

MFAN MODERNIZING FOREIGN ASSISTANCE NETWORK

MFAN Statement on International Affairs Portion of Obama's Budget Request

CONTACT: Sam Hiersteiner at 202-295-0171 or shiersteiner@gloverparkgroup.com

February 26, 2009 (WASHINGTON) - *This statement is delivered on behalf of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) by MFAN Co-Chairs Steve Radelet (Senior Fellow, Center for Global Development) and David Beckmann (President, Bread for the World):*

MFAN commends President Obama for unveiling a strong FY2010 International Affairs Budget outline, and we are hopeful that he will be able to follow through on his vision and pledge for doubling funding for U.S. foreign assistance programs that alleviate poverty, fight disease, and create economic opportunities for the world's most vulnerable people in developing countries. We are also pleased that the President will move to bolster staffing at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which will shoulder much of the burden of carrying out the proposed increases in funding.

In this time of economic and geopolitical turmoil, it will be extremely important for the White House to make sure these foreign assistance dollars are spent as strategically, efficiently, and effectively as possible. To reach this goal, and to properly manage the taxpayer resources that underlie it, the U.S. must enhance the U.S. foreign assistance system by:

- Naming a strong, seasoned Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID);
- Creating America's first-ever National Strategy for Global Development (NSGD) - with leadership from the National Security Council, the USAID Administrator, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton - to align with and inform President Obama's overall National Security Strategy;
- Using the NSGD process to inform the rewriting of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which governs U.S. foreign assistance structure and programs but has not been updated for nearly 25 years;
- Building on all these steps to empower USAID by strengthening its budget; enhancing its management and professional development capacities; restoring its policy planning capabilities; increasing its ability to work with and leverage the private sector; and better defining its foreign assistance leadership responsibilities and relationships with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and the Defense Department; and
- Establishing a vision for U.S. public engagement on global development, and work with diverse private sector and civil society actors to reach out to the American people and bring that vision to life.

With these steps, President Obama can enhance America's ability to save lives in the developing world, mitigate short and long-term threats to U.S. security and prosperity, and lay a foundation that he and his

successors can use to carry out critical foreign assistance programs in the context of a successful and effective 21st-century U.S. foreign policy.

For more information, visit www.modernizingforeignassistance.net
<<http://www.modernizingforeignassistance.net/>> .

Steve Radelet's biography (Center for Global Development) -

<http://www.cgdev.org/content/expert/detail/2680/>

David Beckmann's biography (Bread for the World) - <http://www.bread.org/about-us/david-beckmann.html>