



January 2013

Foreign Assistance Briefing Book

Critical problems, recommendations and actions for
the 113th Congress and the Obama administration



Photo: Amos Gumulia

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Ezra Millstein, Habitat for Humanity International

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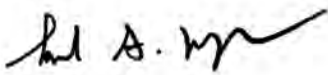
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Aaron Simon, Seva Foundation

Information contained herein was compiled between August and November 2012.

Updates will be made available on InterAction's website (www.interaction.org) as required.



Introduction

To: The 113th Congress and the Obama Administration
From: Samuel A. Worthington, President & CEO, InterAction
Date: January 2013
Re: InterAction's 2013 Foreign Assistance Briefing Book

On behalf of InterAction's 201 member organizations, I am pleased to present our 2013 *Foreign Assistance Briefing Book*. Our goal is to offer you the U.S.-based international nonprofit community's best thinking on important international development, humanitarian and other issues related to U.S. foreign assistance. This briefing book captures and applies the lessons learned from InterAction members' decades of on-the-ground experience improving human well-being, responding to humanitarian crises, advancing democratic governance and ensuring equitable and sustainable development. We have selected key areas of U.S. foreign assistance and offer suggested actions for you to consider during the 113th Congress or as a member of the Obama administration. Each issue is outlined in a succinct one-page document.

At the heart of America's foreign assistance portfolio is poverty-focused development assistance, which is our country's most important tool for reaching the world's poorest and most unstable societies. This effort extends beyond the much-needed task of addressing basic needs. It also involves protecting the most vulnerable populations from economic shocks, conflict and natural disasters, equipping them with the capacity and tools to advocate on their own behalf, and enabling them to be stakeholders in shaping a more just and stable world. While concern for the world's poor is a moral issue, their status and prospects are closely linked to our national security and economic well-being.

InterAction is the largest coalition of U.S.-based nonprofits, commonly referred to as U.S. NGOs, operating around the world focused on the world's poor and most vulnerable people. Our members' activities are directly supported by an estimated \$8.3 billion per year of private funding thanks to generous contributions from the American people; this leverages the \$3.7 billion per year our members receive from the federal government.¹ InterAction members represent the diversity of America; many are faith-based or faith-founded and over 60,000 congregations support their work.² Whatever their mission, InterAction members embody the American people's compassion and desire to build a better, safer world.

Development assistance through U.S. civilian agencies advances U.S. national political, economic and security interests. Republican and Democratic leadership have consistently viewed development assistance as a core tool of U.S. foreign policy to address American security and economic interests, and to promote our image as a compassionate nation. As President Barack Obama stated at the Millennium Development Goals Summit in 2010, development must be recognized "not only as a moral imperative, but a strategic and economic imperative."³ ►

The American people strongly support sustainable development and poverty reduction, including advancing universal education, promoting gender equality, improving maternal and child health, combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability. For example, a recent poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 66 percent of Americans think current U.S. spending on global health is “too little” or “about right,” including majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independents. Furthermore, 67 percent of Americans believe that when it comes to efforts to improve global health, the U.S. should provide funds directly to U.S.-based nonprofits operating programs in developing countries.⁴

Partnering with U.S. NGOs should be a key part of the U.S. government’s strategy for promoting effective global development, and USAID should continue to explore ways to leverage this relationship as it implements reforms and development initiatives such as the Feed the Future Initiative. The participation of the U.S. NGO community as a thought leader, private donor, key partner and implementer will help ensure that U.S. development initiatives build local capacity, and are dynamic enough to respond to the needs of local populations. All of these steps should take place in consultation with civil society, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

This briefing book contains a wealth of information and policy recommendations on a range of pressing foreign assistance challenges. It represents a collaboration involving InterAction member organizations and relevant working groups. If you would like further information about these papers please contact InterAction at 202-667-8227.

Nearly every InterAction staff member contributed in some way, by coordinating the work of members, writing and editing, developing ideas and concepts, and reaching out to knowledgeable authorities. Leadership for this project came from three staff members: Chad Brobst, Creative Director; Will Merrow, Special Assistant to the President & CEO; and Lindsay Coates, Executive Vice President. We are grateful to the InterAction member organizations, their leadership and staffs, and the InterAction staff for their contributions, professionalism and dedication. We hope that our efforts will be useful to our readers.

1 InterAction analysis of members’ 2009 IRS Form 990s.

2 InterAction analysis of data reported by members in August 2012.

3 Remarks of President Barack Obama – As Prepared for Delivery. Millennium Development Goals Summit, UN Headquarters, New York. 2010.

4 Kaiser Family Foundation, “U.S. Global Health Policy: 2012 Survey of Americans on the U.S. Role in Global Health.” May 2012.

InterAction Member Organizations

ACDI/VOCA
Action Against Hunger USA
ActionAid International USA
Adeso
Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA)
African Medical & Research Foundation
African Methodist Episcopal Service and Development Agency (AME-SADA)
Africare
Aga Khan Foundation USA
Air Serv International
All Hands Volunteers
Alliance for Peacebuilding
Alliance to End Hunger
American Friends Service Committee
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
American Jewish World Service
American Near East Refugee Aid
American Red Cross International Services
American Refugee Committee
AmeriCares
America's Development Foundation (ADF)
Americas ReliefTeam
Amigos de las Américas
Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team
Baptist World Alliance
Basic Education Coalition (BEC)
Bethany Christian Services Global, LLC
Bethesda Lutheran Communities
BRAC USA
Bread for the World
Bread for the World Institute
Brother's Brother Foundation
Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
Build Change
CARE
Catholic Relief Services
CBM
CDA Collaborative Learning Projects
Center for Civilians in Conflict
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
ChildFund International
Church World Service
Concern America
CONCERN Worldwide U.S., Inc.
Congressional Hunger Center
Convoy of Hope
Counterpart International
Creative Learning
Development Gateway
Direct Relief International
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
The Eagles Wings Foundation
Easter Seals
Education Development Center (EDC)
Episcopal Relief & Development
Ethiopian Community Development Council
Family Care International
Feed the Children
Food for the Poor (FFP)
Freedom from Hunger
Friends of ACTED
Friends of the Global Fight
Giving Children Hope
Global Communities
The Global Food Banking Network
Global Fund for Children
GlobalGiving
Global Health Council
Global Links
Global Washington

GOOD360
Habitat for Humanity International
Handicap International USA
Heart to Heart International
Heartland Alliance
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
Heifer International
Helen Keller International
HelpAge USA
Helping Hand for Relief and Development
Himalayan Cataract Project
Holt International Children's Services
Humane Society International (HSI)
The Hunger Project
Information Management and Mine Action Programs (IMMAP)
INMED Partnerships for Children
InsideNGO
Institute for Sustainable Communities
Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc. (IMA World Health)
International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)
International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)
International Emergency and Development Aid (IEDA Relief)
International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
International Fund for Animal Welfare
International Housing Coalition (IHC)
International Medical Corps
International Medical Health Organization (IMHO)
International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)
International Relief & Development
International Relief Teams
International Rescue Committee (IRC)
International Social Service—United States of America Branch, Inc
International Youth Foundation
IntraHealth International, Inc.
Islamic Relief USA
Jesuit Refugee Services USA
Jhpiego – an affiliate of The Johns Hopkins University
Joint Council on International Children's Services
Keystone Humane Services International
Latter-day Saint Charities
Life for Relief and Development
LINGOS
Lions Clubs International Foundation
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Lutheran World Relief
MAG America
Management Sciences for Health (MSH)
MAP International
Medical Care Development
Medical Emergency Relief International (Merlin)
Medical Teams International
MedShare International
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Mercy Corps
Mercy USA for Aid and Development
Millennium Water Alliance
Mobility International USA
National Association of Social Workers
National Cooperative Business Association
ONE Campaign
One Economy Corporation
Operation Blessing International Relief and Development Corporation
Operation USA
Outreach International
Oxfam America
Pact
Pan American Development Foundation
Pan American Health and Education Foundation (PAHEF)

PATH
Pathfinder International
PCI
Perkins International
Physicians for Peace
Plan International USA
Planet Aid
Plant with Purpose
Population Action International
Population Communication
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Hunger Program
Project C.U.R.E.
Refugees International
Relief International
Religions for Peace
Resolve Uganda
RESULTS
ReSurge International
Salvation Army World Service Office
Save the Children
Seva Foundation
ShelterBox USA
Society for International Development (SID)
Solar Cookers International
Solidarity Center
Stop Hunger Now
Transparency International USA
Trickle Up Program
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
United Cerebral Palsy
United Methodist Committee on Relief
United Nations Foundation
United States International Council on Disabilities (USICD)
USA for UNHCR
U.S. Climate Action Network (USCAN)
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
U.S. Fund for UNICEF
VAB (Volunteers Association of Bangladesh)
WaterAid America
Water for South Sudan
WellShare International
Winrock International
Women for Women International
Women Thrive Worldwide
World Concern
World Connect
World Food Program USA
World Learning
World Neighbors
World Rehabilitation Fund
World Relief
World Renew
World Society for the Protection of Animals
World Wildlife Fund
World Vision
Zakat Foundation of America

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University
Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy (DRLA) at Tulane University
Enough Project (a project of Center for American Progress (“CAP”)
Global Master's in Development Practice Secretariat of the Earth Institute at Columbia University
Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs at Maxwell School of Syracuse University, The Transnational NGO Initiative
The NGOLD Center at Northern Illinois University

(as of 12/4/12)

Policy Paper

The Role of U.S. NGOs in Global Development and Humanitarian Work

By Samuel A. Worthington, President & CEO, InterAction

Development assistance has become a multistakeholder initiative, drawing in participants from national governments and international agencies to nonprofits, foundations, universities and corporations. These shifts have transformed the role of official development assistance (ODA) programs globally, and U.S. nonprofits, commonly referred to as U.S. nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), have a critical role to play in this more crowded landscape.

The new development landscape

Gone are the days when a few donor nations and the World Bank provided the bulk of grants or loans to recipient countries and targeted programs. New players are rapidly transforming the basic architecture of the aid system, its diversity, capacity and effectiveness. New donor governments are giving aid and development assistance from emerging economies has more than doubled in recent years.¹ U.S. corporations, which already contribute an estimated \$7.6 billion² per year in philanthropy, are increasingly moving beyond a charity-based “check-writing” model to one of creating shared value, making thousands of mutually beneficial partnerships with governments and NGOs to achieve development outcomes through their everyday business operations.³ Social entrepreneurs and “impact investors” are bringing new ideas and resources, and universities and think tanks play a growing role through research, analysis and partnerships. The American public has also become involved with increased donations, advocacy and volunteer work.

During the 1960s ODA constituted 70 percent of capital flows to developing countries, while today only 13 percent comes from ODA, with the rest coming from private capital flows.⁴ It is in this context, as an ODA partner and major

donor of private development resources, that NGOs are helping shape the nature of development assistance here in the United States and abroad.

The U.S. NGO community³

The important contribution of international NGOs is widely recognized. It was acknowledged at the 2010 UN General Assembly, for example, that without the work of NGOs around the world, much progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) would have been impossible. In the context of U.S. foreign assistance, U.S.-based international NGOs offer private resources, technical assistance and longstanding relationships with local communities. These assets make U.S. NGOs key partners for the U.S. government, offering enormous leverage potential to increase the effectiveness of U.S. development assistance dollars. U.S. NGOs also partner extensively with corporations, engaging in multistakeholder partnerships to increase their impact. International NGOs are an essential component in responding to global disasters and major innovators in development programming.

The U.S. NGO community embodies many values familiar to American culture such as compassion for those less fortunate, self-help and innovation, and a desire to promote human dignity and individual potential within democratic societies. U.S. NGOs respect and promote human rights and social justice, and focus on people’s empowerment, democratic ownership and participation. They are committed to realizing positive, sustainable change by promoting gender equality and equity, environmental sustainability, transparency and accountability through equitable local partnerships. Given their long-term programming in-country, independent funding and collaboration with local communities, U.S. NGOs operate differently than many ►



Basir Seerat

government-funded contractors working in developing countries.

In government circles it is common to think of international NGOs as institutions that use donor government support to respond to humanitarian emergencies or provide public services, or as charities at the margins of the development assistance system. In recent decades, however, shifts in their funding structure have made many U.S. NGOs donors in their own right. Nearly 70 percent of InterAction members' revenue comes from private donor sources, representing the broad-based support that U.S. NGOs receive from American citizens, foundations and corporations.⁶

In 2010, U.S. NGOs managed \$14 billion in private cash contributions and gifts-in-kind resources.⁷ U.S. NGOs receive individual donations from millions of Americans living in every congressional district, and are supported by over 60,000 religious congregations, including every faith group.⁸ Our community works through millions of Americans who voluntarily give their time, energy and money to support sustainable development, poverty alleviation and humanitarian relief programs around the world. This private assistance has increased at an unprecedented rate in recent years and now produces more development assistance each year than the official donor assistance of most developed countries.⁹

Many U.S. NGOs have their origins in responding to manmade or natural disasters but have over time expanded to include long-term efforts to reduce extreme poverty. According to the most recent reliable estimate, this disaster response (often referred to by donor governments and NGOs as humanitarian assistance) accounts for approximately 30 percent of the total programming by U.S.-based international NGOs.¹⁰ With over 200 members, who manage the vast majority of U.S.-based international NGOs' resources, InterAction represents a key constituency of this new development landscape. InterAction members undertake a wide range of projects; for example, as they respond to disasters, advance sustainable environmental practices, promote gender and disability inclusion, and build the capacity of local communities. They work with local governments and civil society across many sectors, such as basic health and education services, technical expertise, democracy and effective rule of law. This allows donors, from governments to the private sector, to partner with InterAction members on a range of programs. InterAction members are also the backbone of international humanitarian response missions worldwide, often contributing the bulk of community-level services during an emergency.

U.S. NGOs act as a bridge between local communities and programs funded by donor governments, businesses and private individuals, which ensures more effective and sustainable development projects. As impartial actors

working in conflict areas, many NGOs work to increase transparency, accountability and sustainability of programs undertaken by donor and local governments and with the private sector.

An approach focused on results and local ownership

The *Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness* guide the practices of U.S. NGOs in areas of work from grassroots service delivery to policy advocacy, and from humanitarian emergencies to long-term development. The key principles of humanitarian law – impartiality, neutrality and independence – enable U.S. NGOs to operate in many difficult and dangerous environments. We have seen significant improvements in the overall professionalization of the NGO humanitarian and development sector and their ability to deliver results.

Despite these changes, a number of myths are still being perpetuated about the NGO community. These include:

- **NGOs cannot take projects to scale.** U.S. NGOs vary in size, but many have projects that routinely go to scale and are as efficient as large-scale government or private sector programs. U.S. NGOs are also quick to scale up proven methods and implement them in other countries after adapting them to the local context.
- **NGOs prefer to bypass governments and operate parallel programs.** U.S. NGOs are not creating parallel programs by funding local civil society institutions or programs aimed at the most vulnerable populations. They are helping build the capacity of a society to develop itself. Any U.S. NGO must work with or through local governments and civil society to build its capacity to provide goods and services to its population. U.S. NGOs do provide these services in the short run or in a humanitarian setting, but only with the goal of creating a demand for these services and handing over such processes to fully functional government agencies.
- **NGOs cannot coordinate.** The U.S. NGOs that belong to InterAction coordinate their efforts and those of governments, the United Nations and others. The U.S. NGO community recognizes that it is not enough for each individual organization to design and implement excellent projects. Those projects must ultimately result in a changed society: one that is more inclusive, democratic, equitable and resilient. U.S. NGOs are motivated to strengthen mechanisms to facilitate this by working better with all parties.
- **NGOs cannot build local capacity.** U.S. NGOs allocate billions of dollars each year on programs that deliver critical development benefits while also building the capability of local partners. Existing NGO relationships with communities and organizations represent

ongoing experienced investments in training, skills transfer, infrastructure and operations that over time enable local institutions to thrive.

As development assistance shifts toward multistakeholder partnerships, U.S. international NGOs are an important ally to reduce suffering and combat global poverty. The many participants in development aid bring different perspectives to the table and use varying means to achieve their goals. Many of these approaches complement each other; but to ensure efficient and flexible development programs, governments, NGOs and the private sector must build effective partnerships. In part, this will entail further appreciation of the role of international NGOs and their greater inclusion in policymaking.

Through the efforts of InterAction, the U.S. NGO community has responded enthusiastically to the elevation of U.S. development assistance and it wants to advance accountable, results-oriented partnerships that include both local civil society and businesses in development projects. If this vision is to succeed, there must be new opportunities for enhanced partnerships between the government, NGOs, the private sector and local communities to flourish.

1 "Charity Begins Abroad," *The Economist*. <http://www.economist.com/node/21525836>.

2 "Index on Global Philanthropy and Remittances 2012," Hudson Institute. <http://gpr.hudson.org/>.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Remarks of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Available at http://www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhlf4/images/stories/hlf4/Keynote_at_the_Opening_Session_of_the_Fourth_High.pdf.

5 Parts of this section are drawn from Samuel A. Worthington and Tony Pipa, "Private Development Assistance: The Essential Role of INGOs and Foundations in a 21st Century Aid Architecture," in Homi Karas (ed.), *Catalyzing Development: A New Vision for Aid*, Brookings Institution.

6 InterAction estimates based on members organizations' 2009 IRS Form 990s.

7 "Index on Global Philanthropy and Remittances 2012," Hudson Institute. <http://gpr.hudson.org/>.

8 2011 estimate based on self-reported data by InterAction members.

9 Kerlin, Janelle and Supaporn Thana Sombat, "The International Charitable Nonprofit Subsector: Scope, Size, and Revenue" Urban Institute Policy Brief, No. 2. September 2006.

10 "The International Charitable Nonprofit Subsector: Scope, Size, and Revenue," The Urban Institute. <http://www.urban.org/publications/311360.html>.

Foreign Assistance Funding



U.S. International Development Funding

Problem

The U.S. does not invest enough in foreign assistance programs that help people living in extreme poverty around the world become self-sufficient. U.S. assistance is at historically low levels relative to GDP – only 0.7 percent of the federal budget is allocated for international development and humanitarian assistance. This approach is short-sighted and does not reflect American values.

Recommendations & Actions

The United States should resist the temptation to sacrifice the long-term fiscal benefits of investments in poverty-focused humanitarian and development assistance for short-term, minimal budget savings. The U.S. should invest in these programs along with the personnel and systems that administer, deliver and provide oversight for such assistance. Consistent and predictable aid flows also leverage the contributions of private organizations, thus greatly increasing the impact of U.S. government funding. The U.S. should also maximize its efficiency and effectiveness by continuing to modernize its administration of foreign assistance. Greater up-front investment would bolster efforts of those most in need to become self-sufficient, plant the seeds of economic prosperity and better reflect American values.

Congress and the administration should:

- Provide sufficient funding in FY2014 and FY2015 for InterAction's core poverty-focused development and humanitarian accounts.¹ Aside from meeting America's share for international development and humanitarian needs, these funds support ongoing efforts to rebuild the policy, planning, monitoring and evaluation capacity of USAID.
- In the congressional budget resolution and appropriations subcommittee legislation, provide overall and subcommittee discretionary spending allocations and account funding levels sufficient to allow no less than \$29 billion for the development and humanitarian accounts, equal to the level recommended by the Senate Appropriations Committee for FY2013.
- Work together to avoid disproportionate cuts to foreign aid and continue to modernize our foreign assistance architecture to ensure the most efficient, effective and accountable use of taxpayer resources.

Results

Continued U.S. investment in development and humanitarian programs, as well as the systems and people who administer them, will contribute to increased global prosperity and reduce the need for costly military intervention and emergency humanitarian action. It serves our long-term national security and economic interests by expanding global markets, continuing to rebuild our goodwill around the world and putting our national values into action.

For more information,
please contact:

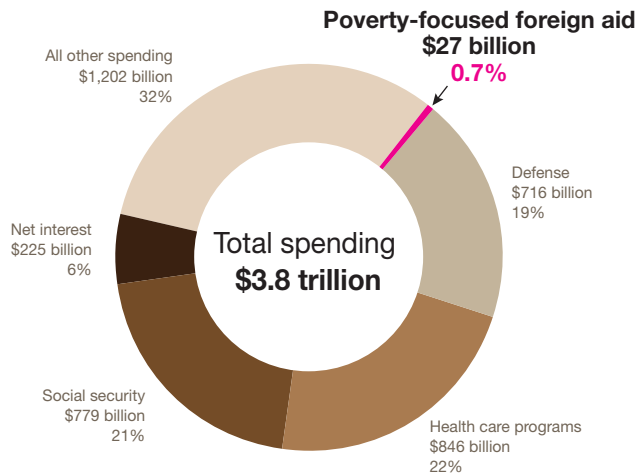
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Background

As the chart below demonstrates, the foreign aid budget is a tiny fraction of the total federal budget when compared with programs such as Social Security, Medicare, defense spending or even the interest on U.S. debt. In FY2012, poverty focused development and humanitarian assistance totaled just 0.7 percent of the total U.S. budget.

Foreign Aid and the Rest of the Federal Budget, 2012²



Public Attitudes. The American public's strong support for foreign assistance is consistently evident in polling data. In a 2010 poll, 66 percent of Americans polled said that "the U.S. should take the lead in achieving international goals to reduce hunger, poverty and disease."³ This strong support has been echoed in the halls of Congress, where the Senate Appropriations Committee has voted with overwhelming bipartisan majorities to support robust international aid funding for the last two years.⁴

At the same time, the public thinks our official assistance is grossly higher than it is: in a recent poll, the median estimate of foreign aid's share of the federal budget was 25 percent while the median level preferred was 10 percent. The actual level is less than 1 percent, only one-tenth of the public's median preference level.⁵

The Three D's. Recent U.S. National Security Strategies see our national security apparatus as three-pronged, with defense, diplomacy and development each having important roles. As a group of retired flag and general officers from all branches of the U.S. Armed Services wrote in a March 2012 letter to Congress, "We firmly believe the development and diplomacy programs in the International Affairs Budget are critical to America's national security ... Development and diplomacy keep us safer by addressing threats in the most dangerous corners of the world and by preventing conflicts before they occur."⁶ The 2010 National

Security Strategy similarly calls international development "a strategic, economic, and moral imperative for the United States." However, the chart below shows the lack of balance among U.S. government spending levels on the three D's in FY2012.⁷

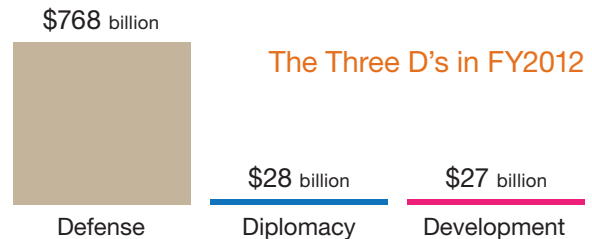


Chart notes: Defense total includes military construction and Veterans Administration funding. Diplomacy total includes security assistance and trade facilitation.

American Values. Some argue that the U.S. does more than its fair share to serve the international community, aside from foreign assistance. That argument ignores both practical and moral points. On practical grounds, our foreign assistance helps develop and open up economies around the world; 10 of America's top 15 trading partners were once recipients of foreign aid.⁸

And most Americans agree that assisting those struck by disasters and supporting the self-help efforts of those climbing out of poverty flow directly from American values, regardless of other U.S. contributions. As President George W. Bush has said, "In order to heal human suffering, America must lead. That means the government must lead. It means that corporate America must lead. It means that NGOs must lead."⁹

1 InterAction's core poverty-focused accounts include: Global Health, Development Assistance, International Disaster Assistance, Office of Transition Initiatives, Migration and Refugee Assistance, Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance, and International Operations and Programs – as well as accounts for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the President's Emergency Response for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), food aid (P.L. 480 Title II and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program), International Development Association, Global Agriculture Food Security Program, International Fund for Agricultural Development, NIH Global Health, CDC Global Health, Contributions for International Peacekeeping, Peacekeeping Operations, USAID Operating Expenses, and poverty-focused funding within the Economic Support Fund (including nonpartisan democracy promotion assistance).

2 Data from OMB, The Budget of the United States Government for Fiscal Year 2013, February 2012.

3 "2010 National Post-Election Survey." The Alliance to End Hunger. <http://www.partnership-africa.org/sites/default/files/2010%20election%20day%20poll%20results.pdf>

4 For fiscal year 2012, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill by a vote of 28-2; for the following year, the vote was 29-1.

5 WorldPublicOpinion.org (November 29, 2010). "American Public Vastly Overestimates Amount of U.S. Foreign Aid." Press release, accessed 12/1/2010. "American Public Opinion and Global Health," May 20, 2009, Ramsay, Clay et al., pp. 6-7; "Americans on Addressing World Poverty," June 30, 2005, Krull, Steven, et al.

6 U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, Military Leaders' Letter to Congress, March 27, 2012. <http://www.usglc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/NSAC-Letter-2012.pdf>

7 Chart source: Congressional Research Service analysis.

8 "Choose to Invest." InterAction. http://www.interaction.org/sites/default/files/4857/ChooseToInvest_booklet_Complete.pdf

9 "Day Two of the Bush Summit to Save Lives." U.S. Global Leadership Coalition. <http://www.usglc.org/2011/09/15/day-two-of-the-bush-summit-to-save-lives/>

Problem

Humanitarian needs are increasing and many people worldwide lack access to the most basic elements of survival and dignity: health care, safe shelter, clean water, nutritious food and education. Humanitarian funding falls short of what is needed and lack of flexibility in this funding affects the quality of U.S. assistance to vulnerable people.

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Humanitarian Funding Priorities

Recommendations & Actions

Natural disasters, armed conflict, drought and famine in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Sudan and Syria have dramatically increased global humanitarian need. At the same time, funding levels have been affected by the global economic crisis, with many donors reducing assistance in key areas. The United States has long been a leader in humanitarian funding and continued U.S. leadership is needed now more than ever. USAID and the Department of State must be given the necessary resources to meet their humanitarian aid mandates. To this end, the U.S. should:

- **Fund humanitarian accounts at the highest possible level.**
 - » **Provide a robust level of funding for the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)** to help ensure a strong response to new conflict-related humanitarian emergencies and to address key U.S. humanitarian priorities including protection for the most vulnerable and prevention and response to gender-based violence and statelessness.
 - » **Increase funding for USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)** to address new emergencies and protracted crises. This reduces the risk of future disasters and helps meet early recovery needs, especially for those affected by conflict, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities.¹
- **Increase PRM's Emergency Refugee Migration Assistance (ERMA) funding** ceiling to \$200 million and allow the secretary of state, rather than the president, to authorize the use of funds from this account to ensure funds are released quickly.
- **Provide funding for disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities.** The number and intensity of natural disasters is increasing, negatively impacting communities living in coastal, urban areas, and those who depend on rain-fed agriculture. DRR activities help communities build resilience against climate-related changes and boost their ability to recover from future disasters.
- **Give OFDA and PRM the capacity, authority and resources** to provide multiyear funding for humanitarian projects that require a long-term commitment.
- **Provide sufficient funding for and seek increased flexibility in U.S. food aid programs** through greater use of cash-based emergency food assistance including local and regional purchasing where market conditions permit. When in-kind U.S. commodities are provided, ensure that the food is supplied efficiently, prepositioned whenever possible, distributed with nutrition education, and supplemented with quality complementary local foods when feasible.

Results

U.S. commitment to robust, flexible funding for humanitarian assistance saves lives, builds resiliency in communities, and underscores the United States' role as a leader in defending vulnerable people around the world.

Background

Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) has the primary responsibility for meeting the needs of refugees – individuals residing outside the borders of their country of origin due to persecution and conflict – and supports programs that provide key services such as shelter, water and health care. PRM also plays a role in meeting the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in particular countries through its funding of the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR) and other international organizations.

Increased funding for PRM can help the United States make substantial progress in meeting its longstanding priorities such as addressing gaps in protection for women and girls, internally displaced people, victims of sexual and gender based violence, and stateless persons. Focusing on these gaps would be in line with the U.S. government's recently released Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence and would ensure that men, boys, women and girls have equal access to humanitarian assistance. Greater funding would also help support education and livelihood programs, which lay the groundwork for more sustainable development when conflict ends and ensure that displaced men and women can provide for themselves and their families.

In addition, higher PRM funding levels would support more effective implementation of important initiatives such as the U.S. government's urban refugee principles, guidance adopted by PRM to help improve programs designed to reach urban refugees, a population that constitutes two-thirds of the total number of refugees.² More funding would also support the U.S. government's initiative on protracted refugees, which works toward durable solutions for refugees who have been exiled for many years and are unlikely to be able to return to their country of origin in the near future.

We also urge the U.S. government to double the funding ceiling for PRM's Emergency Refugee Migration Assistance (ERMA) account, a funding stream that provides resources to PRM for refugee assistance during unanticipated crises. This account plays a critical role in ensuring that the United States is able to respond quickly to sudden emergencies, yet its funding ceiling has not been increased for over a decade. Furthermore, we ask that the secretary of state, rather than the president, be given the power to authorize the use of funds from the ERMA account so that PRM can act more swiftly in emergencies.

Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

The USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) uses its resources to meet the needs of con-

flict- and disaster-affected people; address protracted emergencies; and conduct disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities, programs that help populations prepare for and mitigate the adverse impacts of disasters. Increased funding will help OFDA more effectively provide relief supplies and services to communities affected by conflict or disaster, and will also help OFDA better serve IDPs, a population whose needs have been historically underfunded. IDPs face many of the same challenges and needs as refugees, including abysmal camp conditions, lack of jobs and income, political marginalization, disease and hunger, but on average, IDPs receive roughly a third of the per capita assistance that refugees get. The quality of U.S. support for a displaced person should not hinge on something as arbitrary as whether he or she has succeeded in crossing a national border. Moreover, humanitarian needs in protracted IDP crises require a significant portion of OFDA's annual resources, yet OFDA's small budget means that it cannot meet these needs in a consistent or comprehensive manner.

Finally, due to climate change, natural disasters, including tsunamis, hurricanes and the droughts in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region, are on the rise. The world will continue to need to find ways to mitigate the effects of these crises. Increased funding of OFDA will support DRR activities that can help communities build resilience against climate-related changes to their environment and strengthen their ability to recover from disasters in the future. Currently, DRR efforts are woefully underfunded.

U.S. emergency food programs

Although U.S. contributions of in-kind food aid commodities are generous in scale, U.S. emergency food programs need greater flexibility. In-kind food assistance can be improved through increased efficiency, shorter delivery times and prepositioning whenever possible. Use of cash-based emergency food assistance tools, which address immediate needs of vulnerable populations in line with market conditions, is improving but remains limited. These programs include local and regional procurement (LRP) programs and voucher or cash transfer approaches. LRP also promotes regional market integration and supports surplus producers in adjacent areas. Sourcing food locally also reinforces production incentives for indigenous farmers. When local markets are still functioning, voucher and cash transfer programs provide a boost to the local economy while allowing hungry populations access to local goods.

¹ See InterAction, "The Transition from Emergency Relief to Development" *Foreign Assistance Briefing Book*, 2013.

² "PRM Principles for Refugee Protection in Urban Areas," Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/187237.pdf>.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)

Problem

The MCC was created less than a decade ago and many members of Congress are still unfamiliar with its innovative model for development. The agency's commitment to transparency and publishing results, both positive and negative, have also made it a target for budget cuts in years past.

Recommendations & Actions

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is an innovative tool for the U.S. government to implement effective, efficient U.S. foreign assistance. Since its inception, the MCC's work has complemented USAID's efforts and centered around principles of good governance, accountability, country ownership and a focus on results – principles that have been heralded by development experts for years and now serve as the foundation of recent efforts to reform U.S. foreign assistance across all agencies. As the U.S. government continues its efforts to reform its global development work, maintaining this comparatively modest investment will allow the MCC to test ideas, develop models and evaluate results that will yield dividends for U.S. foreign assistance writ large. We urge the following recommendations:

- **Support MCC transparency and accountability efforts.** As the MCC releases its evaluations of compacts, there are bound to be some mixed results. Congress should stay the course: supporting this unique commitment to transparency and accountability and not using mixed results as a justification to cut MCC funds.
- **Maintain robust U.S. funding for the MCC for the 2014 fiscal year (FY).** The MCC model has resulted in constructive and sustainable policy changes, concrete outputs, and life-changing outcomes for individuals, families, communities and countries. Continuing this work requires robust funding. Cuts to MCC funding not only undermine these results, they also impede the agency's ability to continue to meet the highest standards for transparency, accountability and country ownership. With five compacts due for completion in 2013, Congress should maintain funding at FY2010 levels to allow for the signing of three new compacts in 2014.
- **Include analysis on poverty reduction in impact evaluations.** The MCC should ensure impact evaluations include analysis to measure poverty reduction (in addition to economic growth) and report to Congress in this regard. Measuring this impact on poverty reduction will be critical to securing sustainable and robust funding from Congress.
- **Maintain a strong, bipartisan Board of Directors,** complete with sustained private sector and civil society representation.

Results

The MCC's work has been a catalyst of policy reforms that improve transparency, fight corruption, increase family incomes, promote women's rights and create systems that reduce dependence on development aid. The impact of this work is far-reaching both through the "MCC effect" and by significantly altering foreign assistance debates in Washington.

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Background

The MCC was created by Congress, with bipartisan support, in 2004 as a new and innovative international assistance agency charged with reducing global poverty through economic growth. The MCC is one of multiple effective U.S. government tools for combating poverty, and should be seen as an important complement to USAID. In an important deviation from other U.S. assistance agencies, the MCC has, since its inception, operated under several core principles, now heralded as best practices for smart and effective international development.

Competitive selection

To become eligible for MCC assistance, countries are selected based on their performance on 20 independent and transparent policy indicators such as political rights, public spending on education and sound fiscal policy. This ensures that the U.S. partners with countries that share American values and can produce high returns on investments. Furthermore, the MCC's rigorous and competitive selection process has created what is now called "The MCC Effect," in which countries improve their performance in a variety of policy areas in the hope of qualifying for MCC funding. The MCC partners with some of the world's poorest countries, but only those committed to good governance, economic freedom and investments in their citizens.

Country-led solutions

The MCC is unique because it requires partner countries to submit proposals identifying their *own* priorities for achieving poverty reduction. Countries develop these proposals in broad consultation with a variety of stakeholders, including local civil society, and these same stakeholders are consulted in the project design and implementation phases. This ensures that projects are informed by the needs of the people they are intended to benefit – rather than being driven by political priorities or funding earmarks. Most importantly, it means that projects effectively reach their targets and maximize their returns on investments.

Country-led implementation

Funding is awarded to countries with proposals that have a clear focus on results, fiscal responsibility and country ownership. If approved, these proposals become "compacts" – formal agreements between the MCC and the national government. Once awarded a compact, countries set up local Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) entities within their government to manage and oversee program design and implementation. In this unique model, it is not

the United States, but partner countries themselves that are responsible and accountable for effective program implementation.

Gender and social analysis

Decades of development research and experience show profound differences between the roles, rights, resources and responsibilities of women and men in the developing world. Recognizing this, the MCC created a robust gender policy in 2006. The agency has since increased its commitment to gender integration through additional staff, resources and accountability mechanisms. This ensures that both women and men benefit from MCC projects and also increases program effectiveness overall.

Transparency and accountability

The MCC has been on the forefront of investing in strong monitoring and impact analysis systems, enabling the MCC to systematically and consistently increase the effectiveness of its programs. The MCC is transparent in publicly sharing the results of these analyses – both good and bad. It holds itself and partner countries accountable for improving programs that fall short of their standards and terminates terminating compacts when countries fail to adhere to MCC principles and guidelines.

Focus on results

While still a young agency, the MCC has shown promising programmatic results through compacts with 25 countries.¹ For example, in Honduras, an MCC road project raised farmers' annual incomes by 88 percent.² The success of the compacts in creating measurable economic growth in partner countries has shown that the MCC model works. Finally, the MCC's pairing of governance standards with substantial compact funding continues to provide an incentive for policy reform in countries around the world, reducing poverty through economic growth in the long term.

The MCC has broad, bipartisan support in Congress and continues to be supported by the NGO, think tank and academic communities. It is in our nation's strategic interests to invest in countries that have demonstrated a commitment to governing responsibly, growing their economies and investing in their people. These investments help build stable democracies, strengthen U.S. and global security, and plant the seeds for our future economic strength.

1 "About MCC," MCC. <http://www.mcc.gov/pages/about>.

2 "Testimony of Daniel W. Yohannes Chief Executive Officer, Millennium Challenge Corporation to House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations," March 15, 2011 <http://www.mcc.gov/documents/press/testimony-2011001054401-2011hacfo.pdf>.



InterAction Public Policy Committee

1,000 Days
ACDI/VOCA
ActionAid International USA
Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA)
Aga Khan Foundation USA
American Friends Service Committee
American Jewish World Service
American Red Cross International Services
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Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA)
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Islamic Relief USA
Lions Club International Foundation
Lutheran World Relief
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Mercy Corps
Medical Emergency Relief International USA (Merlin)
Millennium Water Alliance
ONE Campaign

Oxfam America
Pact
PATH
Pathfinder International
Plan International USA
Planet Aid
Population Action International
Refugees International
Relief International
RESULTS
Save the Children
Solidarity Center
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
U.S. Fund for UNICEF
United Methodist Board of Church and Society
United States International Council on Disabilities (USICD)
WaterAid America
Winrock International
Women Thrive Worldwide
World Food Program USA
World Learning
World Vision
World Wildlife Fund

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Heifer International
International Housing Coalition (IHC)
Modernizing Foreign Assistance Working Group (MFAN)
ONE Campaign
Oxfam America
Save the Children
Solidarity Center
The Asia Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
Women Thrive Worldwide
World Learning

The USAID-U.S. NGO Relationship

The USAID-U.S. NGO
Relationship



A New Vision for the USAID-U.S. NGO Relationship

Problem

The quality of the relationship between U.S. NGOs and USAID needs to be strengthened, as evidenced by an inconsistent strategic policy engagement, a shift from a partnership framework to a control focus, and discounting of the local networks, social capital and financial resources U.S. NGOs bring to the table. Strengthening this relationship is critical to increase development effectiveness.

Recommendations & Actions

Partnering with U.S. nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) should be a key part of USAID's strategy for promoting effective global development. USAID should continue to explore ways to leverage this relationship as it implements reforms going forward. To accelerate and broaden the impact of development work, the strategic relationship between U.S. NGOs and USAID must be strengthened. U.S. NGOs bring a range of important and unique assets to development practice; these are increasingly relevant today as USAID tries to reform its practices to deliver better results and to leverage other resources. NGOs have accumulated knowledge, experience and social capital that can contribute significantly to reaching shared development goals.

The following recommendations are the focus of ongoing discussions with USAID and would form the basis of a renewed USAID-U.S. NGO partnership to increase development effectiveness:

- **Continue to engage in regular, substantive policy dialogue.** In order to allow for U.S. NGOs to contribute to USAID policies, USAID should establish a high-level consultative mechanism for ongoing strategic discussions with the NGO community.
- **Develop a USAID-U.S. NGO engagement strategy.** USAID should develop a strategy that identifies all of the areas of potential collaboration and leveraging between our two sectors. This would range from a traditional implementing partner role to several other forms of collaboration and could be modeled after AusAid's new Civil Society Engagement Framework.
- **Maximize opportunities for field collaboration.** USAID should continue to engage U.S. NGOs as counterparts with expertise that qualifies them to participate in effective capacity building, program design, implementation and monitoring. USAID should appropriately include greater flexibility in grants, increase the transparency of procurements, and rebalance its solicitation stream (inside and outside its local procurement target) to take advantage of U.S. NGOs' field-based experience.
- **Ensure donor alignment.** Consistent with international aid effectiveness principles, USAID should optimize available development resources by partnering with NGOs to take advantage of the \$14 billion in private resources that they invest abroad each year.¹ U.S. NGOs' resources and their local organizational capacity should be leveraged through a new NGO-specific partnership initiative which could be modeled on USAID's Global Development Alliance initiative for public-private partnerships.

Results

Strengthening the relationship between USAID and U.S. NGOs will allow USAID to leverage the resources and expertise of U.S. NGOs, increasing the impact of U.S. foreign assistance and leading to better development outcomes.

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Background²

Since the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea, the international aid community has been adapting to a new era of development cooperation: an era guided by the 2005 Paris Principles, but taken to a new level of inclusive, democratized development involving many new partners. Most U.S.-based international NGOs not only support these changes, they actively championed these reforms.

For USAID, this new era offers the promise of more sustainable strategies for overcoming poverty, yet it must succeed in a climate of severe budget constraints and competing demands for scarce public resources. Continuing political support for official development assistance is tenuous. There are serious risks if not enough attention is paid to accountability and risk management of taxpayer resources.

We have learned the hard way that there are no shortcuts to effective results. Development cannot happen without a capable government. It will not be sustainable without the job creation of the private sector. And it will not be inclusive without an engaged and empowered populace, particularly women, organized by civil society. Only by mobilizing, leveraging and coordinating all of these actors can we address complex development challenges.

The added value of U.S. NGOs

USAID recognizes that U.S. NGOs bring to the table a range of unique assets to development practice, which are relevant for today's rapidly evolving results-based, multi-stakeholder development ecosystem. NGOs have accumulated knowledge, experience and social capital that can contribute very significantly to reaching development goals both sectors share. These assets include:

- **Established partnerships with local populations** – U.S. NGOs have worked with local communities, civil society and private sector implementing partners for decades. In most countries, more than 90 percent of NGO staff are local nationals.
- **Global reach** – U.S. NGOs work in every developing country, including areas where USAID has no presence. In places like Somalia, remote camps in Darfur or insecure villages in Afghanistan, NGOs work in regions that lie beyond the reach of U.S. government staff.
- **Support and resources from the American people** – In 2009, InterAction members raised \$8.3 billion from private sources of funding, to complement \$3 billion in U.S. government support.³ There is great potential to leverage these investments and enhance the impact of official U.S. assistance.
- **Innovation and best practices** – U.S. NGOs consis-

tently focus on applying best practices and incubating innovations, both through research – often in partnership with foundations – and experimentation in the field.

- **Proven expertise in capacity building** – U.S. NGOs operate in partnership with local community organizations, NGOs and private sector organizations. U.S. NGOs can be a key partner in building the readiness of local organizations to engage directly with donors, and in bolstering their ability to deliver development results.

Renewing a changing relationship

InterAction and its membership are concerned that the partnership between USAID and the U.S. NGO community has eroded in recent years and although positive steps have been taken, it is at risk even as a shifting aid environment, federal budget challenges, and new approaches to development make it more crucial than ever to have strong collaboration on all sides.

The concerns about the nature of the U.S. NGO-USAID partnership are manifested in several ways:

- **A lack of consistent strategic policy engagement** – USAID's policy engagement with NGOs in recent years has been inconsistent. We welcome efforts to include NGOs in dialogue before a new policy has been reached.
- **A shift from a partnership framework to a control focus** – Some USAID field missions increasingly view U.S. NGOs as implementers to be controlled rather than partners with expertise and experience in their own right.
- **Past rhetoric casting NGOs as costly middlemen rather than valued partners** – It is important that USAID continues its shift away from language that reduces U.S. NGOs to "costly implementers." This reflects a limited understanding of our role and potential – NGOs are donors, thought leaders and practitioners.

Toward a shared new vision of development

In the spirit of Paris and Busan, it is crucial that USAID join U.S. NGOs in creating a new partnership. Partnering with U.S. NGOs should be a key part of USAID's strategy for promoting effective global development.

1 "Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances," Hudson Institute. <http://gpr.hudson.org/>.

2 For more information on this topic, see the Policy Paper from InterAction's CEO Taskforce on Aid Reform and Effectiveness "A New Vision for the USAID-U.S. NGO Relationship: Partnering for Effective Development," available online at <http://www.interaction.org/document/new-vision-usaid-us-ngo-relationship-partnering-effective-development>.

3 Estimate based on InterAction members' 2009 IRS Form 990s.



InterAction CEO Task Force on Aid Reform and Effectiveness

ActionAid International USA

Adeso

Alliance for Peacebuilding

American Jewish World Service

American Red Cross International Services

Basic Education Coalition (BEC)

Bread for the World

CARE

Catholic Relief Services

Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA)

ChildFund International

Church World Service

CONCERN Worldwide U.S., Inc.

Counterpart International

Global Communities

Helen Keller International

Heifer International

The Hunger Project

InsideNGO

International Center for Not-for-Profit Law

International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

International Medical Corps

International Relief & Development

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Lutheran World Relief

Management Sciences for Health (MSH)

Mercy Corps

Oxfam America

Pact

Pan American Development Foundation

PATH

Pathfinder International

Plan International USA

Relief International

RESULTS

Save the Children

Solidarity Center

Transparency International USA

United States International Council on Disabilities (USICD)

Winrock International

Women Thrive Worldwide

World Learning

World Wildlife Fund

World Vision

Post-2015 Development Goals

Post-2015 Development Goals



Shaping Global Development Goals After 2015

Problem

The UN Millennium Development Goals are set to expire in 2015, and the international community must decide what goals should replace them. Strong U.S. engagement is needed to ensure that the new goals reflect U.S. priorities and that there is buy-in from a broad range of countries.

Recommendations & Actions

In 2000, UN member states agreed to ambitious goals to reduce poverty and disease, creating the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which set specific development priorities to be achieved by 2015. They have been effective at catalyzing action and aligning development efforts around eight critical challenges: poverty and hunger, universal education, gender equality, child health, maternal health, HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability, and global partnership for development. The MDGs help ensure that U.S. foreign assistance aligns with other governmental and nongovernmental efforts, increasing the effectiveness of our foreign assistance dollars. While many of the goals will be met by 2015, some will not. Recently, a global process began to determine what should replace the MDGs when they expire in 2015. As a member of the UN's "High-Level Panel" tasked with making recommendations on what should replace the MDGs, the U.S. has a key role in the post-2015 process. The United Kingdom has also assumed a leadership role as one of three co-chairs of the panel.

The U.S. should:

- **Continue to help achieve the MDGs through 2015.** The development challenges identified by the MDGs are just as pressing today as at their conception, and the United States must continue to take action toward their achievement.
- **Fully engage in the UN's post-2015 process.** It is critical that the United States support the post-2015 process by promoting John Podesta as an active participant of the High-Level Panel. This will ensure that other countries also engage constructively and that the new goals reflect U.S. priorities.
- **Hold meaningful consultations.** The process should reflect the priorities of Northern and Southern civil society and be inclusive of the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations. U.S.-based international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have expertise on a wide range of development issues and can serve as a useful advisory partner to the U.S. government.
- **Support new goals that are ambitious yet practical.** The next set of goals should target critical development challenges where action is most needed, but also strive to be measurable and achievable in order to galvanize international support.

Results

By continuing to take action on the MDGs before 2015, the United States will reduce poverty and suffering worldwide. U.S. engagement in the post-2015 process will ensure that the MDGs are replaced by goals that reflect American values and leadership and provide a clear blueprint for a more prosperous, just and sustainable world.

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Background

From the ONE Campaign's issue brief on the MDGs, available online at <http://one.org/c/us/issuebrief/762/>.

In 2000, leaders from 189 nations signed on to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of eight ambitious targets designed to significantly reduce global poverty and disease by 2015. By setting time-bound, measurable targets for achieving results in areas like child and maternal health, education and access to water and sanitation, they injected new momentum into the fight against global poverty.

Achieving these important development goals depends on a partnership between developing countries and donor governments. Developing countries must lead the way by prioritizing poverty reduction, demonstrating effective governance and working with civil society to develop transparent and accountable plans to achieve the goals. Developed countries also have a key role to play. They signed on to support the efforts of developing countries by agreeing to goal eight, which calls for a global partnership to achieve the poverty reduction targets.

Since 2000, tangible results prove that dramatic progress is possible when developing countries and donor governments fulfill their ends of the bargain: 51 million more children were enrolled in schools in Africa between 1999 and 2010,¹ 6 million Africans are receiving antiretroviral treatment for AIDS,² and malaria deaths have been reduced by a third.³ Despite these successes, much more needs to be done to ensure that the MDGs are met by 2015, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, which is the region farthest off-track from reaching the goals. Through the MDGs, the world has pledged to make progress in the following areas:

1. Poverty and Hunger

- » *Target 1:* Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day.
- » *Target 2:* Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.
- » *Target 3:* Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

2. Education

- » *Target 1:* Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

3. Gender Equality

- » *Target 1:* Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

4. Child Health

- » *Target 1:* Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-5 mortality rate.

5. Maternal Health

- » *Target 1:* Reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio.
- » *Target 2:* Achieve universal access to reproductive health.

6. HIV/AIDS, Malaria & Other Diseases

- » *Target 1:* Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- » *Target 2:* Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it.
- » *Target 3:* Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

7. Environmental Stability

- » *Target 1:* Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.
- » *Target 2:* Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss.
- » *Target 3:* Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
- » *Target 4:* By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development

- » *Target 1:* Address the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing states.
- » *Target 2:* Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.
- » *Target 3:* Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt.
- » *Target 4:* In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.
- » *Target 5:* In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

¹ "The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012," United Nations. <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/publications/mdg-report-2012.html>.

² "Fact Sheet: Sub Saharan Africa," UNAIDS. http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/epidemiology/2012/201207_RegionalFactSheet_en.pdf.

³ "World Malaria Report 2011," World Health Organization. http://www.who.int/malaria/world_malaria_report_2011/9789241564403_eng.pdf.



Contributors to the Global Development Goals Policy Brief

1,000 Days

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ONE Campaign

Save the Children

WaterAid America

Civil Society



Problem

In recent years, over 50 countries have introduced restrictions on civil society. These constraints impede the ability of U.S. and host country organizations to improve the daily lives of people around the world.

Safeguarding Civil Society

Recommendations & Actions

Recent years have witnessed a legislative backlash against civil society organizations (CSOs)¹ around the world. U.S. organizations have had staff arrested, their offices raided, and programs terminated. Governments have also constrained the formation, operation and funding of host country CSOs. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult for CSOs to promote education, poverty alleviation, health awareness, disaster relief, economic development and other causes. Accordingly:

- The U.S. government should ensure that the legal framework for civil society is a core priority of USAID and other U.S. government programming.
- The U.S. Department of State should ensure that the legal framework for civil society remains a priority for U.S. foreign policy.
- The U.S. Department of State should create an office reporting directly to the Secretary of State with full-time employees and adequate resources to serve as a portal for civil society engagement with the department on a variety of issues and to oversee the Secretary of State's Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society.
- The administration should implement U.S. commitments regarding aid effectiveness and the promotion of an enabling environment for CSOs.
- The administration should engage the Department of the Treasury, the U.S. Trade Representative, the Millennium Challenge Corporation and other components of the government to promote U.S. government coordination on this issue.

Results

An enabling legal environment for civil society will ensure that individuals and organizations around the world are able to take ownership for improving their lives. It will also increase the effectiveness of U.S. development cooperation with host country CSOs.

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Background

An enabling legal environment is essential for civil society organizations (CSOs) to advance gender equality, empower the disabled, provide humanitarian assistance, promote human rights, and foster other activities important to local populations. However, an increasing number of governments have used the law to constrain the ability of civil society organizations to improve the daily lives of people around the world.

Foreign funding

A number of countries are seeking to constrain the foreign funding of civil society. For example:

- In July 2012, **Russia** enacted a law that forces all CSOs that receive foreign funding and conduct “political” activities to register as “foreign agents.” In fall 2012, Russia expelled USAID from the country.
- In December 2011, **Egypt** raided the offices of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the International Republican Institute, Freedom House and other organizations, arresting employees on charges of operating illegally and receiving “illegal” foreign funding.
- In **Ethiopia**, a government proclamation prohibits organizations seeking to promote gender equality, the rights of children and the disabled, good governance, conflict resolution and other related objectives from receiving more than 10 percent of their funding from abroad.

Restrictions on forming CSOs

Governments often employ incorporation/registration laws to impede the ability of people to form CSOs. For example:

- In **Bahrain**, a CSO can be denied registration if “society does not need its services or if there are other associations that fulfill society’s needs in the field of activity.” This provision has been used to deny registration to human rights groups.
- In **Eritrea**, national CSOs engaged in relief and rehabilitation are required to have access to \$1 million U.S. dollars – which is 15,000 times greater than monthly per capita GDP.
- In **Belarus** and many other countries, it is virtually impossible to register a CSO, and operating an unregistered organization is a criminal offense.

Operational barriers

Even if CSOs are able to overcome registration barriers, governments often constrain CSO operations:

- In **Syria**, the law authorizes the state to interfere in associational activities by allowing government rep-

resentatives to attend CSO meetings and by requiring CSOs to obtain permission to undertake various activities.

- In **Cuba**, officials have enforced the provisions of the Law for the Protection of National Independence and the Economy of Cuba, which outlaws “counterrevolutionary” or “subversive” activities, to harass dissidents and human rights activists.
- **China** has used tax laws to deter dissent and impede the work of civil society activists in the country.²

Contagion effect

Recent developments in Russia, Egypt and elsewhere have emboldened other governments to crack down on civil society. Currently, over 20 countries are considering restrictions on civil society. If enacted, these restrictions would:

- restrict the ability of U.S. and host country organizations to engage in effective development cooperation;
- undermine procurement reform – which is premised on the ability of local entities to receive foreign funding – by impeding host country CSOs from partnering with U.S. government entities;
- constrain the ability of people to address issues related to economic development, health care, education, disaster relief, poverty alleviation and other issues of societal concern; and
- prevent CSOs from carrying out their commitments in development effectiveness declarations, such as the Busan Partnership and Accra Agenda for Action, which recognize CSOs as independent development actors in their own right.

Despite this troubling trend, progress is possible. With U.S. leadership, restrictive legislation has been stopped and enabling legislation has been enacted in scores of countries.

¹ As defined by the World Bank, CSO refers to “a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations.” Available at: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html>.

² For a more comprehensive summary of constraints, please see the second edition of the “Defending Civil Society” report that the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law drafted in conjunction with the World Movement for Democracy. Available at: http://www.icnl.org/research/resources/dcs/DCS_Report_Second_Edition_English.pdf.

Aid Effectiveness and Reform



Problem

At the recent High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, the definition of “country ownership” was broadened to reflect a “whole of society” approach – a critical mechanism for building broad-based, inclusive country ownership. Increasing country ownership and stakeholder participation poses considerable challenges, reorienting and changing the dynamic of the aid relationship.

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Country Ownership

Recommendations & Actions

“Country ownership” is routinely highlighted as a key principle of good development practice, although there is a wide range of interpretations of the term. True country ownership is the full and effective participation of a country’s population via legislative bodies, civil society, the private sector, and local, regional and national government in conceptualizing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating development policies, programs and processes.¹ To support this principle and advance development effectiveness, the U.S. government should:

- **Develop a clear definition and operational guidelines for inclusive ownership**, applicable to all U.S. agencies implementing development assistance. Guidelines would help ensure that stakeholder participation is consistent and not left to the discretion of individual agencies or missions. They would also allow partner countries and implementers to adhere to a clear and uniform standard.
- **Ensure broad, inclusive and meaningful engagement of civil society** in consultations on Feed the Future, the Global Health Initiative, Country Development Cooperation Strategies, the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, and other new development initiatives. A transparent, consistent plan should be developed for inclusive, participatory, ongoing engagement of civil society, including feedback mechanisms to measure the impact and effectiveness of engagement by all stakeholders.
- **Continue diplomatic support for an enabling environment for civil society**, working with host governments, international and host country civil society organizations (CSOs) and other implementing partners to establish formal methods to ensure guidelines are followed. A strong enabling environment allows CSOs to thrive and builds more inclusive and transparent development.
- **Continue policy dialogue with U.S. nongovernmental organizations to monitor the ongoing implementation of country ownership principles** in current U.S. initiatives, with exchange about best practices on key issues such as local consultation, project governance mechanisms, capacity building and use of country systems.
- **Continue to promote and advocate for inclusive country ownership with its international partners.** By presenting the challenges and lessons learned in recent U.S. efforts to achieve country ownership, the United States can lead this important discussion with other donor countries, host countries and civil society.

Results

U.S. foreign assistance programs will be made more effective, conforming to internationally agreed upon principles of development effectiveness, and will be democratically owned by local communities and governments and therefore more sustainable.

Background²

At the simplest level, participation of both citizens and government in development efforts is at the heart of country ownership, allowing for better targeting of resources, strengthened accountability among the various stakeholders, and ultimately increased sustainability and success. Empowering and supporting effective states and citizens to take responsibility for their own development, using local systems and local resources to help countries become less reliant on external assistance, is key to “smart development.” Effective use of development assistance results in communities experiencing change they believe is good, in which they have a voice and that they are committed to sustaining.

For most NGOs, promoting broad-based country ownership is a core part of their mission and moral commitment to poverty alleviation. Far from an abstract principle, it is founded on years of experience, often working as donors in developing countries to build local capacity and engaging in participatory development. InterAction’s endorsement of country ownership is therefore central to its members’ commitment, not only to the aid effectiveness agenda, but also more broadly to the goal of development effectiveness.

Core Principles of Country Ownership

Although country ownership may look very different depending on the country context, an accumulating body of evidence points to the following universal elements that effectively support country ownership:

Enabling environment. An enabling environment for civil society is the broad backdrop that generally determines whether development assistance fails or succeeds. The extent to which an environment is enabling (or restrictive) of civil society depends on the legal framework in which CSOs operate (for example, freedom of expression and association, right to operate free from unwarranted state interference) and how donor governments and host country governments support CSOs with funding and engage them in strategic policy dialogue.

Transparency and accountability. Comparable, comprehensive, timely and accessible information for stakeholders is essential for effective engagement in the development process. Information-sharing by both governments and donors not only helps governments manage and take ownership of their own development, but equally importantly helps civil society, legislatures and others hold governments accountable. As a first step, donor countries need to provide clear information about their plans and programs in recipient countries to allow government, civil society organizations and citizens to be more effective and accountable in managing aid resources.

USAID and the Department of State have made significant progress on the issue of aid transparency (the U.S. Foreign Assistance Dashboard, with USAID and Department of State foreign assistance information, is one example), but it is still a mixed picture across agencies.

Consultation. Consultations are typically the initial way of engaging affected stakeholders. Consultations are the primary vehicle to solicit the input and expertise of the local stakeholders, generally the closest to the issues facing the country. Effective consultations, engaging a wide range of stakeholders and encouraging a diversity of input, are important because they ensure that program and strategy designs are well-informed and grounded in the local context, helping avoid the need for costly fixes later. Consultations in the U.S. can also bring a broader U.S. constituency and nongovernmental perspective to bear on development issues and help guide policy development. In many situations, however, consultations with limited inclusiveness, scope and accountability have tended to substitute for establishing real development partnerships.

Capacity building. In many cases, partner country groups and institutions may require additional support to effectively lead their development processes. In these cases it is necessary to develop or enhance the capacity of these organizations, in whatever areas necessary – financial, administrative, governance or other – to support their ability to effectively participate in the development process. Effective capacity building can take years, and can appear to slow down development efforts, running up against the demand for quick results. But there is strong evidence that taking the time to develop capable partners yields more sustainable and effective results.

Participation. At the broadest level, effective participation entails enabling stakeholders to have substantive input and involvement in decision making throughout development processes intended to benefit them. Participatory approaches provide the crucial foundation for sustainable development, ensuring the broad spectrum of society, including marginalized people and those living in poverty, are involved and have a stake in development processes and plans. An enabling environment, transparency, meaningful consultation and capacity building are all critical to ensure effective participation.

1 Definition developed by InterAction’s Aid Effectiveness Working Group.

2 From InterAction’s policy brief “Country Ownership: Moving from Rhetoric to Action,” available at <http://www.interaction.org/country-ownership>.

Procurement Reform for Better Results

Problem

USAID's "implementation and procurement reform" is important to the agency's future effectiveness. However, InterAction members, many of whom are USAID implementing partners, are concerned that the way in which procurement reform is being implemented jeopardizes the reform's ability to meet its goals of increased local ownership, accountability and aid effectiveness.

Recommendations & Actions

InterAction and its members support the principles that inspire USAID's implementation and procurement reform (IPR). Strengthening the capacity of local organizations and institutions to lead their own development is necessary for achieving long-term, sustainable impact. The success of this ambitious reform effort will depend on USAID working more effectively with its partners, who can contribute extensive expertise and additional resources. While there has been progress on some procurement practices, the following changes would improve the effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance:

- **Refine the agency's approach to building the capacity of local NGOs.** To build greater local capacity, IPR must do more than shift resources from international to local organizations. USAID should fund organizational development as well as project implementation, further simplify compliance and reporting requirements, and ensure awards to local organizations are appropriately sized given their capacity.
- **Facilitate greater partnership with U.S. NGOs.** USAID can advance the goal of greater local ownership by partnering with U.S. NGOs, which have longstanding relationships with local communities and extensive experience with capacity building. USAID should treat NGOs as partners, not solely as implementers, and develop mechanisms to leverage U.S. NGOs' private resources and expertise.
- **Provide clear guidance on the selection of assistance or acquisition mechanisms.** USAID should clarify its guidance on the selection of assistance or acquisition mechanisms and ensure that this guidance is consistently followed.
- **Enhance risk mitigation to protect from corruption, waste, fraud and abuse.** USAID should recognize and fully assess the risks associated with IPR so it can ensure that risks to aid effectiveness and financial accountability can be mitigated.
- **Increase the transparency of implementation and procurement reform.** USAID should improve its central source of information, the Foreign Assistance Dashboard, to better report on implementation and procurement reform, publish detailed, yearly progress reports on IPR, and provide more detailed procurement data in raw form.

