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USAID Announces New Initiatives at the 2023 Summit for Democracy and Updates on Progress Made Since the 2021 Summit

BACKGROUND

At the first Summit for Democracy held in December 2021, President Biden announced the establishment of the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal (PIDR), a landmark set of policy and foreign assistance initiatives that build upon the U.S. Government's significant, ongoing work to bolster democracy and defend human rights globally. USAID contributed 14 initiatives to the PIDR at the first Summit, and over the past year has made progress advancing these programs.

During the Second Summit for Democracy USAID is contributing eight new initiatives – many of which are focused on policy reforms – to the PIDR for the second Summit. The PIDR comprises five lines of effort in response to significant challenges to democracy in the 21st Century.

For FY 2023 and FY 2024, the Administration has requested $540 million ($270 million annually) to support USAID's PIDR programming, subject to the availability of funds and working with Congress.

- The **Partnerships for Democratic Development (PDD)**, provides multi-year support to countries that demonstrate sustained democratic progress. PDD focuses on integrating democratic decision making into local processes as countries address a key development challenge that could either shorten or extend their democratic openings. PDD's proposition is that bringing together an expanded set of diverse stakeholders in government, civil society, and the private sector to inform and participate in local decision making will reinforce democratic institutions, processes, and norms and foster inclusive development gains by demonstrating that democracy delivers. At the 2023 Summit for Democracy USAID announced nine PDD partner countries: Armenia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Malawi, Nepal, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Timor-Leste, and Zambia.

SUPPORTING FREE AND INDEPENDENT MEDIA

- **The Media Viability Accelerator** collaborates with Internews and six partner organizations, including the private sector, to preserve fact-based news and information media while ensuring that media outlets can survive, thrive, adapt, and grow as businesses. Recognizing the power of the private sector, it will increase the business viability of independent media outlets by deploying market-based solutions and facilitating connections among media stakeholders. It will help media outlets learn from the data and performance of peers globally and participate in a marketplace of "solution providers" such as funders, media development organizations, and businesses. In March 2023, through USAID's Global Development Alliance, USAID, Internews, and Microsoft signed a Memorandum of Understanding to leverage its best-in-class technology to support fact-based, independent media and build the MVA together.

- **Reporters Shield** helps to protect investigative journalists from defamation lawsuits by providing insurance liability coverage to cover the cost of defending journalists, civil society activists, and their organizations from defamation, libel, and other lawsuits meant to silence their reporting.

  In November 2022, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) established [Reporters Shield](#) as a 501c3 organization, which will provide a variety of services to investigative journalists and civil society activists doing investigative work, including training on how best to avoid lawsuits, resources for editing and fact checking, and supervision and pay for legal defense. In December 2022, USAID Administrator Power announced the launch of Reporters Shield at the International Anti-Corruption Conference in Washington, DC. At that conference, OCCRP also announced its partnership with the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice to oversee Reporters Shield, which will start accepting members in May 2023.

- As previously announced at the 2021 Summit for Democracy, USAID's $20 million contribution to the International Fund for Public Interest Media (IFPIM) is helping to boost global support for media sustainability by providing grants to develop and sustain independent journalism; inform the public with fact-based data; enable public debate and dialogue across society; and hold those in power to public account. To support this work, IFPIM obtained additional external commitments of $26.8 million from a variety of democracies, corporations and philanthropies.

  IFPIM is poised to provide grants to a diverse group of 14 finalists from 10 countries to help them experiment with new audience engagement models, foster increased diversity in the

newsroom, improve representation in coverage, and increase production of fact-based quality news content.

FIGHTING CORRUPTION

- **NEW in 2023**: Through **the Integrity for Development Campaign**, USAID will seek to increase donor resources for anti-corruption, especially in environments where the international community is making major development investments, such as in climate finance. This year-long campaign calls on bilateral donors and foundations to join forces with USAID and increase their investments in building integrity.

  USAID plans to allocate up to $250 million in anti-corruption programming by FY 2024 and is calling on bilateral donors and foundations to match this investment, with the goal of bringing half a billion dollars to the fight against corruption by Fiscal Year 2024.

- **NEW in 2023:** The **Financial Transparency and Integrity (FTI) Accelerator** will serve as the strategic umbrella for USAID to surge support for and ensure sustained progress on priorities identified by the Summit's U.S. government-co-led FTI Democracy Cohort. The FTI Accelerator will drive resources and technical assistance to cohort members and partner governments to help them deliver on their commitments and advance reform in these areas.

  At S4D2, the Cohort launched the FTI Pledge and Call to Action, identifying key areas in urgent need of concerted, collaborative action—namely, ensuring effective establishment and implementation of beneficial ownership registries or similar mechanisms, countering professional enablers of corruption, and improving transparency in public procurement.

- **The Countering Transnational Corruption Grand Challenge** is harnessing the power of novel and proven technologies and partnering with the private sector, local solvers and influencers, and diverse networks to prevent corrupt actors from siphoning off resources intended for the public good.

