

KEY BENCHMARKS FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY REFORM

With his announcement in September, 2010 of the Administration's new global development policy, President Obama has outlined a future in which development serves as a core pillar of U.S. foreign policy, delivering greater results for people in poverty around the world and for U.S. taxpayers. The President's policy provides a long-overdue roadmap for more strategic, effective, accountable U.S. foreign assistance, and puts forward a mechanism for regularly refreshing our development approach through the establishment of a U.S. Global Development Strategy.

As an extension of the new development policy, the State Department and USAID completed in December, 2010 the first-ever Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), which is intended to better coordinate U.S. diplomacy and development efforts in strengthening America's civilian power. However, as with most ambitious policy pronouncements, the true test will come with the details of implementation.

As the first anniversary of the Administration's new development policy approaches, MFAN has developed the following benchmarks as a tool for assessing the Administration's progress toward implementing its policy proposals. The benchmarks are based on Administration policy documents and commitments and informed by MFAN implementation recommendations.

Are the Administration's policy proposals maximizing development impact by...

1. Maximizing efficiencies by eliminating wasteful regulations, better coordinating and leveraging work with partners, and demanding clear results through better evaluation?

- Supporting improved burden-sharing with key development partners and more effective multilateral institutions;
- Improving coordination between assistance and non-assistance development tools;
- Providing the NSC with a strong coordinating role on the Interagency Policy Committee for Development to ensure appropriate levels of strategic and program coordination; and
- Consulting early and broadly with U.S. civil society and the private sector to leverage best available knowledge and expertise?

2. Increasing accountability to U.S. taxpayers, as well as people in developing countries?

- Demonstrating the ability of programs to effectively eliminate poverty and promote economic growth in the developing world;
- Concentrating development spending where it can be effective and curtailing spending where it has proven ineffective based on rigorous monitoring and evaluation;
- Holding countries receiving assistance primarily for strategic or transition purposes accountable for development results; and
- Building on the new Foreign Assistance Dashboard by publishing comprehensive, comparable, and timely information on all USG development activities?

3. Codifying a shared Executive-Legislative vision for the U.S. approach to development built around sound strategic planning, greater transparency, accountability for results, and the flexibility to spend resources according to needs and opportunities on the ground?

- Protecting foreign assistance focused on achieving long-term development goals from the budgetary pressures brought about by near-term political and security imperatives;
- Reaching agreement with Congress on the goals of the U.S. approach to development – as articulated in an overarching Global Development Strategy;

- Developing, in consultation with Congress, clear and effective criteria and transparent metrics for determining where aid should be directed and how its impact is measured;
- Rewarding innovation in programming to encourage informed and reasonable risk-taking; and
- Implementing a consistent and coordinated USG approach to gender integration?

4. Ensuring assistance is driven by local priorities and supportive of local policy reforms that will lead to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction?

- Actively and transparently engaging and consulting with developing country stakeholders in all phases of the design, implementation, and monitoring of development policies and programs;
- Ensuring the USAID mission director leads the formulation of country development cooperation strategies, in close consultation with other USG agencies, civil society, and local actors;
- Building greater local capacity and working locally through host country procurement and public financial management systems; and
- Working collaboratively with Congress to reduce earmarks and directives in exchange for greater transparency and accountability?

5. Institutionalizing the distinctiveness between diplomacy and development so that short-term humanitarian and political goals and long-term development are complementary and work together to achieve U.S. objectives?

- Ensuring that development programs are led by development experts;
- Establishing clear leadership over and a regular process for coordinating development and humanitarian relief efforts effectively in Washington and in the field;
- Keeping life-saving humanitarian programs free from political interference; and
- Holding all USG assistance actors in crisis contexts accountable to standards of monitoring and impact?

6. Empowering and strengthening USAID as a 21st-Century development agency?

- Formalizing a role for the USAID Administrator to participate regularly in NSC meetings,;
- Ensuring that USAID leads implementation of all USG core development initiatives and activities;
- Giving USAID full authority over its policies and budget;
- Providing USAID with mission-critical tools, including a working capital fund, continuation of the Development Leadership Initiative, and more flexible hiring mechanisms;
- Allowing USAID flexibility to balance program and operational expenses; and
- Mandating that a coordinated development strategy be prepared for each developing country with a U.S. presence that: includes all U.S. agencies engaged in development policy or activities; is prepared under the leadership of USAID and approved by the U.S. ambassador; and is consistent with an overall U.S. Global Development Strategy?

MFAN is a reform coalition composed of international development and foreign policy practitioners, policy advocates and experts, concerned citizens and private sector organizations. 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. In 2011-2012, MFAN will monitor and encourage the Administration's development policy reform agenda and support action in Congress to achieve bipartisan agreement and legislation in support of reform.