Results

By adopting these recommendations, the U.S. government can create procurement mechanisms that advance local ownership, improve the overall effectiveness of its development and humanitarian programs, and protect taxpayer investments in reducing extreme poverty around the world.

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Background

In 2010, USAID announced the USAID Forward reform initiative, described as “an effort to make the Agency more effective by changing the way we partner with others, embracing a spirit of innovation and strengthening the results of our work, saving money and reducing the need for U.S. assistance over time.”¹ The reforms focus on three areas: fostering innovation, strengthening capacity to deliver results, and building local sustainability and partnerships (known as implementation and procurement reform, or IPR).

USAID states that the ultimate goal of implementation and procurement reform is to “build the kind of capacity in developing countries that can lead to sustainable development.” The agency aims to invest 30 percent of its global funds in local governments, businesses and NGOs by 2015.² Many elements of the reforms focus on increasing local ownership of U.S. development assistance programs.

Concerns

InterAction fully supports the principles that underpin implementation and procurement reform. However, the way in which the reforms have been implemented raises some serious concerns:

- In designing its procurements, USAID must be careful to build country ownership and not merely build a new channel for the delivery of its own programs.
- Although USAID has taken some steps in the right direction, it has not done enough to simplify the application process to enable more local organizations to benefit from IPR. InterAction members have found that their local partners are daunted by these requirements.
- In some cases USAID has provided local organizations with two to three times the amount of funding they are used to receiving, which risks overwhelming and harming local organizations.
- NGOs are treated as implementers, not as partners. For example, grants and cooperative agreements have become more prescriptive, in essence reducing grantees to implementers rather than partners who can contribute their own expertise to the design, implementation and monitoring of programs.
- Affiliation with an international NGO should not disqualify locally registered organizations from being considered local NGOs. This policy could force local organizations to sever their relationships with international NGOs, which are often an important source of funding for those organizations.
- In many places around the world, local NGOs lack an enabling environment to prosper. USAID should

address the serious obstacles hindering local NGOs.

- USAID solicitations often reflect unrealistic expectations about what both international and local NGOs can achieve in terms of time and resources.
- Currently, even basic information about USAID funding and IPR – such as the amount of funding going through different funding mechanisms or types of organizations – is not publicly available.

U.S. NGOs and procurement reform

For implementation and procurement reform to have the desired impact, USAID will need to work more effectively with its partners to leverage their additional resources and extensive expertise. Promoting country ownership and empowering local organizations have been core values of the U.S. NGO community for many years; and there continues to be a need for a stronger and more effective partnership with the NGO community. U.S. NGOs bring unique advantages that ensure U.S. taxpayer dollars are effectively utilized, including:

- **Established partnerships with local populations** – U.S. NGOs have worked with local communities, civil society and private sector implementing partners for decades. In most countries, more than 90 percent of NGO staff are local nationals.
- **Global reach** – U.S. NGOs work in every developing country, including areas where USAID has no presence. In places like Somalia, remote camps in Darfur or insecure villages in Afghanistan, NGOs work in areas that are not accessible to U.S. government staff.
- **Support and resources from the American people** – In 2009, InterAction members raised \$8.3 billion from private sources of funding, to complement \$3 billion in U.S. government support.³ There is great potential to leverage these investments and enhance the impact of official U.S. assistance.
- **Innovation and best practices** – U.S. NGOs consistently focus on applying best practices and incubating innovations, both through research – often in partnership with foundations – and experimentation in the field.
- **Proven expertise in capacity building** – U.S. NGOs operate in partnership with local community organizations, NGOs and private sector organizations. U.S. NGOs can be a key partner in building the readiness of local organizations to engage directly with donors, and in bolstering their ability to deliver development results.

¹ “USAID Forward,” USAID. <http://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/progress-data/usaaid-forward>.

² “Building Local Sustainability and Partnerships,” USAID. <http://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/progress-data/usaaid-forward/building-local-sustainability-and-partnerships>.

³ Estimate based on InterAction member NGOs’ 2009 IRS Form 990s.

Building Local Capacity for More Effective Development

Problem

Many countries lack the institutional capacity to achieve “country owned” development. Governments, civil society and the private sector all need additional competencies for stronger collaboration. The policy and legal environment for non-state organizations (such as NGOs) often limits their ability to contribute to national development goals.

Recommendations & Actions

International assistance programs should support capacity building for local organizations to accelerate development and achieve aid effectiveness goals. To contribute effectively to development, civil society organizations must have the rights and freedoms to organize, secure resources, voice opinions, participate in agenda setting, operate effectively and help hold state institutions accountable for development results. Development assistance can be more efficient and effective if local capacity building is better integrated into ongoing programs. The following policy and program steps can help local organizations assume more effective roles in country owned development:

- **Promote more capable, self-sufficient local organizations by supporting policies and programs that build a healthy enabling environment for nonstate actors.** Efforts to create an improved enabling environment, such as government law and practices that promote the organized involvement of nonstate actors complements capacity building for individual organizations
- **Make capacity building a higher priority and better integrate it into development and humanitarian assistance programs.** Relatively few programs incorporate capacity building into their efforts. Programs that integrate capacity building are feasible and cost-effective.
- **Support and leverage established capacity building relationships between international NGOs and local NGOs.** International nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) invest billions of dollars each year on programs that deliver critical development benefits while also building the capability of local partners. Building on these established relationships effectively leverages private and public investments.
- **Increase the effectiveness and sustainability of local capacity building by supporting longer-term programs.** Building capable, sustainable local organizations is a long-term process. Programs providing longer-term support for this process achieve better results and use resources more efficiently than short-term efforts.

Results

Healthier enabling environments for civil society will increase the development impacts of nonstate actors. Integrating capacity building into development programs will build local capability to scale up development, reduce its overall costs and make its impacts more sustainable. Supporting nonstate actors that contribute to national development objectives supports inclusive country ownership.

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Background¹

The guidelines and standards for international development are increasingly shaped by “aid effectiveness” principles. As expressed in the Busan Agreements, these principles call for increased transparency, accountability and alignment of goals between donors and host countries. They also prescribe close involvement by local nongovernmental actors in all phases and aspects of development, including implementation, monitoring and accountability. Together, aid effectiveness guidelines are intended to bring about greater “country ownership” of the development process. Achievement of country ownership has been slowed by governance and policy challenges and by institutional capacity deficits. Addressing these deficits through capacity building has become an important aspect of current development programs.

Capacity building for aid effectiveness

As aid effectiveness principles make clear, country ownership of development will entail new roles and responsibilities. Local civil society, the private sector and governments must acquire the skills, institutional capabilities, resources and operating space to more directly drive the development process. Each aspect of this shift will need to be based on enabling policies and a range of capacity building interventions. The purpose of these steps is to assist local partners in achieving greater development impact and to support strong, independent nongovernmental sectors that can contribute meaningfully to country-led development. But capacity building of individual organizations – though vitally important – often has a short-term focus on supporting program deliverables. It is equally important to address the macro-level constraints that limit the operations and functioning of civil society organizations.

Enabling environment for effective development

Perhaps most important to the aid effectiveness framework is a supportive policy, legal and regulatory operating environment to empower and activate the full range of local stakeholders. Inclusive country ownership implies the emergence of capable, independent nonstate sectors – communities of organizations – actively supporting and engaged in national development processes. To contribute effectively to development, civil society organizations must have the rights and freedoms to organize, secure resources, voice opinions, participate in agenda setting, operate effectively and help hold state institutions accountable for development results. Yet the quality of the enabling environment for civil society as a whole often receives less attention than the capacities of individual organizations. Capacity building for individual organizations in a weak or restrictive enabling environment for non-

state actors will generally be unsuccessful, akin to sowing high-yielding seeds on infertile ground.

NGO expertise in local capacity building

Many NGOs have been involved in local capacity building efforts for decades, helping to strengthen the contributions of partner organizations to national development goals. International NGOs have helped build the capabilities of local partners – including counterparts in civil society, government, community-based organizations, private enterprises and other institutions. While international NGO activities reflect a range of missions and priorities, a consistent characteristic has been engaging communities for sustained periods. International NGOs invest billions of private dollars each year in programs that establish lasting relationships with communities and local partner organizations. In part because more than 90 percent of in-country NGO staff are local nationals, NGOs are familiar with local needs, culture and development priorities.

Integrating capacity building into development

Increased development effectiveness – rooted in gains in local organizational performance and the efficiency with which aid improves development indicators – should be the purpose of development assistance. Yet many development programs lack or have weak local capacity building components. Programs that integrate capacity building with efforts to achieve other development impacts offer cost-effective ways to address both objectives. Capacity building for local NGOs should be guided by a clear vision of the organizational needs and the development goals that capacity building will address. Effective capacity building should focus on improving the effectiveness of organizations in accomplishing their missions and program objectives. Meaningful capacity building requires significant investment in a wide range of organizational functions. The up-front costs of these activities can usually be recouped in increased development effectiveness, but may take more time than programs without capacity building. Program managers should understand the costs and duration of effective capacity building as an investment in greater impacts and lower long-term costs.

An investment in country ownership

Capacity building for local organizations is a critical component in a broader set of enabling requirements for meaningful country ownership of development. It supports the engagement of nonstate actors as a critical complement to government leadership. The recommended policies and approaches can guide strategies for integrating capacity building to improve critical development indicators.

¹ Based on *More Effective Capacity Building Within USAID Forward*, InterAction, October 2012.

Problem

After years of decline, USAID is rebuilding its capacity to measure effectiveness and transforming the agency into a learning organization. Instilling a culture of evaluation will require both time and resources, as will increasing the agency's capacity to produce high-quality evaluations. Although on the right path, USAID must improve implementation of its Evaluation Policy and work more closely with implementing partners to measure results.

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Monitoring and Evaluation

Recommendations & Actions

USAID's focus on results and its commitment to making investments based on hard evidence is commendable and will move the aid reform agenda forward. Over the past two years, USAID has taken a number of steps to reinvigorate its monitoring and evaluation. It could strengthen these efforts by:

- **Maintaining a commitment to building evaluation capacity.** USAID should ensure that appropriate support and resources are provided to allow continued staff training (particularly at the field level) and technical support. USAID should also hire more staff with evaluation expertise, and dedicate the necessary resources for evaluating the full portfolio of large and innovative projects, as required by its Evaluation Policy.
- **Ensuring consistent implementation of the Evaluation Policy.** Consistent implementation of USAID's Evaluation Policy at an operational level is critical to its efficacy over the long term. It is imperative that USAID missions and headquarters offices apply the policy evenly, which requires a common understanding of its requirements.
- **Expanding implementing partners' role in evaluations.** Increasing implementing partners' involvement in evaluations will help improve their quality and utility. USAID should provide further guidance on the role implementers can play in external evaluations, and ensure that programs subject to the external evaluation requirement are identified early, so that implementers and evaluators can better coordinate.
- **Increasing transparency around evaluation.** USAID should make public information about evaluations planned or underway (not just completed), describing how they meet the Evaluation Policy's criteria as well as the evaluation objectives, design and methods. It should also consider publishing information on the amount of money spent on evaluations, in absolute terms and as a proportion of total agency spending.
- **Adopting more realistic timeframes for achieving and measuring results.** Achieving sustainable outcomes, in contrast to short-term outputs, requires longer timeframes. So that evaluations do not try to measure results before they can be achieved, USAID should ensure that evaluations are based on a program's theory of change, which should inform the timing of data collection and analysis.
- **Reinforcing guidance that no single evaluation method is best.** Evaluation methods should be chosen based on the evaluation questions, the nature of the program, the local context and practical considerations such as time and budget. USAID should promote the use of a mixed methods approach, which draws on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Results

A sustained commitment to building evaluation capacity will ultimately yield greater evidence of what does and does not work, allowing better use of aid dollars.

Background

One of the main pillars of the USAID Forward reform effort is to transform the agency to embrace a “relentless focus on results.”¹ This commitment to ensuring that resources are spent based on results-related evidence is critical, especially when funding for foreign aid is under pressure.

Over the past two years, USAID has taken a number of concrete steps to ensure that this commitment is translated into action. In January 2011, the agency released a new Evaluation Policy to strengthen USAID’s capacity to design, manage and use more rigorous evaluations. To support its implementation, USAID has dedicated more resources to evaluation, hired new staff, conducted trainings and developed additional guidance and tools to assist its staff.

USAID is now developing guidance on improving performance management, as well as a Strategic Learning Plan to increase the effectiveness of USAID programs by ensuring that they adapt and respond to changing circumstances and findings from past experiences. USAID has regularly sought the input of its implementing partners in developing these policies and guidelines.

Challenges

Transforming an agency in which evaluation practice was only recently in sharp decline will require a significant amount of effort, however. Not surprisingly, some challenges remain:

- **Uneven implementation of the Evaluation Policy.** USAID’s Evaluation Policy provides good guidance and criteria for when and how to evaluate development programs, but it has been inconsistently implemented at an operational level. Both mission and headquarters staff seem to lack understanding of the policy’s requirements, which may be partly due to the fact that many staff are not familiar with evaluation in general. This underscores the need for further training, as well as management that prioritizes and incentivizes evaluation and learning.
- **Minimal role for implementing partners in evaluation.** USAID’s Evaluation Policy requires projects at or above a defined threshold to undergo an external evaluation. These evaluations are contracted by USAID and must be led by an external consultant. Though implementing partners may be invited to join the evaluation team, for the most part the Evaluation Policy limits their role to monitoring a project’s progress. As revealed by the policy’s implementation to date, there are several problems with this practice. First, implementing partners’ limited role means that the evaluation design may sometimes happen in a vacuum, making it inconsistent with the project implementation design, potentially duplicating data collection, or delaying program

implementation to allow external consultants to follow their evaluation timeline. Second, given the separation between monitoring and evaluation functions (with implementing partners responsible for one and external consultants for the other), monitoring data necessary for the evaluation may not be collected, or may not be integrated with evaluation analyses. The evaluation may also not reflect changes in project implementation that may be made based on monitoring data. Finally, if the implementing partner is not involved in the evaluation design, it is likely that very little relevant learning will come from it.

- **Demand for quick results and building local capacity are often at odds.** USAID sometimes has unrealistic expectations about what it is possible to achieve in a given amount of time and with the resources available. As a result, program evaluations are often designed to assess outcomes far before they are likely to come about. The demand for quick, optimal results in the minimum amount of time is particularly problematic given USAID’s desire to promote local ownership, which is a long-term process.
- **Focus on quantitative measures of results.** USAID and the State Department have attempted to move beyond a focus on outputs to a greater emphasis on the measurement of outcomes. Still, a persistent focus on *quantitative* measures of both outputs and outcomes, such as number of cooperatives formed and increases in daily income, remains. This bias – which partially stems from insufficient input from those that manage, implement and benefit from programs in the field – means that important, harder-to-measure goals, such as strengthening an organization’s capacity, are overlooked. The focus on the quantitative also sometimes comes at the expense of careful observation and assessment of causal mechanisms, which allow us to understand *why* and *how* changes have (or have not) occurred.
- **Overemphasis on impact evaluation.** Impact evaluations require considerable resources. Best practice dictates that such evaluations be used sparingly, to help answer important questions for which limited evidence is available, for example. The relatively high number of solicitations for impact evaluations indicates that better guidance for *when* to conduct this type of evaluation is needed. In addition, these solicitations display a strong preference for the use of experimental and quasi-experimental methods for determining impact. Randomized control trials (RCTs) in particular continue to be viewed by many as the gold standard, though they are only rarely appropriate.

1 USAID Forward: Overview, <http://forward.usaid.gov/about/overview>.

Transparency in U.S. Foreign Assistance

Problem

The U.S. government has initiated or endorsed a number of initiatives related to greater transparency in foreign aid. For these initiatives to deliver on their promise of improved accountability and more effective development, the U.S. government needs to move more quickly on implementation and take proactive steps to establish a culture of openness.

Recommendations & Actions

Transparency is a prerequisite for accountability and effectiveness. Timely, comprehensive and comparable information on how aid dollars are spent, and with what results, allows citizens here to hold the U.S. government accountable; it also allows citizens of the countries to which our aid is directed to provide feedback on the quality of that aid. Recognizing this, the U.S. government has made improving transparency a priority. Although this commitment is a notable and critical first step, the U.S. government now needs to make rapid progress on implementation.

- **Publish information from all U.S. agencies managing foreign aid to the Foreign Assistance Dashboard.** More than two years since its launch, the Foreign Assistance Dashboard still only includes limited information from three agencies: USAID, the State Department and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). All agencies managing foreign assistance should publish their planning, obligation, spent, project and performance data to the Dashboard, including the Departments of Defense, Treasury and Agriculture. The timeline for each agency's "on-boarding" to the Dashboard should be made public.
- **Publicly release an ambitious implementation schedule for the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).** As a signatory to IATI, the U.S. has committed to publicly sharing an implementation schedule by the end of 2012, detailing what information it will (or will not) publish, by when and how often.
- **Allow agencies to publish aid information directly to the IATI Registry.** Rather than require that data first be submitted to the Foreign Assistance Dashboard, agencies should be allowed to publish directly to the IATI Registry. This will help improve the timeliness and comprehensiveness of information.
- **Establish an Advisory Panel on U.S. Foreign Aid Transparency.** This panel would help identify priority data sets, provide feedback on how agencies must improve on the data they are providing, and help guide future U.S. government efforts.
- **Institutionalize the U.S. commitment to transparency.** Progress on aid transparency currently seems to rely on forward-thinking officials. To ensure information continues to be made available, Congress should pass legislation requiring all U.S. agencies to publish detailed aid information in line with international standards.

Results

Increasing the transparency of U.S. foreign aid is critical to making it more accountable, effective and efficient. As the largest provider of foreign assistance in the world in dollar terms, the United States is uniquely poised to play a leadership role in international aid transparency efforts. But it must lead by example.

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Background

Both the administration and Congress have recognized the importance of open government in a number of initiatives that the U.S. government has initiated or endorsed, as well as in legislation proposed by members of Congress. This background section provides a brief overview of each, focusing on aid transparency specifically.

Open Government Initiative

Implementation of the Open Government Initiative is guided by a 2009 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Open Government Directive, requiring agencies to “take immediate steps and to establish long-term goals to achieve greater openness and transparency.”¹ Under the directive, agencies must: (1) proactively publish information online, in open formats and in a timely manner; (2) improve the quality of information; and (3) create and institutionalize a culture of open government. The December 2010 launch of the Foreign Assistance Dashboard (ForeignAssistance.gov), led by the State Department but meant to capture information from all U.S. agencies managing foreign aid, represents the most important progress to date in increasing the availability of U.S. aid information.

International Aid Transparency Initiative

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) was launched in September 2008 with the goal of making information on international aid activities and spending easier to find, use and compare. It specifies what aid information should be shared and in which format to make it easier to combine information from multiple sources.² As of November 2012, 35 donors had signed on to IATI, accounting for about 75 percent of official development assistance (ODA). In November 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that the United States was joining IATI. This announcement was made on behalf of all U.S. agencies that provide foreign assistance, not just USAID and the State Department. Like all other signatories, the United States must now share an implementation schedule by the end of 2012 outlining what information it will (or will not) publish, by when and with what frequency.

Open Government Partnership

In September 2011, the U.S. and seven other countries launched the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a multilateral initiative to make governments more transparent, effective and accountable. Each member of the OGP must develop a national action plan detailing the actions it intends to take to meet the goal of more open government.

One of the commitments the U.S. government makes in

Timeline

Jan. 2009	President Obama issues Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government
Dec. 2009	OMB issues Open Government Directive
Dec. 2010	Launch of Foreign Assistance Dashboard
Sept. 2011	President Obama launches the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and releases the U.S. National Action Plan
Nov. 2011	Secretary Clinton announces that the U.S. will join IATI at the 4th High Level Forum in Busan
Sept. 2012	Senate Foreign Relations Committee passes <i>The Foreign Assistance Transparency and Accountability Act of 2012</i> (S. 3310) (companion bill, H.R. 3159, was introduced in October 2011)
Sept. 2012	OMB issues guidance for all U.S. government agencies on providing foreign aid information

its national plan, which is meant to complement the U.S. Open Government Initiative, is to increase the transparency of foreign assistance. To achieve this goal, OMB published guidance in September 2012 requiring the release and implementation of “release and implement governmentwide reporting requirements for foreign aid.”³ This guidance was issued by the OMB in September 2012, laying the groundwork for the publication of data to the Dashboard and IATI (on a quarterly basis).⁴

Legislation

Both the House and the Senate have attempted to codify some of these transparency efforts, with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recently passing *The Foreign Assistance Transparency and Accountability Act of 2012* (S. 3310). This bill – which like its companion bill, H.R. 3159, enjoys bipartisan support – calls on the president to make publicly available through a website (i.e., the Dashboard) “comprehensive, timely, comparable and accessible information on United States foreign assistance programs.” This requirement would affect all Federal departments or agencies that administer foreign assistance.

1 “The Open Government Partnership: National Action Plan for the United States of America,” September 2011. Pg. 4. www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/www.opengovpartnership.org/files/country_action_plans/US_National_Action_Plan_Final_2.pdf.

2 IATI, along with the OECD/DAC’s Creditor Reporting System, also forms the basis of a new “common, open standard for aid transparency,” one of the commitments agreed to at the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Under this standard, donors are to publish implementation schedules by December 2012 and implement the standard fully by December 2015.

3 “National Action Plan for the United States of America.” Pg. 7.

4 OMB Bulletin No. 12-01, 25 September 2012, is available here: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/bulletins/fy2012/b12-01.pdf>.

Problem

Business has a critical role to play in achieving effective and large-scale development outcomes. However, it should be engaged strategically and with meaningful consultation of nongovernmental organizations and local civil society organizations to ensure that it plays an effective role.

Business in Development

Recommendations & Actions

Businesses from multinational corporations to local small enterprises have an essential role to play in development and humanitarian relief, bringing new resources, technical expertise and the ability to achieve large scale reach and impact. They also provide jobs and spur economic growth. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) work extensively with corporations and local businesses through thousands of mutually beneficial partnerships that can achieve large-scale and sustainable results in areas such as health, disaster response, income generation, and food security and nutrition. The U.S. government is also increasingly working with the private sector through public-private partnerships (PPPs), in which business and government work together to achieve development goals.

To ensure that the private sector is engaged strategically in these partnerships, the U.S. government should:

- **Hold businesses accountable to meet appropriate standards.** Private sector investments and funding commitments should be transparent and contain accountability mechanisms. In addition, setting standards for private investment in sectors such as water and agriculture has a large impact on development outcomes.
- **Support and encourage the role of civil society organizations in public-private partnerships.** In particular, U.S. NGOs are often well positioned – and have a proven track record – to catalyze, manage and ensure greater effectiveness of private sector corporations in development assistance.
- **Prioritize public-private partnerships that are most likely to reduce poverty,** build capacity, create jobs, and benefit local small businesses.
- **Engage in co-planning with the full range of actors required for effective public-private partnerships in order to reach the poorest** and most vulnerable and advance equitable economic growth in developing countries. Local civil society organizations are critical actors in these partnerships, bringing the poorest of the poor to the table as partners and potential entrepreneurs.

Results

By following these principles for effective business engagement, the U.S. will increase the effectiveness of public-private partnerships.

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Background

Broad-based and inclusive economic growth that benefits poor and marginalized populations catalyzes progress on issues such as hunger and malnutrition, access to health care, and education. Working with the private sector often helps increase the impact of development initiatives by leveraging businesses' private resources, technical expertise and large-scale distribution capacity. As such, the development assistance of the U.S. government and other donors, including U.S. NGOs, should include initiatives that engage businesses, from local entities to multinational corporations.

Business is increasing its contributions to development as a donor in its own right. In 2010, U.S. businesses contributed an estimated \$7.6 billion to international development through philanthropy.¹ Corporations are also increasingly looking beyond corporate social responsibility, moving away from a charity-based, philanthropic, "check-writing" model to one of creating shared value and partnering with governments and NGOs to achieve development outcomes. They are seeking to do good while doing well. For example, a corporation might work with an NGO to increase low-income rural farmers' access to markets. Corporations are increasingly interested in partnering with NGOs and government aid agencies; a 2010 Accenture study found that 78 percent of corporate CEOs believe their company should engage in multistakeholder partnerships to address development goals.² To date, multinational corporations' development activities have been most focused on countries with positive economic outlooks and large potential markets, such as Brazil, India and China.

The private sector and U.S. foreign assistance

The U.S. government increasingly views public-private partnerships as a key to improving livelihoods. In 2001, then-USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios rolled out the Global Development Alliance model, in which government and private sector actors identify development outcomes of common interest and each contribute resources and unique skills to achieve those outcomes. Since 2001, USAID has engaged in nearly 1,000 public-private partnerships.³

The U.S. government should seek greater impact through partnerships. In practice, however, the engagement of the private sector thus far has raised a number of concerns. First, private investment cannot make up for a decrease in public investment. Public dollars are still critically needed even as the private sector is increasingly engaged as a donor. Second, civil society organizations (CSOs), including local CSOs and international NGOs, have often not been meaningfully involved in the design of public-private partnerships or as a core participant in implementation.

Consultation with local CSOs ensures development efforts align with local priorities. Engaging international NGOs leverages their private resources, their longstanding relationships with communities and their focus on achieving sustainable results that reach the poorest of the poor. In public-private partnerships, NGOs encourage boosting local employment, capacity building and positive benefits for local small businesses. Overall, NGOs and other civil society organizations help ensure a people-centered approach, acting as an interface between communities and outside donors such as governments and corporations. Public-private partnerships should be thought of as tripartite relationships involving government, the private sector and civil society, with each playing an essential role.

Case study: The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition

At the May 2012 G8 summit, President Barack Obama announced the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, which the White House describes as "a commitment by G8 nations, African countries and private sector partners to lift 50 million people out of poverty over the next 10 years through inclusive and sustained agricultural growth." This will supposedly be achieved through private agricultural investments, with \$3 billion worth of investments over 10 years identified thus far, beginning in Ethiopia, Ghana and Tanzania.⁴

While the private sector certainly has a critical role to play in increasing food security and improving nutrition, a number of steps must be taken to ensure the New Alliance achieves its stated goals. First, local civil society, especially smallholder farmers' organizations, should be involved as leaders to ensure the New Alliance does not compromise African-led food security initiatives. Second, private investments must be aimed at small-scale producers. Third, priority outcomes for private investments must include gender equity, nutrition, environmental sustainability and climate response. Fourth, private sector actors should be held accountable for responsible investment. Finally, public investments cannot be replaced by the private sector and should be sustained.

Recently, InterAction pledged that its members would spend over \$1 billion in privately funded resources on food security over the next three years, showing the great potential for the U.S. government to leverage the contributions of U.S. NGOs as well as businesses.

1 "Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances 2012," Hudson Institute. <http://gpr.hudson.org/>.

2 "Convergence Economy," Accenture. <http://www.accenture.com/us-en/Pages/insight-international-development-converging-world.aspx>.

3 "IDEA Fact Sheet," USAID. <http://idea.usaid.gov/about/factsheet>.

4 "New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition," White House. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/05/18/new-alliance-food-security-and-nutrition>.

Aid Effectiveness in Fragile States

Problem

Traditional approaches to foreign assistance in fragile and conflict-affected countries are not working. Not one of the world's most conflict-affected states has achieved a single Millennium Development Goal. Supporting peaceful, lasting change in fragile states is the central challenge in international development in the 21st century. A new paradigm is needed to promote development, peace and security in fragile societies.

Recommendations & Actions

- **Fulfill the U.S. government's commitment to the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States endorsed in 2011.** Use the New Deal principles to mainstream conflict prevention across all U.S. government entities that provide foreign assistance. Peace building is not a discrete project for a few specialized offices. It is a goal; and a comprehensive framework through which all assistance strategies must be designed if they are to succeed in addressing the root causes of conflict. All U.S. government agencies should share a common definition of peacebuilding.
- **Focus on development strategies that foster more inclusive relations between citizens and their governments in fragile states.** Lasting stability must be grown from the ground up through methods that do not harm prospects for peace and that empower local people to design and lead culturally-appropriate strategies for managing conflict. Help governments strengthen critical state capacities to respond to the needs of their citizens through fair, accountable and democratic systems.
- **Understand the trade-offs between the long-term goal of sustainable development in conflict-affected countries and more immediate political and security objectives.** Neither aid nor military activities alone can solve the problems of chronic state fragility. Ensure U.S. political, economic and security policies support preventative diplomacy and conflict-sensitive development strategies in a coherent way.
- **Do not rush conflict prevention and development in fragile states.** Sustainable change requires timeframes that extend beyond quick-impact projects and short-term stability operations, and which strengthen existing capacities.
- **Focus U.S. diplomacy and aid on the drivers of regional and country conflict systems,** for example by improving revenue transparency and supporting an enabling environment for civil society.
- **Set benchmarks to measure U.S. assistance** according to its impact on the root causes of conflict, not just on improving service delivery.
- **The new post-2015 development goals (which will follow the UN Millennium Development Goals) need a clear focus** on preventing conflict and on addressing the structural drivers of chronic conflict in fragile states, such as poor governance, corruption, exclusion, and unequal access to services and opportunities.

Results

By better understanding and addressing the drivers of conflict in fragile societies, U.S. investments will assist people in conflict-affected countries to chart their own courses out of poverty and away from violence.

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Background

Violent conflict puts development in reverse. It destroys the governance capacity of the state and creates divided societies. Conflict channels a poor country's few resources toward war rather than the development of crucial institutions and social capital. Delivery of the most basic health and education services is disrupted. Besides destroying lives and livelihoods, endless conflicts increase animosity and resentment between people and nations, undermine investments in statebuilding, sink economic growth, fuel trade in illicit goods such as weapons and drugs, and harm the environment. Development assistance must be intentionally designed to alleviate the root causes of conflict or the investment may be lost.

