our democracy-strengthening efforts will continue to focus on enabling and supporting credible, participatory, representative, and inclusive electoral processes. This Strategy will support capacity building for key actors and civil society, training for national and subnational elections commissions, promotion of diverse representation in government, and voter education and election observation programs. We will also encourage policies or laws to increase the political participation of marginalized groups (including women and youth) as voters, civil society members and leaders, and office holders at all levels of government. In relatively well performing states, we will advocate for and support continued consolidation of democratic institutions; these countries can be influential, including via the regional economic communities, in efforts to expand and strengthen democratization in neighboring states, thereby improving the democratic profile of Sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, we will increasingly integrate understanding of the benefits and risks of technological innovations into our activities to enable democratic progress by leveraging mobile technologies, social networks, and youth and women's engagement.

Objective 3.3 aligns with JSP Strategic Objective 3.2

- **Bureau Objective 3.3 Risk Considerations:** This objective considers the inherent political risk of strengthening transparency, oversight, and accountability that comes with the strengthening of democratic norms and processes. We will support representative, multiparty systems, without predisposition to electoral outcomes, and our activities will engage evenly with all political actors, understanding that more participatory processes may be seen by some as a threat.

**Bureau Goal 4:** Build Africa's resilience to meet post-pandemic challenges and promote inclusive development.

- **Bureau Goal 4 Description:** The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated and exposed vulnerabilities in Africa's health, social protection, and food systems that are compounded by the climate crisis, humanitarian challenges, conflict and migration, gender and other social inequalities, and unequal growth and development. Achieving this goal requires increasing the capacity of countries in the region to absorb shocks and apply prevention and coping strategies; adapt to social, economic, and environmental changes through informed livelihood choices; and sustain an enabling environment for systemic innovation through governance mechanisms and policies, norms, and social protection measures. Sustainable capacity in these areas is critical to help countries in the region accelerate inclusive growth and mitigate climate change. Fragile states, weak institutions, poor economic governance, the unsustainable management of natural resources, gender and other social inequalities, and income disparity continue to hinder development.

Addressing diseases and improving public health not only reduces morbidity and mortality and improves the quality of life, but also promotes peace, enhances security, and increases economic growth. There will be the continued implementation of PEPFAR, the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), and Feed the Future (FTF), as well as ongoing implementation of other maternal and child health, family planning, tuberculosis, and global health security programs with the aim of ending preventable maternal and child deaths, controlling the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and combating infectious disease, including by working with our partners to advance the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSa). Furthermore, programming will remain centered on promoting gender equity and equality; leveraging local and multilateral partnerships, including the private sector; strengthening health systems to provide essential services and prevent, detect, and respond to future infectious disease outbreaks; and promoting innovation and research for better health outcomes and higher life expectancy.

Sub-Saharan Africa is vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which negatively influence nutrition and food security, and impact a large population that relies on natural resources and agriculture for their livelihoods. These effects and negative impacts are experienced differently by women and girls, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, and other populations vulnerable to systemic inequalities. In the long-term, sub-Saharan African countries can adapt to the impacts of climate variability, and enhance conservation and biodiversity efforts, while continuing to grow their economies and optimize the use of natural resources and human capital in a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable manner.

As the USG's global hunger and food security initiative, FTF, remains our primary development tool for addressing chronic hunger and undernutrition in Africa. FTF seeks to catalyze agriculture-led economic growth and improve nutrition by increasing investments in agriculture, enhancing agricultural productivity, expanding access to markets and trade for smallholder farmers—especially women—and increasing economic resilience in vulnerable communities.

Achieving resilience across the region, where nearly two-thirds of the total population is under 35 years of age, will depend on engaging youth as the region's most abundant resource. Africa's young women and men are innovative, solutions-focused, and often drivers of change in their communities. This goal will support efforts to advance gender-equitable access to education, especially in crisis and conflict environments, as well as improve the quality of basic education, vocational training, and higher education to enhance the capacity of African youth to contribute to and benefit from their economies and societies. Initiatives such as Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), which includes the Mandela Washington Fellowship, Regional Leadership Centers, and YALI Network; the Pan-Africa Youth Leadership Program (PAYLP); Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES); the English Access Microscholarship Program; Study of U.S. Institutes (SUSI); the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP); and the multiple elements of the Fulbright exchange program under YALI, and other IVLP initiatives help empower Africa's current and next generation of leaders through opportunities for English language learning, academic coursework, leadership training, and networking. Encouraging post-secondary students to study at U.S. higher education institutions also creates long-lasting relationships with future African leaders and an understanding of Western values.

