November 23, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on 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), I am writing in strong support of the funding level of $20 million for the Cooperative Development Program, administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development, in fiscal year 2021.

CUNA represents America’s credit unions and their more than 120 million members. There are over 89,000 credit unions in 117 countries with $2.1 trillion dollars in total assets serving 260 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. WOCCU has been a recipient of grants from the Cooperative Development Program (CDP) of the Development Assistance account in the State-Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations bill.

In fiscal year 2020, Congress provided an appropriation of $17,000,000 to be available for cooperative development programs of USAID. WOCCU has made efficient and impactful use of these grants from the Cooperative Development Program (CDP) to promote cooperative businesses and cooperative systems for self-reliance, local ownership, and sustainability.

On November 10, the Senate Appropriations Committee released its draft bill text and report language for the FY 2021 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill. The bill text suggests an appropriation of $20 million for the CDP. Page 45 of the report states, “Funds above the fiscal year 2020 level shall be made available to support community-based credit unions in developing countries.”

During discussions with the Senate regarding omnibus spending legislation, we respectfully urge you to adopt this increased Senate funding level for the Cooperative Development Program. In addition, we urge you to accept the corresponding report language that funds enacted in FY 2021 for the CDP that are in excess of the FY 2020 level be directed to “community-based credit unions in developing countries.”

On behalf of credit unions and their millions of members, thank you for assistance in ensuring much-needed funding for the Cooperative Development Program.

Sincerely,

Jim Nussle
President & CEO