Fragile states are fragile precisely because the government in power often represents just one side of a long-standing political conflict. Exclusionary, "winner-take-all" thinking closes the door to democratic systems that allow groups to pursue their interests nonviolently and cripples a country's ability to advance. International development strategies in such contexts must be designed and implemented in a way that reduces tensions between and promotes a more inclusive, constructive relationship between a government and its citizens.

Peace building works to break cycles of conflict by changing the structural conditions that lock conflict in place. It encompasses a wide range of strategic initiatives across multiple sectors to address the root causes of conflicts before, during and after armed conflict. Peace building is not just postconflict stabilization and the prevention of violence, but also the construction of systemic conditions that foster just and peaceful relationships between groups. Systemic drivers of conflict include political exclusion, economic marginalization, endemic corruption, the absence of mechanisms for justice and accountability, and socially-sanctioned hate that divides societies. All development investments meant to lift people in conflict-affected regions out of poverty permanently must be designed with peace-building goals in mind, or they cannot be sustained.

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States is a principles document for foreign development assistance that was endorsed by the U.S., other major donors, and nations affected by conflict in November 2011. It establishes the need for country ownership of the problems and solutions, and lays out five peace-building and state-building goals for permanently lifting countries out of fragility. It is the latest step in a series of summits and declarations about making foreign assistance in conflict-affected and fragile states more effective. But there is particular buzz around the New Deal because of the unprecedented degree to which "fragile" states themselves (known collectively as the g7+) are leading the process and to which the

U.S. and major donors are supporting the effort.

Armed conflicts abroad impose costs on the United States. Conflict-affected regions are often the scene of significant and protracted humanitarian crises and relief efforts. In addition to the economic consequences of the disruption of markets, costs increase through international peacekeeping missions, deployment of U.S. civilian and military assets, provision of humanitarian assistance, and the lost opportunity costs when assistance is pulled from other investments. Whole-of-government investments focused on long-term conflict prevention are 60 times cheaper than crisis response.¹ A strong commitment to supporting conflict-affected societies in their efforts to move out of chronic poverty and state fragility is a financially prudent investment for the United States.

There can be a trade-off between short-term foreign policy objectives and long-term development goals. As noted in the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, it is in the strategic interest of the U.S. to prevent armed conflicts and help countries move out of poverty and fragility. But in some cases short-term security objectives can compromise the longer-term work of reducing poverty and fostering more peaceful relationships between parties in conflict. InterAction's policy brief on the military's expanding role in foreign assistance discusses some of the ways counterinsurgency and stabilization operations can work against humanitarian efforts and undermine long-term development. The same is true for civilian-led missions focused on narrowly-defined political objectives. Peace building is not the same as stabilization. It places the needs and interests of the people caught up in armed conflict ahead of counterterrorism and other U.S. security objectives. But by doing so, peace building approaches build stronger long-term social and political stability from the bottom up, which reduces instability and global security threats at the source.

How foreign assistance is carried out is as important as what is provided. All forms of foreign assistance influence local, national and regional conflicts. U.S. strategies must be grounded in a deep understanding of the specific drivers of conflict in a given setting, then carefully designed to mitigate tensions rather than doing harm. This is a particular challenge in conflict-affected states because governments are simultaneously development actors and parties to conflict. The U.S. should ensure that aid is helping to construct a more peaceful and productive society, not just stabilizing the government.

¹ Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflicts, "The Cost of Conflict: Prevention and Cure in the Global Arena" Edited by Michael E. Brown and Richard N. Rosecrance, 1999.

Policy Paper

U.S. Aid Reform and the Global Movement for Aid Effectiveness

Over the past decade, the U.S. government, other donors and developing nations have held four high-level global forums to improve the effectiveness of development aid. The United States, with extensive input from U.S. nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), helped to shape these deliberations that have guided Washington's own aid reform efforts.

Aid effectiveness: from financing to the Paris Principles

The conversation began in Monterey in 2002 at the Conference on Financing for Development. In 2003, a meeting in Rome shifted from looking at financing to the quality of aid. The outcome was an agreement to harmonize donor practices for improved performance.

The 2005 deliberations in Paris produced the **Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness**.¹ The Declaration includes five basic principles: **ownership** by developing countries of their own strategies for poverty reduction; **alignment** by donors with these national objectives and systems; **harmonization** of donor policies and practices; a **results** focus; and **mutual accountability** of donors and partners for development results. The Paris Declaration became the global framework for aid effectiveness for next five years and influenced the U.S. government as it launched its own aid reform efforts.

In 2008, a forum in Accra, Ghana produced the **Accra Agenda for Action**,² which refined the Paris agreements and for the first time **recognized civil society organizations** (CSOs), or the nonprofit sector, as development actors in their own right. CSOs then committed to developing their own principles or standards for development effectiveness.

Busan and beyond: a new global partnership

The fourth and final meeting convened in South Korea in late 2011, the Busan Fourth High Level Forum on Develop-

ment Effectiveness. At this forum, CSOs and new development stakeholders, including the private sector and donors (Brazil, China, India and Russia), joined the deliberations and adopted some joint agreements.

The meeting ended with the creation of a new **Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation**,³ which is convened under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) in Paris. The U.S. government serves on its 18-member Steering Committee. An immediate priority for the Steering Committee in 2013 is finalizing a global monitoring framework for implementing the Busan agreements.

A primary focus of the Global Partnership is to advance the implementation of four priority principles, consistent with agreed international commitments on human rights, decent work, gender equality, environmental sustainability and disability:

- 1. Ownership of development priorities by developing countries.** Partnerships for development can only succeed if they are led by developing countries and use approaches tailored to country-specific situations and needs.
- 2. Focus on results.** Our investments and efforts must have a lasting impact on the eradication of poverty and reduction of inequality, on sustainable development, and on enhancing developing countries' capacities. These must all align with the priorities and policies set out by developing countries themselves.
- 3. Inclusive development partnerships.** Openness, learning, trust and mutual respect lie at the core of effective partnerships to support development goals. Partnerships should recognize the different and complementary roles of all actors.
- 4. Transparency and accountability.** Mutual account-



Nagulan Niesiah, Episcopal Relief & Development

ability and accountability to the intended beneficiaries, as well as to the broader public, organizations, constituents and shareholders, is critical to delivering results. Transparent practices form the basis for enhanced accountability.

InterAction members also are holding themselves to account in improving their own development effectiveness. U.S. NGOs and CSOs around the world kept the promise made in Accra to create a CSO charter for development effectiveness, with adoption of the Istanbul Principles in Turkey in 2010. The **Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness**, which were presented in Busan, were developed under the umbrella of the global Open Forum CSO network and emerged out of CSO consultations in more than 50 countries. The text of the Istanbul Principles is included on the following page.

The U.S. government and aid reform

InterAction worked closely with the United States government to help prepare for the High Level Forum in Busan. InterAction developed five policy papers for discussion at a series of pre-Busan roundtables with senior U.S. officials from USAID, the State Department and other agencies. The topics were aid effectiveness in fragile states; country ownership; the enabling environment for civil society; the role of the private sector in development; and transparency, accountability and results. InterAction supports the principles that shape these reforms, with some specific recommendations.

¹ Available at <http://www.oecd.org/development/aideffectiveness/34428351.pdf>.

² Available at <http://www.oecd.org/development/aideffectiveness/34428351.pdf>.

³ Available at http://www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhl4/images/stories/hlf4/OUTCOME_DOCUMENT_-_FINAL_EN.pdf.

Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles¹

Civil society organizations are a vibrant and essential feature in the democratic life of countries across the globe. CSOs collaborate with the full diversity of people and promote their rights. The essential characteristics of CSOs as distinct development actors – that they are voluntary, diverse, non-partisan, autonomous, non-violent, working and collaborating for change – are the foundation for the Istanbul principles for CSO development effectiveness. These principles guide the work and practices of civil society organizations in both peaceful and conflict situations, in different areas of work from grassroots to policy advocacy, and in a continuum from humanitarian emergencies to long-term development.

1. Respect and promote human rights and social justice

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... develop and implement strategies, activities and practices that promote individual and collective human rights, including the right to development, with dignity, decent work, social justice and equity for all people.

2. Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girls' rights

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... promote and practice development cooperation embodying gender equity, reflecting women's concerns and experience, while supporting women's efforts to realize their individual and collective rights, participating as fully empowered actors in the development process.

3. Focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... support the empowerment and inclusive participation of people to expand their democratic ownership over policies and development initiatives that affect their lives, with an emphasis on the poor and marginalized.

4. Promote Environmental Sustainability

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... develop and implement priorities and approaches that promote environmental sustainability for present and future generations, including urgent responses to climate crises, with specific attention to the socio-economic, cultural and indigenous conditions for ecological integrity and justice.

5. Practice transparency and accountability

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... demonstrate a sustained organizational commitment to transparency, multiple accountability, and integrity in their internal operations.

6. Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... commit to transparent relationships with CSOs and other development actors, freely and as equals, based on shared development goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organizational autonomy, long-term accompaniment, solidarity and global citizenship.

7. Create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... enhance the ways they learn from their experience, from other CSOs and development actors, integrating evidence from development practice and results, including the knowledge and wisdom of local and indigenous communities, strengthening innovation and their vision for the future they would like to see.

8. Commit to realizing positive sustainable change

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... collaborate to realize sustainable outcomes and impacts of their development actions, focusing on results and conditions for lasting change for people, with special emphasis on poor and marginalized populations, ensuring an enduring legacy for present and future generations.

Guided by these Istanbul principles, CSOs are committed to take pro-active actions to improve and be fully accountable for their development practices. Equally important will be enabling policies and practices by all actors. Through actions consistent with these principles, donor and partner country governments demonstrate their Accra Agenda for Action pledge that they "share an interest in ensuring that CSO contributions to development reach their full potential". All governments have an obligation to uphold basic human rights – among others, the right to association, the right to assembly, and the freedom of expression. Together these are pre-conditions for effective development.

**Istanbul, Turkey
September 29, 2010**

¹ Please note, the Istanbul Principles, as agreed at the Open Forum's Global Assembly in Istanbul, September 28 -30, 2010, are the foundation of the Open Forum's Draft *International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness*. These principles are further elaborated in Version 2 of this *Framework*, which is being updated and will be found on the Open Forum's web site, www.cso-effectiveness.org.



InterAction CEO Task Force on Aid Reform and Effectiveness

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American Red Cross International Services
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Bread for the World
CARE
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ChildFund International
Church World Service
CONCERN Worldwide U.S., Inc.
Counterpart International
Global Communities
Helen Keller International
Heifer International
The Hunger Project
InsideNGO
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International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
International Medical Corps
International Relief & Development
International Rescue Committee (IRC)
Lutheran World Relief
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American Friends Service Committee
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
American Jewish World Service
American Red Cross International Services
American Refugee Committee
America's Development Foundation (ADF)
Baptist World Alliance
Bethany Christian Services International, Inc.
CARE
Catholic Relief Services
CBM
CDA Collaborative Learning Projects
CHF International
ChildFund International
Church World Service
CONCERN Worldwide U.S., Inc.
Development Gateway
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
Education Development Center (EDC)
Episcopal Relief & Development
Freedom from Hunger
The Global Food Banking Network
Habitat for Humanity International
Handicap International USA
Heifer International
Helen Keller International
The Hunger Project
INMED Partnerships for Children
Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc. (IMA World Health)
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)
International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
International Medical Corps
International Medical Health Organization (IMHO)
International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)
International Relief & Development
International Relief Teams
International Rescue Committee (IRC)
International Social Service—United States of America Branch, Inc.
International Youth Foundation
IntraHealth International, Inc.
Islamic Relief USA
Jesuit Refugee Services USA
Jhpiego – an affiliate of The Johns Hopkins University
Life for Relief and Development
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Lutheran World Relief
Management Sciences for Health (MSH)
MAP International
Mercy Corps
Mobility International USA
Oxfam America

Pact
Pan American Development Foundation
PATH
Pathfinder International
PCI
Physicians for Peace
Plan International USA
Plant with Purpose
Population Action International
Refugees International
Relief International
ReSurge International
Salvation Army World Service Office
Save the Children
Seva Foundation
Solidarity Center
Stop Hunger Now
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Oxfam America
Pact
Relief International
Solidarity Center
World Vision

Food Security, Agriculture and Nutrition

Food Security, Agriculture
and Nutrition



Agricultural Development for Food Security and Poverty Reduction

Problem

Persistent poverty and high food prices mean that hunger remains an everyday threat for about 1 billion people worldwide, of whom about one-third are children. Global economic challenges have made it increasingly difficult for governments to meet food security challenges. Low levels of investment in agricultural development, biases against women farmers and environmental degradation have combined to perpetuate a solvable hunger problem.

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Recommendations & Actions

Investments in sustainable agriculture, nutrition and rural employment will boost incomes, increase food security and enhance success in other areas of development. Economic growth through agriculture is roughly twice as effective in reducing poverty as alternative approaches. Key steps to maintain U.S. leadership in food security include:

- Fully fund the administration's \$3.5 billion commitment to the L'Aquila Global Food Security Agreement, the Feed the Future Initiative and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program.
- Establish food security as an enduring priority through authorizing legislation for the Feed the Future Initiative, continued support for Title II nonemergency programs, and locate a food security coordinator within USAID.
- Leverage the resources, experience, networks and country presence of civil society through partnerships between the public and private sectors to expand the reach and impact of development investments.
- Integrate emergency food response, nutrition and safety net programs as components of food security assistance.
- Elevate natural resource management and adapting to the effects of climate change as key objectives in agricultural development programs.
- Ensure that the special challenges women farmers face in many developing countries are addressed as key constraints to the success of economic, social and governance programs.
- Ensure that aid effectiveness principles from the Busan Partnership Agreement – including country ownership, broad citizen participation, transparency and accountability – are implemented in agriculture and food security programs.
- Address the root causes of food price volatility – including market speculation, biofuel mandates and subsidies – to encourage greater investment in agriculture and reduce the vulnerability of people living in poverty.

Results

Agricultural development through smallholder farmers will reduce poverty and food insecurity, accelerate economic development, lower costs for emergency food aid and help to stabilize important developing countries. Integrating natural resource management and climate change adaptation will reduce risks to agricultural systems and increase resilience of vulnerable households. Stronger partnerships between civil society, the private sector and government will leverage scarce resources to achieve more effective and efficient agricultural development.

Background

Interrelated food security challenges

Persistent poverty, high food prices and malnutrition in vulnerable developing countries threaten the well-being of hundreds of millions of people. High food prices have contributed to political unrest and the destabilization of countries facing rising food prices. Unsustainable agricultural systems have degraded natural resources that underpin food production, increasing the difficulty of meeting future needs. Climate change – the effects of which are already visible in many countries – lowers productivity and raises the frequency of destructive droughts and floods. Each of these risks falls most heavily on remote rural areas and small-scale farmers, the majority of whom are women.

Development policies and approaches still do not adequately reflect the interconnectedness of food security challenges. Traditional program stovepipes have separated agricultural development, nutrition and social protection, and have not effectively linked humanitarian food assistance with longer-term agricultural development. The various sectors involved in food security – including government, the private sector and civil society – have not been well coordinated within or across their respective sectors. This has reduced the effectiveness of assistance investments and delayed progress on the long-term challenges of food insecurity and poverty.

Improved policy choices, increased support

Years of declining investment in agriculture by donor and developing countries alike have reduced growth in agriculture, placing many developing countries in food deficit situations. Safeguards to ensure private sector investment can benefit smallholder farmers such as the internationally agreed Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, as well as principles for responsible agricultural investment that enhance food security and nutrition, are essential. Steps to reinvest in agriculture and food security represented, for example, by the L'Aquila Food Security Agreement, signal important changes. In few cases, however, have resource allocations made by donors and governments met promised commitments. Fully funding agricultural programs can reduce the need for more expensive humanitarian relief efforts.

Integrated responses for development effectiveness

A coordinated, integrated and comprehensive focus on alleviating poverty, hunger and malnutrition in development assistance is essential. Increased U.S. leadership on food security has resulted in progress on multicountry donor coordination. Focused assistance of various sorts, including safety nets and interventions to improve adap-

tive capacity must complement longer-term agricultural programs. Interventions that address the challenges women farmers face must be prioritized. Adequate nutrition – particularly for pregnant women and children under 2 years of age – must be a central objective of programs for economic growth and agricultural development. Funding must be ramped up despite the fiscal challenges, and should flow through more integrated and effective program mechanisms, such as local and regional procurement where appropriate.

Sustaining the environment

There is a pressing need to integrate natural resource management policies into agricultural development programs that traditionally have tended to promote food production through intensive resource use. A shift to less resource-demanding regenerative systems, rather than high external input, can protect small producers and mitigate degradation associated with conventional agricultural development. Consistent use of program indicators on natural resource management can help institutionalize this shift. Improved training for USAID staff on integrating natural resource management and climate adaptation into all aspects of programming is also essential.

More effective aid

Consistent with Aid Effectiveness principles such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, country-led development is most effective when it mobilizes all sectors of society to participate in implementing national agendas. Successful country ownership of development also needs to include capacity building for local organizations and institutions. Rather than parallel capacity building and service delivery programs, integrating the two dimensions of development can help create lasting local capability to meet local needs. Country ownership principles should also contribute to improving coordination and aligning the programs of the U.S. government, private sector and civil society.

Better coordination

Although there has been remarkable progress by the U.S. government over the past three years in increasing global food security program coordination, the U.S. effort would benefit from further integration of programs with consistent leadership across all agencies. All U.S. efforts should be structured and supported by an overall strategic plan for increasing global food security that details the roles for all agencies involved. Furthermore, a coordinator or council should be tasked with overseeing development and implementation of a government-wide strategy to address global hunger and malnutrition, with corresponding budget authority over all the global food security programs.

Nutrition: An Investment in Growth

Problem

Malnutrition is one of the world's most serious yet least addressed development challenges. It contributes to almost 2.5 million young child deaths annually. Malnutrition is a serious drain on economic productivity, costing countries as much as 11 percent of GDP. Without urgent action to improve nutrition, progress on hunger and poverty alleviation will be harder and costlier to achieve.

Recommendations & Actions

Nutrition sets the foundation for human health and economic development, yet malnutrition is pervasive. Close to 200 million children throughout the world are chronically malnourished and suffer from serious, often *irreversible*, physical and cognitive damage as a result, according to *The Lancet*. The economic and societal implications of this are immense. Recent World Bank research has shown that the quality of a person's nutrition early in life, particularly during the 1,000 days between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday, can determine the future course of his or her health, educational attainment and lifetime earning potential. Thus, modest investments in improving early nutrition can have enormous macroeconomic impact, boosting a country's GDP through greater workforce productivity and health care cost savings.

- **Increase U.S. funding for global nutrition.** Based on World Bank cost estimates and recommendations, an annual investment of \$450 million would allow the U.S. to contribute roughly 10 percent of the total global funding needed to fully scale up nutrition interventions designed to promote good nutrition practices and increase the intake of nutrients in women and children during the 1,000 day window; fully funded, these interventions can reach as many as 356 million children under the age of 5.
- **Strengthen nutrition across U.S. development programs.** Nutrition is a foundational investment. Because it underpins the success and sustainability of food security and health programs, it is necessary to ensure strong coordination and continued integration by: (a) establishing a high-level focal point for global nutrition that has authority across relevant U.S. government agencies and accounts; and (b) developing an overarching nutrition strategy that defines interagency and interinitiative roles, coordination mechanisms, funding, impact targets and field guidance on nutrition, including monitoring and evaluation.
- **Ensure transparency in nutrition budgeting and tracking.** It is imperative that a more detailed nutrition budget across relevant initiatives and accounts be published. In addition to specific nutrition investments funded from the global health account, funding for agriculture development, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and overseas food aid should also be held accountable for improving nutrition.

Results

Reversing decades of underinvestment in nutrition would save lives and ensure healthier, more prosperous futures for families and societies.

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Background

Malnutrition is a death sentence for almost 2.5 million young children across the world each year. Virtually all of these deaths are preventable. For another 170 million children, malnutrition is a life sentence – with chronic malnourishment causing serious, often irreversible, damage to their bodies and brains, which significantly impairs their capacity to grow, learn, earn a living and become self-sufficient.¹

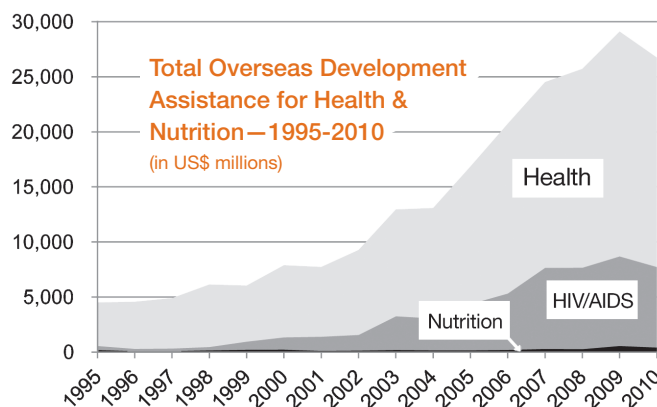
Malnutrition is also an enormous drain on economic growth. It can translate into a loss in annual GDP of as much as 11 percent and keeps families, communities and countries locked in an ongoing cycle of poor health and poverty.²

Why 1,000 days? The consequences of malnutrition in women and young children can last a lifetime. Poor nutrition during the critical 1,000 day window between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday can lead to impaired brain development, lower IQ, diminished capacity to learn, and lost earning potential later in life. It can also increase susceptibility to infections and illness and magnify the impact of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Ultimately, the damage done to young children by malnutrition has implications not only for the well-being of individuals, but also for the long-term economic growth of entire communities and societies. Research has shown that the right nutrition during childhood can increase individual earnings over a lifetime by up to 46 percent.³

What is needed?

- Access to sufficient, affordable and nutritious food for a balanced diet.
- Improved child feeding practices and maternal and child care.
- Access to health services and a healthy household environment, including clean water, better sanitation and improved hygiene.



Source: OECD/DAC

Investments in nutrition must be scaled

Despite the scale of the malnutrition problem and the long-term implications it has for economic development and health, nutrition has been a low funding priority on the global health, food security and development agendas. Overall, tiny sums are being spent on preventing under-nutrition, the underlying cause of 35 percent of all child deaths.⁴ Globally, nutrition funding represents about 0.3 percent of total official development assistance.⁵ Within the U.S. foreign assistance budget, nutrition represents only 1.2 percent of the Global Health Programs account in the U.S. government's 2012 fiscal year.

Economists agree: nutrition offers the best return on investment. The Copenhagen Consensus, an expert panel of economists that includes several Nobel laureates, concluded that *fighting malnutrition in young children should be the top priority investment for policymakers*. Every \$1 invested in nutrition generates as much as \$138 in better health and increased productivity.⁶

Scalable, cost-effective solutions exist. A package of proven, life-saving measures (micronutrient powders, therapeutic zinc, vitamin A supplements, deworming medication, and iron and folic acid for pregnant women) can be delivered for \$8 per year per child.⁷ Educating families on breastfeeding, essential feeding practices and proper hygiene – which is critical to preventing malnutrition and ensuring long-term sustainability – costs only \$15 per household per year.⁸

U.S. leadership is critical

The U.S. has been at the forefront of the global community in recognizing that nutrition is a critical investment in economic growth. In part because of U.S. leadership and support, 30 developing countries with some of the highest burdens of child malnutrition have committed to investing their own resources to prevent and combat malnutrition as part of the Scaling Up Nutrition movement. Continued U.S. leadership and investment are vital to scaling up nutrition interventions and leveraging funding from other donors to achieve significant and sustainable reductions in child malnutrition rates.

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Pact
Pan American Development Foundation
PATH
PCI

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Planet Aid
Population Action International
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Hunger Program
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RESULTS
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Stop Hunger Now
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U.S. Fund for UNICEF
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Vitamin Angels
WaterAid America
WellShare International
Wellstart International
Winrock International
World Concern
World Food Program USA
World Relief
World Renew
World Vision

Global Health

Global Health



Problem

U.S. investments in global health have saved millions of lives, and helped make the world healthier, safer and more secure. These advances will be lost unless global health funding is sustained. Health problems will only be more expensive and difficult to resolve in the future.

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Global Health

Recommendations & Actions

Through its support for global health programs, the United States has been successful in reducing child deaths, slowing the spread of AIDS and other global diseases, responding quickly to health emergencies in times of disasters, and preventing malnutrition. Americans support U.S. investments in global health because such investments reflect the American values of caring for the poor, sick and impoverished. These relatively modest investments also improve the health, safety and security of U.S. citizens. However, we cannot take the gains in global health for granted. Our efforts to provide sustainable global health programming are at a tipping point. Continued U.S. investment in global health can help the world create an AIDS-free generation, end preventable child deaths and focus health systems on the needs of women and girls. If the U.S. fails to live up to its commitments, we could see health progress in developing countries stagnate or even reverse.

The administration and Congress should ensure that the focus of global health programming puts people who need health services at the center of all activities by:

- Maintaining and increasing U.S. government support for overall global health programs and initiatives.
- Supporting the development and implementation of national health strategies, with real participation from civil society, that address high-priority health needs, including non-communicable diseases and neglected tropical diseases.
- Addressing the linkages between health and other sectors of development, such as water and sanitation, infrastructure planning, nutrition, agriculture, education, microfinance and the environment.
- Supporting efforts to reduce inequalities of health care coverage and access, which primarily affect women, children and other marginalized groups.
- Increasing support for programs that strengthen health workforce capacity and encourage healthcare workers to serve their local communities.
- Ensuring that humanitarian health programs during crises lay a foundation for effective health systems so nations can successfully transition from providing relief to development programs.
- Increasing investment in data collection, monitoring and evaluation, research and new tools and technologies.

Results

Maintaining investments in global health will save lives and ensure the progress made thus far is not lost. Building strong and sustainable health systems will ensure healthy and safer populations, as well as stronger local economies.

Background

Addressing global health issues has been a bipartisan priority for more than half a century. Relatively modest investments by the U.S. have not only saved lives, but also improved the economic growth and regional stability of developing nations, and bolstered public perceptions of the United States. Since national borders do not stop the spread of diseases, addressing global health issues is also important for the protection of America's health and security. U.S. global health programs have **treated more than 4 million people living with HIV** and prevented HIV transmission to millions more.¹ In addition, **50 million people were helped by malaria treatment** programs in 2009 alone² and more than **3 million lives are saved** each year through immunization programs.³ The U.S. is at the forefront of global health, with targeted projects including the Child Survival Call to Action (led by USAID to end preventable child deaths) and Saving Mothers, Giving Life (a public-private partnership to reduce maternal mortality). The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), are helping to create an AIDS-free generation and reducing the burden of malaria.

We are now at a critical juncture: budget pressures threaten gains we have made and jeopardize critical funding despite the growing consensus within Congress, across government agencies and throughout the broader global health community about what is working and what remains to be done to improve global health. Capitalizing on our success and meeting our goals will require increased and sustained commitment.

Implement national health systems

Like other development initiatives, global health efforts are most effective and sustainable when they align with national priorities and help countries build their own capacity. Civil society should be fully engaged in the development of national health plans to ensure the needs of all people are met.

Support comprehensive, integrated approaches

The U.S. government should support integrated health programming where it can make an impact, particularly at the community level, including for child health (undernutrition, pneumonia, diarrheal diseases and malaria) and across sectors (such as maternal, newborn and child health with water, sanitation and hygiene).

Increase health equity

The U.S. should work to reduce inequities in access to quality health care as it invests in lower-income countries.

This requires increased engagement with vulnerable and traditionally marginalized populations, including women and persons with disabilities. It includes a focus on gender to make sure all members of a family benefit from quality health care. U.S. investments must continue to support efforts to develop and adapt health tools that are culturally, financially and technologically suited for low-income settings.

Strengthen health systems

Strengthening health systems means training a capable health workforce, along with supporting local jobs and opportunities. Complementary strategies include engaging diaspora communities abroad and investing in the global health research and development capacities of developing countries with endemic diseases. Strengthening health systems also includes an increased focus on measuring program quality and success, and developing and deploying new diagnostic tools. The U.S. government should partner with the countries and communities it is trying to reach, including national and district-level governments, civil society organizations and the business community.

Strong collaboration and coordination should occur to develop health systems in fragile states as they move from a humanitarian crisis to the development of sustainable health systems to ensure continuity, strengthen partnerships and build the capacity of national and local governments to deliver quality health services. Fragile states often lack the ability to partner with development agencies to deliver care and provide basic security to access health services, which is crucial to developing sustainable, lasting health systems.

Increase investments

It is incumbent upon global health providers to ensure that their efforts are recorded, monitored and evaluated so efficiency improvements can continue to be made throughout the sector. Global health providers should be commended for their commitment to "best practices" and implementing new technologies and tools that improve global health investments around the world. Maintaining these investments will result in sustainable health systems, healthier populations and stronger economies.

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Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Problem

Despite the importance of water, sanitation and hygiene in virtually all aspects of development, 783 million people still lack access to safe drinking water and 2.5 billion lack adequate sanitation.¹ Nearly 5,000 children die each day from preventable water and sanitation-related diseases.² And lack of adequate water and sanitation services costs sub-Saharan Africa around \$23.5 billion annually, or 5 percent of GDP.³

Recommendations & Actions

The administration and Congress should prioritize and integrate sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in their overall approach to international development. In particular, foreign policy objectives must be realigned to address the sanitation and hygiene crisis. This includes: creating a multiyear WASH strategy that targets programs based on need; fully implementing WASH elements in the administration's development initiatives, in particular the Global Health Initiative and the Child Survival Call to Action; and improving the ability of USAID and the State Department to implement WASH programs at the headquarter and mission levels.

- The administration should ensure that its yet to be completed comprehensive, multi-year WASH strategy is integrated within a wider water strategy that includes measurable water resource management and water productivity indicators, benchmarks, timetables and an identification of the resources needed to meet set goals. The strategy is six years overdue, pursuant to the Water for the Poor Act, and should be released immediately.
- Congress and White House officials should work together to ensure that robust funding is provided for WASH initiatives within the various Global Health and Development Assistance accounts, as well as ensure that the objectives of the Water for the Poor Act are implemented as intended by Congress.
- Communities of greatest need should be targeted for WASH programming; however, in fiscal year 2010, only 33 percent of U.S. government WASH programs was targeted at low-income countries.⁴
- USAID should continue training personnel in WASH to develop long-term expertise.
- Congress should codify existing senior WASH coordinator positions at the State Department and USAID to improve interagency coordination, ensure predictable expertise in WASH in these agencies, and demonstrate a U.S. priority for WASH.
- The administration should continue its support of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership to address gaps in policy, planning, financing and technical assistance.
- USAID should have a transparent, web-based monitoring dashboard for WASH work.
- Congress should urgently pass the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act, in order to rectify many of the above concerns without significant funding increases.