It is also critical that we work to ensure the nature, scope, and impact of U.S. support for African health system strengthening, food security, resiliency to the effects of climate change, and ability to contribute to their economies and societies is effectively communicated to African populations.

Goal 4 aligns with JSP Goals 1 and 2.

**Bureau Objective 4.1:** Strengthen African health systems and mobilize global actors to prevent, detect, and respond to current and future health security threats, and accelerate reductions in preventable deaths.

- **Bureau Objective 4.1 Justification and Linkages:** Ebola and COVID-19 have recently demonstrated the devastation caused by disease. Health and health security are foundational to sustained economic growth, and a healthy population is necessary for resilient economies and communities. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for nearly half of all global child deaths, more than half of all maternal deaths annually, and has the leading rates of mortality among every population group and accounts for 18 of the world's 20 countries with the highest prevalence of child, early and forced marriage. Furthermore, African governments' ability to deal with emerging disease threats will remain critical to ensuring Americans' safety.

The USG works to improve African health systems and infrastructure through new and enhanced partnerships with governments, other donors, civil society, faith-based and non-governmental organizations, the academic community, and the private sector. GHSA brings the United States, country stakeholders, and international partners together to protect populations from epidemics and threats they pose to human life, the global economy, and our national security. USAID's expertise in disaster response also contributes to establishment of emergency operations centers, critical to real-time outbreak response. Our PEPFAR programs strive to make strategic, scientifically sound investments to rapidly scale-up core HIV prevention, treatment, and care interventions, and maximize impact. As more and more countries achieve HIV epidemic control, health systems will need to absorb many of the responsibilities previously held by outside organizations. We support efforts to reduce maternal and child mortality by implementing cost-effective and evidence-based interventions to address otherwise-preventable deaths, train health personnel, improve the recognition of danger signs, and the importance of seeking care. We promote the appropriate use of community health workers to support a wide range of child and family health interventions and improved, including care for small and sick newborns. We promote child marriage-sensitive programming that aims to meet the health-related needs of girls vulnerable to child marriage and its health consequences. Our family planning assistance will continue to help women and couples in Africa choose the number, timing, and spacing of their pregnancies, resulting in significant social, economic, and health gains for families and communities.

This objective links to JSP Strategic Objective 1.1, the Global Health Security Agenda, the USG COVID-19 Framework (Objectives 2 and 3), PMI, PEPFAR, and the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE).



- **Bureau Objective 4.1 Risk Considerations:** Across all our efforts, achievement of the overall objective will depend upon sufficient political will, domestic and external resource mobilization, efficient utilization of resources, human capacity building at national and sub-national levels, and our ability to prevent and detect emerging health risks. Additionally, risk created by the impacts of climate change and socio-economic factors such as urbanization, transient populations, gender inequality, and the increasing youth bulge must also be addressed to ensure improved health outcomes. In order to mitigate these risks, the USG, together with key partners, will need to invest in and adopt approaches that: 1) directly respond to the current COVID-19 pandemic, both first and second order impacts; 2) advance policies and programs that strengthen African health systems, including increasing domestic resource mobilization and improving access to public health and health care services, especially for vulnerable and marginalized populations; and 3) utilize effective policy, programmatic, and resource strategies to foster connections and integration (as appropriate) of health with other development sectors, including but not limited to economics, governance, climate, education, agriculture, infrastructure, and urban development.

**Bureau Objective 4.2:** Accelerate equitable, inclusive, and accessible actions to address the climate crisis, build the capacity to adapt, and foster resilience to climate-related environmental changes.

- **Bureau Objective 4.2 Justification and Linkages:** The devastating impacts of the climate crisis are evident across Sub-Saharan Africa in drought, deforestation, failing crops, floods, advancing deserts, food insecurity, competition for resources, economic losses, and migration. Seventeen of the 20 countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change are in Africa and yet the continent accounts for less than three percent of global carbon emissions. That imbalance makes it critical that developed countries including the United States do much more to support climate actions across the region that either help to limit the causes of climate change or address its consequences.

