

**Testimony of Wade Warren**  
**Acting Deputy Administrator**  
**United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**  
**Before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee**  
**Subcommittee on Information Technology**  
**Subcommittee on Government Operations**  
**Wednesday, November 15, 2017, 2:00 PM**

**Introduction**

Chairman Hurd, Chairman Meadows, Ranking Member Kelly, Ranking Member Connolly, members of both the Subcommittees on Information Technology and Government Operations, thank you for inviting me to testify today. I am grateful for the Committee's support for the work of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in information technology reform, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss our progress in complying with the standards set out in the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA). I have brought with me today Reggie Mitchell, USAID's Chief Financial Officer, and Jay Mahanand, USAID's Chief Information Officer, who have been instrumental in our technology reform efforts to help answer questions.

USAID is a global agency, charged with ending extreme poverty, and promoting resilient democratic societies while advancing U.S. security and prosperity. We employ more than 12,000 people and work in more than 100 countries. Our work is often done under the most difficult circumstances -- from a tent in Mexico City following the recent earthquake, to a small Mission in East Timor with a less-than-reliable internet connection, to a refugee camp in Jordan. We are an organization that depends on agile and mobile information technology.

We are also extremely data driven. For example, our Chief Geographer and GeoCenter use satellite data, demographic information, geo-statistics, and digital mapping to inform our decisions about where to target resources to maximize our development impact. Our Economic Analysis and Data Service provides a central source for all federally funded foreign assistance and international socioeconomic data.

Strong and effective information technology systems are essential to USAID achieving its mission in a modern world. As a relatively small agency with a relatively small IT budget managing a worldwide network, USAID has no choice but to embrace efficient IT. USAID is proud to have received the first A rating

ever given under the FITARA Scorecard; our score reflects years of hard work to put in place key reforms to address the deficiencies of prior years.

## **Modernizing Our IT Systems**

Eight years ago, USAID's IT was in disarray. We operated our own data center in the basement of the Ronald Reagan Building, and each Mission overseas maintained its own servers. In Washington, we spent hundreds of thousands of dollars every year acquiring new equipment, powering, and cooling our data center -- what we got was regular outages and a system that left employees tethered to their desks. We lacked WiFi, laptops, and efficient remote access to email, and we collaborated by emailing documents from person to person.

In the field, the situation was even worse. USAID often operates in countries with low bandwidth. Our old email system did not function well in this environment, leaving many overseas staff waiting for long periods of time for email messages to load, if they were able to use their email at all. These operating constraints caused us to reconsider what we needed from an IT system. Not surprisingly, access to email for staff positioned in high-priority critical areas topped the list.

In February 2010, we realized that the status quo was not sustainable. Our need for greater email reliability abroad, for increased data storage, and for greater mobility, compelled us to look for a new, modern email system. Spurred by calls from the Office of Management and Budget and the White House to modernize our technology and move to a cloud-based platform, we began taking steps that ultimately gave USAID a cloud-based email system by 2012.

Over the last few years, the Agency has developed into the leading federal agency for cloud computing investments with at least 20 percent of its operational IT spending dedicated to cloud solutions.

## **Keys to Success**

These investments in technology modernization have made us one of the most technologically efficient and effective agencies in the Federal Government. So today, I would like to share what we view as the keys to our success.

First, we accepted that updating our IT would be risky, that we would run into problems, and that we would not get everything right the first time. We knew that we needed to improve, and we were willing to take those risks. We embraced

change. We brought people along and encouraged them to try new things, like the cloud. By being open about the changes underway, we smoothed the way for adoption. We strived for constant and clear communication about what was happening and why it was happening. And we were there to answer questions as they came in.

I was hesitant when we first moved to the cloud. I led USAID's planning ahead of the transition, and my staff suggested we use a cloud-based word processor. At first I was resistant, but I was brought along and soon saw the value of editing quick-turnaround documents in real time -- from the office or from home, during regular work hours or late into the evening, as the situation dictated.

Following the transition, we were able to push out the entire library of transition documents to the whole Agency in one afternoon -- something we could never have done through email. And today those documents remain online for reference by anyone at USAID.

A second key to success, and related to the first point, we had real buy-in from the Agency leadership. We supported and funded modernization efforts, recognizing that in order for USAID to achieve its mission we needed to provide world-class technical support to employees. We realized that for USAID to remain the world's premier international development agency, modernizing our technology had to be a top priority. We committed significant financial and human resources to this effort and championed it from the top, with leadership committing to being among the first adopters.

Third, we continue to improve, plan for what we know will come, and deliver results. Today, rather than holding off on technology adoption until we need to make a significant leap forward, we have embraced a culture of incremental progress. We constantly phase in new technology and make small updates to our platforms. We regularly make small investments in our information systems that keep them from going out of date or losing interoperability. I am proud to say that because of these investments, today, USAID is not operating a single legacy system.

Fourth, we committed to hiring experts at a senior level who have the technical know-how to implement these changes and keep us ahead of the curve. We worked hard to recruit knowledgeable, experienced staff and provide training and support for the staff we have. The skills and abilities of our IT workforce remain

one of the key determining factors of whether we are successful in providing the information services we need as an organization.