Results

A strong water strategy integrated across all development programs will give the U.S. government the tools it needs to lead the developed world in improving access to safe, affordable and sustainable water and sanitation. Improved coordination among donors will help recipient governments achieve universal WASH access and ultimately healthier, more stable societies with stronger economies.

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Background

Lack of clean water and sanitation is perhaps the world's largest single cause of disease. More than 25 diseases are caused by inadequate water and sanitation services, creating nearly 10 percent of the global public health burden, killing more than 2 million people each year (including more children than AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined)⁵ and causing up to half of the world's malnutrition.⁶ Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are crucial building blocks for improving quality of life and health, advancing education, reducing poverty and malnutrition, increasing child and maternal survival, driving economic growth and contributing to gender equality and dignity.

The facts:

- For every dollar invested in water and sanitation, an estimated \$4 is returned.⁷
- Annually, **\$260 billion in economic losses are associated with inadequate water and sanitation services.**⁸
- Each year, **children lose 443 million school days** due to water-related illness.⁹
- Collectively, women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa spend an estimated **200 million hours per day and 40 billion hours per year collecting and transporting water.**¹⁰ Access to clean water and sanitation would allow women to earn a living and girls to attend school.
- WASH programming has been found to **reduce the number of child deaths related to diarrheal diseases by about 65 percent.**¹¹
- Access to improved sanitation and clean water is essential to the overall health of people living with HIV/AIDS, whose compromised immune systems are more prone to diseases such as diarrhea and who need adequate nutrition in order to respond to antiretroviral therapy.¹²
- **Water scarcity** affects more than 500 million people in more than 30 countries and can lead to instability and violence,¹³ a challenge recently highlighted in a 2012 Intelligence Community Assessment.

The good news is that the work of donor nations has paid off. Some 87 percent of the world's population has access to safe, affordable and sustainable drinking water and 61 percent has access to improved sanitation.¹⁴ These numbers show that effective and appropriate solutions to global WASH issues are available. Effective solutions address water supply issues (e.g., boreholes, rainwater harvesting), sanitation provision (e.g., pit latrines) and hygiene training (hand washing).

The biggest challenges to achieving universal access to WASH are a lack of global awareness of the issue and a lack of political will, particularly from heads of state

and relevant ministers, to channel the necessary financial, human and technical resources. These gaps create opportunities for the United States to take leadership and provide support that leverages funds from developing nations and the private sector. Other significant challenges include developing culturally-appropriate strategies to encourage behavior changes, such as good hygiene and food safety, as well as improved management systems and governance to ensure WASH programming addresses the issues facing rural, urban and slum areas. By 2050, 70 percent of the world's population will be living in urban areas,¹⁵ and sustainable WASH services must keep up with this growing demand. Donors must also support WASH programming that considers long-term sustainability, including protecting freshwater ecosystems that provide the underpinning for WASH services. *Although developing countries should fund the majority of their water and sanitation improvement projects, the developed world and Congress can and should offer financial, human and technical assistance to support and speed up this ongoing process.*

Congress showed strong leadership on WASH issues when it enacted the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act in 2005. This act passed with overwhelming bipartisan support and made the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation in countries of greatest need a priority of U.S. foreign policy. Congress continued its support of WASH issues in the 112th Congress by introducing updated water legislation, the Water for the World Act.

As the international community builds upon its success in meeting the Millennium Development Goal on water, the sanitation goal remains unmet by a gap of 580 million people.¹⁶ Both developing and developed countries must prioritize WASH services. Safe drinking water and sanitation are not a luxury; progress on other development priorities cannot be sustained without them.

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World Food Program USA
World Vision
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Basic Education



Achieving Quality Global Basic Education

Problem

Across the globe, approximately 61 million children and 71 million adolescents are out of school.¹ Roughly half of these out-of-school children live in areas affected by conflict and or fragility, and these numbers continue to grow.² Moreover, many millions of children receive an education of poor quality, lacking basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Recommendations & Actions

The U.S. should make quality basic education a core development objective. The U.S. should also ensure adequate resources for effective programs, strengthen USAID capacity and implementation of its education strategy, pass the Education for All Act, and exert stronger global leadership to equitable access to quality basic education for all children. By so doing, the U.S. can help alleviate poverty, strengthen societies, foster stability and security, and spur economic growth at home and abroad.

- **Make education a core development objective.** The U.S. should elevate education to become a core development objective, and ensure basic education programs are reflected in USAID's country development cooperation strategies in a manner that is responsive to host country needs and objectives.
- **Ensure adequate resources for effective, sustainable basic education programs.** The U.S. should maintain ample resources for basic education programs, and give greater attention to best and promising practices, evidence-based program design, and monitoring and evaluation. It should focus on effective approaches to improve learning outcomes and foster sustainability, including capacity building.
- **Strengthen USAID capacity and implement its Education Strategy.** USAID must significantly increase the number of qualified procurement specialists, as well as education specialists for monitoring and evaluation; empower USAID mission directors to respond to country-based objectives with effective interventions; enhance interagency coordination and ensure the USAID Education Strategy is well implemented.
- **Pass the Education for All Act.** Passing this important bipartisan legislation would ensure a continuum of education services for children in conflict and other emergencies; promote strategies for reaching the most disadvantaged children; support activities to increase the quality of education programs; and authorize the president to develop a comprehensive strategy to meet the goal of education for all.
- **Exert stronger global leadership to expand equitable access to quality basic education for all children.** The U.S. should lead a campaign to achieve the internationally agreed upon Education for All goals and realize quality basic education for all children in the coming decades, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups. This effort should link humanitarian and development assistance, empower women and girls, and foster collaboration and cooperation amongst all stakeholders.

Results

Prioritization and investment in basic education will aid in the alleviation of global poverty, strengthen societies, foster stability and security, spur economic growth and enhance U.S. global leadership and influence. Education can equip millions with the tools needed to better their own lives and forge a path to self-sufficiency.

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Background

Over the past dozen years, there has been real progress toward the goal of education for all. Since 1999, the number of out-of-school children worldwide has dropped by 47 million, and primary enrollment is nearly 90 percent in the developing world.³ In addition, great strides have been made in improving gender equality, with girls' enrollment rising to over 90 percent in 52 countries.⁴

However, 61 million children of primary school age remain out of school,⁵ with roughly half of them living in conflict-affected poor countries.⁶ An additional estimated 71 million adolescents are also out of school.⁷ Each year, millions of students who have attended some school drop out before the fifth grade, at least in part because of the poor quality of their education. We must work to not only ensure children can enter school, but also that they are equipped to obtain critically needed skills in reading, writing and numeracy.

Education drives economic growth

- Quality education equips people with the knowledge, skills and self-reliance they need to increase their income and expand their economic opportunities. No country has achieved rapid economic growth without investing in education and reaching an adult literacy rate of at least 40 percent.⁸ Every extra year of schooling increases an individual's earnings by up to 10 percent.⁹
- As we continue to rebuild our economy, education programs will help to expand the U.S. consumer base in the developing world. Today, the fastest-growing markets for America's goods are in developing countries, representing roughly half of U.S. exports¹⁰ and one out of every five American jobs.¹¹ It is therefore essential to educate the world's poor and build the stable trading partners that growing U.S. export markets require.

Education enhances security and stability

Education is a critical component of building long-term global security and stability. A population that is able to read, write and think critically is far more able to hold its leaders accountable. By 2050, there will be 1.2 billion youth around the world. Nine out of 10 of those young people will be living in developing countries.¹² In addition, population growth is exploding in those countries where we also see the highest illiteracy rates. Through education programs, we can give populations the tools needed to make informed decisions, hold elected leaders responsible and provide a peaceful means of political participation. In fact, each additional year of formal schooling for males reduces their risk of becoming involved in conflict by 20 percent.¹³

Education is fundamental to cost-effective, sustainable development

Education is central to sustainable development and to the success of the administration's priorities for empowering women and girls, global health and food security.

- **Educating women and girls.** Educating girls and women creates a ripple effect throughout society, boosting economic productivity and reducing poverty, enhancing social status, increasing gender equality, delaying sexual activity, curbing child marriage, increasing per capita income and enhancing the chance that each successive generation of girls will receive an education.
- **Global health.** Young people who have completed primary education are roughly half as likely to contract HIV and AIDS as those with little or no education. Half of the reduction of child mortality over the past 40 years was due to better education of women.¹⁴ In addition, a study of 63 countries demonstrated that educating women was by far the most important factor in reducing malnutrition.¹⁵
- **Food security.** A farmer with four years of elementary education is, on average, 9 percent more productive than a farmer with no education, and is far more likely to understand new farming techniques and the treatment of crop diseases.¹⁶
- **Cost effective.** For every \$10 million, we can expand access to a quality education for an estimated 100,000 children annually.¹⁷ An investment of \$10 million also allows an estimated 4,700 more teachers to be mobilized annually to educate children in the world's poorest countries.

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Environment and Development



Climate, Environment and Development

Problem

The degradation of ecosystems undermines gains in poverty reduction, food and water security, and health. Development programs are weakened by flaws in resource management and measures of success that do not consider environmental impacts, including climate change. Durable gains in human well-being are not possible unless these constraints are addressed. Many countries currently lack the capacity to assess and mitigate these challenges.

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Recommendations & Actions

International development programs should balance environmental protection with improving the well-being of disadvantaged populations. Development policies should ensure that healthy ecosystems, the basis for long-term prosperity, are not sacrificed for short-term economic gains. By integrating development with responsible management of the ecosystems that support local economies, programs can become more cost-effective, efficient and sustainable. Assistance programs should support developing countries in gaining capacity to meet economic and environmental objectives without costly trade-offs.

The following actions would help shape programs that produce better outcomes in international development and the environment:

- **Support programs that integrate development, resource management and climate adaptation.** Encourage donors, governments and program implementers to protect investments in international development by reducing the risks resulting from environmental degradation. Incorporate climate adaptation and sound resource management as key development objectives to build and support resilient societies.
- **Support better resource management decisions by increasing accountability, transparency and participation.** Make information about development options and decisions more easily available to local stakeholders. Ensure citizens and community organizations participate more broadly in resource management decisions. Create systems of accountability to track the outcomes of those decisions and to hold program managers responsible for the impacts of development.
- **Revise the measures of success in development programs to better reflect the interdependence of a stable climate, healthy ecosystems and economic development.** Support results reporting systems that capture economic returns as well as success at regenerating the natural resources that underpin economic systems.
- **Strengthen national risk management systems to help countries assess the impact of development on the status of important natural resources.** Provide policy guidance about development that requires assessing the short- and long-term costs to natural resources. Require development approaches that address longer-term as well as more immediate economic needs.

Results

Integrated approaches to climate, environment and development will more cost-effectively deliver poverty-reduction and natural resource management benefits that help build and support resilient societies. Maintaining ecosystem services such as clean water and fertile soils will reduce the burden of disease and malnutrition. Greater attention to environmental management will help ensure that gains in development fundamentals can be sustained over the long term.

Background¹

Functioning ecosystems are the foundation of human well-being and fundamental to lasting development. But too often, development has come at the expense of ecosystems that provide vital services to humanity. Destruction of ecosystems undermines gains in poverty reduction, food and water security, and health. The causes of degradation are many, including weak governance, poor natural resource management, corruption and inequality. Although environmental protection and development are often thought of as competing priorities, these challenges are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Misdirected development degrades ecosystems, while degraded ecosystems constrain development. Durable gains in human well-being are not possible unless these constraints are addressed. Protecting the natural world cannot wait until prosperity is achieved; it is, in fact, a precondition for sustained economic growth.

An urgent and enormous problem

Worldwide, ecosystems are collapsing under the weight of climate change and unsustainable systems of production and consumption. One-fifth of the world's farmland has been degraded by overgrazing and other destructive practices, making it unsuitable for future farming. Evidence suggests that many damaged ecosystems could soon reach a "tipping point" beyond which they cannot be regenerated. In the last two decades several violent conflicts have been fueled in important part by natural resource degradation. Because many communities in developing countries directly depend on natural resources for subsistence and livelihoods, ecosystem degradation places additional pressure on vulnerable populations.

Benefits of an integrated approach to conservation and development

A growing body of evidence shows that an integrated approach to ecosystem management and development can advance human well-being by safeguarding livelihoods and resources. An integrated approach to resource management and development will accomplish a variety of critical goals. It will save money because preserving critical resources is almost invariably less expensive than restoring them. It will protect investments in development by sustaining gains in poverty reduction, food security and resource-based livelihoods. Communities with intact ecosystems tend to sustain less damage from natural disasters and to enjoy more resilient food security, water and health systems.

Barriers to integration

Nonintegrated programs and institutions cannot ensure balanced priorities and effective protections for critical

natural systems. Despite the benefits to an integrated approach to climate, environment and development, policy and practice do not yet fully reflect these linkages. Three primary barriers constrain integration, each of which can be overcome. These include a tradition in which development actors work in their areas of expertise, while environmental concerns are largely addressed by others as separate priorities, in different locations. Fundamental structural flaws shape resource management decisions: critical decisions are made with too little accountability, transparency and participation by those affected. Measures of success too often fail to capture the complex, multidimensional nature of environment and development challenges. For example, governments and development agencies measure increases in food production but not the health of ecosystems that underpin those gains, or fail to anticipate whether those gains are sustainable over the long term.

Strategies for changing the status quo

Integrated approaches to climate, environment and development do not require new institutions or authorities. Instead, they require flexibility in existing approaches and a readiness to acknowledge disappointing results from traditional approaches. Most fundamentally, new strategies will require a recognition that population dynamics impact ecosystems, human well-being depends on the health of natural systems, and that durable gains are not possible unless those human and environmental systems are safeguarded. Strategies to protect ecosystems must reflect their myriad interconnections with human prosperity. The incentives and accountability structures for resource management and development must begin to elevate natural resource management as an essential outcome.

Integrated environment and development approaches will require recognition among policymakers of the contribution ecosystem services make to human communities. Thoughtful and equitable trade-offs will be needed to protect ecosystem services while providing development benefits. Longer program time frames will be needed that are appropriate to integrated results across sectors.

Critically important will be building capacities and fostering policies to facilitate new partnerships. Governments, civil society, community groups and private businesses must be provided incentives to collaborate in integrated climate, environment and development efforts.

¹ Material for this brief has been drawn from "The Nature of Development," InterAction, 2011. Available online at <http://www.interaction.org/document/nature-development-full-report>.



InterAction Climate, Environment & Development Working Group

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American Friends Service Committee

American Red Cross International Services

Baptist World Alliance

Bread for the World

Bread for the World Institute

CARE

Catholic Relief Services

ChildFund International

Church World Service

Counterpart International

Episcopal Relief & Development

Ethiopian Community Development Council

Friends of ACTED

Habitat for Humanity International

Institute for Sustainable Communities

International Medical Corps

International Relief & Development

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Lutheran World Relief

Management Sciences for Health (MSH)

Mercy Corps

ONE Campaign

Oxfam America

Pact

PCI

Plan International USA

Population Action International

Refugees International

Relief International

Save the Children

Solar Cookers International

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

United Methodist Committee on Relief

Winrock International

Women for Women International

World Concern

World Food Program USA

World Renew

World Society for the Protection of Animals

World Wildlife Fund

World Vision

Gender

Gender



Women: Key to Global Progress

Problem

Gender inequality, discrimination and violence against women and girls prevent the achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals in economic growth, health, food security and nutrition, democracy, peace and security. The State Department, USAID, and Millennium Challenge Corporation now have policies mandating the integration of gender equality, female empowerment and prevention of gender-based violence across all sectors. These policies must be fully implemented to ensure development effectiveness.

Recommendations & Actions

- **Integrate gender throughout USAID Forward.** Incorporate gender throughout the reform agenda, especially in implementation and procurement reform with inclusion of local women's organizations as partners for implementation.
- **Empower women farmers.** The Feed the Future and New Alliance strategies must prioritize incomes and nutrition of women, the small-scale farmers who feed most of the world's poorest people. Improving nutrition is key in the 1,000 day window from a woman's pregnancy to her child's second birthday.
- **Fully implement USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy and the Department of State's Gender Policy Guidance.** Develop policy guidance; train new staff and maintain senior staff with gender expertise; ensure accountability by clarifying roles and responsibilities of offices, bureaus and implementing partners; dedicate resources for gender offices and technical assistance to missions and embassies; and monitor progress including collecting benchmark data.
- **Fully implement the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Globally.** Use a cross-sectoral, whole-of-government approach. GBV is a scourge affecting all populations in development and humanitarian settings.
- **Engage crisis-affected women to build peace and strengthen recovery.** Fully implement the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, emphasizing women's participation in peace processes and decision making institutions. Ensure U.S.-supported humanitarian programs provide women and girls safe and equal access to assistance.
- **Place women at the center of health systems and U.S. global health policy.** Fully implement the Global Health Initiative gender equality principle at the country level. Ensure integration of services and remove barriers to healthcare, particularly barriers to reproductive health services.
- **U.S. global leadership.** Continue to lead the G8, G20 and donor community in advances for women and girls in health, nutrition and food security. Refocus existing budgets, support UN Women and UNFPA (the UN Population Fund), and promote a focus on women and girls in the post-2015 development goals.

Results

Empowering women yields dividends for economic growth, health, food security and nutrition, democracy, peace and security. Investing in women's empowerment and gender equality will accelerate and significantly improve the impact of U.S. development assistance overall. More than 40 years of evidence shows that empowered women are agents of the common good.

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Background

Why does gender matter?

Women comprise the majority of the world's poor and often lack access to jobs, education, health care, and basic freedoms such as voting and owning land. Rates of violence against women are as high as 70 percent in some countries¹ and one woman dies every 90 seconds from preventable complications in pregnancy and childbirth.² Helping women and girls around the world to escape poverty and improve their health and well-being is a moral imperative in its own right. It is also one of the most effective methods of fostering safe, stable, healthy and equitable societies. Research shows that when women have increased incomes and opportunities, their children lead safer, healthier and more prosperous lives. Investments in women are key to reducing poverty over generations. Women and girls must be at the center of U.S. international assistance.

Equality, prosperity, security: How do we get there?

Gender inequality imposes costs on productivity, efficiency, and economic progress.³ For example, the World Bank found that inequality between men and women in education and employment in sub-Saharan Africa suppressed annual per-capita growth between 1960 and 1992 by 0.8 percentage points per year. A boost of 0.8 percentage points per year would have doubled growth over the period in that region.⁴ Gender *equality*, however, is a tide that raises all ships. As such, gender equality is recognized as a central goal of U.S. foreign assistance.

Gender is often equated with women, but in fact it means that all people – women and men, girls and boys – have equal opportunities to achieve their potential and maximize their contributions to their families, economies and societies. Achieving gender equality requires more than gender or women's projects here and there. It requires that attention to gender be integrated across all U.S. foreign assistance efforts through gender analysis.

Gender analysis looks at the different roles, rights, responsibilities and resources of women and men and how they impact a proposed strategy, project or policy. It helps to more accurately understand development and humanitarian challenges and develop appropriate solutions. It can uncover historic and ongoing discrimination and inequities and differences in gender norms that vary between communities and countries. For example, gender analysis reveals that while women comprise 43 percent of the agricultural labor force in developing countries, they have less access than men to land, education, extension and financial services. Closing that gender gap could increase yields by 20-30 percent and reduce the number

of hungry people in the world by 100-150 million.⁵ As a proven best practice of international development, gender analysis can ensure the roles of women, men, girls and boys are understood and used to inform policies and programs that result in more effective development interventions overall and higher returns on U.S. investments.

Gender equality in U.S. foreign assistance

Today, nearly all international donors have requirements for implementing and monitoring gender-related outcomes. Over the course of many decades, under both Republican and Democratic leadership, the United States has responded to these critical development and humanitarian challenges through its foreign policy and foreign assistance. In 1973, congressional adoption of the Percy Amendment mandated that gender equality be addressed in U.S. development assistance. Since then, the United States has funded a wide range of programs aimed at women and girls, including basic education, anti-trafficking and microfinance. More recently, a number of new policies mandate the systematic integration of gender equality and gender analysis across U.S. assistance, including: the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security; the State Department's Policy Guidance on Promoting Gender Equality to Achieve Our National Security and Foreign Policy Objectives; USAID's Policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment; and the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally.

These policies, in addition to gender integration across initiatives like Feed the Future, Food for Peace and the Global Health Initiative, provide a foundation for achieving America's foreign policy goals effectively, efficiently and equitably. The policies and programs have strong bipartisan public support. Now is the time to ensure their full implementation for enhanced development effectiveness.

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Problem

Gender-based violence is pervasive in humanitarian crises. Women and girls in particular face a daily threat of violence. It damages families and destroys the fabric of communities. While some progress has been made, there are still unacceptable gaps in services for survivors, widespread impunity for perpetrators, and insufficient attention to preventive action.

Gender-Based Violence

Recommendations & Actions

Both the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally and the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, recognize gender-based violence (GBV) as a priority concern for U.S. diplomacy and foreign assistance programs. The administration and the Congress should provide strong support for the actions plans that have been developed to implement these strategies. Given the prevalence of sexual violence and exploitation in crises, it is vital to address GBV from the onset of a crisis, and to continue to prioritize GBV prevention and response in relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts. In its policy, practice and funding, the U.S. should:

- Use the full range of U.S. diplomatic tools in bilateral and multilateral meetings to prioritize action to help prevent GBV, support survivors and hold perpetrators accountable.
- Lead efforts to ensure that GBV prevention and response programming is included at the onset of emergency response. Increase investments in GBV programming to close gaps in available services for survivors and to strengthen and expand GBV prevention. Sustain U.S. engagement on the issue as medium and longer-term response and recovery plans are developed.
- Strengthen the GBV prevention and response capacity of U.S. government agencies responsible for implementing the U.S. Strategy and National Action Plan.
- Develop a coordinated method to monitor and ensure that U.S.-funded humanitarian programs are consistent with established international standards on preventing and responding to GBV in crises. This requires integrating GBV considerations across sectors of U.S. government response to crises.
- Design programs to elevate women and girls as leaders and agents of change in crises. Develop strategies to mobilize men and boys as partners in challenging harmful norms that perpetuate GBV in crisis situations
- Promote opportunities to share best practices involving new technologies as a tool for protection against GBV.

Results

The widespread nature of gender-based violence in crises and its pernicious impact on every level of society is now much better recognized. Strong policies to address the problem have been developed by the U.S. government and others. The challenge is to harness the will and the funding to move from policy to action. Continued U.S. leadership and a deepened commitment to GBV prevention and response will enable many more survivors to rebuild their lives; help stop the violence from occurring in the first place; contribute to stronger communities; and lay the foundation for a more stable recovery for all citizens.

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Background

An estimated one in three women worldwide has been beaten, forced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime.¹ The risks of gender-based violence are greatly exacerbated in war and other humanitarian crises. The horrific levels of sexual violence the world witnessed in Bosnia, Rwanda and today in the Democratic Republic of the Congo immediately come to mind. There are many more conflict-affected areas where gender-based violence is rampant but never makes the headlines.

Risks

During war and conflict, sexual violence is used to terrorize and destroy communities. Women and girls are at greatest risk, but men and boys are sometimes victimized too. People with disabilities are up to three times as likely to experience physical or sexual abuse and rape.² In addition to the intentional use of rape as a weapon of war, the insecurity, lawlessness and breakdown of traditional social structures during conflict also leads to high rates of domestic violence and widespread sexual exploitation (the demand for sex in exchange for food and other scarce necessities). Even in stable environments, the prevalence of GBV can curtail the impact of donor investments in long-term development goals – from economic growth to health and education.

Long-term effects

Gender-based violence is a human rights violation and key obstacle to gender equality, with devastating impacts on survivors, their families and communities. In addition to the direct physical and emotional consequences, gender-based violence is the cause of a broad range of health problems for survivors, and it creates barriers to education and economic opportunities for those at risk. Women who have experienced this violence are at increased risk of maternal death and are up to three times more likely to be living with HIV.³ Globally, approximately 60 million girls are sexually assaulted at school or on their way to school every year.⁴ In humanitarian crises, violence – and the threat of violence – significantly impede women's and girls' access to lifesaving assistance and other services that increase the resilience of crisis-affected communities. Gender-based violence is not only a critical protection concern for individuals, but also an impediment to the stability and well-being of communities more broadly.

The U.S. response

Over the last decade, the United States has helped lead efforts in the United Nations and other multilateral organizations to formally recognize sexual violence in conflict as a threat to peace, security and sustainable development,

and to elevate ending gender-based violence as a foreign policy priority. The U.S. has developed its own National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and launched a U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally. These complement other key gender initiatives such as USAID's updated Policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment and the State Department's Policy Guidance on Promoting Gender Equality.

The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and the Gender-Based Violence Strategy recognize the imperative to provide better care for survivors from the onset of a crisis and to scale up prevention efforts. The plans reflect the comprehensive approach to prevention that is essential for success. This includes diplomatic efforts with governments and armed groups, and the training of security forces, police, judicial officials and community leaders. It includes humanitarian relief and recovery programs that provide women and girls with specialized health and psychosocial services, safe and equal access to shelter, water, food and cooking fuel, and economic and educational opportunities. It also includes support for the meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making processes at all levels.

The future

With effective implementation of the U.S. National Action Plan and the Global Strategy on Gender-Based Violence, the U.S. has an opportunity to help stop a global scourge that threatens millions of lives and limits the development of more peaceful and prosperous societies. Prompt action will reaffirm the seriousness of the U.S. commitment and further cement U.S. leadership on a most important human rights and security issue.

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American Jewish World Service
American Refugee Committee
Bread for the World
CARE
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Oxfam America
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Winrock International
Women for Women International
Women Thrive Worldwide
World Wildlife Fund

InterAction Humanitarian Policy and Practice Committee

Action Against Hunger USA
Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA)
African Medical & Research Foundation
Africare
Aga Khan Foundation USA

Air Serv International
Alliance to End Hunger
American Friends Service Committee
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
American Jewish World Service
American Near East Refugee Aid
American Red Cross International Services
American Refugee Committee
AmeriCares
America's Development Foundation (ADF)
Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team
Baptist World Alliance
Brother's Brother Foundation
CARE
Catholic Relief Services
Center for Civilians in Conflict
ChildFund International
Church World Service
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Counterpart International
Direct Relief International
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Heart to Heart International
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
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International Medical Corps
International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)
International Relief & Development
International Relief Teams
International Rescue Committee (IRC)
Islamic Relief USA
Jesuit Refugee Services USA
Latter-day Saint Charities
Lutheran World Relief
MAP International
Mercy Corps
Mercy USA for Aid and Development
National Peace Corps Association
Operation USA
Oxfam America
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Hunger Program
Refugees International
Relief International
Salvation Army World Service Office
Save the Children
Trickle Up Program
U.S. Association for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
U.S. Fund for UNICEF
United Methodist Committee on Relief
World Concern
World Relief
World Renew
World Vision

Youth

Youth



Expanding Opportunities for Youth

Problem

Today, 100 million youth cannot find work and many are marginalized due to social and economic disparity. Global youth joblessness will rise through 2014, while millions will lack opportunities to thrive in school, or shape their communities or their own futures. Failure to capitalize on the enormous potential of young people will result in economic stagnation, social disparities and greater global instability.

Recommendations & Actions

Congress and the administration should make youth development a strategic priority for its assistance programs. They should build on the new youth policies at USAID and the State Department by increasing resources that target underserved youth worldwide, and publicly report annually on the total amount spent on policies and programs benefitting youth across sectors and the impact of the resources invested.

- **Provide additional resources to implement the youth policies developed by the State Department and USAID, especially in areas with high concentrations of young people and in conflict or postconflict countries.** To implement reporting measures for these investments, progress and impact for direct and indirect youth programming, USAID should require age disaggregation when analyzing and reporting results. To measure progress against a baseline, a study should be commissioned to assess the current state of youth programming at the State Department and USAID.
- **Establish opportunities for more representative and diverse young people to participate in decision making for U.S. government programs.** For example, further empower Embassy Youth Councils worldwide to serve as open and friendly spaces to engage a broadly representative set of young people in dialogue, and encourage their input on critical issues and programs that affect their lives. Integrate strategies for youth input as part of program planning at USAID and the State Department. Ensure clear pathways for American youth to be more involved in foreign policy debates and discussions.
- **Empower and fund leadership on youth issues within the State Department and USAID, and build the capacity of their staff to implement effective youth programming.** Youth must be targeted deliberately and comprehensively, which requires a specialized technical approach. This can be done by elevating leadership within USAID through the appointment of a Youth Coordinator who reports to the USAID administrator and by designating youth advocates within all USAID bureaus and missions to guide the implementation of the Youth in Development Policy.

Results

Greater investment in young people can increase the number of youth who stay in school, find a job and are engaged, effective citizens. Strong internal leadership at the State Department and USAID, increased fiscal support for youth programs, and a renewed commitment to accountability for results will ensure progress is measured and the urgent global needs of young men and women are met.

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Background

Over half the world's population is under the age of 30, and in developing countries, where assistance is most needed, that percentage is even higher, at nearly 60 percent.¹ Providing young people with the skills and opportunities they need to be successful learners, workers, citizens and leaders, and actively engaging them in policy and program development as well as local governance, will integrate them meaningfully into the political, economic, social and civic life of their communities and countries.

Demographics demand a holistic approach to youth in U.S. foreign policy.

Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are expected to see the largest increases in youth population. Currently, South Asia hosts 27 percent of the world's youth (about 300 million youth ages 15-24). Between 2010 and 2020, that region's youth population will grow by 15 million. From 2010 to 2015, the number of youth in sub-Saharan Africa will grow by more than 19 million; and by 2050, Africa's youth population will have increased by 182 million.²

UN-HABITAT estimates that by 2030, 60 percent of the world's population will live in cities and as many as 60 percent of urban residents will be under the age of 18.³

Tapping the potential of the world's youth

Positive youth development means recognizing young people as assets and focusing our collective resources to tap into their energy and talents so they can realize their full potential and play meaningful, positive roles in their communities. Without these opportunities however, young people can also become disengaged and potentially disruptive forces in society.