Effectively addressing the climate crisis requires bold and collective action from all parts of society and, in the African context, further requires that climate mitigation and adaptation work in tandem with other development and diplomatic goals. To address a crisis of this magnitude requires reshaping how we work to take a more holistic approach across broad systems. This includes recognizing the direct and indirect impacts of the climate crisis on women, girls, and marginalized communities, and empowering these communities as leaders and innovators in overcoming local climate challenges. Climate change is not gender neutral, as women and girls, and men and boys, experience the effects of climate change differently. These effects and shocks tend to exacerbate and are exacerbated by underlying gender and other systemic social inequalities and vulnerabilities, including gender-based violence.

Responding to the climate crisis requires new and increased investment in adaptation and resilience measures in the immediate and long term to shore up the communities and economies across Sub-Saharan Africa. Our efforts will strengthen climate resilience of populations vulnerable to climate change, catalyze emissions reductions and prevention of future emissions, and strengthen citizen engagement and inclusive governance for effective climate action. Through the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE), we will provide funds to finance climate adaptation projects that will reduce the impact of climate change on those most endangered by it. As part of that plan, we will support the Africa Adaptation Initiative and its accelerator program, which aims to plan and finance infrastructure that is energy-efficient and resilient to climate change. We will continue to work with the African Union and other regional partners on climate-smart investments in agriculture, protecting forests, and improving climate education. Ventures supported by Power Africa and the Development Finance Corporation will contribute to the expansion of renewable energy and foster the industries and infrastructure of a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. The objectives, milestones, and indicators below outline a comprehensive effort to effectively limit the risk of climate change to communities and countries where we work by improving climate adaptation and preparedness, strengthening climate policy and ambition across sectors, moving towards net zero emission development, and mobilizing the finance necessary to achieve climate goals across all sectors.

This objective links to JSP Strategic Objectives 1.2 and 2.4, the strategic objectives of PREPARE, and the draft USAID Climate Strategy 2022-2030.

- **Bureau Objective 4.2 Risk Considerations:** Climate change and extreme weather events magnify the existing challenges on the continent, impact the most vulnerable groups and communities, and limit the ability of many African countries to achieve resilience, which will continue to worsen with increasing temperature variability. African countries and communities face challenges to achieve climate resilience due to the frequency and magnitude of multiple climate-related shocks and stressors (e.g., droughts, floods, pests, extreme heat), the high reliance on sectors and livelihoods that are sensitive to climate change and natural resource availability (e.g., rainfed agriculture).

In addition, trends in some sub-Saharan African countries, such as population increase, rapid urbanization, and democratic backsliding will make achieving ambitious climate goals even more challenging.

**Bureau Objective 4.3:** Reduce hunger, malnutrition, and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa by transforming Africa's food systems for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, strengthening equitable and accessible resilience capacities, and climate adaptation and natural resource management, and the enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth.

- **Bureau Objective 4.3 Justification and Linkages:** A disproportionate number of food insecure countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa due to a confluence of drought, conflict migration, climate change, and infectious diseases. Alleviating acute hunger, improving maternal health, reducing stunted growth, reducing child marriage prevalence, and ensuring food security requires investment in developing food systems supported by research and development technologies that can respond to climate stressors. The revised Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS) of 2021 integrates food and nutrition security strategies with approaches that incorporate resilience capacity building, integrated climate adaptation and natural resource management, women's empowerment and gender equality, and inclusive agriculture-led economic growth that contributes to sustainable transformation of African agriculture and food systems. GFSS is implemented through the FTF initiative, through which the United States partners with targeted African countries to generate broad-based economic growth and improved food security and nutrition. This U.S. strategy will advance global stability and prosperity by improving the most basic of human conditions—the need that families and individuals have for a reliable source of quality food and sufficient resources to purchase it. FTF addresses the root causes of poverty and hunger. By catalyzing responsible private sector investment and promoting higher levels of public investment and assistance for agriculture and food security, U.S. food security and nutrition efforts connect farmers to markets, increase farmers' productivity and resilience, and enable them to better manage risks, withstand shocks, and in some cases make the transition from receiving humanitarian assistance to engaging in more self-reliant economic development. Since FTF was launched in 2010, our investments in food and nutrition security have reduced poverty and child stunting—the best surrogate indicator for nutritional status—and helped vulnerable populations become more resilient to food crises.

