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Public Meeting on Democracy,
Human Rights & Governance

Partnerships
Breakout Session

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INDEX OF SPEAKERS

NEIL LEVINE: Good afternoon. My name's Neil Levine. I'm the director of the [inaudible] human rights and governance --

MALE SPEAKER: Your mic's not on.

MALE SPEAKER: And it should be.

NEIL LEVINE: My friend's going to help us out. The -- I'm not going to have to use the stage -- I'm going to rise to my full height of five-foot-six, and try to work end to end here. I'm really just here to get the ball rolling, and frame some of the discussions. But we have a lot of the food for thought from our administrator. I just want to say how excited I am to be here on a day where we've gotten a real lift from the administrator, in terms of her thinking about what she sees when she looks at the DRG sector, and the trends we're facing together as partners.

And then, the discussion in the ACVFA governing board meeting this afternoon, which was the start of that discussion. And

then, now to widen that discussion to all of you. Many familiar faces here. I think we're here to get the best ideas, and then turn this over to Jeanne and the working group. Why don't I do a few introductions? We have some members of the working group here. Doug, can you stand, if there's anyone else -- or else, Doug's going to be very, very busy. Yeah. And Eric Bjornlund, from Democracy International. We have the ACVFA chair, Jack Leslie, here. So, thank you all for your time.

So, without any further ado, just let me make a few framing remarks and comments. I'm aided, in part, by the -- prior to Jeanne's long -- week long campaign for the chair of this esteemed committee, there was a telephone call where we just started this conversation, and this -- we'll bring everybody onto the same page. So, when we talk about partnership, one of the first questions is where do we want to focus our efforts? And so, on the slide here, you see the iconic figure of the aid handshake that really is the representation of partnership from our earliest beginnings.

But whether we're talking about partnerships with -- as you -- outside actors to internal actors, we as partners together and local actors, that's one partnership. Partnership, in terms of how we structure relationships, whether the coalitions or grant alliances the form in which those partnerships take. And then, the partnership really between the U.S. government and implementing -- you, the implementing partners.

So, there's a question in the room about where we should we -- where should we aim our laser focus here, or what are the questions we want to ask about forming these partnerships, and with whom these partnerships are formed with. So, that's one set of questions.

Then, the question is one very helpful comment that Jeanne made in the initial discussion is one way that we might problematize the question of partnership is where and when we partner. And so, I've tried to depict here, you know, a protest in an area of closing space where there are -- degrees of freedom are reduced, and the opportunities to partner -- to strain our creativity to

perhaps partner in new ways and new modes in a closing space environment.

The second picture up there is, of course, of Aung San Suu Kyi as Gayle talked about, as times of opening or transition, and do those create unique opportunities for different kinds of partnerships, and also to explore, as we have seen in the past, changing up the cast of whom we partner with. Those -- the entry of new actors who are, heretofore, in prison, out of the country, or new forms of organizations that were, perhaps, illegal.

Let's say, under times, apartheid. And then, the last is a form -- a citizen form in Indonesia. And that speaks to the environment of a consolidated democracy that really needs and seeks a partnership of a different level. Not a donor relationship, really. Not a senior/junior partnership, but of democratic countries trying to solve problems together based on mutual experience and mutual exchange of knowledge.

And so, we can think about problematizing the issue of partnership in any of these three. And I thought that was a very useful way to think through the issue. The last issue before we get to some of the questions is how do we collaborate? And one of the things that the new model, based on science, technology, innovation, and partnership has given arise to is many different forms of partnership and collaboration.

So, you've heard a little bit about co-creation, or the idea that we co-design with partners in a different way that gives us a little bit more flexibility to draw out the best ideas from broad groups of folks -- co-creations. The emergence of how do we partner directly with the private sector, public-private partnerships that have grown into global development alliances.

