



November 27, 2006

Dear Friends of Foreign Assistance,

Please find enclosed the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid's (ACVFA) October 25 meeting report. This was the final public convening of 2006 for the Committee, a year of many changes for USAID and consequently the foreign assistance community which the ACVFA represents.

Both the morning and afternoon sessions of the ACVFA's public meeting devoted a great deal of time to the reforms. Presentations by USAID's Acting Deputy Administrator James Kunder and Dirk Dijkerman, Chief Operating Officer in the Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance were highly informative. Updates on the steps taken to date and the role of USAID were very useful. The importance of interfacing with leadership in the midst of the reforms cannot be understated.

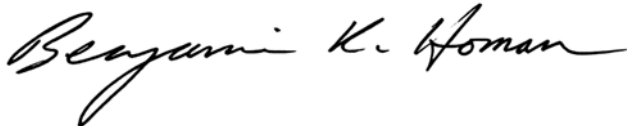
The discussion continued in the afternoon with a joint presentation led by Laura Wilson and Charles North, both with the Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance. The level of detail on the operation plans, the priority objectives, and training was extremely helpful. However, probably the most useful part of the afternoon session was the opportunity for ACVFA members, the meeting participants and staff from the Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance to take part in discussion groups around the reforms. Questions were raised about the positive aspects of the reforms, constructive criticisms, and the future role of the ACVFA and PVOs as the reforms move forward. From the reports of the group moderators, it is clear that the ACVFA and the community which it represents desire greater engagement and similar opportunities for discussion in the future.

While the reforms are understandably front and center, the work of USAID continues, as reflected in the President's Malaria Initiative update provided by Admiral Tim Ziemer. The opportunity for the ACVFA to hear first-hand about the rapid implementation of measures by USAID and its partners to roll back the debilitating impact of malaria upon women and children, communities, economies and nations was very beneficial. The ACVFA received the subsequent news of a forthcoming White House Summit on December 14 with a great deal of interest and anticipation of the next steps.

The dynamic presentation led by USAID's Bill Garvelink and Mark Ward on lessons learned during relief and reconstruction efforts was complimented by a free flowing panel discussion moderated by Nancy Aossey, ACVFA Member, with Rein Paulsen from World Vision, Randy Martin from Mercy Corps, and Darlene Taylor from Pfizer. Due to the interesting and helpful points made by the panelists, the ACVFA recommended that a "lessons learned" document be provided for meeting participants. You will find this posted on the Committee's web site.

In closing, the ACVFA looks forward to 2007 and its ongoing work to engage the American people around the importance of U.S. foreign assistance and serve as a conduit for feedback and information between USAID and its partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benjamin K. Homan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'B'.

Benjamin K. Homan
Chairman
Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid