



**Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA)
Public Meeting Notes
December 2, 2022
10:15am - 11:45am ET
Horizon Ballroom, Ronald Reagan Building
And virtual via Zoom**

US Agency for International Development (USAID)
1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC

Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid
December 2, 2022
Virtual via Zoom, and
Horizon Ballroom
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20004

Meeting Agenda:

10:15am: ACVFA Chair Nisha Biswal opening remarks

10:20am: USAID Administrator Samantha Power remarks

10:30am: Panel Discussion and Audience Q&A: Challenges and Opportunities in Climate Resilience and Food Security

- Moderator: Gillian Caldwell, USAID Chief Climate Officer
- ACVFA panelists:
 - C.D. Glin, President, PepsiCo Foundation
 - Asma Lateef, Policy and Advocacy Lead for Agriculture, SDG2 Advocacy Hub
 - Paul Weisenfeld, Executive Vice President for International Development, RTI International

11:00am: Panel Discussion and Audience Q&A: Challenges and Opportunities in Democracy and Anti-Corruption

- Moderator: Rosarie Tucci, USAID Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Rights, and Governance
- ACVFA Panelists:
 - Kristin Lord, President and CEO, IREX
 - Saad Mohseni, Founder and CEO, MOBY Group
 - Dan Twining, President, International Republican Institute

11:30am: Jodi Herman, Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs, closing remarks

11:45am: Public Meeting Adjourns

Transcript of ACVFA Public Meeting December 2, 2022

[Nisha Biswal, ACVFA Chair:] Morning, everyone. It's a wonderful day to be at USAID. My name is Nisha Biswal, and I am both the senior Vice President for International Strategy at the US Chamber of Commerce, but I'm here today in my capacity as the chair of the Advisory Committee for Voluntary Foreign Assistance [*sic*], which is a role that I am so proud and privileged to play. Let me just welcome all of you for our first public meeting of ACVFA. We're thrilled to be with all of you today - everyone in the room, and everyone who's joining online for a conversation around some of the global challenges that AID and our partners and stakeholders are grappling with today.

For those of you in this room - I know most of you are very familiar with ACVFA and its history. - but for that broader audience, I will just say that the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Assistance [*sic*] has been an important role in providing guidance and engaging with USAID over - its entirety - of its existence. And actually, I think, actually was established even before we had a USAID to play that role of advising the US government on the development challenges that the practitioner community has been engaged with.

And so we're really privileged to have today this newly reconstituted ACFVA board that Administrator Power has brought together. This board this year is one of the most diverse and inclusive boards in ACFVA's history. I'm not going to introduce every member of the ACFVA committee, because there's 30 of us, and I want to get to the conversations that we want to engage in across the next hour and a half.

But I will just say thank you to all of our illustrious members who have, you know, volunteered to serve on this committee, give up their time, give up their expertise. And also for those of you who are not familiar with the board. I encourage you to go to the USAID website [USAID.gov](https://www.usaid.gov) and peruse the bios and the full list, and welcome your engagement and participation in this advisory committee process by sending in your thoughts and comments both today and throughout the tenure of our work.

So with that said, I want to 1) give you a sense of the work that ACVFA is focused on, and then 2) just get to today's program where we will, of course, hear from Administrator Power, and I'll bring her up in a moment. And then we'll hear on a couple of panels that essentially intersect with the work that the committee is going to focus on.

One of the panels will be on that intersection between climate and resilience and food security and we will hear from a number of our ACFVA members who are working on that important nexus. And then the other will be talking about democracy, anti-corruption, and in this age of disinformation and misinformation, and how AID is grappling with it, and how many of our practitioners are grappling with it.

The working groups are going to focus on these important issues, as well as looking at inclusive development through the lens of localization, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, etc., and on how we leverage and engage the private sector much more meaningfully in the work of USAID and broader - in a broader sense - in the work of the development community writ large on essentially a time of unprecedented challenges around the world.

And this is one that I'm particularly really excited about because, as an alumnus of USAID, and having spent most of my career in government focusing on development challenges both from the agency perspective as well as an appropriator on the Hill, and now at the Chamber, the ability to bring the private sector into much more meaningful participation. Because what companies are also finding around the world is that their commercial operations are deeply impacted by the developmental challenges that we're grappling with in this room, right? And that they can't have successful trade and commerce without engaging on these fundamental issues of resiliency in the communities in which they market in the communities in which they operate.

So I think, despite the fact that we are at a time of extraordinary challenge, we are also at a time of extraordinary opportunity to innovate and retool our toolkit to be impactful and to leverage the impact of so many of us around the world who approach these things from a slightly different perspective. And I think we all got a handle on what that potential is as we looked at new ways of coming out of the pandemic, whether it was on dealing with supply chain crises, on getting shots in arms. It was an incredible moment of public and private partnership in addressing those challenges. So I'm really excited about the opportunity that we have not just today, but over the next couple of years, and with that I'm also just, deeply honored and excited that we have the opportunity to work with someone who, I think, is probably one of the most incredible individuals to be leading this agency at this time of profound challenge: Samantha Power, who needs no real introduction in this room, and in this community.

So I won't go through her bio, but I will just say that as we think about, you know, the development diplomat who can be on the global stage and really lead a conversation on how we think about development from a fundamental perspective of national and human security for this country and for every country and its people. I can't think of anyone who is better placed to be able to take that conversation into board rooms, into, you know, Prime Ministers' offices and presidential palaces, and into the streets and villages and town halls around the world. So with that, Samantha, I invite you to come up here and make a few comments and get us going.

[USAID Administrator Samantha Power]

Thanks so much. That's incredibly generous, Nisha. What's also generous is just how much of your time and your intellect and your heart you are giving to us at USAID – again – in this different role. And I don't know what we would do without you in ACVFA, and that is a form of service to all the people in the world again, who you've dedicated your life to.

I have seen firsthand the way you have been, through your career, able to marshal powerful actors on the Hill, in the private sector, in the Interagency. I always knew when I was in the Situation Room, and you were there and we were on the same side of things – which was pretty much every time – that I was in much better shape. That our arguments were going to be presented and land in with the most powerful punch imaginable – just drawing on this lifetime of experience you bring across sectors – so I feel incredibly lucky.

I also want to thank a member of USAID's current staff – a remarkable person – Sophia Lajaunie, who is orchestrating ACVFA and pulling all of this together. And it is no exaggeration to say that we would not

be here today without Sophia and – it really, having such an inspiring and dynamic leader as Nisha – and such an inspiring and dynamic workhorse, as Sophia puts us in a really, really strong position.

I want to thank everyone who's joining in the audience today. And we have so many people joining online also. I think you are seeing something really special. If you've ever heard of USAID, in truth you should know ACVFA too. Because without ACVFA – as Nisha sort of hinted at – basically USAID, you know, likely would not exist.

It was ACVFA, which was established in the wake of World War II and the global reconstruction effort that followed, that argued to President Truman that America needed to establish a dedicated development authority. Even though the World Bank and the IMF had been founded years earlier, that first group of appointed experts recognized that the development of poor countries could not happen only through loans – aid, voluntary grants were necessary as well.

The Committee visualized this Agency as a place where diverse partners could come together in pursuit of a common mission to promote economic development abroad to avoid future conflict – which of course was looming large in people's minds – to spur collaboration with other free nations and international institutions, and ultimately to safeguard human dignity around the world.

In the years since, ACVFA has evolved to be not just an advisor to USAID, but a bridge linking the institution of USAID to nongovernmental organizations, to the private sector, to religious leaders, to civil society.

ACVFA has helped guide our approach to crucial global development challenges from foundational efforts to provide humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction, to recruiting new partners to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic, to supporting the expansion of democratic governance after the Berlin Wall fell – the Iron Curtain fell. Together, we have navigated through major challenges and, I think really it is fair to say, spurred long-lasting impact in the real world.

And we've done so again by convening a diverse set of experts to advise us and steer us, not just again through new solution sets but through new relationships entirely beyond those that we at USAID may have already established. This emphasis on partnerships I think it is really, really important. It is these partnerships that are going to help us deliver development progress beyond the scope of our programs and beyond the size of our budgets.

We need to convene, to catalyze, to spur new policy shifts, not only in our own government but at international institutions, who are major players in impacting development and mitigating harms, for example, from climate shocks and otherwise. It is these partnerships that this Committee is really, really poised to help us build.

And that's because the group gathered here today is in fact the most diverse – that is the Committee gathered here today – is the most diverse in the history of ACVFA. And I don't just mean diverse on the basis of nationality, ethnicity or gender – though that representation is absolutely essential as we commit

to being an Agency for inclusive development at every level of our work starting with our people, but of course also extending out into who we are working with in the field.

But I also – this board is extraordinary for its diversity of experience. It’s remarkable. We are blessed to have at our side leading business executives, top scholars, civil society champions, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, and lions of international development who will forget more about work in this field than I know I will ever know.

Some of them bring to the table years of experience in the public sector, working with foreign ministries and commerce agencies, or they come having brought experience from different periods working right here at USAID.

Others have worked at the UN or the World Bank, other parts of the international system. Still others are leaders of industry, executives in finance, tech, food systems, sustainability, consulting. And everyone is a subject matter expert in their own right, whether on democracy, advocacy, procurement, philanthropy, or technology. And we need their expertise, we need their support, we need their connections, we need their help.

Since the last time USAID had the benefit of a board to advise us three years ago, it’s hard to imagine that this can be the case but the challenges in the world have, of course, multiplied. Climate change just in that short period of time has intensified – droughts, floods, heat waves, cold fronts, typhoons, tornadoes – all are seeming to proliferate. Putin’s war – which we had a version of three years ago but nothing at the scale that we are seeing that started on February 24 – is not only devastating Ukraine, but it is, as you well know, fueling inflation and contributing to an unprecedented global food crisis.

Around the world, democracies are under attack as misinformation and the misinformation machines grow more sophisticated, and as lies and harmful disinformation – willful disinformation – spread like wildfire. And of course the pandemic, though it doesn’t get headlines in the same way, still rages claiming hundreds of lives each day and snarling supply chains that communities are relying upon to survive or to make ends meet.

Each of these global crises feeds on the other. Natural disasters destroy farms, conflict spikes prices for fertilizer and food, misinformation fuels the spread of the pandemic, right? Everything is connected.

And of course it is the most marginalized and least resourced communities that are affected first and usually that are hit the hardest. It is the racial and ethnic minorities who are forced to live in the areas most affected by pollution and climate change. It is women and children who are shut out of economies devastated by conflict and COVID-19. It is indigenous communities and LGBTQI+ communities who must fight for their right to participate in the democratic process and to benefit from equal rights.

Our ACVFA member Paul Weisenfield, who you will hear from in just a bit, shared a quote with all of us in a recent board meeting, and this just kind of sums it up: “The reason development is so hard is because everything is important.” Right? What do you not do to do this other thing with more intensity?

Each of the crises we face today can be described with virtually the same words: urgent, devastating, some existential. So, not only do we struggle to prioritize because the challenges are so interlinked, but it is actually the case that we can't just focus on one without focusing on the other, or we will face setbacks, even in the domain to which we give our focus.

So, we have to broaden our effort, we have to bring in these new allies and new partners, we have to not see development as solely the product of governments or international organizations, but as a shared commitment that far more institutions and organizations can embrace.

And I thought Nisha spoke eloquently to the private sector case, the case to the private sector, for just the extent to which their markets and their concepts of operations are being affected every day by these development challenges.

This approach to deliver progress even beyond our programs is something our team is already demonstrating. In Ukraine, for instance, our Ukrainian staff – who work day in, day out, despite their countries, their families and their communities facing bombardment and incredible peril – recently enlisted local fashion houses to sew sleeping bags for displaced communities. The same team partnered, as you might have read in the news, with SpaceX to set up internet antennas to facilitate communication within Ukraine's borders. They broadened the impact of what USAID and the U.S. government were doing in Ukraine by looking outward, not inward, and by bringing that development hustle to bear, and I could not be more grateful.

That is the type of action we hope this board helps us supercharge. And today, I'm incredibly excited, because we'll be hearing from some of our Committee members on the global challenges that we face as a development agency.

And as a country, we know we can create a bigger tent to tackle those challenges. So, we have a conversation coming as you know, on opportunities to strengthen food security, and to support nations as they withstand the impacts of a changing climate. We have a discussion on how we can help fuel a global democratic rebound and fight the corruption that fuels autocracy around the world. And here I would note, again, that for all the talk of the democratic recession and all the data that attests to that, you have authoritarian, totalitarian, autocratic governments very much on their heels at the moment. Whether it's Putin's blunder in invading Ukraine and all of the devastation that is wreaking inside Russia and on Russian families, whose soldiers are sent to fight or in the Russian economy, or what you're seeing in China, or, of course, the incredibly inspiring and courageous actions of women and young people in Iran.

You know, for all of the talk of democracy's dysfunction and demise, you know, there is a reason that democracy is the worst form of government apart from all the others – so, as was once said. And we are seeing that the resilience, the absorptive capacity, the learning, the iteration that we can do, the involvement of our greatest resource or citizens – that is what makes this model the more adaptive model and the more productive and impactful model over time.

So I want to thank this board so much for letting us benefit from your wisdom, for giving us your time – which is the most precious commodity that any of us have on this earth – and for sharing your collective

wisdom with everybody gathered here today. It's – I think – we're going to get a taste here, and the public's going to get a taste of all that this diverse range of experts has to offer the development challenges and this development agency, so thank you so much.

[Nisha Biswal] Well, Samantha, thank you so much for again inspiring us. I'm always struck by, you know, how compelling, how compassionate, and how committed you are every time you undertake something and this was no exception.

It's my pleasure now to bring up the first panel conversation that we're going to have. First, I want to introduce Gillian Caldwell, who's the Chief Climate Officer at USAID and our panelists from the ACFVA committee: C.D. Glin, President of PepsiCo Foundation; Asma Lateef, Policy and Advocacy Lead for Agriculture in the SDG2 Advocacy Hub; and Paul Weisenfeld, the Executive Vice President for International Development at RTI. Gillian, I'm going to hand it over to you.

[Gillian Caldwell] Okay. I think you'll be pleased to know that I'm starting my alarm clock because I know that we're just a little behind on time here. So hi everybody. I'm Gillian. I'm the Chief Climate Officer at USAID, and I'm really honored to be here with some of the many incredibly bright and talented people on our committee. And this conversation is going to be about the twin crises - the climate crisis and the food crisis - and the interconnect, the interconnections between those. Just by brief, by way of brief introduction, you know, we are facing a crisis of catastrophic proportions. It threatens to imperil or potentially accelerate everything we hope to achieve as an agency. And that's why Administrator Power has so frequently called upon us to become a climate agency.

That is not to suggest that we shouldn't continue doing the critically important work that we do. But it is to say that if we don't skin our glasses with an understanding of the climate crisis and ground our development responses in an understanding of the radical ways in which the world has to change and is changing, we won't succeed in doing what we need to do to deliver on this enormous challenge. And we're in the midst of combining teams, which I think really points to the salience of this panel. The climate and environment teams are going to be coming together with the resilience and food security team within our agency, which is an acknowledgement of the close interconnectivity between these terrains. Today's panel's also, I think, is a reflection, as is the broader committee, of the primacy we're placing on public-private partnerships. We're staring at a 3 to 5 trillion dollar gap in climate finance, and if we don't engage the private sector in getting where we need to go, we've got an enormous problem on our hands.

So I have got three amazing people with me here today. I've got C.D. Glin to my immediate left, who is with the PepsiCo Foundation. I've got Asma Lateef, who is with the SDG2 Advocacy Hub, and I've got Paul Weisenfeld, who is with the RTI Institute [*sic*].

So my first question's to you, C.D. I want to thank you, Pepsi, for joining our PREPARE Call to Action first of all, which is a call for private sector engagement and tackling the critical challenges we're facing when it comes to adaptation and resilience. And I want to ask you to talk about the really innovative work you're doing in the terrain of regenerative agriculture and, more specifically, how you're tackling a key conundrum, which is that women are hit first and worse. They face disproportionate burdens in the context of the climate crisis. They're also critical to the agricultural economy globally, and yet we're not

seeing as much uptake when it comes to climate smart agricultural practices with women. So talk to us about what you're doing and how you're tackling that nut.

[C.D. Glin]

Thanks. Thanks for the opportunity. This is a great time to come back to DC and to represent the private sector. So I used to be in government, and I used to say, from the government, I'm here to help. Now I'm from the private sector and I'm still here to help, so this is a good moment for me. You know, PepsiCo - I want to step back a little bit, Gillian, and sort of introduce PepsiCo beyond Pepsi Cola or Frito Lay, and share that PepsiCo sources 25 key crops from 30 different countries and has an agricultural footprint of 7 million acres across the world. And that's sort of our capabilities and our reach. But what's our responsibility with that? And so in sourcing crops we were committed to sourcing 100% sustainably in some key value chains. And think potatoes and think Lays. Corn - think Doritos or Cheetos. Oats - think Quaker Oats and oatmeal. Water - we're going to be net water positive in all of our water sourcing. And so it's one thing to operate. It's another to operate within planetary boundaries. And we know we can't operate, we can't perform, we can't be profitable unless we do that.

And then also in terms of adaptive practices - regenerative agriculture across the 7 million acres. It's critical to, not only to people, but also to the planet. And so we have a strong commitment there, and our whole process is really about being... thinking about it from a sustainable food system. Almost everything that we do.

Last year we announced what we call PepsiCo Positive. This was an end-to-end transformation of the Company. I work in the foundation, but I'm the Global Head of Philanthropy for the company. But the entire company has put sustainability and human capital at the center of everything that we do. And in doing that, that means we have to be sustainable, we have to be regenerative, but we also have to be inclusive. So to your point around agriculture - and if you think about Pepsi as a food and beverage company, but as an agricultural company, we source, we make, we move products that are grown by a lot by smallholder farmers around the world and the vast majority of those farmers are female and women and so in partnership with USAID through GDA (the Global Development Alliance), we've, on the business side, invested in a program that's critical to including women and basically making the business proposition for women in agricultural supply chains.

If there was a silver bullet to food and agricultural security, part of that silver bullet or silver buckshot would be addressing gender inequality and agricultural value chains. And so with USAID, through our program to include and increase prove out the business model for women agricultural supply chains, it's really critical to our success. We also have a program with CARE around the world and seven different countries to impact five million women, five million smallholders - females in agricultural supply chains because part of this is the intentionality of focusing on women. So we know we want to adopt regenerative practices. But how are we going to get there? Well, it's investing in those women. It's really making the business case to them that if you do transition your practice to a regenerative nature, it will increase incomes. It will improve yields. It will provide improved food and nutritional security. And so women are climate smart and smallholder farmers - female smallholder farmers - can be climate smart, but they're also economically rational. So we have to make both the case for the planetary case, but also the profitability case for them as well.

And so we work with USAID, we work with a lot of implementing partners, but in our own supply chain we want to practice what we're preaching. And this is why I feel really proud of the movements that we're making to really think about this from a sustainable food system.

[Gillian Caldwell]

Thank you. Thank you so much, C.D. I might circle back to you if we have time. Paul at RTI, first of all, I want to thank you for the recent study you did on how we can be increasing agricultural yields while decreasing methane emissions. As you know, but the audience may or may not, methane is a short-lived climate pollutant. It is extremely toxic. It is our best opportunity to reduce carbon emissions in the near term, and stay on track for 1.5, which is slowly or quickly slipping out of reach so that's an incredibly important study. I wonder what your own insight and analysis can tell us about how to get at the critical challenge of building adaptation and resilience. It's such a huge terrain. It's a term that's tossed around all the time, and I'm not sure we've really got a handle on the scope and scale of this challenge. We're within USAID trying to hone in on a few key things: information systems in response to the Secretary General's call for early warning for all; embedding, understanding of resilience and adaptation across all government policy making and programs; and then increasing private sector finance. But what might you be able to tell us? What learnings do you have to help inform our thinking on how to tackle this challenge?

[Paul Weisenfeld]

Well, thanks for the question, Gillian and it's a real honor to be here, and to be part of ACFVA. Thanks for this opportunity and thanks for highlighting the study. I think, when I think about the challenge and the intersection of food systems and climate change, it's really in my mind three challenges, because we see around the world increasing food and security, increasing nutrition insecurity. There's an urgent need to deal with that and make sure people have food. We've seen declines in livelihoods over the last couple of years because of economic disruption, the war in Ukraine, COVID-19's impact, so there's an urgent need to deal with livelihoods.

But we have to do that in a way that doesn't increase greenhouse gas emissions. We can't just plant more land to agriculture. So one of the things the study that you highlighted noted was, we looked at improving animal husbandry practices in a project in Kenya, and really dramatically improving the way that people care for their animals increases productivity, and it gets you that triple benefit. It provides increased access to the nutritious food sources. It increases livelihoods and it reduces methane emissions. That's great. As you said it's a potent climate change gas. So I think how you deal with the tensions between increasing food security, livelihoods, climate change is really about innovation and are we studying it in a way that we understand what the impacts are. Do we really, and I would say, you drive innovation both from kind of a global, big picture, technological level, but also a local level. So one of the things that we're really emphasizing is we have ever better ways to collect and analyze data and get really unique insights from AI tools and technologies that's actionable to countries, to governments, to farmers down at the community level. So we need to make sure that people have access to the latest tools and technologies to drive innovation.