And I thought Gayle really put her finger on it and said, it's one thing to go passing the hat for private sector engagement. Could you pick up half or three times the bill, and we'll call ourselves a partnership? And what she said and asked us to look at is what does it mean to truly partner in a way that speaks to

kind of mutual interests and benefits of that partnership

together? We've heard and seen USAID engage in grand

coalitions. The open government partnership coalitions of civil

society, governments, the private sector, parliamentarians,

academics, in broad coalitions, working together.

A new form of partnership. We've talked about calls to action,

which really are not -- partnerships, in the sense that they are

trying to foster collective action against a common problem,

where we recognize that many actors bring something to the

table, and we want to identify and sort of focus that energy.

It may be a loose partnership, but it's a way of stimulating

activity that, before, was not present in the same way.

We have alliances; they're called different names, but I think

the issue is what is your experience with those practices? Are

there -- I don't know if we've evolved enough to call them best

practices, but what are the practices that you think,

particularly in the DRG sector, are effective? We're paying a

lot of attention now to the open government partnership as a

race to the top where committed governments can -- are looking for solutions, and they really do want to find problems that aren't available to them by continuing to mine their own experience. They want the experience of other partners, private sector, technology, solver communities. I don't know if the word solver communities existed a decade ago in the development space. So, those are some of the questions that animate this discussion, we hope.

Lastly, we -- these two teaser questions that I want to leave up for our discussion. But really, as Jeanne suggested, we're looking for those questions that most interest this group, that the DRG working group can focus on. And I think -- I wanted to add to something that Jeanne just said is how do we walk the walk, in terms of our partnerships, that brings in the DRG principles that we all have -- or all engaged in-- espousing and implementing across the board. Participation, inclusion, transparency, accountability, respect for human rights, democratic processes.

How does that work across all the sectors that we work in development? And then, also, I guess the issue -- returning to the word partnership -- and this is the last thing I'll say is that partnership, the noun, is kind of the form it takes. We are -- that is a noun that describes how we're working, but to what end? And Jeanne suggested that this is really fostered towards sustainable impact in whatever endeavor we are working for. The -- then, there's partnership the verb, and I think it's really important, and if you look at USAID's mission statement now is that it begins with "We partner to end extreme poverty, and promote democratic resilient societies." And so, what does it mean, again, to this point of what does that partnership mean?

Why should we collaborate in this way that's different, that works to mutual advantage, not just for us, but of course, the ultimate citizenry on whose behalf we are working. And I think, again, that gets into what Jeanne was saying about walking the walk.

So, let me -- first, I should've done this at the top. We have
a graphic illustrator. And how are you doing so far? Tell me
your name.

RYAN TEROLO: Ryan.

NEIL LEVINE: Ryan --

RYAN TEROLO: Terolo [spelled phonetically].

NEIL LEVINE: Terolo.

RYAN TEROLO: Yep.

NEIL LEVINE: Thank you for being here. This will be a gift to
the agency, but first, to the working group. And we will follow
the conversation as it goes along.

RYAN TEROLO: One thing. These don't come with spell check so,
you know, if I get it wrong --

[laughter]

NEIL LEVINE: They will. They will. Let me stop there, and maybe I will put Doug on the spot for just a second, in terms of reacting to this. You've been -- you're one phone call and one ACVFA meeting ahead of the rest of the audience here, so in terms of starting us off, when you think about partnership in the DRG space, what do you think are some of the considerations we should be talking about?

MALE SPEAKER: Do we have -- are we miked?

RYAN TEROlO: You have a mike.

MALE SPEAKER: Do you have a mike?

MALE SPEAKER: Oh I have a mike.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Can we have a handheld mike?

RYAN TEROLO: Yes.

MALE SPEAKER: Yeah let's --

[inaudible dialogue]

RYAN TEROLO: Do you want to do the -- do you want to do the miking?

[inaudible dialogue]

MALE SPEAKER: And I think that was a great introduction. I think the challenge for this group is as follows: it's hard to talk about partnership in the abstract. We should be talking about partnership as an objective. And we work in so many different fields, so it's one thing to talk about, for example, partnership to achieve good electoral results and other closing space for civil citing and so forth. So, I think one of the challenges that we have before us is to think about where are

the commonalities so that we can roll something up to USAID that would be useful, not only for the agency, but also for most of us, if not all of us, in the room.