Our programming will continue to promote a comprehensive and inclusive approach to food system transformation that empowers and meaningfully engages marginalized populations, women, youth, LGBTQI+ people, Indigenous Peoples, and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, it will focus on environmentally sound and climate-smart approaches to ensure smallholder farmers can adapt and thrive despite variations in rainfall, higher temperatures, and more saline soils. The implementation of our climate mitigation/adaptation and food systems transformation strategies will support the objectives of the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), which includes significant focus on environmental, humanitarian,

economic and resilience outcomes. Through our continued engagement with Africa's leaders and agricultural system current and future actors through CAADP, we will support African food systems transformation efforts at continental, regional, sub-regional, national, and sub-national levels.

Objective 4.3 aligns with JSP Strategic Objective 2.2 and 2.4.

- **Bureau Objective 4.3 Risk Considerations:** Risks to achieving the overall objective may include such factors as climate-related hazards (e.g., drought, flooding, seasonal pests); the quality of market links and market access; gender and other social inequalities; and policies and practices that affect the investment of labor and capital in agricultural development and farming cycles year to year. Our approach to mitigating these risks focuses on promoting technologies and innovation that minimize the impact of climate change, evidence-based policy reform and implementation that foster inclusion and gender equality and advancing enabling environment reforms to increase access to capital, labor, and agricultural markets.

**Bureau Objective 4.4:** Build the skills of Africa's current and next generation to adapt to longer-term economic, social, and environmental change.

- **Bureau Objective 4.4 Justification and Linkages:** We will equip the current and next generations of sub-Saharan Africans with the skills and knowledge to adapt and competently respond to global, regional, and local longer-term economic, social, and environmental changes. Through Fulbright Academic Exchange Programs, such as the Humphrey Fellowship, IVLP exchanges, and U.S. university partnerships with African institutions, such as those created under the University Partnership Initiative and Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation and Exchange (HELIX) Annual Program Statement. African professionals can enrich their knowledge and skills in public health and other global issues. We remain committed to youth programming and recognize that educated, healthy, employed, and civically engaged youth drive economic growth, democracy, and prosperity. We also remain committed to gender equity and quality, recognizing that young women and adolescent girls have different needs and face different barriers than young men, and have decreased opportunities due to systemic gender inequalities. We will support equitable access to the tools, education, and opportunities required by the increase in technology use and dependency that is rising across the region. By improving critical thinking skills, effective communication, freedom of thought and expression, and inclusive and sustainable economic growth opportunities, young women and young men are better placed to be leaders of their own development and help to build more stable and prosperous societies.

We will work with the current and next generation as partners; youth and young adults are well-positioned to lead the response in their communities and can contribute to

mitigating the long-term health, economic, and social costs their generation may experience most profoundly. They are also poised to create innovative, locally relevant solutions that promote climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. To adapt to the challenges ahead, we will reinforce the educational foundation of growing societies in our partner countries based on democratic values, transparency, and equality. We will ensure that crisis-affected children and youth, including those who are LGBTQI+ or have a disability, and especially girls and young women are accessing quality education that is safe, relevant, and promotes social cohesion and equality.

We will also ensure that the next generation has basic literacy and numeracy for future learning and success; are learning needed skills to lead productive lives, gain employment, and positively contribute to society; have teachers trained and equipped with requisite soft skills to develop global competencies in their students; have learning environments free from violence, especially from gender-based violence; and can access higher education institutions supporting development progress across sectors. USAID partnered with the UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) to stand up the Global Working Group to End SRGBV (School-related Gender Based Violence), which now consists of a robust network of over 50 organizations to ensure safety in school, especially for girls. Initiatives such as the English Access Microscholarship program target underserved students, primarily 13-20 years old, through extracurricular classes and activities that provide participants with a foundation in English language, leadership and professional skills, and exposure to U.S. culture and democratic values that may lead to better jobs and educational prospects, including future exchanges and study in the United States. We will remain champions of girls' education and target the underlying causes of gender gaps in education attainment, including child, early, and forced marriage, and gender-based violence. We will remain champions of equitable access to education for LGBTQI+ students, and students with disabilities, including building capacity and support for these populations through targeted training, programming, and exchanges. Activities such as the Disability-Inclusive Education in Africa Program increase governments' and stakeholders' knowledge and capacity for inclusive education and primary level students with disabilities. Through programming under YALI, Africa's next generation of leaders will be empowered by opportunities provided for academic coursework, leadership training, and networking.