- Young people are affected by conflict and violence:
- Young people aged 10 to 24 make up over 30 percent of the world's 42 million people displaced by armed conflict.⁴
- Enrollment rates in secondary school are nearly one-third lower in conflict-affected countries compared with other developing countries, and far lower still for girls.⁵
- The youth literacy rate for conflict-affected countries is 79 percent, compared with 93 percent for other developing countries.⁶

Effective youth programming involves more than including youth as beneficiaries in traditional development interventions. Programs must engage young people as valuable contributors who, with the training, skills and opportunity, have the capacity to be creative entrepre-

neurs, community leaders, and act on their own and others' behalf.

More than a demographic

Young people must be targeted deliberately and comprehensively, which requires a specialized technical approach. Just as "gender-blind" activities may not serve to increase gender equality, programs that do not differentiate their approach by factoring in the age of beneficiaries may not ultimately be successful. Youth policies and programs must reflect the diverse needs of young people and the integral role they play in the social and economic well-being of their communities, now and in the future. Accounting for factors such as age, gender, disability, conflict and culture are essential for effective and sustainable programming, and must be reflected in youth-focused initiatives and policies worldwide. Effective youth development programs empower young people to participate in all aspects of program design and delivery, and enable them to serve as change agents.

Youth are a strategic priority

The State Department and USAID have already recognized the need to address young people through the development of their respective youth policies and creation of the Office of Global Youth Issues at the State Department. These are important first steps, but both agencies need increased and sustained funding for this important work. Indeed, critical support for youth in all aspects of U.S. foreign assistance is both timely and urgently needed, particularly given the potential demographic dividend of today's global youth population, the momentous youth-led events in the Middle East and around the world this past year, and the persistent challenges of poverty, unemployment, health, and local and regional conflicts that impact the lives and prospects of today's youth. With over half the world's population under the age of 30, all foreign assistance programs are related to improving the lives of youth. Our collective future relies on their success.

1 UNICEF, Adolescents and Youth: The Big Picture. http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/index_bigpicture.html.

2 ILO Global Employment Trends 2012. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_171571.pdf.

3 UN Habitat. World Urban Forum 6: World Urban Youth Assembly. "The Role of Youth in the Urban Future." September 2, 2012. <http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/WUF6-Assembly-WorldUrbanYouth.pdf>.

4 Women's Refugee Commission. Factsheet: Untapped Potential: Displaced Youth. http://womensrefugeecommission.org/docs/up_dy.pdf.

5 EFA Global Monitoring Report on Conflict 2011. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/reports/2011-conflict/>.

6 *Ibid.*



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World Learning

Disability



Advancing Disability-Inclusive Development

Problem

There are over 1 billion men, women and children with a disability worldwide, making people with disabilities the world's largest minority. However, their particular rights, needs and participation are largely absent in U.S. foreign assistance programs.

Recommendations & Actions

Fifteen percent of the world's population has a disability.¹ Inclusion and mobilization of this population must be a strategic priority within all foreign assistance programs, similar to the integration of gender equality and female empowerment across foreign assistance programs. People with disabilities are best qualified to advocate on issues affecting their lives; so their experiences and insights must be an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies, programs and projects worldwide. A rights-based approach facilitates the equitable participation of all people with disabilities as both beneficiaries and drivers of the development process. Specific steps include the following:

- Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, an international treaty that recognizes the rights of people with disabilities;
- Influence multilateral organizations (such as UNICEF, the UN Development Programme and the World Bank), private foundations and other donors to develop disability inclusive programs and policies; and
- Ensure full inclusion of people with disabilities in foreign assistance programs by:
 - » **Establishing and strengthening internal policies on inclusion.** Include disability in all scopes of work, selection criteria and evaluation mechanisms for USAID and State Department solicitations for funding. Disaggregate key goals and indicators in a way that effectively captures participation by people with disabilities. Increase inclusive development training for USAID and State Department staff.
 - » **Increasing funding for disability-specific programs and programs that support inclusion of people with disabilities.** There should be an increase in funding to support disability inclusion in foreign assistance programs, through specific projects which support the empowerment of people with disabilities as well as mainstreaming.
 - » **Ensuring and promoting accessible programming and infrastructure.** Make all foreign assistance programs fully accessible to people with disabilities including; ensure construction supported by U.S. funds is accessible; ensure all program materials are disseminated in accessible formats such as sign language, braille or large print.

Results

Reforming U.S. foreign aid to effectively include men, women and children with disabilities will ensure that their rights and priorities are addressed and lead to sustainable development for all.

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Background

One in five of the world's poorest people have a disability. Major environmental, societal and attitudinal barriers continue to prevent people with disabilities from enjoying their basic rights, such as attending school, working, having access to clean water, civil society and health services, and participating fully in their communities. Consider the following facts:²

- 15 percent of the world's population has a disability. Disability is a part of every population regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.
- There are 150 million children with disabilities in the world.
- Children with disabilities have less access to education and are more likely to be out of school compared to their nondisabled peers.
- People with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed and generally earn less when employed than their nondisabled peers.

Why inclusive development is important

Disability is a critical development issue because of its direct link to poverty. Disability may increase the risk of poverty and poverty in turn may increase the risk of disability. Data continue to show that people with disabilities and their families are more likely to experience economic and social disadvantage than those without disabilities.

Disability is also important given the recent push to promote greater community and educational inclusion of people with disabilities (in place of previous patterns of segregation, institutionalization and discrimination). This shift is largely due to people with disabilities mobilizing themselves and their efforts to empower the disability community to participate actively in political, economic, social and cultural life. This rights-based model introduced a new perspective on disability to the development field.

It is essential that development activities be done in a manner that is inclusive of people with disabilities across all program and policies. This means using a dual-track approach:

1. Inclusion of disability in all development and humanitarian programs and policies (such as education, health care and post-conflict response); and
2. Operating disability-specific programs for greater capacity building, education and access.

Focusing on these dual tracks allows for inclusion of people with disabilities throughout all development, while also creating specific opportunities for people with disabilities to continue to close the inequality gap.

Policies and actions for inclusive development

In 2007 with the adoption of the USAID Disability Policy, the U.S. made a commitment to ensure that people with disabilities are included in its foreign assistance programs. In the spirit of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA), the policy addresses both the discrimination against people with disabilities and the need for greater disability inclusion in all areas of development and humanitarian work. As one of the first bilateral donor agencies to develop such a policy and establish standards for accessible buildings, the U.S. has been a global leader in inclusive development. For over a decade, the U.S. government has launched numerous initiatives designed to strengthen disability inclusion in foreign assistance programs.

President Obama has built upon earlier advancements. In 2009, he ordered U.S. signature of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), initiating an administrative review of whether U.S. laws complied with the convention. In May 2012, the administration transmitted the CRPD package to the Senate for ratification. The CRPD, which entered into force in 2008, formally recognizes disability as a human rights issue and is a milestone in the disability movement worldwide. It is a paradigm shift within the development community, as Article 32 of the treaty identifies the important role of the development community in the implementation of inclusive strategies by governments and players at all levels of the development process. As a global leader, the U.S. can play a key role in exemplifying and promoting the CRPD and offer guidance and expertise on its implementation.

When President Obama signed the CRPD, he also announced the creation of a new position at the State Department: Special Advisor for International Disability Rights. He also appointed a new coordinator for the Office of Disability and Inclusive Development at USAID. These two offices publicly demonstrate U.S. commitment to disability rights.

¹ "World Report on Disabilities" World Health Organization. http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report/en/.

² *Ibid.*



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International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
International Medical Corps
Mercy Corps
Mobility International USA
Perkins International
Perkins School for the Blind
Reach Scale
Save the Children
Trickle Up Program
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United Cerebral Palsy
United States International Council on Disabilities (USICD)
Women's Refugee Commission
World Concern
World Learning
World Vision

Disaster Risk Reduction



Problem

Disasters are becoming increasingly frequent and intense. The human and financial costs of responding only after disasters strike are unsustainable. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) must be a priority in order to curb the rising cost of humanitarian assistance and economic loss, while also protecting long-term development investments.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Recommendations & Actions

Eight years after 168 countries, including the U.S., signed the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA – the international community’s commitment to implement disaster risk reduction), disasters continue to inflict devastating loss of life and assets that compromise development gains and perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Although the HFA has substantively contributed to strengthened global attention on disaster risk reduction (DRR), its goals and priorities for action are far from being achieved. USAID’s DRR agenda has made significant strides, but given current and future realities, increased attention and resources are needed to reduce global disaster losses and protect development investments. To improve DRR programs and help those living in disaster-prone regions, the U.S. should:

- Support local partners through greater community outreach and resources. Participatory approaches are both cost-effective and sustainable mechanisms for reducing risks.
- Provide resources to national and local governments and communities to enable them to better prepare and respond to disasters and conduct their own disaster risk assessments.
- Dedicate at least 10 percent of humanitarian emergency assistance for DRR, and increase USAID development funding for DRR and climate change adaptation (CCA).
- Develop and institutionalize a comprehensive DRR/CCA/resilience strategy across USAID while ensuring humanitarian needs are not overlooked.
- Identify DRR focal points in USAID and its Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance at both headquarters and the mission level to better liaise with other donors, national governments, nongovernmental organizations and other stakeholders on DRR issues.
- Increase support for DRR activities and policies that reduce negative impacts of human activity, legal/regulatory barriers, and climate change (i.e., flood control and coastal management), and promote planned and regulated land use and urban development.

Results

Taking these steps will save lives and reduce human suffering due to disasters, gradually reduce disaster response costs, and protect development investments. The result will be more effective foreign assistance that will increase countries’ capacity to respond to natural hazards and a changing environment.

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Background

Increases in the frequency and intensity of disasters,¹ coupled with population growth and rapid urbanization, expose more people to greater disaster risk, threatening lives and development efforts.² At greatest risk are the poor, particularly women and children, in developing countries who are disproportionately affected by disasters due to their precarious living situations and lack of resources. In addition, increased exposure of economic assets has resulted in 2011 being the costliest year on record for disaster-related economic losses.³ This trend is expected to continue.

These realities have led to significant international commitment to DRR. The 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction was held in Kobe Japan, just days after the Indian Ocean tsunami, a disaster that underscored the importance of effective detection and early warning systems. One hundred sixty-eight countries adopted the conference's Hyogo Framework for Action⁴ in order to strengthen international commitment to DRR with the goal of substantially reducing disaster losses (in lives and in social, economic and environmental assets) of communities and countries by the year 2015.

However, almost eight years into the HFA, disaster losses continue their upward trend. The 2011 Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami and the 2011 Thailand floods proved that both developing and developed countries are vulnerable to severe disasters. Now that more than half the world's population lives in urban areas, the threat is even greater. The 2010 Haiti earthquake exemplified how better planning and enforcement could have saved thousands of lives.

While mega-disasters like the Haiti and Japanese earthquakes capture global attention and emotions, the cumulative impact of everyday, small-scale disasters affect more people and are major impediments to long-term development. Shorter recovery periods between disasters and a diminished ability to cope perpetuate the cycle of poverty and reduce communities' ability to rebuild and be self-reliant. The crises in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel demonstrate how the adverse effects of repeated droughts and lack of resources can lead to large population movements, significant loss of life, unrest and costly interventions – all of which could have been avoided by simple risk reduction measures.

In addition to saving lives and reducing vulnerability, DRR is, on the whole, a cost effective approach. While it is impossible to measure the impact disasters may have had without DRR measures, and while there is no exact ratio for dollars invested versus dollars saved, studies indicate that DRR activities have a higher positive return for each dollar invested than making no investment at all.⁵

Community-based DRR programs are low-cost/high-impact investments that save lives and assets. Supporting these types of programs ensures that the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized communities understand the simplest, most practical actions required to protect themselves in a disaster and, in the long term, build resilience.⁶

The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction is an opportunity to ensure that the policies and plans put forth in the HFA are matched by sufficient financing, technical expertise, and capacity building. It is an opportunity to create a framework that reflects local realities and incorporates affected populations in the design and implementation of programs. Beyond the post-2015 framework, DRR can and should also be promoted by integrating DRR across development programming.

Senior officials at USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) recognize the importance of DRR and are attempting to allocate more resources. Between 2010 and 2011 funding for disaster readiness nearly doubled.⁷ Unfortunately, this falls short of what is needed and begs the question whether other leaders and senior officials advocating for greater resilience are able to match OFDA's efforts. Improved DRR, and by extension the resilience of communities, can decrease the needs of affected populations and save lives.

1 Disaster is defined here as a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society causing widespread human, material, economic, or environmental losses which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.

2 "IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation," Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. http://www.ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX/images/uploads/SREX-All_FINAL.pdf.

3 "Heavy disaster losses for insurance companies in 2011," UNISDR. <http://www.unisdr.org/archive/24588>.

4 The Hyogo Framework for Action has five priorities:

1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation;
2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning;
3. Use knowledge, innovation, and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels;
4. Reduce the underlying risk factors; and
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

5 "Natural Hazards, Unnatural Disasters: The Economics of Effective Prevention," World Bank, 2010.

6 "Conference on Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction," UNICEF, Pg. V. <http://www.unicef.org/india/ConferenceCommunitybasedDisasterRiskReductionreport.pdf>.

7 Foreign assistance obligations for Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011. <http://foreignassistance.gov>.



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Lutheran World Relief

Mercy Corps

Oxfam America

Refugees International

Save the Children

United Methodist Committee on Relief

World Concern

Transition



Transitioning from Relief to Development

Problem

The emergency response and development arms of the U.S. government do not plan and work together to ensure a smooth transition from life-saving activities to programs that build sustainable, resilient communities in the aftermath of disasters. The links between humanitarian and development programs are weak due to a lack of coordination and accountability, threatening the long-term prospects of crisis-affected communities.

Recommendations & Actions

Even in the midst of an acute humanitarian emergency, it is essential to respond in ways that will enable crisis-affected people to withstand future shocks. Postemergency transition and recovery efforts can then lay the foundation for longer-term development. Humanitarian agencies should begin planning for the transition from relief to development even as the emergency response unfolds, and should engage development actors through joint assessments and programs as early as possible. This approach would include development expertise and principles that build on the gains made in the humanitarian phase, with the goal of building resilient individuals and communities. Such efforts are particularly important when emergencies threaten to become protracted: when a crisis-affected population begins to recover, but a wider solution to the lack of jobs, shelter, basic services and protection remains elusive.

To improve the transition from emergency relief to development, the U.S. government should undertake the following actions:

- Clarify the division of labor for managing the transition from relief to development among USAID and State Department offices;
- Require USAID missions in conflict or disaster-affected countries to report annually on how their development strategies programs build resilience and address, include and account for vulnerable populations recovering from disasters;
- Ensure U.S. government policy supports flexible funding for USAID missions so they can invest in programs focused on job creation, shelter, recovery from gender-based violence, and local capacity building, which are critical to the success of recovery efforts for disaster and conflict-affected populations but often lack an institutional home within USAID's development work;
- Build on efforts already underway to ensure humanitarian and development staff of the relevant U.S. government agencies are planning integrated responses that address long-term needs among especially vulnerable populations; and
- Ensure U.S. transition activities include strong emphases on conflict mitigation and disaster risk reduction.

Results

Strengthening coordination and promoting joint planning between USAID, its missions and U.S. humanitarian agencies will allow the U.S. government to consolidate the gains made in emergency response and ensure that the most vulnerable groups do not slip through the cracks in the critical recovery period.

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Background

It is clear from recent humanitarian crises, such as the Haiti earthquake and Pakistan floods, that the U.S. government lacks effective mechanisms to facilitate the shift from emergency response to recovery and development. The United States is known as a generous and compassionate humanitarian donor, but the mechanisms by which the U.S. government transitions from emergency response into recovery and development assistance do not allow for the quick and flexible response necessary in these situations. Development programs require long-term planning prior to implementation and are not fast enough to adapt to rapidly evolving needs.

Supporting fragile states in achieving a measure of stability and economic development is a major policy priority for the U.S. government, with the majority of its foreign assistance spent in countries experiencing or emerging from civil strife. Yet the structure of U.S. assistance reflects an outmoded dichotomy between “relief” and “development” in which effective coordination and handover between the two is often discussed but rarely executed. The “transition gap” in countries recovering from natural disasters is just as acute.

Within USAID, it is unclear which office or bureau is responsible for ensuring a coherent transition strategy. Moreover, there is currently very little coordination between the U.S. government humanitarian agencies and the regional bureaus responsible for more traditional development assistance when programs transition from one type of assistance to another. While the Office of Transition Initiatives has the mandate to provide support during strategic political transitions, no U.S. government office is responsible or accountable for transitioning essential services to development actors. Other mechanisms, such as the Complex Crises Fund, could potentially help narrow the transition gap but lack adequate funding. The State Department’s Conflict Stabilization Office was recently revamped but focuses on a limited number of countries.

Due to the gap between humanitarian and development programs, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration tend to be drawn into de facto transitional development assistance, but lack clear mandates and appropriate tools to do so. Humanitarian programs have short funding cycles that do not facilitate medium- to long-term strategic planning. This complicates efforts to build program ownership and capacity among the affected populations, and prolongs the use of expensive relief-oriented program strategies.

There are many examples of humanitarian assistance programs ending without development assistance picking up support for basic social services. This has caused

already vulnerable populations to lose access to health and education, which then contributes to continuing suffering and vulnerability. For example, OFDA spent over a half billion dollars over two years to provide critical lifesaving and recovery assistance in response to Haiti’s devastating earthquake. Three years later, donors consider the emergency phase to be over, although 390,000 people remain in squalid camps. Despite these needs, USAID’s Haiti mission is primarily focused on constructing an industrial park and port in a region largely unaffected by the earthquake. While this development project may contribute to Haiti’s economic growth in the long-term, the gap in assistance leaves thousands vulnerable and perpetuates extreme poverty.

The food crises in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region are prompting USAID to stress the importance of “resilience,” linking emergency and development responses under the framework of supporting programs that will enable communities to withstand future shocks. While the concept remains ill-defined, there are promising efforts underway to carry out USAID’s signature food security initiative, Feed the Future, to regions of countries where famine and food insecurity are particularly threatening. Joint planning by OFDA, Food for Peace and USAID staff in this context is welcome.

Of particular concern in communities coming out of conflict is the impact of sexual violence on survivors and their families. Addressing the physical, psychological and legal needs of women who have survived sexual violence is extremely important to the recovery process for communities and societies coming out of conflict. A comprehensive response to sexual violence, along with the reintegration of child soldiers, is often lost in this “relief to development” gap.

Another challenge is the chronic underfunding of disaster risk reduction activities, which support communities to assess their vulnerability to threats such as drought or floods and work to reduce their future exposure to those threats.¹

To address the transition gap and allow for a more flexible response to situations that often fluctuate between emergency and recovery, the U.S. government’s humanitarian and development agencies should improve coordination and develop clear strategies to prevent gaps in basic social services during these critical periods.

¹ See the Disaster Risk Reduction policy brief for more details.



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International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)
International Relief & Development
International Relief Teams
International Rescue Committee (IRC)
Islamic Relief USA
Jesuit Refugee Services USA
Latter-day Saint Charities
Lutheran World Relief
MAP International
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Salvation Army World Service Office
Save the Children
Trickle Up Program
U.S. Association for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
U.S. Fund for UNICEF
United Methodist Committee on Relief
World Concern
World Relief
World Renew
World Vision

NGO and Military Relations

NGO and Military Relations



The U.S. Military's Expanding Role in Foreign Assistance

Problem

The U.S. Armed Forces may provide important lift capacity during large-scale humanitarian crises. But the military's expanded involvement in humanitarian and development activities has compromised the security of NGO workers, while also having uncertain impact on the lives of vulnerable people.

Recommendations & Actions

In humanitarian and development work, differences in mandate, expertise and training make the military a poor substitute for civilian experts from the U.S. government, the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Military involvement in providing development assistance does not increase security and stability. In some cases it has been counterproductive, increasing risks to aid workers and undermining sustainable development efforts. The U.S. military should focus on its mandate and strengths, including combat operations, security sector reform, maritime security and military-to-military training.

U.S. Armed Forces should, as a rule, be used in disaster relief as a last resort in situations requiring large lift capacity, under civilian humanitarian leadership. The military's development and humanitarian efforts should be limited in geographic and programmatic scope. There should be close collaboration with U.S. State Department and USAID specialists to ensure that the aid provided is effective and aligns with broader foreign policy and development goals.

Congress and the administration should:

1. Conduct a thorough review of the appropriateness of Department of Defense authorities in the humanitarian and development realm. Clear parameters for its operations should be developed in the National Defense Authorization Act to reduce duplication and overlap with civilian agencies and ensure that any benefits are in line with the significant costs.
2. Rebuild civilian personnel and resources at the Department of State, and particularly development and humanitarian professionals at USAID, by providing substantial support to their operational capacity in the international affairs budget. The overall aim should be to ensure that civilian agencies have the mandates, funding and personnel needed to lead U.S. diplomatic, humanitarian, and development efforts.

Results

These steps will foster a means of U.S. humanitarian response that is in keeping with internationally agreed principles and standards, while addressing the imbalance among the three pillars of national security: defense, diplomacy and development. The recommendations will eliminate duplicative Department of Defense programs, thus freeing up military resources for tasks critical to its core mission.

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Background

Since 1998, the Department of Defense (DoD) share of U.S. official development assistance (ODA) has increased from 3.5 percent to 22 percent. During that time, the DoD has dramatically expanded its relief, development and reconstruction assistance through programs such as Section 1207/1210, the Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP) and the Combatant Commanders' Initiative Fund, as well as through the activities of the regional combatant commands and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs).

NGOs take a different approach to relief and development than the military. NGOs generally make a long-term commitment to a situation, acquire a deep understanding of local societies, employ largely local staff and design projects with community participation and cultural sensitivity to ensure sustainability. As a result, instead of using weapons or armed guards for their security, NGOs rely on an "acceptance" model that rests upon perceived impartiality and the trust of the communities in which they work.¹ In conflict situations, NGO staff generally need to keep their distance from the military unless they deem cooperation necessary to address the needs of vulnerable populations. This is not an expression of hostility to the military, but instead a necessary and vital measure for their security, which depends on the community's trust in their neutrality and independence from political and military actors.

Issues

The impact of this expansion on the work of humanitarian NGOs has been significant. The primary focus of military efforts is on security objectives that its humanitarian and development efforts presumably advance. Quick-impact projects and other force protection activities motivated by security objectives, however, often undermine sustainable development projects and relationships built by NGO workers. Well-intended projects may have negative consequences and are often unsustainable due to the military's short-term goals and quick turnover rate. Relief activities by the military can also compromise the security of NGO staff in or near conflict areas by blurring the lines between humanitarian and military personnel.

Further, the actual impact on vulnerable people of DoD's humanitarian and development work is at best unclear. The February 2012 Government Accountability Office report on the humanitarian and development assistance efforts of the U.S. military concluded that problems of coordination with civilian agencies, poor data management and limited program evaluations plagued these efforts and there is little evidence of positive impact.² Value for taxpayer dollars of DoD efforts is questionable

and the security value is unproven. Evaluations by as diverse institutions as the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the U.K. Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst and Tufts University have found that aid driven by short-term military objectives in Afghanistan was ineffective and even counterproductive in terms of military objectives.³ Projects often fuelled corruption and the war economy, undermining wider strategic objectives.

Since 2004 InterAction members have been in a regular dialogue with senior officials of the Department of Defense through a civil-military working group under the auspices of the United States Institute of Peace. The landmark achievement of this working group is agreement on *Guidelines for Relations Between U.S. Armed Forces and Non-Governmental Humanitarian Organizations in Hostile or Potentially Hostile Environments*.⁴ They include protocols for communications and conduct when U.S. military forces and NGOs are operating in the same space. They are perhaps best known for the agreement ensuring that U.S. military personnel wear uniforms when conducting relief activities to avoid being mistaken for non-governmental humanitarian organization representatives. In addition, they recommend that, to the extent practical, humanitarian relief personnel avoid traveling in U.S. Armed Forces vehicles, with the exception of liaison personnel. While the guidelines represent a significant advance in mutual understanding at the leadership level, substantial efforts are still required to insert them in the U.S. military's doctrine and training.

Conclusion

The most useful humanitarian role for the military is in responding to natural disasters where their logistical resources, air and marine transport capabilities, and engineering services fill important gaps. The agreed international principle is that such efforts should be mounted when there is genuine need due to lack of civilian capacity, and only then under civilian coordination, whether by the U.S. Chief of Mission in country, USAID, or the United Nations during a large-scale international response.

¹ See the Acceptance Research website at <http://acceptanceresearch.org> for more information.

² "Humanitarian and Development Assistance: Project Evaluations and Better Information Sharing Needed to Manage the Military's Efforts," United States Government Accountability Office, February 2012.

³ "Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan," Tufts University Feinstein International Center. <http://sites.tufts.edu/feinstein/2012/losing-hearts-and-minds>.

⁴ Available online at <http://www.usip.org/publications/guidelines-relations-between-us-armed-forces-and-nghos-hostile-or-potentially-hostile-envi>.



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Legal Restrictions and Humanitarian Action



Impact of Legal Restrictions on Humanitarian Action

Problem

U.S. law inhibits efforts of humanitarian organizations to prevent and alleviate suffering of civilians in areas controlled by armed groups considered to be terrorist organizations. The current licensing regime to permit transactions with “Sanctioned Entities” is not comprehensive and is too slow for fast-paced major crises that demand rapid humanitarian response.

Recommendations & Actions

In responding to crises in conflict settings, humanitarian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) may need to negotiate with all armed actors, including parties to the conflict, to ensure aid is unimpeded and reaches vulnerable civilians. In some circumstances, organizations providing life-saving assistance may find that the payment of customary and incidental fees, such as road tolls, taxes or permit fees is unavoidable if aid is to reach affected people in a timely manner.

U.S. law currently criminalizes such transactions and therefore inhibits humanitarian operations if the civilian population is located in an area controlled by an entity such as a terrorist group that is sanctioned by the U.S. government (collectively, “Sanctioned Entities”). Current restrictions require organizations to obtain a license from the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) at the Department of Treasury before starting humanitarian operations where such transactions may occur. Failure to obtain a license can result in asset freezes, civil penalties and criminal prosecution.

The OFAC licensing process, however, takes far too long when lives are on the line. While the Somali famine of 2011 was predicted months in advance, OFAC did not grant licenses until well after the famine’s impact became visible, by which time tens of thousands of children had already died of the combined effects of war and drought. Furthermore, OFAC licenses do not address the Material Support statute (see Background section on reverse side), which criminalizes coordinated advocacy with Sanctioned Entities and the provision of any material support to these groups, regardless of its intended use.

To ensure that U.S. law does not inhibit efforts to prevent and alleviate human suffering, U.S. law must be changed to:

- **Allow humanitarian organizations to pay unavoidable and incidental fees such as taxes and tolls without a lengthy bureaucratic licensing process.** U.S. law should permit NGOs to conduct transactions that are customary, necessary and incidental to the donation or provision of goods or services to prevent and alleviate the suffering of civilians.
- **Allow humanitarian organizations to engage with all parties to armed conflict.** U.S. law should protect NGOs from legal liability when they engage with Sanctioned Entities to gain access to civilians in order to prevent or alleviate suffering and to reduce the frequency and severity of violent conflict.

Results

Humanitarian organizations will be able to deliver humanitarian aid in a timely and impartial manner in areas controlled by Sanctioned Entities. This will allow life-saving assistance to reach vulnerable civilians living in areas where Sanctioned Entities operate while still leaving in place means for the departments of Justice and Treasury to preserve U.S. national security.

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Background

The International Economic Emergency Powers Act (IEEPA) and Material Support statute contain legal restrictions that affect NGOs operating in places like Somalia, where Sanctioned Entities control a portion of territory. Under these two statutes, NGOs risk a variety of penalties including asset freezes, civil penalties and criminal prosecution if they experience involuntary diversion of their assistance or pay customary and incidental fees such as road tolls to Sanctioned Entities in order to ensure that aid reaches vulnerable civilians.

OFAC process: too slow for fast-paced crises

U.S. law permits humanitarian organizations to pay customary and incidental fees in order to deliver life-saving assistance provided that NGOs first obtain a license from OFAC. U.S. law therefore recognizes that such transactions may be a necessary part of delivering life-saving humanitarian assistance.

The 2011 famine in Somalia demonstrated, however, that the OFAC licensing system is grossly inadequate for the fast-paced, life-saving demands of large-scale humanitarian crises. Even though the famine was predicted months in advance, the U.S. government did not grant an OFAC license until well after the famine's impact became visible, by which time tens of thousands had already died of malnutrition and disease.

When an OFAC license was finally issued to USAID, it took many more months of negotiation between USAID and its partners before the legal protection of that license was extended to a small number of NGOs. Even today, U.S. NGOs that do not receive USAID funding in Somalia lack any legal protection, and even some program activities of USAID's partners are not protected. The net effect has been a serious policy failure: a significant amount of humanitarian aid was blocked, and civilians who could have been fed instead died of malnutrition and disease. Hundreds of thousands continue to face the combined effects of war and drought in Somalia, and the U.S. reputation as a leader in humanitarian relief continues to suffer.

Coordination activities

In June 2010, the Supreme Court considered the *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project* case and held that organizations are prohibited under the Material Support statute from coordinating with or providing "expert advice or assistance" to foreign terrorist organizations. Since this ruling, U.S. NGOs have been unsure whether and how they can negotiate and reach practical agreements about the security of humanitarian operations with all parties to the conflict, including armed actors that may be considered terrorist organizations. Such arrangements are

indispensable to safely reach civilians in need of aid and to maintain continuous humanitarian operations. In addition, in situations of armed conflict NGOs often seek to persuade armed actors, including Sanctioned Entities, to modify their behavior to better safeguard the well-being and human rights of civilian populations and to seek alternatives to violence. The Material Support statute prohibits coordination and cooperation even to prevent human suffering.

Safeguards to mitigate diversion of aid

In accordance with humanitarian principles, U.S. NGOs use robust systems to prevent assistance from being diverted by parties to the conflict.¹ A legislative remedy can overcome the restrictions on humanitarian assistance currently present in U.S. law while providing the departments of Justice and Treasury ample tools to address U.S. national security concerns. Under a legislative remedy, those NGOs that seek to prevent or alleviate the suffering of civilian populations will be subject to the following conditions:

- Must act in good faith, without intent to further the goals of the Sanctioned Entity;
- Must use best efforts to minimize such transactions;
- The goods and services the NGO provides must not be capable of being used to carry out terrorist activities;
- Must file notice with the secretary of state within 10 days of the first such transaction, and file annual reports summarizing the program operations; and
- Must not be suspended or debarred from receiving funding from the United States government.

¹ See InterAction, "Strengthening Humanitarian Assistance," 2013 *Foreign Assistance Briefing Book*.