So, as you think about these questions to the extent you could think about not just your own organizations' experiences with partnership, broader lessons for the community. I think that's what would be most helpful to the working group. And I know Eric is on the working group as well, so I'm going to turn the next --

NEIL LEVINE: Yeah, next victim.

MALE SPEAKER: And I think also, one of the issues of partnership is that we're talking about a lot of different phenomena that are -- that are -- that are quite different. We're talking about sort of how do we work with groups in other countries and make a difference, and help them do what they want to do, and put their agendas forward, and how do we stand behind that and support that? But we're also talking about how the

agency partners with others in the world that it has common

objectives with? How does it partner with other development

agencies from other countries around the world? How does it

partner in multilateral institutions, and mobilize those kinds

of resources?

And of course, something that everyone in this room cares about,

how does it partner with its intermediaries? With its partners,

based in the United States and based around the world, that are

carrying out programs in democracy rights and governance and in

other fields. And so, how does the agency mobilize those

partnerships in a way that gets to other issues, like

innovation, for example? So, we're making with the same

partners all the time doing the same thing. Can we be -- really

be innovative? And so, if we want to think of these issues as

distinct because broader partnerships -- opportunities for new

players, new partnerships, is part of the way of getting

innovations.

Innovation's just not at the margins with new initiatives and

new ideas and new technologies and new approaches, but it's new
ideas that come from other ways of partnering with other
organizations; and I think that's one of the challenges for the
agency as well. So, we obviously have to disaggregate what
we're talking about, which kinds of partnerships we're talking
about, and sort of all of them are extremely important to the
agency's mission.

NEIL LEVINE: Please go ahead and introduce yourself.

IRVING ROSENTHAL: Hi. I'm Irving Rosenthal, formerly of AID,
now a professor at various universities. There are three levels
of partnerships that I think we have to make sure which we're
talking about -- maybe more, but the one level is amongst all of
the official donor agencies. We talked about between AID and
World Bank between AID, MCC. Those are important, but I don't
think that those are the most important. There's a second level
that we're talking about. It's partnerships between government
agencies, and we're here in ACVFA -- between U.S. government
agencies and the U.S. -- and the private voluntary

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organizations. You know, how does AID, MCC, all of the others, partner with the NGOs and PBOs? Very important, but I don't think that's the most important.

There are two other levels that I think are core. One is between the U.S. government, U.S. agencies, and the organizations in the field and the countries in the field. Now, we're getting closer to what I think development is all about. And then, once you're then even talking about, then the other level is cooperation and coordination amongst local people, local organizations, local NGOs. I guess those are four different levels, and for me, who spent a lot of time in the field, it's that last one that's the most important.

And I think when we use the word sustainability in development, all across the board, I think that the sustainability of local organizations, local society, is very important. For example, I spent a lot of time in the [unintelligible], and my wife and I went off in [unintelligible] to spend a couple days and nights with the herders.

And the goal was to get the herders to decide what it is that

they want, and to decide what local institutions in their local

government they should work for -- with. And I think that is

the angle of everything we do, if we can't get local

partnerships at those levels, everything we do is beside the

point. And that takes a tremendous amount of skill that I don't

think we really spend enough time on. Thank you.

NEIL LEVINE: Thank you, sir. Yes?

FRANCIS V.C.:   I'm Francis V.C. with answer for a non for profit

research and analysis organization. And one of the things that

we've really been looking at is using a system syncing approach

to understand how all the different stakeholders interact with

each other. What are their motivations? What are their

barriers for enacting change? And what are the different

relationships that our partners have that can be leveraged, in

order to not just kind of make a change here and there, but

actually, to fundamentally alter the system so that you can have

that sustainable change?

