



July 17, 2006

Dear Friends of Foreign Assistance,

The enclosed report for the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid's (ACVFA) June 7 meeting reflects a time of transition at USAID as well as continuity. As the implementation of the foreign assistance reforms in support of transformational diplomacy move forward, the Committee hopes to provide a forum for the exchange of views between USAID's leadership and the broad sweep of private individuals and organizations that partner with the agency on the ground.

The Committee was delighted that Ambassador Tobias was able to give the morning keynote. In his new role as the Director of Foreign Assistance and USAID Administrator, he made the case for a more cohesive and effective U.S. foreign assistance program. From the discussion and questions reflected in the report, it is clear that as the reform process moves forward, there is support for a more comprehensive and transparent strategy and a desire for engagement with private voluntary organizations as well as a belief in the need to strengthen the role of civil society.

Reflecting its ongoing commitment to Africa, the Committee's Fragile States Task Force invited Lloyd Pierson, Assistant Administrator for Africa, to update the ACVFA on the African Growth and Opportunity Act Forum (AGOA). Mr. Pierson's emphasis on the importance of agriculture for a sustainable economy in Africa received a lot of interest and support. He was followed by an equally provocative panel discussion on the impact of AGOA from both the perspective of USAID and its partners.

Recognizing the 25th anniversary of the discovery of HIV, the Committee invited Dr. Mark Dybul, Acting Coordinator for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to give the afternoon keynote on the impact of concerted efforts to combat the spread of the virus as the treatment of those suffering from AIDS. He was followed by an extremely informative and timely presentation by Patrick Purtill on the New Partner Initiative, a funding effort intended to engage indigenous and smaller U.S. groups. The ACVFA's own Tim Flanigan then gave a dynamic presentation on the challenges ahead in treating AIDS. The afternoon session closed with an engaging panel discussion amongst PEPFAR grantees, looking at lessons learned from both the faith-based and sectarian perspectives.

In closing, the ACVFA looks forward to its October meeting where it plans to interface with USAID's leadership on the implementation of the reforms, particularly as it relates to the importance of engaging the American people and serving as a conduit for feedback from USAID's partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benjamin K. Homan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Benjamin K. Homan
Chairman
Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid