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REMARKS BY ADMINISTRATOR RAJIV SHAH AT THE RESILIENCE POLICY LAUNCH

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Just over a year ago, the worst drought in six decades brought 13.3 million people to the brink of hunger and starvation.

As the suffering mounted, the U.S. joined its partners to mobilize a large-scale humanitarian response to save lives as quickly as possible.

But because the crisis occurred on a scale so difficult to comprehend and so far away, we didn't see the public come together to respond in the same way they did after the earthquake in Haiti.

So we decided to try something new—we launched a public awareness campaign.

It was our attempt to make the world smaller—to connect people with the clear knowledge and understanding of exactly what was happening in the Horn and give them a powerful way to respond.

It included interactive maps with real-time information, tool kits, and these public service announcements from some familiar faces.

This campaign also represented something else—a turning point in decades of work to respond to humanitarian crises around the world.

Instead of just encouraging the public to help in a crisis, we also introduced to them to Feed the Future, President Obama's food security initiative, as well as new development breakthroughs that can put millions on the pathway out of poverty, including:

- New drought, flood tolerant, climate rice that can lift 72 million people over the poverty line by 2020 and save 7 billion cubic meters of water annually.
- Innovations in actuarial science that provide new microinsurance packages for pastoralists to cover them against loss of their livestock in lean season.
- Advances in nutrition—including vitamin A-rich orange-fleshed sweet potatoes to protect children against diseases.

Now, instead of just talking about how this crisis shouldn't ever happen again, we were taking real and meaningful steps to ensure it wouldn't.

We know we cannot prevent droughts or floods, but we can work much harder and more strategically to ensure these shocks don't devastate families or set back hard-won development gains.



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That is the goal behind today's launch of our Agency's first-ever [Policy and Program Guidance on Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis](#).

With this policy, we take a step forward in essentially delivering results for the most vulnerable communities around the world.

Because the truth is, we've seen a predictable pattern looking across more than three decades of humanitarian assistance.

Over the last decade, three quarters of our humanitarian assistance was spent in just 10 countries. And we know with climate change, it is only going to get worse.

At the end of the day, this policy is about changing the basic concept of humanitarian assistance so that communities can move out of a state of dependence and we can put ourselves out of business.

Take the earthquakes in Chile and Haiti as an example. While a Chile suffered a worse earthquake than Haiti (an 8.8 to Haiti's 7.0), it was able to bounce back far more effectively—because of the resilience in its economy, society, and infrastructure. The question for us is how we help get more communities and nations there.

Outlining new approaches in our work, today's policy provides guidance for turning these aspirations for resilience into real results.

Instead of sending in different types of teams to complete separate analyses and draw up separate plans, we've forged one unit—called a Joint Planning Cell—to address both humanitarian and development needs.

For example, in Kenya's arid northern lands, our Joint Planning Cell has fast-tracked a new Feed the Future project focused on diversifying livestock so it could begin just as emergency assistance was winding down in the region.

As a result, pastoralists will not experience any gaps in support as they work to rebuild their economic foundations.

Our teams call this work "integrating, layering, and sequencing"—and it has become the heartbeat of our effort to ensure we're delivering results in resilience.

The policy also means measuring our results differently.

Instead of just reporting on how many people we're reaching with humanitarian assistance, we're also reporting how many people we've helped stay in their communities.



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For example, in the Horn, we have set the goal of ensuring that 1 million additional people will no longer need emergency assistance in the next crisis because our work in resilience—a down-payment in our effort to put ourselves out of business.

And instead of trying to work everywhere, we are focusing our efforts where the need is greatest and our potential impact most significant.

Using the power of geospatial mapping, we can continue to focus our efforts even more strategically—finding and targeting the most vulnerable people in the most vulnerable settings.

In fact, just today, *The Washington Post* published an article about our Agency's partnership with NASA to provide satellite mapping for 32 countries worldwide in help build resilience.

This technology can do everything from track the depth of rivers to warn of imminent flooding to predict the potential impact of glacier melt and forest fires.

There is an incredible potential for using this technology across our work in resilience.

For example, this map was done by a student at William and Mary through a project called Mapping for Results that shows active World Bank health projects overlaid on a map of poverty levels.

The student—Alena Stern—presented the map at the launch of our Higher Education Solutions Network and spoke about the potential of open data to question our basic assumptions and improve our performance. It is a powerful example of how we need to get better as a community. In fact, precisely for this reason, we haven't pursued this new focus on resilience alone.

Last April, we worked closely with our African partners, the EU, and the World Bank to rally the world behind a new global agenda in resilience. Now, for the first time ever, Kenya and Ethiopia have plans and structures in place to help communities combat vulnerability to crisis.

Already, we're seeing real policy changes. Kenya has established a National Drought Management Fund to support increased investments in its arid north. And Ethiopia is implementing new policies to prioritize early livestock interventions ahead of drought—including commercial de-stocking.

This approach—which is basically helping families sell livestock ahead of a drought—has a cost-benefit ratio of 40:1. Ultimately, with this new policy, we seek to save and improve more lives—while reducing the need for repeated infusions of humanitarian assistance.

It won't be easy, but this policy already represents the best of our Agency in action. It was formed with the expertise from at least seven different bureaus and incorporated more than 90 pages of comments. We want to build on this engagement.



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For the first time, we are setting up a pilot project to give individuals outside our Agency the opportunity to comment on policy drafts at the same time our Agency staff are reviewing it. In the coming weeks, a draft of our Sustainable Urban Services Policy will be available for review on our website.

We know that there are costs of inaction—of the unbroken cycle of disaster and dependence.

There are security costs. In regions where we witness scarcity of resources today, we are more prone to face heightened tensions, conflict, and extremism tomorrow. But by building resilience in these places, we help fight the despair and suffering that can lead people towards violence.

There are economic costs. Over the last 30 years, one dollar out of every 3 spent on development was lost as a result of disasters and recurring crises. And the World Bank recently found that Kenya's prolonged drought last year cost the economy \$12 billion.

But all of these pale in comparison to the human costs and the harm to human dignity that occurs year after year, crisis after crisis.

Last July, an article appeared in *The Washington Post* about a 14-year-old girl who had lost her son in childbirth. In fact, she had already been married since the age of 12. The article talked about the humanitarian crisis in the Sahel—and the concern among aid workers that hunger would drive families to marry off their daughters even earlier for the dowries they fetch. The consequences of endemic hunger—the article reminded us—are not limited to an empty stomach.

At the end of the day, this policy will help us make the difference between enduring dependence and thriving human dignity. And if we get this right, not only can we help families remain in their communities—raising their children, growing crops, looking after livestock—instead of standing in line for food in refugee camps. But we can end the cycle of poverty and hunger for tens of millions of people, enabling growth and prosperity that will advance our nations together.