You know, so that you're not kind of putting your interventions at the end where, you know, where you're hitting the symptoms. You're actually getting to the root cause of the behavior in order to change it, and get by-in from all the different members of the community. So, we've been using system syncing methodologies in order to kind of analyze local, regional, national systems in order to understand what makes people tick, and try to design interventions that will meet the goals of USAID and our partners, as well.

NEIL LEVINE: Great. Thank you. And this comment calls to mind Gayle's comment about the existence of many more tools in our toolkit, systems analysis being one of them. I can't think of an organization better suited for system analysis. In fact, Irv will probably agree that we were doing systems analysis for a long, long time because we look at whole sectors, whole of country as a unit of analysis, but the tools have improved. And as part of the partnership discussion, getting at what are the

other tools that are out there would be really important for the group.   Andres?

ANDRES FALCONER: Thank you.   I am Andres Falconer.   I'm GPSA, Global Partnerships Social Accountability, in the World Bank. And while we're still dealing with definitions, I thought I'd share a bit of our experience with partnerships. And I guess in bank parliaments, partnership is usually gets -- gets kicked around when we talk about a couple of donors putting funds into a multi-donor trust fund for partners. We, I think, thankfully went well beyond that in the GPSA partnership. And before we talk about specific concrete things that we do with individual partners, we can categorize three broad pockets into which – the goals of why working partnerships -- what we seem to achieve. The first one for us is very important.

Our partners are constituents. They keep us on our toes. They keep us relevant. That's very important. But equally important at times, they have kept us alive. They are very strong advocates for our work when we get it right. So, it has been

very important to partner. The second, and it speaks to the

aims of our program, our partnership is a community of -- it's a

learning community, a community of practice to learn together.

And thirdly, a partnership as a -- as a movement, as a coalition

on building the field. At the partnership level, we can talk

about where we want to take the field before we're talking our

petty organizational needs and how we're going to fund our

secretaries, and so on and so forth.

And again, this is important because this is before we go into

what are we achieving with each and every one of our more than

300 partners on what we thought we could be doing. It could be

a [inaudible] partnership, it could be a contract to deliver --

could be a grant where we are on the giving side or on the

receiving side. So, there are many instruments that we're clear

on where -- what broad categories of achievements or results

[inaudible].

NEIL LEVINE: Great. Thank you. Apologies, I'm going to go

over to this side. I'm going to go far right and -- my far

right, and move back across.

PAUL FOLDI: Thanks very much. I'm Paul Foldi Professional
Services Council. I was looking at what you've got on the
screen here, and you've got collaboration and you've got
partnerships and handshaking. And those -- for those who don't
know PSC, we represent the acquisition side of the house.

And we're very concerned because when you talk about the
toolkit, for DRG in particular, we're concerned with the
direction the agency is going on with its partnerships and its
toolkits because when it uses language like "providing funding
to eligible recipients to stimulate their activities to promote
political competition and consensus building through support to
electoral and political process, and fostering more accountable
and responsible parties and institutions" as an example of the
work that USAID is looking for, but that's in assistance with
nothing counterbalancing it on the acquisition side, we think
that the agency is, perhaps, instead of doing a handshake, we
call it the Heisman or the stiff-arm perhaps to the RFP side of

the house. So, Brian, I don't know if you want to draw that,
necessarily --

[laughter]

-- but I just want to put that out there that there may be a
perception in some parts of your partnership community that
you're shutting the door on them and would precaution you to
somehow, perhaps, have greater inclusiveness because I know
you're working on implementing guidance in the DRG space. But
at the same time, when you get an ADS provision that has this,
we think it's not necessarily in the agency's best interest.

NEIL LEVINE: I'm going to work on my thoughtful answer, and --
for a little while, but thank you --

PAUL FOLDI: Nothing more or -- nothing less, then.

LYNN CARTER: Lynn Carter, Management Systems International. I
actually don't think it matters whether you're a firm or an NGO.

I think that, given the compliance atmosphere in which you say USAID operates now, it's very hard to treat implemented partners like partners, period. I think that you're in a risk-adverse environment, and in the end, it's just difficult to cross the board. But that really wasn't the point that I wanted to make. My sympathies go to the sub group that's working on this because too many forms of partnership were outlined, where I think if you were to do a feasible job, so it seems to me, you have to pick between priorities.

