

Reforms to U.S. foreign assistance should be conducted jointly by Congress and the Administration — in consultation with the development community — and guided by these principles, a comprehensive review of U.S. efforts, and a coherent Global Development Strategy.

Foreign assistance is vital to advancing U.S. interests – promoting security, economic opportunity, and our moral values – by helping to protect human dignity and ensure that countries can meet the needs of their people.

In order to promote these interests, the goals of United States foreign assistance should be to:

- Reduce global poverty and alleviate human suffering by focusing aid where the need is greatest or where it can have the most impact.
- Counter transnational threats, including global pandemics and violent extremism.
- Support human rights and democracy.
- Expand global prosperity through trade and investment, transitioning countries from aid to new forms of economic cooperation.
- Build and reinforce strategic partnerships.

Structural Requirements

The following features are critical to making U.S. development more effective, efficient, and accountable:

- **An independent lead aid agency.** The U.S. should have an independent lead aid agency that is headed by a Cabinet-rank official. It should be exclusively focused on global development and humanitarian response for the U.S. Government.
- **Strong policy, planning, and budget authority.** The lead aid agency should be empowered to conduct its own policy, planning, and field-based analysis to support long-lasting economic growth and development.
- **Accountable, transparent, and efficient functions.** All agencies should have the capacity to evaluate programs, the flexibility to reduce duplication when needed, and the ability to reinforce success by scaling up best practices.
- **Selective and focused presence.** Aid should be focused on countries with the greatest need and where aid can do the most good. As conditions in countries change, the nature of our assistance and field presence should change with it.
- **Sufficient resources.** Sufficient resources should be allocated for technical, sector, and geographic expertise to support U.S. aid programs.

Principles of U.S. Foreign Assistance

To maximize effectiveness and efficiency, U.S. foreign assistance should be carried out by agencies that follow these basic principles:

1. Foreign assistance structures should uphold diplomacy and development as distinct but equal.

Therefore:

- DO coordinate diplomacy and development, but have separate structures with clear lines of authority and accountability.
- DO strengthen policy, planning, learning, and budget management capacities, which provide mission-critical tools, staff, and authority over policies and budgets.
- DON'T subordinate long-term development goals to short-term strategic interests – such as by combining the Development Assistance account with Economic Support Funds.
- DON'T cut operating expenses and staff capacity needed to manage development programs effectively.

2. Foreign assistance should help create the conditions under which it is no longer necessary.

Therefore:

- DO partner with Congress and the development community to conduct a comprehensive review of U.S. foreign assistance and create a Global Development Strategy.
- DO develop country strategies in consultation with local stakeholders that ultimately help countries meet the needs of their own people.
- DO increase assistance to targeted countries and communities to enable them to raise and spend their own revenues for development and to more effectively partner with the private sector.
- DON'T rush countries off assistance based on arbitrary timelines, especially countries with significant development needs or a strong commitment to partnership and reform.

3. Foreign assistance should be focused on countries where the need is greatest or where it can have the most impact. Therefore:

- DO focus on measuring and increasing the sustained impact of U.S. assistance.
- DO exercise selectivity in allocating resources across regions, countries, and sectors that yield the greatest impact or where people's need is the greatest.
- DO increase the flexibility of humanitarian and development assistance to better align aid with need, increase impact, and adapt to changing realities on the ground.
- DON'T continue development assistance programs that cannot have a sustained impact – including programs that are too small to be catalytic, lack a mutual commitment to shared goals, or where other donors and institutions can do it better.

4. Foreign assistance should be transparent and accountable to American taxpayers, local stakeholders, and international partners. Therefore:

- DO ensure all U.S. agencies publish high-quality and comprehensive aid data to ForeignAssistance.gov.
- DO implement rigorous standards for evaluation – as directed by the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016 – making evaluations public and sharing findings across U.S. agencies, to U.S. taxpayers, and to program beneficiaries.
- DO facilitate data collection so local partners can hold their governments and donors accountable and incorporate local participation as part of the evaluation process.
- DO take advantage of the comparative strengths of other bilateral and multilateral development partners.
- DON'T prioritize short-term measures of inputs and outputs over long-term results of outcomes and impact.

5. Foreign assistance should tap the best practices in development across the U.S. Government.

Therefore:

- DO work with partner countries and development stakeholders to identify constraints to development so U.S. assistance can best help overcome them.
- DO seek opportunities to strengthen local institutions by channeling aid through local partners where possible and by engaging local stakeholders throughout both program design and implementation.
- DON'T hamstring programs by encumbering them with Washington-based earmarks and initiatives that undermine local priorities.