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One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

May 18, 2023

Ms. Katrina Fotovat
Senior Official
Office of Global Women's Issues
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Ms. Fotovat,

Over the past two years, the Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) has been without confirmed leadership. Considering the management and programmatic challenges inside that office, stemming from prolonged periods without political leadership, we seek additional information regarding your policy priorities for S/GWI, as well as information on how those priorities align with the work that preceded your arrival.

As you may know, we have strongly supported efforts by the Department of State to advance women's economic empowerment as an important priority of U.S. foreign policy. In 2020, we introduced bipartisan legislation to codify the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (WGDP) Initiative and strengthen USAID and State Department managerial structures related to women's empowerment, including within the S/GWI office. The WGDP Initiative enjoyed strong bipartisan support and appropriately prioritized concrete lines of effort around women's participation in the global economy, including an increase in women's participation in the global labor force and providing women with quality education, training, and support to secure higher paying jobs and increase the access of women entrepreneurs and business owners to financing, market opportunities, and training to establish and grow their businesses.

In 2021, however, the Biden Administration announced it would utilize the funds Congress provided to implement the WGDP Initiative for the Gender Equity and Equality Action (GEEA) Fund, which expands the focus beyond women's economic empowerment to include other issues such as climate change, gender-based violence, and global health.¹ We are concerned that by

¹ Press Release, Exec. Off. of the President, Fact Sheet: United States to Announce Commitment to Generation Equality Forum (June 30, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/30/fact-sheet-united-states-to-announce-commitments-to-the-generation-equality-forum/#:~:text=Establish%20the%20Gender,women%20and%20girls.>

blending these priorities, the emphasis on *women's economic* empowerment will be diminished and eclipsed. We are also concerned that the Biden Administration appears to have abandoned the interagency priorities announced in 2021 for implementation of the U.S. Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Act (P.L. 115-18) and is instead moving to focus the WPS agenda on “gender” rather than the needs of women and girls. Finally, we have concerns about S/GWI’s decision to re-engage with the problematic UN Women Generation Equality initiative.

Over the past two years, women around the world – from Burma and Afghanistan to Ethiopia and Ukraine to Colombia and Xinjiang – have faced renewed challenges from conflict, coups, mass atrocities, and authoritarian resurgence. The Committee is interested in knowing how, under your leadership, S/GWI will address these overarching issues and drive U.S. responses to the most critical needs and contexts.

To that end, please provide the following no later than May 30, 2023. Please submit any classified materials and information in a separate annex or annexes.

1. Documents sufficient to show S/GWI and U.S. participation in the UN Women Generation Equality initiative, including: funding expenditures to date and future funding commitments; reporting on substantive commitments related to participation in the Generation Equality Forum, Action Coalitions, or Global Acceleration Plan; documentation related to U.S. participation in Forum sessions, including but not limited to meetings in Mexico City and Paris; and agency guidelines for implementing limitations on use of the U.S. contribution to UN Women for funding of activities related to Generation Equality.
2. The FY24 budget requests more than \$3 billion to advance gender equity and equality globally. What specific programs account for this topline total? How does this request account for “double counting” among and within other development goals and commitments? Does this include implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017?
3. A detailed description of the quantity and percentage of S/GWI appropriated funds which are currently allocated to assistance projects with a climate change nexus under the GEEA. What assistance will be provided to maintain programming related to women’s economic empowerment, launched under the WGDP Initiative?
4. A detailed description of S/GWI’s role, if any, in:
 - a. Drafting the U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality;
 - b. Drafting, designing, and/or implementing USAID’s Principles for Inclusive Peacebuilding;
 - c. Drafting, designing and/or implementing USAID’s 2023 Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy; and
 - d. Drafting, designing and/or implementing USAID’s LGBTQI+ Inclusive Development Policy.