These efforts are even more important given the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 and the climate crisis on the education, employment, engagement, health, and safety of young people. As the global leader in youth programming, we will work across sectors and in partnership with other USG agencies, the private sector, national governments, and civil society organizations around the world to assist youth in their transition from childhood into adulthood. As needed, we will adjust our approach and scope while utilizing all the tools of assistance and diplomacy to advance efforts in the region.

This objective links to JSP Strategic Objectives 2.4, 3.2, and 3.5 and to USG COVID-19 Framework Objective 1.

- **Bureau Objective 4.4 Risk Considerations:** When we fail to effectively engage youth and address their unique needs, it can lead to violence, inequality, instability, unrest, and migration. The rapidly growing youth population, rise of violent extremism, and high youth unemployment underscore the urgency to invest in youth worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacts youth through adverse effects such as loss of education; increased unemployment; increased rates of adolescent pregnancy, and of child, early, and forced marriage and other forms of gender-based violence; and deterioration of mental well-being. The negative impacts are particularly acute for young women, youth with disabilities, young LGBTQI+ persons, and young people within marginalized populations.

The UN estimates that 91 percent of young people have been impacted by school closures and drop-out rates are expected to rise as youth must supplement family incomes. Girls also tend to return to school at lower rates than boys once schools reopen. Youth unemployment is nearly triple the general population rate, and lack of engagement has left youth susceptible to sexual exploitation and abuse, harmful labor, illicit activity, or extremist groups. This objective also considers several potential risks, including sufficient political will and effective domestic resource mobilization, the ability to recruit and retain essential staff at all levels, public norms that value education and completion, and the quality and relevance of education and training provided.

These risks will be mitigated by designing and implementing targeted programs and activities for youth and children, particularly for girls and marginalized communities. These programs include building political will and driving partner country support for education; protection of all children from school-related gender-based violence; productive opportunities for youth including leadership training and engagement in civil society; partnerships with young people as drivers of their economic and community development; and increased engagement with diverse global, regional, and local stakeholders. Selected USAID Africa Missions with Basic Education Programs will implement activities in alignment with the USG Strategy and USAID Education Policy enhancing access to and the quality of basic education.

## 4. Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective

**Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1:** Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and infrastructure in a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible manner.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1 Justification and Linkages:** As we work to implement the administration's goals of revitalizing diplomacy and development, we have a unique opportunity to champion the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) while reenergizing and adapting our workforce, IT infrastructure, and commitment to safety to meet the needs of the 21st century. These values permeate everything we do.

In support of these aims, we will reexamine the way the Department and USAID do business in Africa, using data-driven analysis for decision making in our investments in safety and security; how we diversify and reorient the foreign assistance portfolio toward reestablishing U.S. leadership in health, development, and climate change; and by developing a more diverse, flexible, and highly skilled USG workforce in Africa, including U.S. Direct Hires (to include Foreign Service Limited Non-career Appointment employees), contractors, and Locally Employed Staff.

For USAID, Institutional Support Contracts (ISCs) will ensure that long-term vacancies do not slow momentum towards revitalizing the workforce, and that options to recruit highly skilled staff, including surge support, are available within shorter timeframes. DEIA principles will be incorporated into ISC recruitment processes, allowing leadership to pivot and adapt recruitment best practices nimbly, increase the flexibility of the USAID workforce, and attract top talent.

This objective aligns with JSP Goal 4.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1 Risk Considerations:** The biggest impediment to implementing the Management Objective is staffing. It takes people to build a workforce, modernize IT infrastructure, protect people and property, and embrace greening technologies, let alone provide the administrative support via the ICASS platform that the Department, USAID, and other agencies require to meet programmatic objectives. Africa is significantly understaffed overseas and domestically compared to other Regional Bureaus and the workload and demands on our staff continue to grow without a commensurate growth in USDH staffing.

The pandemic has taken a dramatic toll on posts in Africa. The closure of schools and the extreme isolation of lockdowns in some of the world's most challenging posts increased curtailments and vacancies, and less than one third of posts are currently reporting a return to "All Functions" status within the Department's COVID-19

mitigation framework. As employees return to their offices both in the field and in Washington, Missions are finding themselves stretched thin by increasing programmatic demands and workplaces that are, as of yet, unable to return to normal due to high local infection rates.