Dear U.S. Senate: Confirm Gayle Smith as USAID Administrator

June 15, 2015

Dear U.S. Senate:

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, urge you to swiftly confirm Gayle Smith as the next Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. A Senate-confirmed appointee at the helm of our lead development agency is essential to advancing U.S. development goals to end extreme poverty around the globe and ensuring that our foreign assistance is accountable and sustainable. Gayle Smith is a strong and experienced leader with a proven commitment to effective development.

In her time at the National Security Council, Ms. Smith was instrumental in the creation of the first-ever Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development. This directive focused on reestablishing the United States as the global leader on international development by modernizing the U.S. Government approach to development, including rebuilding USAID’s capacity. The policy paved the way for USAID Forward, a series of reforms that have allowed the agency to better deliver results for the American people and for people in developing countries. In addition, Ms. Smith has helped to foster a more robust interagency dialogue and coordination around U.S. development efforts, preparing her to effectively advance our development priorities from day one.

USAID, with bipartisan support from Congress, has made significant progress toward becoming a results-driven agency by improving the effectiveness and transparency of U.S. foreign assistance. The agency is conducting higher-quality monitoring and evaluation to inform decision-making, coordinating with other agencies, donors, and partner countries to reduce gaps and redundancies, and demonstrating a greater commitment to data transparency. USAID needs a Senate-confirmed Administrator who can work with Congress and other agencies to implement and institutionalize those gains and to ensure the continued elevation of development above defense and diplomacy as a vital form of engagement to improve the lives and well-being of men and women around the world.

When the Administrator position was vacant in 2009 for nearly a full year, America’s ability to maintain its leadership role in international development suffered. At a time when we are responding to global crises in places like Nepal, Syria, and Yemen, and with the Millennium Development Goals expiring and a new set of goals taking their place, the United States cannot afford to be without a strong USAID Administrator to lead our engagement and represent our interests internationally. Now is too important a moment to delay action.

We urge you to vote to confirm Gayle Smith as soon as possible to support the administration and development programs and the accountability of our foreign assistance resources.

Individuals

J. Brian Atwood, Dean, Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Bette, University of Minnesota; Former Administrator, USAID G. William Anderson, MFAN Principal David Beckmann, President, Bread for the World The Honorable Howard Berman, Former U.S. House of Representatives; MFAN Honorary Co-Chair Pierre Ferrari, President and CEO, Heifer International Claude C.G. Fonthim, CEO, Fonthim International, LLC Henrietta H. Fore, Former Administrator, USAID Samuel P. Fried, Executive Vice President - Law, Policy and Governance, J. Brand Dr. Edwin H.格雷戈里, Executive Director, Global Campaign for Education-US George Ingram, Senior Fellow, Brookings; MFAN Co-Chair General James L. Jones, Former National Security Advisor, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps The Honorable Jim Kolbe, Former Member U.S. House of Representatives; MFAN Honorary Co-Chair Jim Kandeh, Former Deputy Administrator, USAID Kristin N. Lord, President and CEO, IREX Rear Admiral Donald P. Loren, United States Navy (ret), former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter McPherson, Former Administrator, USAID Carolyn Miles, President and CEO, Save the Children; MFAN Co-Chair Rob Mosbacher, Former President and CEO, OPEC John Norris, Executive Director of the Sustainable Security and Peacebuilding Initiative, Center for American Progress Larry Newell, Independent Consultant Ray Offenheiser, President, Oxfam America Diana Ohlbaum, President, DLO Global LLC Carol Peasley, MFAN Principal The Honorable Jon Porter, Former Member of U.S. House of Representatives William S. Reese, President and CEO, International Youth Foundation Tessie San Martin, President and CEO, Plan International USA Liz Schuyler Alexander Shakow, Co-Chair, USAID Alumni Association Ritu Sharma, Principal, Sharma Solutions Dr. Christine Sos, Executive Director and CEO, Global Health Council Dr. Jeffrey L. Sturchio, President and CEO, Rabin Martin Connie Veillette, MFAN Co-Chair Jennifer L. Windsor, CEO, Women for Women International

Organizations


The Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) was created to build upon the bipartisan consensus that has emerged over the last decade that the U.S. should play a leadership role in achieving economic growth and reducing poverty and suffering around the world, and that we can play this role more effectively, efficiently, and transparently. For more information, please visit www.modernizeaid.net.

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