



January 31, 2018

Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
Attn: Ms. Nadia Schadlow

Dear General McMaster:

We are writing as the Co-Chairs of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN), a coalition of foreign policy experts and international development practitioners who believe that the United States should continue its distinguished and bipartisan history of global leadership. As the recent National Security Strategy states, this engagement is more vital than ever to confront the challenges and opportunities we face – preventing the next outbreak of disease, such as Ebola, Zika, or influenza; curbing the appeal of extremist ideology and instability; addressing escalating humanitarian crises in Burma, South Sudan, and Yemen; and partnering with fast-emerging economies and trading partners.

As you implement this Strategy, it is vital to consider that the U.S. Government cannot mount an effective response to these threats and opportunities without a fully capable development and diplomatic corps. The National Security Strategy notes that advancing U.S. interests requires investments to empower women and girls, support food security and global health, and focus assistance on helping countries mobilize their own resources to promote growth and stability. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is demonstrating leadership by seeking to better enable country transitions from aid to broader partnerships with the United States. We will continue to work closely with the Administration on this effort, guided by [MFAN's Principles for Strategic Transitions from Development Aid](#).

Yet we remain troubled by this Administration's proposed budget cuts and growing number of vacancies in our highly specialized development and diplomatic agencies. Inadequate authority, budgets, and human capital planning will have deep and consequential ramifications for the ability of the United States to deliver on these priorities. It has taken two decades to restore the skilled professional capacity that was lost in 1990s when USAID was hollowed out by substantial staff reductions and budget cuts. We should not repeat past mistakes when this expertise is vital to advancing U.S. interests and maintaining our security around the world.

We have a capable leader in Mark Green at the helm of USAID who should be empowered to carry out the important work of the agency. To address the myriad humanitarian and development challenges identified by the National Security Strategy, Administrator Green must have budget and policy authority, flexibility, and sufficient resources to deploy. USAID should maintain, and where possible elevate, its development voice at the National Security Council and in the interagency.

As you implement the National Security Strategy, we urge you to work with the leadership of the Office of Management and Budget, USAID, and the State Department to ensure sufficient authority, resources, and personnel at our development and diplomacy agencies.

Sincerely,



George Ingram
MFAN Co-Chair
Senior Fellow, Brookings
Institution



Tessie San Martin
MFAN Co-Chair
President & CEO, Plan International



Connie Veillette
MFAN Co-Chair
Senior Fellow, The Lugar Center

Enclosed:

[Guiding Principles for Effective U.S. Assistance](#)

[A New Foreign Aid Architecture Fit for Purpose](#)

[Deliver More with U.S. Development Cooperation: A Proposal for the President](#)

Cc: The Honorable Rex Tillerson, United States Secretary of State

Cc: The Honorable Mick Mulvaney, Director of the Office of Management and Budget

Cc: The Honorable Mark Green, Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development