Dear Administrator Shah, We Support USAID's Efforts to Strengthen Country Ownership

Dear Administrator Shah:

We are writing to express our support for your leadership in implementing key reforms at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that will make the U.S. approach to development more effective, efficient, and sustainable.

We support policies that strengthen the ability of developing countries to lead their own development and graduate from U.S. assistance. For this reason, we believe that successful implementation of USAID's reform agenda is a crucial test of American leadership, and we wish to work with you to ensure these policies are designed and executed to deliver maximum development impact.

USAID's Implementation and Procurement Reform (IPR) initiative, which seeks to give partner countries more direct responsibility for—and ownership over—the success of U.S. development assistance by increasing the use of local institutions and systems, is rooted in President Obama's September 2010 global development policy. This policy promises that, where good partners exist, the U.S. will "respond directly to developing country priorities," and "empower responsible governments to drive development and sustain outcomes by working through national institutions rather than around them."

Successful and sustainable development outcomes hinge on the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness with which a country manages and expends public resources. Bolstering country systems and local civil society will enable the U.S. to leverage the contributions of other donors and the expertise of current implementing partners, and reduce the need for U.S. assistance by helping developing countries meet the needs of their own citizens. These efforts are also critical to attracting new sources of foreign direct investment into partner countries, as corporations rely on indigenous commercial partners and effective governance at the national and local levels in order to build successful and sustainable business models.

We support your efforts to increase developing country ownership, and we make the following recommendations to help IPR fulfill its promise of more effective, sustainable development:

- Create a strong enabling environment for local NGOs and businesses. Transparent, well-functioning country systems are only part of the development equation; engaged civil-society and private-sector actors drive the effectiveness and accountability of local institutions through active participation.
- Bring all stakeholders into the planning process to optimize efficiency, execution, and long-term viability of IPR reforms. As the U.S. Government seeks to shift more assistance over to local entities, longstanding U.S. development partners should be consulted regularly to leverage their expertise in building local capacity abroad.
- Be prudent, vigilant, and transparent throughout the implementation process. In an increasingly resource-constrained budget environment, it is even more critical that IPR is done right, incorporating safeguards to ensure responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

We look forward to engaging with and supporting you as you undertake this critically important initiative, and would welcome a regular dialogue with you as implementation continues.

MFAN MODERNIZING FOREIGN ASSISTANCE NETWORK
www.modernizeaid.net

The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) is a reform coalition composed of international development and foreign policy practitioners, policy advocates and experts, concerned citizens and private sector organizations. MFAN was created to build upon the bipartisan consensus that has emerged over the last decade that the U.S. should play a leadership role in achieving economic growth and reducing poverty and suffering around the world, and that we can play this role more effectively, efficiently, and transparently. For more information, visit www.modernizeaid.net

Individuals

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Rodney Bent, Former Government Official
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Hussein Khalid, Executive Director, Muslims for Human Rights
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Organizations

ActionAid USA
Adeso
African Wildlife Foundation
The Alliance to End Hunger
American Jewish World Service
Bread for the World
The Borgen Project
CARE
Contract Monitoring Coalition
The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Freedom of Information Coalition
Friends of the Nation
Global Washington
Habitat for Humanity International
Heifer International
Helen Keller International
The Hunger Project
Improve International
Initiative for Global Development
InterAction
International Rescue Committee
International Youth Foundation
Lutheran World Relief
Management Sciences for Health
Mercy Corps
Millennium Water Alliance
Nike
ONE
Oxfam America
Partners In Health
Pathfinder
PCI Global
Population Action International
RESULTS
Save the Children
Trickle Up
Truman National Security Project
United Methodist General Board of Church and Society
United Methodist Women
Water for Humans
WaterAid in America
Women Thrive Worldwide
World Wildlife Fund