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The Honorable Bob Menendez
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Risch
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch,

On behalf of the Credit Union National Association (CUNA), thank you for holding this hearing on the nomination of the Honorable Samantha Power to be Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). CUNA represents America's credit unions and their 120 million members.

CUNA is also a member of the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU), which is the apex trade association and development organization for the international credit union movement. 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 (including USAID) and private U.S. foundation support, WOCCU 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.

We are proud to report that there are over 89,000 credit unions in 117 countries with \$2.1 trillion dollars in total assets serving 260 million members.

While we continue to support and appreciate full funding for USAID's Cooperative Development Program, which is a primary funding source for WOCCU, during this important hearing, we urge you to encourage Ambassador Power to advance procurement reform at USAID if she is confirmed.

U.S. civil society offers core strengths in the form of not-for-profit organizations and the citizens who are passionately dedicated to make a positive difference in the world. Many such values-driven organizations offer specialized and professional areas of expertise which can both make that positive difference and support U.S. foreign policy. Many, like credit unions, have extensive community rooted networks in countries that are prioritized by USAID.

Such organizations can provide USAID with specialized skills, organized networks and a proven track record to support USAID implementation of U.S. foreign assistance. However, these U.S. private voluntary and not-for-profit organizations tend to be smaller and more specialized; as such, they face procurement obstacles in the effort to partner with USAID.

Previous USAID Administrators and Congresses have tried to reform procurement practices and broaden access to USAID resources. Despite these efforts, USAID data shows that large contracting firms continue to increasingly dominate USAID awards. We respectfully ask Congress to ensure that USAID addresses USAID procurement in ways that will ensure a fair access by smaller U.S. private voluntary and not-for-profit organizations and urge you to address this issue to Ambassador Power during her confirmation process.

On behalf of credit unions and their millions of members, thank you for holding this important hearing and for your assistance in promoting much-needed funding for the Cooperative Development Program as well as furthering procurement reform at USAID.

Sincerely,



Jim Nussle
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