

Dr. Jill Biden arrives in Namibia Wednesday for her first visit to Africa as U.S. first lady. Biden will focus on women's empowerment, children's issues and food insecurity that has ravaged parts of the continent.

"Dr. Biden's trip builds on last year's U.S.- Africa Leaders summit and as another demonstration of President Biden's commitment that the United States is all-in on Africa and all-in with Africa," Judd Devermont, senior director for African Affairs at the National Security Council, told reporters Tuesday morning.

"The U.S. strategy toward sub-Saharan Africa, which we released last August, starts with the conviction that Africa is critical to advancing our shared global priorities," Devermont added. "We believe that we are in the early years of a decisive decade which will determine the rules of the road on a host of vital issues from trade and economics, cybersecurity and technology."

With this visit, Jill Biden also becomes the first U.S. first lady to visit Namibia since the southwest African nation gained independence in 1990.

In addition to focusing on women and children, the first lady will draw attention to the dire food insecurity that is again gnawing at East Africa as she visits Kenya.

"In Kenya, Dr. Biden will very specifically draw attention to the food security crisis impacting the Horn of Africa, which is noted as the worst drought that this region has experienced in decades," said NSC spokesperson Becky Farmer. "Over 20 million people are increasingly experiencing acute food insecurity with many more at risk of increased hunger over the last year."

President Biden highlighted the situation in December when he announced a large humanitarian aid package at a summit that brought African leaders to Washington. And he discussed it again Tuesday as he highlighted the effects of Russia's war in Ukraine on global food supplies.

"Putin tried to starve the world, blocking the ports of the Black Sea to stop Ukraine from exporting its grain exacerbating a global food crisis that hit the developing nations of Africa especially hard. Instead, the United States and the G-7, and partners around the world answered the call with historic commitments to address the crisis and to bolster global food supplies. And this week my wife, Jill Biden, is traveling to Africa to help bring attention to this critical issue," President Joe Biden said Tuesday.

The Biden administration has been seen as trying to woo Africa to support Ukraine over Russia, recently dispatching Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen to Senegal, Zambia and South Africa.

The White House has withheld specific details of the first lady's activities in each country, citing security concerns.

Jill Biden previously visited Africa in 2010, 2011, twice in 2014 and once in 2016, all during Joe Biden's service as U.S. vice president. Two of those trips were with him.

This time, she is traveling to Africa without the president as he wraps up his own trip to Poland to mark Friday's anniversary of Russia's aggression toward Ukraine.