



February 27, 2019

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Subcommittee State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Ranking Republican Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Rogers:

On behalf of the Credit Union National Association (CUNA) and the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU), we are writing to thank you for holding this hearing titled, “**Oversight of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Programs and Policies.**” There are over 89,000 credit unions in 117 countries with \$2.1 trillion dollars in total assets serving 260 million members. The Credit Union National Association (CUNA) represents America’s credit unions and their 115 million members. CUNA is also a member of the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU), which is the leading trade association and development organization for the international credit union movement. We respectfully request that this letter be made part of the record for this hearing.

Since 1971, WOCCU has offered nearly 300 technical assistance programs around the globe – all while serving the mission of improving lives through credit unions and other cooperative financial institutions. WOCCU’s programs provide education and international networking for the exchange of information and ideas. Through these projects, WOCCU promotes the sustainable development of credit unions and other financial cooperatives around the world to empower people through access to high quality, affordable financial services.

With U.S. government and private U.S. foundation support, World Council is working to promote economic freedom and growth, increase financial inclusion, expand rapidly financial access using mobile technology, help farmers and artisans obtain better prices for their goods, and fill the agricultural lending gap to improve food security.

Current World Council Projects:

Haiti – Promoting a stable and economically viable Haiti through our Haiti Home Ownership and Mortgage Expansion (HOME Program and the Accessible Finance Activity Program

Ukraine – Strengthening the credit union sector to improve the quality of financial services and products offered to farmers and agribusinesses in rural areas through the Credit for Agriculture Producers (CAP) Project

Colombia – Expanding agricultural finance to micro and SMEs in rural and remote areas through the Columbia Banca de las Oportunidades Project supporting financial literacy and improving savings mobilization.

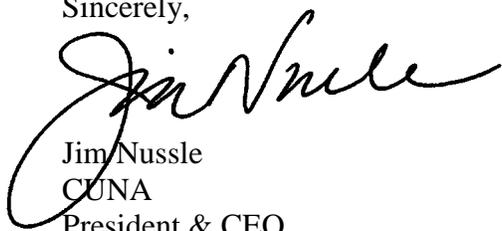
Kenya/Guatemala – Improving Small Rural Producers’ Income through Integrated Access to Financial Services and Agricultural Markets

To expand on these successful projects, WOCCU needs to navigate the bureaucratic and political red tape prior to gaining access for funds at the USAID. CUNA urges Congress to encourage the Administrator of the US Agency for International Development to prioritize procurement reforms that level the playing field for smaller development contractors, such as those credit unions and other cooperatives that helped achieve successful rural development in the United States in the 20th Century and which today have ties to organizations overseas that can help promote local self-reliance.

WOCCU and its credit union partners overseas also promote democratic principles in the developing world and teach self-reliance rather than reliance on state structures. This means that this “foreign aid” actually gets to its intended recipients and also provides a net benefit to American taxpayers.

On behalf of credit unions and their millions of members, thank you for holding this hearing and your assistance in ensuring equal access to USAID funding for smaller entities.

Sincerely,



Jim Nussle
CUNA
President & CEO



Brian Branch
WOCCU
President & CEO