## **Looking Ahead**

All of this hard work has led to important increases in efficiency for our workforce and significant cost savings that today we are using to reinvest into our platforms. Moving forward, we will ensure that we continue to remain ahead of the curve and lead the U.S. Government in our embrace and effective use of modern information technology.

To further optimize data center operations, the Agency is in the process of migrating our already outsourced data center to a cloud environment, which will provide a much more dynamic and flexible model for infrastructure procurement and management. This new arrangement will allow us to acquire and pay for only those services that are required, giving us the ability to easily and quickly scale up or down as needed.

USAID is working to develop a comprehensive Agency-wide software license inventory to ensure the best use of the Agency budget. This helps ensure that USAID is tracking spending and enterprise licenses to help maintain the appropriate number of licences for our Agency. We have also used this inventory to respond to the reporting requirements contained in the Making Electronic Government Accountable By Yielding Tangible Efficiencies (MEGABYTE) Act of 2016.

Finally, USAID is taking steps to actively manage the cybersecurity risk that we are all aware exists today. USAID's Office of the Chief Information Officer detects and mitigates more than 200,000 malware and intrusion events per month. We have made cybersecurity a critical priority and have worked closely with the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Chief Information Officers Council, and other federal organizations to protect our networks, systems, and information from unauthorized access or disruption while continually providing essential services and protecting privacy. In response to the May 2017 Cybersecurity Executive Order, USAID was ranked by the Department of Homeland Security and Office of Management and Budget, as "Managing Risk," meaning the Agency is able to actively manage the cybersecurity risk to the enterprise, making us one of the few federal agencies to receive this rating.

## **Conclusion**

USAID is committed to maintaining our status as a federal leader in the IT space. I would like to thank Members of Congress, and members of these Subcommittees in particular, for your continued leadership, interest in, and support for our work. We look forward to collaborating with you to address future challenges and new opportunities for reform. Thank you for your time; we welcome your questions.

**JAY MAHANAND**  
**CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER**



Jay Mahanand is the Chief Information Officer for the U.S. Agency for International Development. He has worked in the Information Technology arena for over 22 years and has successfully championed numerous multi-million dollar enterprise-level initiatives across entities within the federal and private sectors. With a well-rounded technical background in telecommunications, systems development, information security, and IT project management; Mr. Mahanand has driven innovation while maintaining an emphasis on simplicity to commitments at USAID.

Prior to joining USAID, he spent 15 years supporting the US Treasury and the former Immigration and Naturalization Service in various managerial positions including Chief Information Officer, Deputy Chief Information Officer, Chief Technical Officer, Deployment Manager, Network Manager and Senior Telecommunications Engineer. He holds a B.S. degree in Engineering from the University of Maryland and possesses technical certifications in enterprise architecture, telecommunications, project management, and information security.

## **REGINALD MITCHELL CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**



Reginald W. Mitchell is the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Chief Financial Officer (CFO) responsible for the oversight of the accounting and financial reporting functions of the agency. This includes the oversight and development of USAID worldwide financial management policies, program, and systems in support of the agency's development activities. Mr. Mitchell provides financial management leadership by establishing clear set of policies and procedures to ensure the financial integrity of the agency's programs. In carrying out his fiduciary duties as CFO, Mr. Mitchell directs the daily operations of the CFO organization and provides technical financial leadership for USAID's worldwide controller network and for Washington operating units in executing the agency's approximately 9,000 FTE and \$25 billion dollar financial portfolio.

Prior to joining USAID, Mr. Mitchell served 26 years with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) during which time he held a number of senior executive financial positions to include the Controller responsible for the agency's fiscal policies, proprietary accounting activities, and the development and maintenance of the agency's core and mixed financial systems. He also served as the Budget Director responsible for the agency's budgetary accounting activities, including the formulation and execution of the agency's program and operating expense budgets. Mr. Mitchell served in a variety of other senior executive service positions throughout his tenure with the NRC.

Prior to joining the NRC, Mr. Mitchell served in the United States Navy on nuclear submarines. Mr. Mitchell received his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management from National-Louis University and his Master of Public Administration from American University. He is a long-standing member of the Association of Government Accountants and Senior Executive Association.

## **WADE WARREN ACTING DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR**



Wade Warren currently serves as the Acting Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Prior to assuming his current duties, Warren served as the Acting Administrator. He has also served as the Assistant to the Administrator for the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) and the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Global Health. He had responsibility for strategic planning, budgeting, procurement, human resources, project design, monitoring and evaluation, and communications. Additionally, he was the Acting Chief Operating Officer of the State Department's Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance, where he had overall responsibility for strategic planning, budgeting, program planning and performance reporting for \$32 billion annually in foreign assistance. Warren also worked for 13 years for USAID's Bureau for Africa, serving in Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Washington, D.C. In Washington, he served as the Director of the Africa Bureau's Office of Development Planning and as the Bureau's Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator. He was responsible for the bureau's policy, budgeting, programming and operational processes, with particular emphasis on strategic frameworks for USAID's 23 bilateral and three regional missions in Africa.

Warren received his undergraduate degree in history from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1981 and his graduate degree in international business from the Thunderbird School of Global Management in 1990. Throughout the 1980s, he worked as an analyst in the U.S. House of Representatives (for two members and a committee) and from 1991 to 1994, he served as chief financial officer of the U.S. Telecommunications Training Institute, a non-profit organization that provides policy and technical training to communications professionals from throughout the developing world.