  In November 2022, USAID launched the inaugural activity, Powering a Just Energy Transition Green Minerals Challenge. Twenty semi-finalists from all over the world have been selected and were announced immediately preceding S4D2. USAID expects to make awards, ranging from $25,000 - $400,000, to up to ten finalists in August 2023. All finalists will receive targeted technical services (acceleration support), including mentorship services from industry experts.

- **The Empowering Anti-Corruption Change Agents Program (EACCA)** seeks to boost the work of anti-corruption change agents and investigative journalists around the world who seek to detect and expose corruption, and empower them with the tools and coalitions needed to strengthen their reform campaigns, advocate for and demand change, operate in safety, and engage in collective and collaborative actions.

  EACCA is being implemented in two phases: (1) as two regional Empowering the Truth Tellers (ETT) Activities, focused on establishing investigative journalism networks in underinvested regions (2023-2024); and (2) as a longer-term, central program aimed at empowering both investigative journalism and civil society networks to identify and expose corruption across sectors, network and amplify their work with others around the world, disseminate data and publications for broader impact, and ensure operational sustainability

(2024 - 2029). USAID intends to award the regional ETT/Asia Investigative Reporting Network and the regional ETT/Southern Africa Investigative Reporting Network activities by summer 2023. When combined with similar networks USAID supports in Europe and Eurasia and Latin America, these efforts will enable journalists to expose corruption schemes on a global scale.

- **The Global Accountability Program (GAP)** aims to curb transnational corruption, grand corruption, and kleptocracy by strengthening countries' defenses against illicit finance, money laundering, and other criminal flows and accelerating international cooperation. USAID is in the process of procuring the first activity under GAP—Strengthening National Architectures to Counter Corruption—which will enhance partner governments' capacity to prevent, detect, investigate, and disrupt corruption, including as it crosses borders and appears in high-risk sectors. Also under GAP, USAID will launch the International Anti-Corruption Cooperation Activity (IACCA), which will improve international cooperation, collaboration, and mentorship in detecting, investigating, and pursuing transnational and strategic corruption and related illicit flows. This Activity will link national governmental actors in priority countries with counterparts and willing partners at the regional and global levels.

- **The Anti-Corruption Response Fund (ACRF)** addresses emerging and dynamic opportunities within countries to counter corruption, responds to heightened corruption risks and challenges, and pilots new approaches to countering transnational corruption and implementing the USAID Anti-Corruption Policy.

  This includes support for countries in which an opportunity or crisis emerges that requires a surge in USAID anti-corruption assistance in the short term. It also includes strategic medium-term responses to "bridge" initial investment; test and pilot high-impact and innovative anti-corruption programming; and respond to evolving political dynamics. USAID's missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Dominican Republic received the first tranche of ACRF funding.

BOLSTERING DEMOCRATIC REFORMERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- **NEW in 2023**: USAID will advance **People-Centered Justice (PCJ)**, an evidence-based, innovative approach designed to help justice institutions, first and foremost, meet the day-to-day justice needs of the people they serve, as the cornerstone of its soon to be released first-ever Rule of Law Policy. The United States also became a member of the Justice Action Coalition and is using this platform to further advance people-centered justice globally, in collaboration with the Summit's Rule of Law Cohort.
  Shifting to PCJ helps local actors, partners, and champions to strengthen justice systems by making them more evidence-driven, responsive to justice needs, user-friendly, and problem-solving to improve accountability of justice institutions. These efforts help support services that reach individuals and communities equitably, facilitate justice for all, and ultimately build trust with those they serve. The new Rule of Law Policy, which establishes PCJ as the Agency's new programming paradigm to advance the rule of law in partner countries.

- **NEW in 2023:** USAID is working with bilateral and multilateral partners, philanthropic foundations, and civil society actors to develop **International Principles for Supporting Peaceful Collective Action,** as part of the agency's commitment to support activism and social movements. USAID, together with the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict

(ICNC), is leading the design of the principles and recommendations as a part of the Summit's Civic Space Cohort.

These principles and recommendations will outline how to effectively support nonviolent social leaders and activists. This effort will reinforce the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance by focusing on engaging and supporting nonviolent social movements. It will complement USAID's Powered by the People initiative and will help the United States and other governments navigate and refine the most effective ways to support the work of these critical frontline reformers, which evidence shows is a necessary component of democratic transitions and reforms.

- **NEW in 2023: U**SAID will expand **protections for defenders of democracy and human rights through improved duty of care and strengthen social safeguards,** including by establishing a new accountability mechanism, a Beneficiaries' Bill of Rights, and additional social safeguard capabilities to effectively conduct social impact analysis and guide social risk management and mitigation.

  As physical, psychological, and cyber risks to democracy and human rights defenders continue to increase, USAID will assess gaps and enact key reforms to strengthen duty of care practices within its democracy and human rights programming. USAID will expand its use of flexible mechanisms and inclusion of psychosocial welfare, security, and protections in its programming.

- **Powered by the People (PxP)** provides direct and accessible financial assistance, including legal and psychosocial support, to address the needs, opportunities, and challenges identified by activists and other civic actors engaged in collective action and peaceful movements. PxP will help strengthen the agency, resiliency, and efficacy of activists and people-powered social movements.

  USAID will also increase coordination with donors, specifically bilateral partners, private sector companies, and philanthropic foundations to amplify the impact of this work. USAID has secured a quarter of a million dollars of financial support from Humanity United, and is working with diverse partners, including l5 donors to develop illustrative efforts such as enhanced rapid response capabilities and a global steering advisory group to ensure activists, organizers and civil society access timely resources and support.

- **Advancing Women's and Girls' Civic and Political Leadership** adopts an ecosystem approach to improve women's civic and political engagement. The initiative targets individual, structural, and socio-cultural barriers and prevents and mitigates violence against women in politics and public life while supporting women and girls as they fully exercise their civic and political rights. USAID has identified eight initial focus countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Tanzania, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Kyrgyz Republic, and Yemen.

- **The Multilateral Partnership for Organizing, Worker Empowerment, and Rights (M-POWER)** is helping improve worker rights and empowerment by bringing together governments, unions, labor academics, and civil society organizations to strengthen workplace democracy globally. M-POWER includes a commitment by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), USAID, and U.S. Department of State to invest more than $120 million over two years for innovative technical assistance to empower workers and strengthen

worker voices. M-POWER was formally launched on December 8, 2022 and held its first Secretariat meeting.

As a unique coordinating platform among U.S. and other government partners, this initiative helps to align projects, offer urgent action capabilities, and cooperate on critical issues such as gender-based violence and harassment, occupational safety and health, just transition and the care economy.

ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY FOR DEMOCRACY

- **NEW in 2023:** USAID will work with international partners to develop a set of **Donor Principles for the Digital Age** as adopted safeguards to help ensure that donor-supported programs do not inadvertently facilitate the weaponization of or harm caused by data driven technologies and the information they carry.

  These voluntary, non-binding donor principles will provide an opportunity for donor nations to negotiate and agree upon a set of standards to advance human rights and democratic values across the digital ecosystem. The Principles will be initially drafted under the FOC Donor Coordination Group and then negotiated through the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) starting in April 2023 and presented at the annual Internet Governance Forum meeting in October 2023.

- **Advancing Digital Democracy (ADD)** is working to foster open, secure, and inclusive digital democracy. Building on the existing programming in nine partner countries, ADD activities are being expanded to six additional USAID partner countries this year. USAID is working with local governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector to support multi stakeholder engagement in this initiative.

  The initiative provides help to governments to fulfill their international human rights commitments and advance democratic values through legal and regulatory frameworks that constrain the use of technology for repression and foster the development and use of rights-respecting technology and data. It helps increase investments in and demand for rights-respecting tech innovation by supporting software engineers, technology companies, and researchers embed respect for human rights and democratic values into tech development, design, and deployment. Lastly, it seeks to support civil society, technologists, independent oversight bodies, and the general public to hold governments and companies accountable for protecting and respecting human rights and fostering democratic values across the digital ecosystem.

- **NEW in 2023:** The P**romoting Information Integrity and Resilience (Pro-Info)** Initiative will build on the work of the Summit's Information Integrity Cohort and USAID and U.S. Department of State's new and existing efforts to strengthen information integrity and resilience globally in the countries we operate in overseas.

  This is done advancing private-public-civic partnerships and improving cooperation among key stakeholders, including by demonstrating leadership at the OECD and in other relevant multilateral fora. USAID will provide up to $16 Million to enhance technical assistance and capacity building to local civil society, governments, and media outlets, and expand international donor coordination in order to maximize investments to strengthen information integrity and resilience.

DEFENDING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

- **NEW in 2023:** USAID will enhance its support for democratic elections globally by developing guidelines for **USAID Electoral Assistance for the 21st Century**, which adheres to U.S. government values and draws from global electoral assistance principles and best practices. The guidelines will take into account the changing nature of electoral assistance and serve as a model for other international development agencies.

- **The Global Network for Securing Electoral Integrity (GNSEI)** is rallying the international electoral integrity community to create a platform for advancing electoral integrity norms and guidelines. USAID has joined with more than 30 international organizations, intergovernmental organizations, development agencies, and election networks to form the Global Network for Securing Electoral Integrity. The Network launched on March 21, 2023, with nearly 200 participants from leading election organizations across the globe.

  USAID collaborated with partners to develop a shared agenda with clear vision, goals, and objectives of the Global Network; participation criteria and engagement guidelines; and a shortlist of priority issues. The Network will focus on two priority issues in its first year: the independence of election management bodies and genuine and inclusive electoral reform processes.

- **The Defending Democratic Elections (DDE) Fund** pilots and scales solutions to enhance electoral integrity – particularly those posing a threat during the period in between elections. The Fund is also supporting activities that help advance countries' election-related commitments from the first Summit, and will support programming in at least 15 partner countries.

  Activities will address threats at a country, regional, or global level, including corruption in campaign finance; electoral cybersecurity threats; disinformation in elections; resilience and independence of election management bodies; electoral violence; protection of citizen election observer rights; and barriers to political participation among women, youth, and other marginalized groups.