And the priorities wouldn't be us sitting in the room. It would be the most dire situations, I think. It would be the semi competitive authoritarian regimes, or the not even semi competitive pure authoritarian regimes, and how you partner in those environments. And additionally, we've seen a rise in identity politics and various forms of extremism. Look at what's happening in our own country, and look at that, coupled with large forms of mobilization. They look hopeful on the surface, but then look at what they did in the Arab world. They can end in disaster. So, what do we do in those environments

that prevent them from going bad? So, to me, focusing on

partnerships that are constructive in those environments ought

to be the priority.

NEIL LEVINE: Very helpful. We'll go to Carol, and then Paul.

CAROL PAISLEY: Just a -- really, a follow up on that. Carol

Paisley [spelled phonetically], also former USAID. I think that

this partnership in closed societies is really a key issue to

focus on because I think a U.S. government, we've always

traditionally been -- you need to get caught up in foreign

policy priorities, and so, some closed societies, we don't

recognize as being that because they're important for other

reasons, or we look simplistically at it. We either work with

the government, or we don't work the government. And if they're

at all closely pretend they don't exist, it only worked in civil

society. And I think we've, too often, taken the simplistic

approach, as opposed to the more nuanced approaches.

And I've talked a number of times with people about the long

history in Haiti, where we didn't like the government and we didn't work with them. And I think, in some ways, if you go back and look at that, you'll see that we helped -- that when the earthquake came and we realized that state institutions were so weak, they couldn't actually perform in the way they should have, and it was a mistake to only work in the NGO sector when you didn't like the government. So, I think this idea of having much more nuanced approaches is really important to partnership, and it's going to make some people very unhappy.

NEIL LEVINE: Yeah. Paul?

PAUL RANDOLPH: Paul Randolph [spelled phonetically], with Palladia. We're a for-profit firm in the Exon programs [inaudible] as well. So, I do appreciate the comments about inclusiveness, and the part of those -- everyone in this room, I think, are dedicated to having an impact in the world and [inaudible] of governments, and we're bringing different tools to that table, so I think that's a useful combination to have, all in the room working and bringing our insights to this. For

me, several of these comments have said there's a lot of working
groups that talk about partnerships. I think that some of the
challenges that USAID faces, and I think the point about the
flexibility of USAID's mechanisms is a critical challenge.

How do you forge a partnership? I think a partnership -- if I
take it – there's a very personal level, the biggest partnership
I have is my marriage. And in my marriage, I need to -- one of
the things I've learned after 20 years is you've got to listen.
You've got to hear your partner about what they're telling you,
and what they want.

And for USAID, under the current systems of procurement, it's
difficult for you to write the scope of work that will allow you
to actually have people on the ground eventually that can listen
and be flexible at adapting management aspects of partnership,
and adjusting to what you hear they want, not necessarily what
you have to offer to them because of the [inaudible] because of
the design of the program two years ago. So, I think that's a
challenge in how the working group tries to look at some

procurement reforms that may address that could be useful for actually putting in place a tool that you are better able to use.

NEIL LEVINE: Yeah.   You just passed Nora there.

NORA O'CONNELL: Hi. I'm Nora O'Connell at Save the Children, and we haven't been a U.S. government partner in this space, but we actually do a lot of work under this in something we call the Child Rights Governance Initiative, mostly in partnership with Scandinavian countries, actually. And I have three thoughts on partnership that kind of go back, bigger picture, to the first principles and a little bit what Doug was saying about sort of why we partner, and it gets also at connecting the dots between this conversation and the evidence conversation, and sort of how DRG has positioned in U.S. foreign assistance.

One is, I think, how DRG thinks about its partnerships that realizing that some of the partnerships maybe people who have a shared common interest in democracy, and some that actually

maybe groups, like ours, that actually care about children's rights, right? Like, there might be education or health groups. And we may use different language, but what we're talking about are actually getting children to participate in raising their voices about their needs, and voicing those things to government authorities, right?

So, recognizing that there are sector allies that may be people that can be actual champions for a democracy and governance, and are using those approaches and can help build the evidence base for them, if you partner. But recognizing they'll come for a different interest base, and they'll use terminology. I think the second builds on some of the conversations about instrument that several people have raised that I think in this area in particular, like stability, is critical.

And so, not just in the choice of instruments, but also in how that instrument is managed. I know there are larger conversations happening around this, but I think it's particularly important to this sector. And then, the third

point that I would make -- and this builds on Irving's comment

about partnering with local actors, is to be really thoughtful

and intentional about the nature of the transfer of power in the

partnership.

So, when is the partnership really about USAID transferring

power to local actors in a true partnership versus when is USAID

acting in -- acting through local partners, and not really

transferring that power, and really encouraging it to push the

boundaries on that transfer of power is not just possible and

particularly in the DRG sector. Thanks.

NEIL LEVINE: Thanks. Can you pass the mic here? You're up.

JENNY TENGARA: Thank you. Jenny Tengara [spelled phonetically],

Howard University. Thank you very much, and so happy to be here

today. I participated recently in the [inaudible] assessment

for [inaudible]. And it was outstanding. It was a lot that

came to the surface during those interviews with the people and

the agency and such. So, what comes to me is that USAID does

need to take a hard look at the way people took a hard look at

the NDGs, and saw that they needed to mainstream gender

equality. Okay, we need to take hard look at USAID programs and

we need to mainstream DRG.

Right now, that's not the case at all, and that was apparent in

the programs that they are trying to run. When -- and most

importantly, they don't have money for a majority of the budget,

of course everybody knows goes to health. All right? But there

is no one in DRG at the table when health programs are being

discussed. A lot of the implementations of the health programs

would involve our civil society [inaudible] are absent. They're

absent. So, how can we build civil society, and build this

sustainable democracy if those key players are absent? And

right now, that is clearly the case. So, I think we need to

allow DRG to lead across all sectors, including security,

including the economy, and especially also in health since that

is where the majority of the budget is.

NEIL LEVINE: Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Let's move across

here.

MIYASHA STROSSER: Yes, my name is Miyasha Stroesser [spelled phonetically]. I currently work for [inaudible] and a number of other [inaudible] managing civil society programs, mostly outside. The administrator mentioned not getting ahead of the -- in our departments in the field, and I think Doug who mentioned a partnership based on objectives. I just wanted to congratulate USAID on what I think is a fine model that suggests that's the way we're going. When we see where we're going and there was something that was announced recently in northern Ghana's government's initiative.

It's the partnership between economic growth and the B.P. unit there. And the focus is on civic engagement, on agricultural policy, and a more consensualized environment. And that gets to what interests people, and they're most active when they're interested. And just a couple other comments. I recently sat in on a presentation, but I forget the organization's name here that was involved in the passage of the faculty feedback and it

was the very best presentation I've ever heard about how you take your interest and your issues and you drive them through the system. You find the -- identify the partners that you really need and what they bring to the table, and how to keep them motivated -- and I've been doing this for a long time, and I've never seen that as part of any training or partnership with any of the civil society organizations I've worked with.

But we need to do a better job, I think of linking those types of partners. The groups that are experienced doing it here in the U.S. with those that are looking for experience and partners -- ongoing partnerships to exchange information, ideas, and expertise, as they move issues forward. And the last thing. I think one of those things that I started to say as I've gotten older is be suspicious of people who don't do things that they're telling you to do. And I think we're quite guilty of that in the development sector are things that we've never done ourselves. We're very good in the U.S. at privately supported advocacy and interest groups.

I think we do that better than anybody in the world, and it's a
hallmark of what works well in the U.S.'s democracy, and we need
to be incorporating that into the work that we do overseas. How
do you raise funds? How do you identify those who have common
interests and are willing to contribute? Instead of this sort
rote capacity building, innovational development training
[inaudible].

NEIL LEVINE: Thank you. Did I see a hand over here? Hi,
there.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thanks, Neil. Chairman of health
[inaudible] International. I agree with the great majority of
what was said. I would also emphasize the cross sector
partnerships. To me, it just seems like it's a no brainer. And
within that, though, I would say that we don't speak the same
language, and we need to figure out a way to do that. I'm not
quite sure where it goes. I did a piece once for Feed the
Future, and I was talking to Feed the Future people, and "do you
work with civil societies?" Oh, yeah. We have NGOs. We do

grants. Okay, well, I think of it a little bit differently.

And that's the situation, I think, we're in now, and I think we

need to improve that, as a priority.

I would say two other things maybe I heard too much about. One

is the time frames. You know, it's really hard with the project

cycles to have a long term relationship that you really need to

build that trust, and to build all the things that any

organization, especially local organizations, need in order to

get grant assistance and to be more involved with our projects

directly. The last thing I guess I would say is just to

emphasize -- somebody mentioned that, but honestly, I just think

we have to be so much more politically intelligent and savvy

about how we deal with our partnerships.

I think -- I call it the Girl Scout/Boy Scout projects, we go in

and we just assume this darling NGO is wonderful, or so and so

the government just really wants development. And I don't think

that that's, unfortunately, necessarily the case like, I can't

think of an example, which doesn't mean we throw it out. I just

think we have to engage in a much more intelligent and [inaudible] savvy way when we choose our partners.

MALE SPEAKER: I'm [inaudible]. What I see is that, be it U.S. or say, for example, India or other countries which have seen significant growth had [inaudible] you were able to listen to minorities of all sorts, be it religious minority, be it any other minority. And that is what we -- what we need to promote, somehow. Because if -- you know, if you look at countries that [unintelligible] through minorities, discriminating minorities in one form or another, they kept going, and it never stopped. And you know, Syria example, converting all the way -- 4,000 years into Christianity into, you know, a minority existing. So, be it religious, be it political, be it whatever, in whatever form we can say that, you know, you have to build partnerships with each other in some way.

NEIL LEVINE: Okay, thank you.

KATE WILSON: Hi, my name is Kate Wilson, and I'm from the

management for sciences and health facility, the leadership and

management governance project, which actually lives in the

Global Health Bureau, but has benefited from DRG funding, which

has helped to change our language internally. So, I've seen, in

terms of that partnership, it makes a lot of sense. We did

speak different languages, going in. But then, even -- though

that's only one section of our portfolio, the rest of the

project has kind of shifted its thinking as a result of our

partnership with DRG.

So, I think the more that the agency can really support large

global projects, getting involved with more than one bureau, can

really change the conversation. And then, what I also would say

is thinking about not just different partners at the local

level, but helping local level partners work -- people don't

normally work together, work together. We have been working

with a lot of -- through the DRG funding, a lot of organizations

for people with disabilities. And we just happened to be

working already in communities with MSH -- or the same

communities with health organizations, or with advocacy

organizations, women's groups.

And so, we introduced the women's groups to the person's with disabilities and had them work together. And even though it's not rocket science, I think because we weren't being given that -- because we didn't have funding to work with both at first, or we didn't think about it, it's just changing that mindset, and seeing opportunities that already exist. And then, in terms of thinking about partners, we can't expect the NGOs that we partner with, especially in challenging circumstances, to be perfect, and we shouldn't make that assumption. But we can go through a process that could be potentially separate from the selection process where you're doing a participatory assessment with them to help them look at themselves and figure out what they want strengthened.

And then, if that can be done separately then selection, then you can potentially create a trust environment that will allow for them to talk more frankly about their gaps.

NEIL LEVINE: Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Welcome back. The
longest walk.

ALLISON FOSTER: Hi, I'm Allison Foster. I'm from Interhealth
International. And I just want to talk a little bit about
[inaudible] a little bit about listening. This piece about
sustainability and listening from the beginning. Building these
partnerships, it's not just about the partnership you're going
to have or you're going to build with the partner to partner in
the country within which you're working, but also where they're
going to be when you leave in five years.

