

AS DELIVERED

**Ambassador Randall L. Tobias
Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance & USAID Administrator**

**“The Global Development Alliance Excellence Award:
A Recognition of Innovation in Partnership”**

**The National Press Club
Washington, D.C.**

February 21, 2007

I wanted to take this opportunity to present this year’s USAID Global Development Alliance “Excellence Award.”

Public-private partnerships are a vital part of leveraging resources to advance human potential.

Indeed I would argue that one of the ways in which we are going to make more money available for foreign assistance going forward is to find ways to leverage other money that is out there.

The “Excellence Award” is given on an annual basis, to showcase exemplary alliances that bring various resources together with innovative approaches to solve particular development challenges.

This year’s award goes to the International Youth Foundation for their Entra 21 Alliance.

The Entra 21 Program has brought together a diverse group of public and private sector partners to support 31 locally conceived and executed projects in 20 Latin American and Caribbean nations.

Entra 21 has trained nearly 20,000 disadvantaged urban and rural youth for jobs related to information technology and other sectors.

To date, Entra 21 has had nearly 55% of its graduates placed in jobs or paid internships.

This \$30 million alliance has had more than 70% of its resources provided by the private sector, from companies such as Nokia, Lucent, Nike and many others.

The private sector has been critical in providing up to date training materials and curriculum and, most importantly, offering graduates of the training internships and jobs.

I'm pleased that Bill Reese, who also serves on our ACVFA Board, is here to receive this award today on behalf of the International Youth Foundation.

In closing, let me summarize the importance of such innovative alliances by simply reading the Presidential Proclamation congratulating Entra 21:

"I send greetings to those gathered for the presentation of the 2006 Global Development Alliance Excellence Award.

Congratulations to Entra 21 on being honored for your efforts to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged youth in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Our Nation is committed to building a brighter future for the people of the Western Hemisphere.

As citizens of the Americas see their lives improve and opportunity become more abundant, their faith in a free and democratic society will grow and our hemisphere will become a more secure, hopeful, and prosperous place for all people.

Initiatives such as Entra 21 contribute to this progress by helping youth gain technical skills and placing them in jobs within the field of information technology.

These efforts strengthen local economies and help young people throughout the Americas realize a promising future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

I appreciate the efforts of the Entra 21 initiative and all those who give their hearts, resources, and energy to enhancing the lives of people throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Your commitment to others demonstrates the compassion and generosity of the human spirit and makes the world a better place.

Laura and I send our best wishes.

President George W. Bush”

Congratulations, Bill.