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Peacekeeping



The Role of the U.S. in UN Peacekeeping Operations

Problem

Over the last 10 years, UN member states (including the U.S.) have championed an increase in the number of peacekeeping missions and charged UN peacekeeping operations with increasingly complex and dangerous tasks. While some progress has been made, heightened expectations and responsibilities have not been matched with the necessary increases in financial, material and political support.

Recommendations & Actions

Recognizing the contribution of UN peacekeeping to the achievement of our strategic objectives, as outlined in the 2010 National Security Strategy, the U.S. should strengthen the UN's ability to deploy robust, appropriately-funded peacekeeping operations to address complex conflict situations. Specifically, the U.S. should continue to show positive leadership through reliable and adequate financial support; back the implementation of necessary UN institutional reforms; commit key enabling equipment and other resources; and ensure that peacekeeping is not weakened or discredited through irresponsible deployments.

- Each new U.S. government fiscal year, Congress should appropriate enough money for the United States to fully pay its current peacekeeping assessments.
- Permanently remove the legislative cap on U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping operations, allowing the U.S. to fully meet its obligations to the UN and to pay off arrears incurred under the cap.
- Continue to take a leading role in efforts to implement the Global Field Support Strategy and other reform initiatives in order to increase the efficiency, cost-effectiveness and rapid deployment capacity of UN peacekeeping missions.
- Commit specialized U.S. resources to UN peacekeeping missions to ensure missions are able to fulfill their mandates. This can include critical equipment, air assets and sustaining troops to peacekeeping operations worldwide.
- Provide direct support for senior officer training for troop-contributing countries and support for the UN's effort to develop scenario-based training for peacekeepers, including on protecting civilians, preventing and responding to sexual violence by third parties, and preventing sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers.
- Use U.S. leadership on the UN Security Council to ensure that UN peacekeeping missions are deployed responsibly and judiciously, and that missions receive the high-level political support needed to resolve crises in areas where peacekeepers are deployed.

Results

Continued positive engagement in UN peacekeeping operations and reforms will strengthen and expand the capacity of the UN to effectively and consistently protect civilians, as well as stabilize weak and failing states. It will also help the U.S. to share the cost and political burden of stabilizing states and filling potential security vacuums that could present a threat to U.S. security interests.

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Background

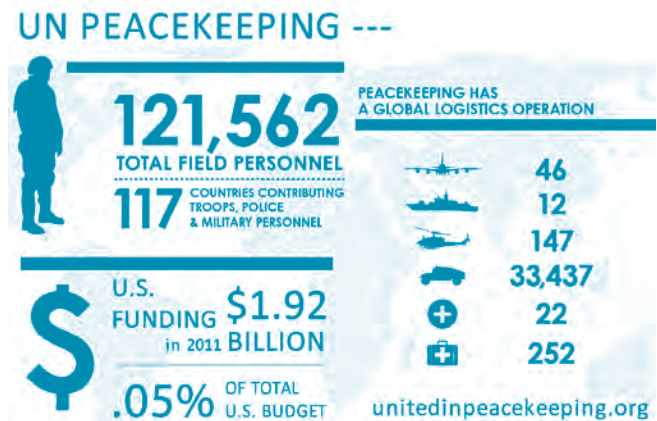
Roughly 120,000 UN peacekeepers are currently deployed in 15 separate missions on four continents: a nearly three-fold increase in the number of UN personnel over the last decade. These operations all originate with the UN Security Council and are managed by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

UN peacekeeping no longer resembles the “classic” observer missions of lightly armed troops monitoring ceasefire agreements. Today’s missions are complex operations in active conflict zones. Modern peacekeepers are asked to create stability, protect civilians, demobilize ex-combatants and guide the development of democratic institutions that respect human rights and uphold the rule of law. Peacekeeping today often represents a comprehensive effort to stabilize and reconstruct failed and failing states.

Overall, this comprehensive multilateral approach to peacekeeping has proven to be a successful, cost-efficient way to promote international peace and security. A 2005 RAND study found that multinational UN forces are far better suited than unilateral U.S. forces to perform peacekeeping responsibilities. In terms of cost-effectiveness, a 2006 Government Accountability Office study concluded that UN peacekeeping is eight times less expensive than funding a U.S. force. Furthermore, the Office of Management and Budget gave the U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping (CIPA account) its highest rating under the OMB Program Assessment Rating Tool. Finally, another study found that in the first three years after a conflict, U.N. peacekeeping missions have a substantial effect on GDP, with annual growth rates nearly 2.4 percent higher in postconflict countries where peacekeeping missions are present than in those where they are not.¹

Reports of sexual abuse by UN peacekeepers threaten to overshadow their positive contributions that help prevent instability and secure peace. The UN has implemented significant reforms to curb and address sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, including mandatory predeployment trainings and the establishment of conduct and discipline units at headquarters and in the field. The U.S. should press troop-contributing countries to hold their accused nationals legally accountable and incorporate the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse into their standard military training.

The U.S. should also continue to push for peacekeeping reform initiatives that increase cost-savings from UN missions. These include the Global Field Support Strategy (GFSS), a five-year project aimed at improving the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of administrative and logistics support to UN peacekeeping missions. The GFSS is already delivering significant benefits – expediting the



deployment of new missions and consolidating operations – while also ensuring substantial cost savings, including an estimated \$372 million in the coming year.² Over the next three years, the U.S. should support its continued implementation.

The U.S. should also support adequate funding of missions. Since 1994, a congressionally-imposed cap has limited U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping to 25 percent of the entire UN peacekeeping budget. While the U.S. renegotiates assessment rates with the UN every three years and the U.S. peacekeeping rate has dropped from 31 percent to 27 percent in the last 10 years, the cap remains. Congress routinely lifts the cap, but the issue must be revisited each year. This gives opponents of the UN opportunities to cut funding for peacekeeping and sends a poor signal to troop-contributing countries (TCCs) that put their troops on the line in missions the U.S. votes for in the Security Council. For example, from 2005-2007, the cap was not lifted and \$175 million in debt for U.S. assessments for peacekeeping operations accrued. However, in 2009, President Obama supported and Congress included sufficient funding to pay off these arrears. This demonstrates that failing to pay our dues ultimately does not result in cost savings. Rather, funding shortfalls simply delay resources and force Congress to appropriate larger sums at a later date. Consequently, lifting the cap permanently is fiscally prudent and demonstrates our commitment to TCCs and to meeting our international obligations.

Beyond funding restraints, UN missions are also routinely deployed with mandated tasks that far exceed the equipment, staff, troop numbers and political support they receive to get the job done.

¹ Anke Hoeffler, Syeda Shahbano Ijaz and Sarah von Billerbeck, “Post-Conflict Recovery and Peacebuilding,” *World Development Report 2011 Background Paper* (2010), p.26, http://wdr2011.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/WDR%20Background%20Paper_Hoeffler%20et%20al_0.pdf?keepThis=true&TB_iframe=true&height=600&width=800.

² Remarks at the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. Available at http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/articles/AB%20introduction%20of%20GFSS%20report_5th%20comm.pdf.



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Humanitarian Priorities



Problem

While the United States is a leading donor responding to international humanitarian crises, too often it is influenced by considerations beyond humanitarian need. Furthermore, response efforts are spread across different agencies without a coherent, overarching policy decision-making architecture to coordinate and guide the work.

Strengthening Humanitarian Assistance

Recommendations & Actions

Humanitarian assistance is provided to save lives in the wake of natural disasters and conflict. It comes in the form of food, water, shelter and health care and seeks to ensure that the most vulnerable are not exposed to abuse and exploitation. Humanitarian principles rather than geostrategic or political considerations should be the primary consideration used to identify where to offer assistance and protection.

The U.S. government must adopt an overall policy on humanitarian assistance to guide decisions to provide aid and save lives. Specific steps include the following:

- State explicitly in U.S. law that the purpose of U.S. humanitarian assistance is to save lives, alleviate suffering, maintain dignity and protect the rights of vulnerable people. In accordance with this, formulate clear criteria to help prioritize the many demands for U.S. humanitarian assistance.
- Ensure U.S.-funded humanitarian programs are implemented by organizations that provide assistance based closely on need and in a manner consistent with internationally-recognized standards and international humanitarian law.
- Strengthen coordination among the U.S. agencies responsible for humanitarian assistance policy and programs by clarifying roles and responsibilities, especially between the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, under the oversight of the secretary of state and the National Security Council.
- Work with other donor countries and the UN system to improve humanitarian leadership and coordination among responsible UN organizations and to strengthen accountability and advance the transformative agenda reforms.
- Provide sufficient funding to address new emergencies as well as more protracted crises. Ensure that priority is given to the most vulnerable refugees, internally displaced persons and those living in crisis-affected communities.

Results

Through the creation of a coherent, coordinated humanitarian assistance policy and the provision of appropriate resources, the U.S. government will be able to consistently achieve the overarching goals of humanitarian relief and will lay the foundation for recovery and sustainable development.

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Background

Since the end of World War II, the United States has been a leader in responding to humanitarian emergencies. The U.S. is consistently the world's largest donor of humanitarian funding, having provided nearly \$31 billion from 2000 to 2009.¹ Especially through USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Teams and the State Department's refugee coordinators, the U.S. has the ability to rapidly deploy to an emergency, assess needs and fund appropriate programs. The U.S. commitment to timely disbursement of emergency funds and supplies directly to both NGO (nongovernmental organization) and UN partners is an indispensable global resource in responding to natural disasters, such as the 2010 Haiti earthquake, and complex emergencies, such as those in Somalia, Sudan and Syria. U.S. emergency assistance, provided primarily by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) at USAID and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) at the State Department, saves lives and supports recovery for thousands of people every year.

Issues

Humanitarian NGOs adhere to a strict set of standards of behavior in accordance with the following principles:²

- **Humanity:** Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for human beings;
- **Impartiality:** Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of humanitarian need alone, regardless of nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions;
- **Neutrality:** Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature; and
- **Independence:** Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military objectives of any other actor in areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

Meeting these principles can be challenging in the current environment. For example, in the context of anti-terrorism efforts, the U.S. has had to constantly balance making humanitarian commitments based on need and on security concerns. Nowhere in U.S. law is it unequivocally stated that the purpose of U.S. humanitarian assistance is to save lives, alleviate suffering, maintain dignity and protect the right of vulnerable people. Adding this provision to the Foreign Assistance Act or other appropriate legislation would strengthen the humanitarian programs of the U.S. government.

While the U.S. role in emergency response is critical, it is rarely the sole donor country involved. Large-scale emergencies involve many donors supporting a wide range of organizations, such as UN agencies like the World Food Program, UNICEF (the UN children's organization), and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and leading operational NGOs. In the midst of large-scale emergencies, in-country humanitarian leadership and coordination is vital. The UN is taking steps to improve its performance in these critical areas. U.S. leadership to support this process in cooperation with other donor countries is important to realize the full potential of UN humanitarian reform efforts.

Under whole of government approaches, there has been a proliferation of agencies involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance. Which agency or agencies should lead the U.S. response to natural disasters? To conflict-driven emergencies that may displace large numbers of people who remain inside their own country? Where should coordination of the overall U.S. response, regardless of context, lie?

The 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) attempted to clarify roles and responsibilities by assigning natural disaster response to OFDA and response to emergencies in conflict zones to PRM. This has not been implemented in practice and roles and responsibilities therefore remain muddled. The agencies involved are reluctant to seek clarity for fear of losing power and authority to the other. Addressing this continued lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities is important to improve the overall effectiveness of U.S. humanitarian response.

Conclusion

In the wake of devastating natural disasters and amidst continued internal conflicts worldwide, humanitarian crises present a moral challenge to the United States. Grounding its responses on humanitarian principles and strengthening coordination among the agencies involved will better assure that the U.S. is able to consistently achieve the overarching goals of humanitarian relief and lay the foundation for recovery and sustainable development.

¹ Development Initiatives, Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2011, p. 14.

² These principles are consistent with the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Nongovernmental Organizations in Disaster Relief and have been endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Problem

As the U.S. and international military withdraw from Afghanistan, its citizens continue to face displacement, chronic food insecurity, a lack of access to basic services and a deficiency in the skills needed to grow their economy and rebuild their country. Humanitarian and development concerns need ongoing attention.

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Afghanistan

Recommendations & Actions

Afghanistan remains one of the least developed countries in the world, and it grapples with the humanitarian consequences of internal conflict, poor governance and chronic food insecurity. To address critical needs and to set the country on a more sustainable path, the U.S. government should support the following policies:

- **Direct more funding to long-term, sustainable, community-based development programs with proven partners while strengthening Afghan institutions.** As the U.S. government seeks to build the capacity of Afghan institutions and ministries, it should retain the help of proven partners, including international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), to ensure continued service delivery. It will take years to build the capacity of government ministries, and interruptions in service-delivery would be devastating. Grants and cooperative agreements, funding mechanisms that leverage the strong partnerships of NGOs with local communities, can help reach these goals.
- **Strengthen the response to humanitarian needs of displaced people.** Protection of internally displaced communities within Afghanistan – as well as Afghanistan's 5 million refugees – must be improved. It is critical for the U.S. government to support the reintegration of refugees and address issues such as land tenure and housing, livelihood opportunities, and access to public services and water. Returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) must be incorporated into the National Priority Programs and should be assisted in urban areas. The Afghan government should also be supported in its implementation of the national policy on IDPs.
- **Strengthen disaster management planning and disaster response.** Significant efforts must be directed at supporting the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) and other key government ministries to ensure greater and more sustainable disaster management planning. Afghan vulnerabilities to climate shocks cause chronic food insecurity throughout the country and strengthening ANDMA will boost Afghan's capacity to respond to these shocks.
- **Ensure that civil society and vulnerable groups, particularly women, are included and protected in development programs and diplomatic agendas.** As donors seek to facilitate gender-specific development, it is critical to collect gender-disaggregated data when conducting needs-assessments, evaluations, budgeting and auditing. Efforts should be made to strengthen the Ministry of Women's Affairs and increase women's participation in high-level governance and peace processes.

Results

By focusing on service delivery to vulnerable groups, the United States will help Afghans recover and build their communities while strengthening their governance structures. Even with decreased funding, the U.S. government can create the foundation for a more stable transition in Afghanistan.

Background

Building Afghan capacity for development

In the last 11 years, Afghanistan saw large gains in health, access to education, local governance and women's empowerment. Health care is now available to 60 percent of Afghanistan's population, compared with 9 percent in 2001.¹ Today, more than 8 million children attend primary school, compared with 1 million in 2001.² The training of midwives and teachers has paved the way for Afghans' development growth. The National Solidarity Programme (NSP) created 22,500 community development councils in 361 districts in all Afghan provinces.³ Through these initiatives, many Afghans received services from their government for the first time.

At the July 2012 Tokyo Conference, the international community committed to consolidating these gains by pledging \$16 billion over four years. This funding is critical given the economic vacuum that will be created by the departure of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and its supporting architecture. In Tokyo, donor governments agreed to channel more funding through Afghan budgets and to align most of this funding with Afghanistan's National Priority Programs. In return, the Afghan government agreed to a Mutual Accountability Framework which conditions aid on better governance and combating corruption. The United States should lead the international community in fulfilling pledges.

Gains in Afghanistan illustrate the power of partnerships. Local communities, civil society organizations, governmental actors, donors and NGOs have collaborated to improve the lives of many Afghans. We support transitioning funding through Afghan ministries that have proven they are capable of efficient, effective program design, management and evaluation. As the U.S. government works with Afghan line ministries to improve their effectiveness, continued capacity building by proven partners – public and private – can ensure continuity of service delivery. For example, NGOs provided and expanded service delivery during the four years needed to certify the Ministry of Public Health. This ministry now effectively administers these programs, often in partnership with these same NGOs. In contrast, when schools were prematurely transitioned to the Ministry of Education in 2011, some schools closed, leaving children without access to education.

Community-based programming has not only increased the well-being of Afghans, but has also improved Afghan governance structures. Quality Afghan-led programs have better project management; are more accountable to the populations they represent; are better at assessing the needs of diverse constituents; and advocate more effectively for community needs to higher levels of government than before. For example, through the NSP, community monitoring teams have a mechanism by which citizens

can evaluate the quality of projects implemented by their Community Development Councils. In some areas, these programs have linked the community to both the district and provincial levels of government. The long-term potential for development gains and the creation of robust governance structures will only be realized through strong community-based programming.

Humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations

Globally, Afghanistan has the highest number of displaced persons and refugees. There are about half a million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and more than 5 million Afghans live outside the country.⁴ Over 5.7 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan since 2002, increasing the population by some 25 percent.⁵ Afghan migration, due to food insecurity, natural disaster and/or conflict, further challenges Afghan development and creates tensions with neighboring countries.

Due to increasing insecurity and endemic environmental hazards throughout Afghanistan, a majority of the country's 30.4 million people are chronically or acutely vulnerable,⁶ and a large number are affected by natural disasters. In this context, food security remains a primary concern for most Afghans. Nutrition, education and health programs remain underfunded. During the transition and for the next 10 years (the Transformational Decade), donors and the government of Afghanistan should promote humanitarian work and allocate resources based on needs. Disaster preparedness and early recovery programs must be expanded. The vulnerability of affected populations heightens their inability to withstand shocks and contributes to recurrent humanitarian needs.

Afghan women are particularly marginalized, but there have been important gains in the past 10 years such as Article 22 of the constitution, which enshrines women's equal rights. Monitoring the application of the new legal framework is vital. Important mechanisms exist, but compliance is inconsistent: the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan and the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law are prime examples of initiatives that have yet to attain their potential.

1 "Speech of Minister of Public Health at 65th World Health Assembly, Geneva," Relief Web. <http://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/speech-minister-public-health-islamic-republic-afghanistan-65th-world-health>.

2 "In Afghanistan, UNICEF and the Government of Japan support the construction of child-friendly schools," UNICEF. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/afghanistan_62634.html.

3 "WDR 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development," World Bank. http://wdronline.worldbank.org/worldbank/a/c.html/world_development_report_2011/chapter_4_restoring_confidence_moving_brink.

4 "Afghanistan: Humanitarian Chief Highlights Plight of Displaced People," UNOCHA. <http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/afghanistan-humanitarian-chief-highlights-plight-displaced-people>.

5 "2012 UNHCR country operations profile—Afghanistan," UNHCR. <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486eb6.html>.

6 "Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan 2012," UNOCHA. <http://www.unocha.org/cap/appeals/consolidated-appeal-afghanistan-2012>.

Problem

The Horn of Africa is beset with interconnected humanitarian crises, drought and conflict. Somali refugees find host countries afflicted by their own humanitarian challenges, while those remaining in Somalia face emergency levels of food insecurity. Diversion and obstruction of aid and noncompliance with international humanitarian and human rights law by all parties exacerbate the situation. U.S. legal restrictions have impaired a timely response to those affected.

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Horn of Africa

Recommendations & Actions

The United States has led the international response to the crisis in the Horn of Africa and is well-placed to help improve the humanitarian and human rights situation in the region. Continued U.S. leadership in the Horn of Africa is critical for Somalia as well as Kenya and Ethiopia, two countries hosting large numbers of Somali refugees. The U.S. has also financially supported the Somali government and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Going forward, the U.S. government should:

Somalia

- Base aid decisions on humanitarian and development needs, best practices and principles. This will ensure that assistance is as effective and efficient as possible, saving more lives and using resources in the best way possible.
- Ensure that the Somali government and AMISOM minimize harm to civilian populations in their military operations, are held accountable to their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, minimize corruption and increase financial transparency.
- Monitor the humanitarian situation in Somalia and neighboring countries and ensure that the U.S. response is timely, reflects needs and is adequately funded.
- Support initiatives to maximize the access of humanitarian organizations to people in need by minimizing legal restrictions and liability for humanitarian action.¹

Ethiopia

- Work with the Ethiopian government to provide an enabling environment for all those responding to the humanitarian crisis. To create this environment, the Ethiopian government should ensure space for the NGO (nongovernmental organization) sector. It is also critical that the Ethiopian government limit bureaucratic impediments to the humanitarian response and work with NGOs to ensure they are following Ethiopian law.
- Encourage the Ethiopian government to implement its “out-of-camp” refugee policy, giving refugees an opportunity to work and contribute to the development of Ethiopia.

Kenya

- Ensure that the Kenyan government comprehensively meets its obligations for the international protection of Somali refugees.
- Provide support to the Kenyan government and civil society organizations leading up to and following national elections scheduled for March 2013, and develop contingency plans to deal with the potential humanitarian consequences if there is electoral violence.

Results

Implementing these recommendations will improve the fundamental security of the drought- and conflict-affected civilian population in Somalia and neighboring countries like Ethiopia and Kenya. U.S. aid will be used more effectively and efficiently and better support U.S. policy objectives of civilian wellbeing and stability in Somalia and the Horn region.

Background

The Horn of Africa is beset with interconnected humanitarian crises and unresolved or ongoing conflicts. In 2011, the failure of two consecutive rainy seasons in eastern Horn of Africa led to the most severe drought in 60 years, which severely affected more than 13 million people.² Famine was declared in southern Somalia; and at the same time farming and animal-raising communities in Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti faced critical food and water shortages, crop failures and substantial loss of livestock. Food insecurity and conflict have led to massive population displacement with humanitarian and political consequences throughout the region.

Somalia

For several decades, Somalia has suffered from conflict, drought and famine. There are more refugees from Somalia (at least 1 million) than from any other African country. Kenya and Ethiopia host the largest Somali refugee population, at more than 500,000 and 200,000 people respectively. Another 1.5 million people are displaced inside Somalia. In 2011, the combination of drought and conflict led to a famine in the south-central part of the country. Despite warning signs well before the onset of the famine, the international response was slow and late, costing lives. Eventually, the U.S.-led international aid effort ended the famine. However, millions of Somalis are still vulnerable to recurring famine. Displaced Somalis are unlikely to return home in large numbers until and unless there is lasting peace and adequate humanitarian conditions.

Effective humanitarian and development aid is critical to Somalia's recovery, security and long-term resistance to future droughts. Historically, the most effective and efficient aid to Somalia has been based on basic needs and humanitarian and development best practices and principles. Unfortunately, U.S. legal restrictions and liabilities have slowed and reduced the ability of aid organizations to reach people in need in Somalia.³ Other negative factors include a wide range of armed groups (including some associated with the Somali government) diverting and blocking access and aid. Regional countries and even some in the international community have chronically misinformed the public by mischaracterizing security realities and overstating security improvements. The Somali government and AMISOM have improved their performance in ensuring accountability and ending impunity for humanitarian and human rights violations of their direct and associated personnel. However, there are still frequent violations and too little monitoring and accountability. Donors are engaged. However, they have been slow to develop and implement systems and aid requirements related to accountability and transparency on humanitarian and human rights issues that are comparable to their

systems and requirements on financial transparency and accountability.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the most food insecure countries in the world.⁴ About 30 million people (47.5 percent of the rural population) live below the poverty line,⁵ and the 2011 Human Development Index ranks Ethiopia 174 out of 187 countries.⁶ To meet basic food needs, many rural Ethiopian households are forced to sell their assets just to survive. With a continuously shrinking asset base, Ethiopians are increasingly unable to mitigate the impact of climatic or other shocks, plunging them deeper into poverty and hunger, and turning every shock into a state of emergency.

In August 2012, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi died after 21 years in power. He led Ethiopia to become one of the fastest growing economies in Africa and was a valuable ally to the West in counterterrorism efforts. However, these advances came during a period of increased restrictions on civil society organizations and opposition parties and increased politicization of humanitarian assistance.

Kenya

In contrast to many of its neighbors, Kenya has enjoyed relative sociopolitical and economic stability since independence. However, significant political, economic and social welfare issues plague Kenya. In 2011, Kenya ranked 143 out of 187 countries in achieving the three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living.⁷ In addition, with over 40 major ethnic groups competing for political power, land and financial resources, tribal affinities are a considerable source of conflict, as demonstrated by the violence that followed the disputed elections in December 2007. Kenya hosts over 600,000 refugees from insecure neighboring countries such as Somalia and South Sudan, which further strains the fragile peace.⁸ Nearly half of the country's population lives below the national poverty line.⁹ Kenyans have seen increasing income inequality and an erosion of gains in education, health, food security, income and employment.¹⁰

1, 3 See InterAction, "Impact of U.S. Legal Restrictions on Humanitarian Action," *Foreign Assistance Briefing Book*, 2013

2 "Eastern Africa: Drought—Humanitarian Snapshot," OCHA, http://www.fews.net/docs/Publications/Horn_of_Africa_Drought_2011_06.pdf.

4 "2009 Key Facts and Findings—Global Hunger Index," International Food Policy Research Institute, 2009.

5 "Humanitarian Requirements Document," Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2012.

6 "Human Development Report," United Nations, 2011.

7 "Kenya Country Profile, Human Development Indicators," UNDP, 2011.

8 "Kenya Humanitarian Update," UNOCHA, November 2011.

9 "Kenya," Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2011.

10 "Kenya," CIA World Factbook, 2012.

Lord's Resistance Army-Affected Areas of Central Africa

Problem

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has terrorized civilians across central Africa for over two decades, exploiting porous borders and remote areas to carry out vicious attacks. What began as a rebellion against the Ugandan government has spread into a regional conflict that exacerbates tensions in an already volatile region.

Recommendations & Actions

The U.S. government is in a unique position to change the situation for communities affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). A targeted and comprehensive set of policy measures, spearheaded by high-level leadership from the executive branch and bolstered by congressional support, has the potential to provide both a significant boost to regional efforts to counter LRA violence and protect civilians across the affected region. To accomplish these two goals, the U.S. government should promote the following policies in LRA-affected areas:

- **Work with the United Nations, civil society groups and regional governments** to increase efforts to facilitate the escape and reintegration of LRA members through the use of targeted communications.
- **Support a robust international humanitarian response and increased funding for humanitarian operations** in LRA-affected areas, particularly for the 450,000 internally displaced persons and refugees in the region.
- **Support grassroots civil society groups in peace-building, reintegration and reconciliation** initiatives to address the root causes of the violence and ensure sustainable peace. Work with the Ugandan government to clarify the legal status of LRA defectors.
- **Work with the UN Security Council and African Union to press the Sudanese government** to allow investigations into allegations of LRA presence in Darfur.
- **Support the efforts of the UN, U.S. advisers and the African Union** to improve intelligence-sharing and coordination between UN peacekeepers and regional forces, ensuring that LRA fighters are unable to find safe haven anywhere in the remote region.
- **Pressure the governments of affected countries** and UN missions in the region to place a greater priority on civilian protection. Regional governments in particular should devote greater resources to ensuring civilians are protected through improved infrastructure and security sector reform.

Results

Implementation of these recommendations offers the opportunity for the United States to have a decisive impact on regional counter-LRA efforts. Such action could greatly improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of people currently suffering from LRA violence and enhance regional stability.

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Background

LRA in Uganda

The LRA, led by International Criminal Court (ICC) indictee Joseph Kony, originated in northern Uganda in the mid-1980s in opposition to the marginalization of the Acholi people by the southern-led Ugandan government. Quickly losing local support due to its brutality against alleged government collaborators and its military ineffectiveness, the LRA turned to attacking civilians for supplies and abducting child “recruits” to replenish their ranks. In turn, Uganda’s government conveniently used the threat of LRA abuses to consolidate its political and economical clamp-down over the north.

Neither military operations nor peace talks with the government ended LRA atrocities. The most recent round of talks collapsed in 2008, during which time Kony used a “ceasefire” to replenish his ranks and resources through periodic attacks on civilians. Nevertheless, the talks brought relative peace and stability to northern Uganda, as the bulk of the LRA relocated to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.¹

Despite improvements in conditions in northern Uganda, the LRA left a path of destruction: 1.8 million people were displaced due to the violence and tens of thousands died from the direct and indirect impact of the war. In addition, over 60,000 children and youth had been abducted for use as child soldiers and sex slaves. A generation of war severely disrupted livelihoods, and the north continues to struggle with crushing poverty as it tries to rebuild.

LRA in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The LRA has been active in northeast DRC since 2005, where they take advantage of weak government and poor infrastructure to carve out a safe haven and base of operations. Despite harboring no political grievances against the people of Congo, they have inflicted massive violence on them; in the first six months of 2012 alone the LRA committed 155 attacks, abducting 222 civilians and killing 12.² In 2008 Uganda launched large-scale military operations against rebel bases. The LRA retaliated with civilian massacres, killing over 1,000 people in December 2008 and December 2009 alone.³

The Congolese government’s decision to refuse access to Ugandan troops in September of 2011 hampers civilian protection efforts. Recent LRA attacks in the area have consisted largely of small-scale looting, suggesting LRA groups there are weak and in survival rather than offensive mode. But local fear has still displaced almost 400,000 Congolese civilians. The UN peacekeeping mission in DRC has deployed some forces to LRA-affected areas, and a handful of U.S. military advisers are assisting with information-sharing and cross-border coordination.

LRA in Central African Republic (CAR)

In CAR, the LRA preys on communities made vulnerable by isolation, government marginalization, and instability. LRA activity in CAR spiked dramatically in recent months, especially along the border with DRC and South Sudan. The first half of 2012 saw 35 attacks, during which time 26 civilians were killed and 89 abducted. In May 2012, Ugandan forces claimed a major victory in CAR, capturing top LRA commander Caesar Achellam.⁴ LRA leaders Dominic Ongwen and Okot Odhiambo, along with 100 fighters, are reportedly operating in the Vovodo-Chinko river basin in northeast CAR.⁵

LRA in Sudan and South Sudan

The LRA used southern Sudan as a base of operations during the mid-1990s. It received training, arms and support from the Sudanese government in return for fighting as a proxy force against southern Sudanese rebels (supported, in turn, by the Ugandan government). Sudanese support for the LRA allegedly dried up in the early 2000s, but accusations of resumed Sudanese support continue. LRA leaders reportedly met with the Sudanese military in 2009 and 2010 to solicit support, though it is unclear whether they were successful.⁶

Although the LRA has not committed an attack in South Sudan since 2011, evidence recently emerged that Kony has moved into the Kafia Kingi enclave, a disputed territory controlled by Sudan, along with some 150 fighters.⁷ Ugandan troops lack the mandate to pursue the LRA here, and the Sudanese government’s insistence that the UN not investigate these claims raises further suspicions of resumed Khartoum-LRA collaboration.⁸

1 “Peace Can Be: President Obama’s chance to help end LRA atrocities in 2012,” *Resolve*, February 2012.

2 “LRA Crisis Tracker: Midyear security brief,” *Resolve*, August 2102.

3 “The Christmas Massacres: LRA attacks on Civilians in Northern Congo,” *Human Rights Watch*, February 2009.

4 “LRA Crisis Tracker,” op. cit.

5 “Central African Republic: LRA Attacks Escalate: Strengthen Measures to Protect Civilians,” *Human Rights Watch*, April 20, 2012.

6 “Moment of Truth: The potential and limits of the US military’s counter-LRA deployment,” *Resolve*, June 2012. “Peace Can Be,” op. cit.

7 “Central African Republic: LRA Attacks Escalate,” op. cit.

8 “Sudan warns Security Council against mixing LRA issue with Darfur peacekeepers,” *Sudan Tribune*, July 24, 2012.

Problem

Mali, once heralded as a model of democracy in West Africa, has, since April 2012, effectively been divided in two. The conflict created mass displacement within Mali and its neighboring countries. Aid workers are largely unable to reach affected populations in the north of the country. Funding and emergency response have been insufficient. Civilians are bearing the brunt of the crisis with poor access to health and education.

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Mali

Recommendations & Actions

Mali, once heralded as a model of democracy in West Africa, has been mired in political conflict since the spring of 2012, when Tuareg separatists aligned with Islamist groups to launch a rebellion. The weak response by the civilian government sparked a military coup d'état. While the junta subsequently handed power back to an interim government, the vacuum it created provided an opportunity for Islamist groups to consolidate power in the north and push out their former Tuareg allies. The conflict, compounded by a food security crisis, has forced more than 440,000 people to flee their homes. The political stalemate in the country has hampered progress on meeting the humanitarian needs of the Malian people. We recommend that the U.S. government undertake the following actions to address the humanitarian crisis.

- Mitigate the effects of the conflict and the regional consequences of the food crisis:
 - » Ensure U.S. policies and priorities focus on the humanitarian crisis and support the ability of humanitarian agencies to deliver assistance independently.
 - » Encourage the European Union and other donors to increase their funding levels for the humanitarian response in Mali.
- Meet the needs of Malian refugees in neighboring countries:
 - » Ensure that U.S. government agencies provide assistance to communities that host refugees to reduce tensions between the refugee population and their host communities, many of whom face acute food and water shortages themselves.
 - » Provide and advocate for more resources devoted to protect refugees and for education activities – programs that are most vulnerable to funding shortfalls.
 - » Encourage host governments and UNHCR (the UN refugee agency) to adapt assistance to meet the needs of traditionally pastoral refugee populations rather than opting exclusively for an unsustainable refugee camp model; this will protect pastoralist livelihoods and freedom of movement.
- Alleviate the food security crisis in the Sahel:
 - » Prioritize programs that account for the risks faced by conflict-affected populations and those who face chronic food insecurity. Directing resources at the most vulnerable would be a positive outcome of the U.S. government's dialogue about resilience.
 - » Push UNHCR to better leverage the expertise of NGO partners that are already on the ground and have strong relationships with local communities.

Results

Further U.S. involvement in the humanitarian, postconflict and recovery efforts in Mali will help mitigate a complex regional crisis. This involvement will create the building blocks for a meaningful resilience strategy that will make the U.S. government's investment worthwhile in the mid and long term.

Background

Fueled by the proliferation of small arms originating from Libya, recurrent droughts and chronic food insecurity, and a weak central government, an alliance of Tuareg nationalists (MNLA), homegrown Islamic fundamentalists (MUJAO) and the regional al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) seized the Azawad territory of northern Mali in April 2012. The MNLA/MUJAO/AQIM alliance has since fractured, and Tuareg rebels have been expelled from three major towns of Northern Mali by different factions of Islamic fundamentalists, who are seeking to impose Shariah law in the territories they control.

A refugee crisis

Conflict, persecution and food insecurity have led more than 250,000 Malians to flee to neighboring countries to seek protection and assistance as refugees.¹ Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger together host more than 90 percent of all Malian refugees.² This influx of refugees has compounded neighboring countries' own challenges in confronting a food crisis that has affected 18 million people across the Sahel and placed 1 million children at risk of starvation.³

The flow of refugees continued unabated throughout the summer of 2012. The humanitarian community's response has been slow and inadequate given the scale of the crisis and its expected duration. The inadequate humanitarian response can be attributed to three factors:

1. Lack of engagement and funding from donors who have adopted a "wait and see" stance focusing on the political and security implications of the crisis rather than its humanitarian consequences;
2. Failure to quickly recognize the displacement crisis because concerns about the Sahel drought and food insecurity overshadowed it; and
3. UNHCR's lack of presence in host countries prior to the crisis, and the need for the operational agencies working in the region, which had been focused on development programming, to set up humanitarian operations.

The significant funding shortfall has made it difficult for aid agencies to meet refugees' most basic needs. Many camps do not meet emergency standards for water, sanitation or shelter; and protection activities, including educational programs, are woefully insufficient. The onset of the rainy season has increased the risk of a cholera epidemic and there is a high incidence of malaria in the camps.

An internal displacement crisis

There are more than 203,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Mali, fleeing areas of conflict or persecution

within the rebel-held north.⁴ Sixty percent of these IDPs remain in the north, and the remainder live in the south.⁵ It is difficult to ascertain the accuracy of these numbers because the IDPs in the south are typically hosted in urban areas with relatives or acquaintances and are therefore not easily counted. IDPs in the north are very difficult to reach.

Access to IDPs remains the main obstacle to humanitarian operations in northern Mali. Some assistance is reaching the affected populations, including food assistance, cholera kits and hygiene supplies. However, more could be done if the funding streams better matched the assessed needs of populations stranded in Mali. As of fall 2012, donors had only provided 49 percent of the humanitarian requirement set forth by the UN.

A food security crisis

The regional food crisis caused by erratic rainfall, low agricultural output and high food prices has significantly exacerbated the Mali conflict (and may even have contributed to it). Within Mali alone, 4.6 million people remain food insecure.⁶ The conflict has not only made it more difficult for food insecure populations to access assistance but also puts pressure on families hosting IDPs. Droughts and food crises are occurring more frequently in the Sahel. Donors and governments must adopt more comprehensive strategies and increase funding to address the larger challenges the region faces, including chronic poverty, increased environmental degradation and climate variability, and explosive population growth.

1 "More Aid Needed for Mali's Hidden Emergency, urge Guterres and U.S." UNHCR. <http://www.unhcr.org/501a6d629.html>.

2 "Mali Situation Update," UNHCR. <http://www.unhcr.org/50a35d509.html>.

3 "Food Crisis in Sahel." Oxfam International. <http://www.oxfam.org/en/sahel>.

4, 5 "Estimated IDP population in Mali," Commission on Population Movement. October 2012.

6 Food Crisis in Sahel." Oxfam International. <http://www.oxfam.org/en/sahel>.

Problem

A combination of limited government capacity, chronic and severe poverty, food insecurity, multiple humanitarian crises and violence have put a heavy toll on the lives of Pakistanis. In addition to causing widespread human suffering and squandered potential for economic growth, these tensions threaten the stability of the entire region.

Pakistan

Recommendations & Actions

The United States must continue to play a key role in facilitating social and economic development in Pakistan, and seek to ensure that its aid reaches those most in need. At a time of growing mistrust between the two countries, the U.S. must show that it is in Pakistan to stay and to help. Along with other donor nations, the U.S. must sustain adequate funding and engagement in the response to and recovery from a spate of disasters that have struck Pakistan in recent years. Over the long term, the U.S. must also support Pakistan's government in efforts to better engage with local communities and civil society in addressing both poverty and how to deal with the disasters many Pakistanis face. Efforts must be made to ensure humanitarian actors can both operate independently of political and military agendas and access populations in need of assistance. To address humanitarian needs in Pakistan, the U.S. government should:

- Provide adequate assistance to respond to the needs of Pakistanis affected by disaster and conflict and help them rebuild their lives. Integrate approaches to better prepare communities for disasters in all humanitarian and development programs.
- Work with Pakistan's government to ensure that protection and assistance needs are addressed for internally displaced persons (IDPs), both in IDP camps and elsewhere, with attention to the treatment of women, girls and other vulnerable groups.
- Continue to engage Pakistan's government and other stakeholders on providing asylum and assistance to Afghan refugees who cannot return home.
- Make explicit the distinction between humanitarian assistance and U.S. political and military goals. Ensure that civilian victims of U.S. drone attacks and Pakistani military operations receive tangible assistance or compensation.
- Build the capacity and accountability of civilian government institutions at all levels. Strengthen national and provincial disaster management authorities to respond to emergencies, reduce the risk of disasters and adapt to the impact of climate change.
- Focus nonmilitary assistance on long-term, sustainable development with increasing investments in poverty alleviation, governance, civil society and meaningful community participation throughout each stage of the development process.

Results

Effective recovery and development efforts will decrease human suffering and help the Pakistani people and their government reduce poverty and better withstand the impact of humanitarian emergencies.

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Background

In order to meet the long-term goal of stabilizing Pakistan, U.S. funding should be assessed in light of its impact on the deep inequalities of the country, vulnerabilities created by recent humanitarian crises and risks posed by natural hazards like floods and earthquakes. Congress passed the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act in October 2009 and authorized \$7.5 billion in nonmilitary assistance to Pakistan over five years. As this legislation passes the halfway point in its authorization, the U.S. should avoid the temptation to focus solely on quick-impact, high-visibility projects, but also emphasize sustainable, community-based development and civilian institutional strengthening over the longer term.

Inequality underlies much of the severe poverty in Pakistan since its creation. About half of the adult population is illiterate¹ and less than 50 percent have access to improved sanitation facilities.² Large parts of comparatively isolated territories in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) – among the poorest in the country – are extremely marginalized and underserved, further facilitating their use as havens for militant groups such as the Taliban. Conflict – resulting in part from corruption, weak governance and ineffective state institutions – has killed or injured thousands and displaced millions more.

These challenges have been exacerbated by devastating man-made and natural disasters in recent years. A historic flood in the summer of 2010 inundated one-fifth of Pakistan's land, killing over 1,700 people; leaving 7 million people homeless; and devastating crops and farmland in the "breadbasket" areas of the country.³ The summer of 2011 also brought significant flooding to a smaller area in the provinces of Sindh and Baluchistan, affecting the lives of 5.2 million people.⁴ To build on fragile gains, assistance should be provided in ways that ensure that Pakistani communities are better prepared for future disasters.

Ongoing violence and conflict in Pakistan's northwest has exacted a heavy toll and continues to force people to flee. Almost 3 million people were internally displaced at the height of the conflict in 2009 and thousands of civilians were killed or injured.⁵ Conflict between the Pakistani military and insurgent groups has continued in FATA, with the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Cameron Munter declaring a disaster on October 4, 2011. As of August 2012, the total IDP population was 742,000 and half of the newly displaced are children.⁶ Only 10 percent of displaced people are living in camps due to difficulties registering their status with the government.⁷ The rest live with relatives or host communities in cramped conditions with little access to food, clean water and jobs. Donor countries that have supported government efforts to root out militants have an obligation to assist the people caught in the crossfire. Failure to meet their needs will result in greater

human suffering, further diminish efforts to reduce poverty in the northwest, and could serve as an ongoing source of instability in Pakistan and the wider region.

Despite the return of an estimated 5.7 million Afghan refugees to their country since 2002, an estimated 1.7 million remain in Pakistan.⁸ Only 50,000 Afghan refugees returned in 2011, demonstrating that the vast majority are unable or unwilling to go back.⁹ While Afghanistan is unable to absorb a significant number of returnees due to a deteriorating security situation and lack of basic services, Pakistan is not willing to support the integration of these Afghans into its own population. Proof of Registration cards, the document allowing Afghan refugees to reside in Pakistan, expire on December 31, 2012, meaning Afghan refugees may no longer be allowed to stay. Negotiations continue between the government of Pakistan and international donors regarding the status of these refugees, but their fate remains uncertain.

During the last few years, there has been an alarming increase in the number of attacks against nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including the abduction and murder of staff members. The security and regulatory environment for NGOs has deteriorated especially over the last year in the wake of several events, including a fake vaccination campaign by the CIA that raised unfounded suspicions around NGOs.¹⁰ Perceived connections between NGOs and the political and security agendas of foreign governments have contributed to this danger for NGO workers, made it more difficult to operate in Pakistan, and ultimately hindered NGOs' ability to provide assistance to those in need. A clear delineation between humanitarian programming and U.S. strategic goals must be maintained in order to protect the lives of NGO staff and Pakistanis who are in desperate need of assistance.

1 "The World Factbook: Pakistan," CIA, 2012.

2 "Workshop: five million people get access to latrines," The Express Tribune. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/436251/workshop-five-million-people-get-access-to-latrines/>.

3 "Perspectives on the 2010 floods in Pakistan," Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, 2011.

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6 "Displacement in KP/FATA: Needs and Response," UNICEF, 2012.

7 "IRC Assessment in Pakistan Shows "Shocking" Conditions for Many Displaced People Living Outside Camps" IRC. <http://www.rescue.org/news/irc-assessment-pakistan-shows-shocking-conditions-many-displaced-people-living-outside-camps>.

8 "Afghan Solutions Strategy," UNHCR. <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4f9016576.html>.

9 "For an Afghan Refugee Family, Reports from Home Spur a Return," UNHCR. <http://www.unhcr.org/4f05a0ee9.html>.

10 InterAction letter to General David Petraeus. <http://www.interaction.org/sites/default/files/Letter%20to%20General%20David%20Petraeus.pdf>.

Problem

After the 2011 referendum on independence, Sudan and South Sudan became two countries. However, the impact of decades of conflict continues to make peace and sustainable development elusive for both countries while Darfur and much of the border region remains volatile. Access to people in need remains limited, largely due to logistical impediments in South Sudan and political and security challenges in Sudan.

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Sudan and South Sudan

Recommendations & Actions

The international community, with the United States at the forefront, has invested significant time and resources to address humanitarian emergencies in Sudan and South Sudan. Too often, however, the focus has been on the symptoms rather than the causes of the crisis. With a focus on the underlying governance and human rights issues that are driving conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan, further disasters can be averted and more lives saved. U.S. policymakers should take the following actions to advance peace and recovery in both countries:

- Continue to provide substantial, timely, predictable support for humanitarian aid and development assistance in both countries through long-term, multiyear programs, and ensure this aid is based solely on need and independent of political objectives.
- Ensure the three peacekeeping missions in Sudan and South Sudan (the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei, and the African Union/ UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur) are properly resourced to execute their respective mandates.

In Sudan, the U.S. government should:

- In coordination with the UN, the African Union and the Arab League, pressure Sudan's government to allow unrestricted humanitarian access across the country, particularly in rebel-controlled areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, as well as in all areas of Darfur. All parties to the conflict must be pressured to refrain from causing harm to civilians, cease hostilities and seek political solutions.
- Ensure that refugee and internally displaced person (IDP) returns in Darfur are voluntary and accompanied by reintegration assistance and adequate service delivery.

In South Sudan, the U.S. government should:

- Invest in peace-building initiatives to address intertribal conflict and programs that build the agricultural sector, improve educational opportunities, and ensure access to and ownership of land for returnees, IDPs and vulnerable groups.
- Support the development of civil society and accountable government institutions.
- Encourage South Sudan's government to devise a regulatory framework that supports the efforts of national and international NGOs rather than suppressing them.

Results

Sudan and South Sudan will be able to coexist more peacefully, with both countries working to eradicate the root causes of conflict, marginalization and poverty. Both countries will respect the rights and dignity of men, women and children, who as active citizens will be able to demand equitable and increased access to natural resources and more sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Background

The people of Sudan and South Sudan have long suffered from recurring crises due to conflict and natural disasters, aggravated by political and economic instability, poor governance, extreme poverty, gender inequality, and systematic marginalization of ethnic and religious groups. The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) put an end to the 22-year civil war that killed an estimated 2 million people and displaced more than 4 million, but many of the CPA's provisions have not been implemented.

South Sudan

The CPA included a provision for a referendum on the future of southern Sudan after an interim period; and in January 2011, the people of the south voted overwhelmingly for secession. On July 9, 2011, South Sudan became the world's newest nation. Decades of marginalization and conflict have left the new country with some of the worst humanitarian conditions in the world. Efforts to undertake the enormous development effort the country needs have been hindered by poor infrastructure, low levels of education, internal instability, seasonal droughts and flooding, and, perhaps most significantly, unresolved issues between Sudan and South Sudan.

When South Sudan seceded, it took with it the majority of the former Sudan's oil resources. In January 2012, following the failure of the two countries to reach an agreement on the distribution of the oil revenues, South Sudan shut down its production. In March 2012, South Sudan briefly seized the disputed oil-rich town of Heglig, prompting strong condemnation from the international community. Under immense international pressure, Sudan and South Sudan signed an agreement in August to resume oil production, but it may take months for the oil to flow. In the meantime, South Sudan's economy has suffered from the depletion of foreign currency reserves, massive inflation, currency depreciation and growing levels of poverty.¹ The crisis has also significantly increased the cost of the humanitarian response as commodity prices have skyrocketed.

South Sudan is currently hosting more than 170,000 Sudanese refugees, and many of these refugees live in some of the poorest and most remote areas of the country. Overall, more than half the population of the country is food insecure, and between 1.2 and 2.4 million people require food assistance, double the amount of 2011.² Approximately 67,000 people remain displaced from the Abyei region – an area whose status remains unresolved. Returnees continue to struggle because they are insufficiently supported by the state.

Sudan

The CPA also includes steps to transform citizen's rights and life in what is now the Republic of Sudan, but those provisions have not been implemented. Years of poor governance, marginalization and underdevelopment in the peripheries of the country have led to conflict, displacement, disintegration of the social fabric and a protracted humanitarian emergency across much of the country. Meanwhile, the shutdown of oil production in South Sudan, ongoing tensions between the two countries and conflict within Sudan have severely harmed the country's economy, resulting in record inflation and high food prices.

Eastern Sudan is among the most marginalized regions in Sudan with high morbidity rates, very limited services and the majority of the 142,000 refugees that Sudan hosts from countries like Eritrea. The Humanitarian Aid Commission's decision on May 31, 2012 to close seven international nongovernmental organization projects exacerbated the situation, leaving 600,000 beneficiaries without vital services.

Conflict erupted in Southern Kordofan State in June 2011 and in Blue Nile State in September 2011 between the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army–Northern Sector (SPLM/A-N). According to OCHA (the office of the UN humanitarian coordinator), more than 520,000 people are displaced or severely affected by the conflict in Southern Kordofan, and 145,000 are displaced or severely affected in Blue Nile.³ A further 205,000 Sudanese refugees have fled to camps in South Sudan and Ethiopia.⁴ Hundreds of thousands living in both states have been denied access to humanitarian assistance despite efforts by the UN, Arab League and African Union to negotiate a mechanism to ensure humanitarian access.

In Darfur, despite some refugee and IDP returns in 2012, 1.7 million people remain in IDP camps and humanitarian access continues to be constrained.⁵

1 Leaked World Bank Report published by the Sudan Tribune http://www.sudantribune.com/IMG/pdf/WB_SS_Analysis.pdf.

2 South Sudan: Monthly Humanitarian Snapshot," OCHA, August 2012. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/map_2916.pdf.

3 Sudan: Monthly Humanitarian Snapshot," OCHA, July 2012. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA%20Sudan%20Humanitarian%20Snapshot_July%202012.pdf.

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

Problem

Syrian civilians are bearing the brunt of an extremely violent internal conflict. Over 2.5 million people need humanitarian assistance within Syria, and over 1.5 million people have been displaced from their homes. The region is struggling to cope with the growing influx of refugees fleeing the violence. Humanitarian access inside Syria is severely limited and the international community's response has been inadequate.

Syria

Recommendations & Actions

The humanitarian crisis caused by violence in Syria is of a magnitude rarely witnessed in recent years, engulfing Syria and its neighbors, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The scope of displacement continues to overwhelm international and host countries' resources; and the many needs of a highly traumatized population must be met. The U.S. government and international community should continue to respond to the crisis with both diplomacy and humanitarian assistance, with a focus on the following:

- **Ensure displaced people can reach safety and have their basic needs met.** The U.S. government should work with countries in the region to ensure borders are open to refugees. Increased international assistance should help ease stress on host governments, communities and families in order to improve refugees' access to basic needs such as food, water, shelter, education and health care.
- **Push for humanitarian access to vulnerable people in Syria.** Since the majority of Syrians affected by the violence are inside the country, it is crucial to maintain pressure on the Syrian government to allow humanitarian assistance to reach civilians trapped inside Syria.
- **Support Iraqis and Palestinians fleeing Syria.** Support Iraqis returning to Iraq due to the violence in Syria; and work with host countries to ensure Palestinians fleeing from Syria have access to safety in neighboring countries and are not subject to arbitrary detention or other discriminatory practices.
- **Work with the international community to increase funding contributions.** The current funding appeals are only half-filled, while the number of people requiring assistance continues to grow exponentially. The U.S. should continue to encourage other donor states to meaningfully contribute to the humanitarian response.
- **Protect women and girls.** The majority of those fleeing the conflict are women and children, many of whom were exposed in Syria to violence, including sexual violence, and are now at risk of trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Increased funding and staff should be dedicated to programs focused on the protection of women and girls and services for victims of gender-based violence.

Results

An effective and coordinated humanitarian response with strong U.S. support will ensure that the immediate needs of affected populations are adequately addressed. Support to host countries and affected communities will help maintain international protection for those seeking safety and contribute toward strengthening stability in the region.

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Background

Since the conflict began in March 2011, over 408,000 Syrians have left their country due to the violence, and the number is expected to reach 710,000 by early 2013.¹ Approximately 65 percent of those who have fled their homes remain in Syria where they face a constant threat of violence, homelessness, and lack of access to food, clean water and humanitarian relief.² Tens of thousands of others have fled to neighboring Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. Over 100,000 people sought refuge in neighboring countries in August alone.³ The refugee population in Turkey has increased by 75 percent in less than two months, while more than 700 people enter Jordan every day.⁴

The refugee crisis

The primary needs of Syrian refugees concern shelter, health and mental health, education and livelihoods. The majority of those fleeing the conflict are women and children.

The government of Turkey has largely been relying on its own resources to address the needs of over 120,000 Syrian refugees seeking safety within its borders.⁵ Turkey has welcomed Syrian refugees in 14 camps⁶ whose capacity, according to U.S. government officials, exceeds international standards.⁷ However, processing of Syrian refugees into Turkey has slowed significantly as Turkey hurries to build additional refugee camps. Some 25,000 Syrian refugees wait on the Turkish border, some of whom seek to enter the country.⁸

More than 127,000 Syrian refugees have sought safety in Lebanon, which has kept its border open to refugees.⁹ Some rent apartments or stay with family and friends, but many are in short-term housing in public buildings such as schools. The many refugees in Lebanon urgently need alternative shelter and greater access to health services. Security is also a concern for those living in border areas.

Jordan has kept its borders open to Syrian refugees, initially using transit facilities to gradually allow those with family and friends in Jordan to move to urban and rural areas. In July 2012, Jordan began moving newly arriving refugees to the Za'atari refugee camp, where some 21,000 refugees receive basic assistance administered by the United Nations and local and international nongovernmental agencies.¹⁰ Another camp is under construction. An estimated additional 100,000 Syrian refugees live in host communities throughout Jordan.

The al-Qaim Iraq border has now been closed due to limited capacity to receive more refugees, but some 50,000 Syrian refugees have entered Iraq since the conflict began.¹² In addition to Syrian refugees, nearly 55,000 Iraqis have returned to Iraq from Syria, settling primarily

in Baghdad.¹³ Like Syrian refugees, Iraqi returnees need assistance with shelter, health and livelihoods.

Inside Syria

The humanitarian situation in Syria is deteriorating every day with no respite for the foreseeable future. There are 2.5 million people in urgent need of assistance in a country engulfed in a generalized and brutal conflict where no one is safe. Food is scarce. And basic services are barely functioning, if at all, in both urban and rural areas. For most, access to water, health care and education is almost impossible. Compounding this dire situation, independent humanitarian agencies have limited access to the affected populations because of drastic restrictions imposed on them by Syria's government as well as generalized violence and insecurity. Nevertheless, NGOs have worked steadily to increase their assistance to reach affected populations.

Lack of funding further hampers the response to a crisis of this magnitude. The UN funding request for Syria has increased from \$180 million to \$347 million to reflect the new realities in the country and the region and the ever-increasing humanitarian needs. As of December 2012, this request was only funded at 50 percent.¹⁴

1, 2 "Humanitarian Bulletin Syria – Issue 12," OCHA. November 2012.

5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13 "Syria Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #4." USAID. November 21, 2012.

3 "More than 100,000 flee Syria in August, highest monthly total," UNHCR. Sept. 4, 2012.

4 "Syria in Crisis: Refugees and the Challenges of the Humanitarian Response," U.S. Congressional Briefing by International Rescue Committee Vice President Michael Kocher. July 31, 2012.

7 "The Continuing Humanitarian Crisis in Syria." U.S. Department of State Office of the Spokesperson. Sept. 5, 2012.

14 "Syria: Humanitarian appeal almost doubles," OCHA. <http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/syria-humanitarian-appeal-almost-doubles>.

Problem

Yemen faces daunting humanitarian and development challenges. The uncertain political transition, brought about by the ouster of Yemen's former autocratic ruler, has been characterized by conflict, rising food insecurity and large numbers of displaced people. Donor attention is critical to prevent conditions from further deteriorating in a country and a region where access to the most vulnerable populations is extremely limited.

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Yemen

Recommendations & Actions

Although international and U.S. government assistance has increased in recent years, Yemen's humanitarian needs have grown. In the middle of a transition, Yemen is missing opportunities for constructive reform. This is both because Yemeni services and governance are centralized, and because many Yemenis are isolated from the elite-driven political transition. To address the humanitarian needs resulting from this situation, the U.S. government should:

- **Consolidate and expand the U.S. leadership role in tackling the humanitarian crisis** by increasing funding to address conflict-driven displacement and the refugee and migrant flows from the Horn of Africa. In working to ensure the stability of the region, U.S. policymakers should not lose sight of the pressing humanitarian needs in Yemen and must make explicit the distinction between humanitarian assistance and U.S. political and military goals.
- **Address the root causes of the crisis in the country such as food insecurity, the lack of safe drinking water and unemployment.** Attention to these basic needs will alleviate suffering and allow for more sustainable development.
- **Encourage new major donors such as Yemen's neighbors to fund approaches that increase the ability of the Yemeni people to prepare for and mitigate the adverse impacts of disasters** and urge all donors to coordinate their assistance to effectively reach the most vulnerable.
- **Ensure humanitarian and development programming in Yemen has greater impact by working through local, preestablished channels for service delivery.** Prioritizing capacity building for local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and local government is not only efficient, but also has the potential to open up dialogue between citizens and the government.
- **Encourage a more inclusive political transition.** The government of Yemen has yet to address several grievances related to the breakdown of services and the lack of government transparency around expenditures. The general perception is that the government holds back youth and other reformers while existing elite and patronage-based systems are entrenched. To address this problem, U.S. policies should encourage a more open governing system in Yemen.

Results

These steps will help create an inclusive governance system that meets the humanitarian needs of vulnerable people, supports the political transition and establishes the foundations of sustainable local channels to address needs.

Background

Yemen is emerging from 33 years of autocratic rule under former President Ali Abdallah Saleh. The Gulf Cooperation Council Agreement, negotiated in November 2011, offers a roadmap for the country's political transition. Nevertheless, security challenges, chronic humanitarian needs and a deepening economic crisis undermine the success of the new government. The nascent government also faces challenges due to both a weak, heavily polarized political system and the presence of armed opposition and terrorist groups that have created a general breakdown of law and order and threatened civilian security. The political changes in Yemen have further aggravated the food, fuel and financial crises in the country, and the situation is made worse by skyrocketing global food prices. Government systems, outdated and overly centralized, cannot get services to the people who need them.

Food, water, health and displacement

Yemen is facing a large-scale humanitarian crisis. Malnutrition has surpassed emergency levels and continues to grow. While there is food in the markets, 44.5 percent of the population (10 million Yemenis) cannot afford the food they need, up from 22 percent in 2009.¹

About half the population in Yemen lacks access to potable water.² Lack of clean water threatens the health of many Yemenis, particularly children and other vulnerable groups. Sana'a is projected to become the world's first capital city to run dry, perhaps as early as 2025.³ Rural areas also face shortages, in part due to the cultivation of qat, a local drug crop. In addition, rural families often migrate to urban centers for better employment opportunities, straining urban water resources. Local conflicts often play out around access to water.

Health issues are a major challenge, especially for children. More than half of children under age 5 are malnourished. The mortality rate for children under 5 is 77 per 1,000 live births, approximately 10 times the rate in the United States.⁴

Adding to the scale of these challenges, nearly half a million Yemenis are internally displaced; and 200,000 refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers have entered from the Horn of Africa, worsening humanitarian needs.⁵ The large number of displaced people in Yemen adds to the complexity and difficulty of responding to the humanitarian crisis.

Poverty, unemployment and youth

Poverty and unemployment are on the rise and disproportionately affect young people, increasing the prospect of

future insecurity. (Over half of the population is under age 24).⁶

The Yemeni government announced in August 2011 that unemployment reached 52 percent for youth aged 18-26. The proportion of the population living on less than \$1 per day has more than tripled since 2000 to 17.5 percent. On average, 34.8 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line – the highest figures in the Arab world.⁷ The recent political crisis – with its civil unrest, lack of government services, high food and fuel prices, and declining oil production – significantly increased poverty nationwide.

In summary, the needs in Yemen are great and interconnected. The political transition continues to destabilize an already tenuous environment. Underlying issues of unemployment and the problems of displaced and refugee populations further exacerbate stresses on the population. Key humanitarian needs remain in the water, food and health sectors, which must be addressed to alleviate the humanitarian crisis.

1 The State of Food Security and Nutrition in Yemen, 2012 Comprehensive Food Security Survey, World Food Programme <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/wfp247832.pdf>.

2 Yemen 2012 Humanitarian Response Plan," UN OCHA. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/full_report_127.pdf.

3 "In Yemen, Water Grows Scarcer" New York Times. <http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/25/in-yemen-water-grows-scarcer/>.

4 "At a glance: Yemen" UNICEF. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/yemen_statistics.html and "At a glance: United States of America" UNICEF. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/usa_statistics.html.

5 "Internal Displacement Grows in Yemen" UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.org/4f59e9009.html>.

6 "Yemen Country Profile" UN Development Programme. <http://www.undp.org/ye/y-profile.php>.

7 "Yemen 2012 Humanitarian Response Plan," UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/full_report_127.pdf.



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