

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 24, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to express serious concerns with any proposed efforts to effectively eliminate the United States African Development Foundation (USADF). USADF plays a central role in strengthening the bonds between Africa and the United States by supporting local entities invested in the economic development of their countries. As indicated in your February 19, 2025, Executive Order, "Commencing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy," USADF is a statutorily authorized independent entity and supported by repeated bipartisan appropriations.

An Act of Congress, the African Development Foundation Act (P.L. 96-533), established the United States African Development Foundation and it has been a successful model of grassroots economic engagement to stimulate sustainable growth in Africa. Specifically, 22 U.S.C. § 290(h) of this statute explicitly states that the Foundation "shall have perpetual succession unless dissolved by an Act of Congress." This unambiguous language makes it clear that only an Act of Congress—not an executive action—can dissolve or eliminate USADF. Any attempt to unilaterally dismantle the USADF through executive action violates the law and exceeds the constitutional limits of executive authority.

Furthermore, the statutory functions of the USADF are clearly defined and must continue as required by law. Under 22 U.S.C. § 290h-2, the mandate of USADF is (1) to strengthen the bonds of friendship and understanding between the people of Africa and the United States; (2) to support self-help activities at the local level designed to enlarge opportunities for community development; (3) to stimulate and assist effective and expanding participation of Africans in their development process; and (4) to encourage the establishment and growth of development institutions which are indigenous to particular countries in Africa and which can respond to the requirements of the poor in those countries. The purposes are to be carried out by making grants, loans, and loan guarantees.

These functions are not discretionary but Congress has legally required them, and your Executive Order cannot override this obligation. Any efforts to reduce the size or scope of USADF as

described in the executive order and any subsequent direction to the USADF raises serious concerns that these statutorily required functions of the USADF may be violated. Adequate staffing is required to perform the due diligence, evaluation, and accountability functions for making the necessary grants to fulfill the Foundation's purpose.

In order to fulfill these requirements, Congress has regularly appropriated funding for the USADF. Most recently, for Fiscal Year 2024, the Congress approved Public Law 118-47, which appropriated \$45,000,000 for the USADF in a strong show of bipartisan support for its critical development efforts. Such funding has continued through the current Continuing Resolution (P.L. 118-83).

Along with the USADF's standing, permanent authorization, the regular approval of annual appropriations for the USADF—enacted by Congresses and Presidents of both parties, including during your first term—constitute an ongoing authorization of the agency's functions that remains in force.

In addition, any efforts to reorganize, redesign, or substantially alter the USADF requires prior consultation with and a 15-day advanced notification to Congress under Section 7063 of the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations law (P.L. 118-47). This includes any efforts to “expand, eliminate, consolidate, or downsize” the USADF, as per Section 7063(b) of the law. No such consultation or notification has been provided to the Congress. The law prohibits any such efforts to reorganize, redesign, or substantially alter the USADF absent such consultation and notification.

Eliminating this agency – or reducing its activities in an effort that would effectively eliminate it – would undermine U.S. leadership in the region and create a vacuum that adversarial powers would exploit to expand their influence, and undermine congressional intent. If your administration believes changes to the mission or funding levels of USADF are necessary, such proposals must be submitted to Congress for legislative consideration, as required by law.

We look forward to your response and to working together to ensure responsible and lawful governance of U.S. foreign assistance programs.

Sincerely,



Lois Frankel
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
National Security, Department of State, and
Related Programs



Gregory W. Meeks
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Cory A. Booker
Ranking Member
Africa and Global Health Policy Subcommittee
Senate Foreign Relations Committee



Sara Jacobs
Ranking Member
Africa Subcommittee
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Russell Vought, Director, OMB
The Honorable Marco Rubio, Secretary of State
The Honorable Carol Moseley Braun, Chair, Board of Directors, United States African
Development Foundation
Ms. Elisabeth Feleke, Chief Programs Officer, United States African Development
Foundation