5. A detailed description of what discussions, if any, S/GWI has had with the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) regarding WPS-related training courses, and the status of making such courses mandatory for all State Department personnel.
6. A detailed explanation of how S/GWI selects partner countries, including a list of all factors considered for each WPS and GEEA funding.
7. Documents sufficient to show what specific programs S/GWI is currently operating, or planning to operate, to support women in the following countries: Afghanistan, Burma, China (including separate sections regarding Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang), Colombia, Ethiopia, Iran, Nigeria, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine. In particular, what is the relationship between the U.S. Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls and Human Rights and the State Department's Special Representative for Afghanistan, how do they coordinate efforts, and what are their results?
8. Does S/GWI continue to prioritize countering violent extremism (CVE) either separately from gender-based violence (GBV) prevention efforts or in the context of WPS or GBV programming?
9. Documents sufficient to show all GBV programs, prime contractors and prime grantees, and all sub-grantees and sub-contractors in countries implementing the program. As stated earlier, please submit any classified information via an annex.
 - a. What is S/GWI doing, if anything, to ensure that all primary and secondary grant/contract recipients comply with the Helms Amendment and other restrictions on the use of U.S. taxpayer funds to perform or promote abortion overseas?
 - b. Please provide all communications to primes and sub-primes specific to how the Helms Amendment should be understood in its implementation.
 - c. Please explain how, if at all, S/GWI implements the World Health Organization Abortion Care Guideline (2022).
 - d. For Nigeria, please also identify the regions in which the money is spent, and any funds designated specifically for regions affected by Boko Haram, including in relation to kidnappings, for the past 10 years including the prime awarded grant/contract funding, and all sub-grantees and sub-contractors implementing the program. Include also any public-private partnerships and funding to UN agencies for this purpose.
10. To what extent do you consider promoting abortion globally to be a component or objective of the U.S. Strategy on Global Women's Economic Security²? To what extent

² U.S. DEP'T OF STATE, U.S. STRATEGY ON GLOBAL WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY (2023).

do you consider promoting abortion globally to be a component or objective of the U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality?

11. Documents sufficient to show S/GWI and U.S. involvement in the Interagency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crisis, including any statements and commitments by U.S. government officials and representatives. Please also provide all bilateral and multilateral commitments related to the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) both in policy and in financial resources.
12. Documents sufficient to show S/GWI's current operational and policy definitions of each of the following terms, and how each definition operates in the context of S/GWI's mandate, priorities, policy advocacy, multilateral negotiations, and funding decisions, as well as any organizational body, professional body, or body of law which speak to these definitions as standard.
 - a. "Woman"
 - i. Please also explain how S/GWI will implement women's economic empowerment and WPS programming, including uses of WPS and GEEA funding, under this definition (versus under a "gender" lens).
 - b. "Reproductive coercion"
 - i. Please also explain how S/GWI approaches "unintended pregnancies".
 - c. "Sexual and reproductive health and rights"
 - d. "Sexual and reproductive health services"
 - i. Please also define "essential" in this context and delineate included services.
 - e. "Women's rights"
 - f. "Sex Characteristics"
 - g. "Gender perspective(s)"
 - h. "Sex work" and "sex worker"
13. State Department staff informed HFAC that there would be no multilateral or diplomatic engagements and negotiations related to abortion, yet the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence states an objective of supporting the inclusion of "reproductive health services, into health-related multilateral, bilateral, and diplomatic engagements and negotiations."³ Please explain how S/GWI is reconciling these two statements.
14. Documents sufficient to show all WPS programs, the prime contractor and prime grantees, and all sub-grantees and sub-contractors in countries implementing the program. As stated earlier, please submit any classified information via an annex.

³ U.S. AGENCY FOR INT'L DEV., U.S. DEP'T OF STATE, U.S. STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE GLOBALLY (2022).

- a. In this account, please detail the deliverables and outcomes from each program alongside the stated objective of the program in the grant application.
- b. Include in this account what funding has been used for each program, in both dollar amounts and percentage of total budget.
- c. Please provide an explanation of how grantees are performing “gender analysis.” Include results of analyses that have been conducted.

Sincerely,



Michael T. McCaul
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Ann Wagner
Vice Chair
House Foreign Affairs Committee