And have they thought about that? Where is the organization
going to be, and how is it mapping its partnership, and where it
benefits itself to move forward, and how is that going to play
out and affect your project and your goals that are larger than
your project? And that -- listening to the politics -- and
what's happening. And it's the individuals in those
communities, and those NGOs, and then the government level, and
also the organization, and wanting that movement as you do.

Because that is so shifting, so much of this transition that we talked about earlier, and it's so fragile.

We're not paying attention along the way, we're continually sewing those pieces together, and showing them how to sew those pieces together, it can all unravel very quickly after we depart.

NEIL LEVINE: You, George.

GEORGE THOMPSON: I'm George Thompson, with USAID. I have two points. One is I agree with the idea there's different levels of partnership. And what I think I've found in my career in foreign service was that what I learned in Peace Corps training was that community development was the basis of everything. And what I've found out in my USAID service is that if a project has community development, it has a chance of working. If it doesn't have community development, it has no chance of working, or very little chance of working.

And then, the other thing is that I remember a partnership that a friend of mine that was working on a Nigeria-esque fought for years to keep these women's health groups together for years and years, during the dictatorship because that was the only thing they allowed us to do, and they wanted to cut that program -- he wrote a letter to the President. He got the President to sign off on a, Clinton to sign off on something to say we're going to keep doing this in order to keep that project going. And he realized it wasn't just -- they couldn't do a democratization program, but they taught these women how to act democratically in the women's group. And those groups were the basis for the -- once democracy kind of broke out there, were the basis for a lot USAID's programming.

NEIL LEVINE: Right here, behind you. We'll take two more. One here, and one in the middle.

KIM HART: Hi. Kim Hart, with Search for Common Ground. I think one of the things we're seeing in trends is an increase and improvement in vertical partnerships, and in horizontal

partnerships in the countries who could use more coordination and information sharing. One of the big gaps that I still see, I think, is information sharing between USAID and the partners that aren't linked in a particular project. So, for example, if I'm working Nepal on a governance project, but some of the great evaluation in another country, unless I'm digging through the deck and somehow finding my name is not even on there, that information often never gets shared beyond just the in country teams.

So, I think that there should be a critical space for us to -- how do we share information more broadly than just through the people on the ground working together, and who's in your project line of command to make sure that there's actual learning across the field.

NEIL LEVINE: Thank you. Last question, and then I'm told the administrator's en route back. Okay.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm [inaudible] grant management

solutions project. I just wanted to talk a little bit in line

with sustainability issues that were raised. But first, when

partnerships are created, they mostly are created to produce

some change, or to make the change work, or you know, to alter

the things. And that's what needs to be remembered, first of

all, before we talk about the sustainability because change

implies a world of behavior changes. And it implies -- and not

necessarily this time exists, and I wanted to say that, for

instance, the prioritization -- and this is probably very

related to what agency is doing and concerned about it, but

prioritization sometimes works against this time.

And for instance, some countries -- they were in priority list

and then all of the sudden, they become out of that list. But

they are still willing, and they don't have means, and they

don't have that support to continue, while the others are bored

with money, you know, and they don't have that commitment. They

don't have that willingness. They don't have that basis. So, I

think, for instance, what I would say for the agency to think

about, there is a will, there will be better results at the end

of the day.

NEIL LEVINE: Okay.   That will be the last question.   I'm going to, I believe I've been asked to summarize in the plenary -- so, I won't do that now.   Some of the questions that arose were very good questions, and there are active conversations and initiatives ongoing to address them, particularly on the questions of acquisition and assistance, on risk management.

I invite our partners to join us at our annual partners' conference, which is June 27, where there will be presentations and future discussions to take those on.   With that, I'll hand it back to -- I would like to invite everybody back in. [laughs].   Yeah we're recording.   Clear the chairs?   Got it.

[end of transcript]