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PRESS RELEASE

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Former Deputy Director of USAID Contractor Sentenced To 51-Month Prison Term for Embezzling More Than \$1 Million - Defendant's Wife Also Sentenced for Her Role in the Crimes -

WASHINGTON - Mark Adams, a former deputy director at a private contractor that did business with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), was sentenced today to 51 months in prison on a federal conspiracy charge stemming from the embezzlement of more than \$1 million from a program meant to address global health problems.

Adams, 44, and his wife, Latasha Bell, 36, of Fort Washington, Md., each pled guilty in October 2012 before the Honorable Beryl A. Howell, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, to one count of conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud. As part of the pleas, they agreed to pay full restitution, and consented to an order forfeiting the amount stolen. The government has already seized about \$49,000 in proceeds from the scheme. Upon completion of his prison term, Adams will be placed on three years of supervised release.

Judge Howell said that Adams's conduct was "downright conniving" and particularly egregious given how the USAID money was supposed to be spent. She also sentenced Bell today to five years of probation, with the first six months to be served under home confinement.

The sentencings were announced by Ronald C. Machen Jr., U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, and Michael G. Carroll, Deputy Inspector General for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

As part of the plea, Adams and Bell admitted that Adams used his position as deputy director at a private USAID contractor to submit and approve false and fraudulent invoices and thereby obtain money. Adams admitted his false invoices generated more than \$1.084 million in fraudulent payments between 2006 and 2010. The bogus invoices claimed to bill for services

from Bell and companies controlled by Adams's friends, such as co-conspirator Everett Lipscomb Jr. However, the work and services claimed on the invoices were not in fact provided.

Adams and Bell received the payments either directly to Bell or indirectly, when Lipscomb and others paid Adams and Bell part of the money they received. Adams and Bell also used fraudulent invoices to pay a home renovation contractor to complete an extensive renovation of their home. In another instance, Adams and Bell received funds that they used to buy a luxury automobile.

Adams admitted that, by approving the bogus invoices, he caused the USAID contractor, and ultimately USAID, to pay these fraudulent bills out of money from USAID's global health program. The program addresses major global issues, including HIV/AIDS.

"Unethical contractors who steal from the American taxpayer undermine faith in government and the accomplishment of important public priorities," said U.S. Attorney Machen. "These defendants renovated their home and bought two luxury cars with dollars intended to save lives from terrible diseases. Today's sentences should reassure taxpayers that we are doing all we can to defend government programs from theft, waste, and abuse."

"I would like to express my appreciation for the exceptional work of our investigators and our partners at the Department of Justice involved with this case," said Deputy Inspector General Carroll. "This sentencing sends a strong message to those who would steal taxpayer money intended to support USAID global health efforts that the USAID OIG will continue to use all necessary resources of the U.S. government to bring justice to those who would defraud the American taxpayer."

Lipscomb, 43, of Aliso Viejo, Calif., pled guilty in March 2012 to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and related forfeiture allegations. He admitted that he participated in embezzling about \$386,279 as part of the scheme. In addition, he admitted that he set up a shell corporation and bank accounts to receive the fraudulent payments and sent them back to Adams. He also acknowledged creating an e-mail account under a false alias to advance the scheme. Lipscomb was sentenced in November 2012 to a 15-month prison term, to be followed by two years of supervised release. He also must join Adams and Bell in paying restitution.

In announcing the sentences, U.S. Attorney Machen and Deputy Inspector General Carroll commended the work of the special agents from the USAID Office of Inspector General, which investigated the case. They also thanked those who worked on the case from the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Paralegal Specialists Krishawn Graham and Nicole Wattlelet, Forensic Accountant Crystal Boodoo, Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony Saler, who handled forfeiture issues, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Hooks, who prosecuted the case.