At the same time, you have to bring it down to the local level and USAID has a localization effort. And really understanding what's happening at the local level. What are the traditional practices that they're doing? Use the technology to analyze what are the effects and impacts of those traditional practices. Are they increasing livelihoods? Are they increasing food security? What is the impact on climate change? Think about all three of those efforts at once, as we analyze and take a holistic perspective to make sure that we understand what the consequences are, that we don't have any unintended negative consequences. And I think that's really the way to move forward.

[Gillian Caldwell]

Interesting that you mentioned Kenya because I was just in Kenya, and thinking about these very issues. On the upside, we've formed something called the Kenya Rangelands Trust, which is a massive, sort of, conglomeration of 47 conservancies - 14 of which are actively engaged in changing grazing patterns to increase the capability of the soil to sequester carbon. And we've now formed the largest soil - well really, the only, but it's also massive - soil sequestration project in the world. And these communities have now received 20 million dollars from the sale of those carbon credits, which they're using to build maternity clinics and pay bursaries to go to school. At the same time, this is a community that's heavily dependent on livestock, and you know, 1.2 million livestock died in the most recent drought. The Horn of Africa is facing unprecedented droughts.

I'm about to get to you Asma on this, but the question becomes: can we continue to afford a livestock driven culture? And you mentioned how do we ground ourselves in an understanding of those cultures? Livestock - it's culture, it's wealth, it's central to the Maasai culture in Kenya so making a change on that front is really challenging. And yet, I just wonder how, you know, how our planet, given the predictions, can sustain the current ways of life.

Asma, I wanted to ask you about food security. That's, of course, central to this conversation and Paul mentioned the sort of polycrisis. We've got war. We've got pandemics. We've got debt. We've got climate. And we've got so many people on the brink of starvation. You know, by the time famine is actually announced, it's too late. So how do we continue to ensure that the food security crisis remains central in the context of all these other interrelated challenges we're confronting?

[Asma Lateef]

Thanks. Thanks very much for the question, and adding my thanks to you for inviting me to be on this panel, and it's a real honor to be part of ACFVA. This is the rise in hunger and the crisis in Somalia and the Horn of Africa have been brewing for a long time, and for the reasons that you've mentioned. At the beginning of this year, with the invasion of Ukraine, there was a lot of conversation about where we would find alternative sources of wheat and grain, and nobody imagined that Pakistan would be flooded the way it was in the summer. So we have a food system that is completely broken, too dependent on very few countries, too dependent on very few commodities. There is a real, urgent need to diversify production, to diversify diets. And I think there is an opportunity with this, in this crisis, to really reposition food security and food systems as a global public good.

We are... three billion people on this planet cannot afford a healthy diet. One in two children - in a very recent study in The Lancet - one in two children is micronutrient deficient in at least one key nutrient.

That has huge implications for health, for livelihoods, for economic growth. And we're not thinking about our approach in these interconnected ways. So I think we really need to take the time and that world leaders - it was great to hear President Biden and President Macron speaking to food security and actually mentioning nutrition, which was great. It's really important that we use this time when the world's attention is very much focused on these issues to really position these challenges as central to also some of the... part of the solution to the challenge of climate change.

We are at a point where there are... countries are fiscally tapped out. There is no money coming out of COVID. Developing countries are in a deeply debt-distressed situation. There are really interesting conversations happening now at the global level - the Bridgetown Initiative about how we finance both the climate crisis, the climate emergency, the need for adaptation, loss and damage mitigation.

We really - I think we have a moment, an opportunity to come together and really position food security and food systems transformation as the way forward and as the main reason for reforming the financial crisis. I mean, put these issues at the heart of that discussion around Bridgetown... the Bridgetown Initiative. We have 45 million people at the brink of starvation in - no, sorry, it's 45 million people at risk of starvation in 35 countries, 222 million people facing acute food shortages. The UN's recent appeal is 51.5 billion. It came out yesterday. This is an unsustainable track that we're on, and I think there's a huge opportunity in these conversations to really make the case for a triple win - both for climate, for people, and for livelihoods.

Smallholder farmers are on the frontlines of the climate crisis. They are themselves malnourished. Their children are malnourished. We have... we know what to do. At the end of the last food crisis in 2007, 2008, Feed the Future - the global agriculture and food security program that was launched at the G20 in Pittsburgh, those were really foundational, sorry, really foundational initiatives. [...] was initially intended to be a 20 billion dollar program. It never reached there. And after that food crisis diminished, the attention dropped off. And it's an interesting thought experiment to think about what the world would have been like if we had actually made the investment at the time. Would we be needing a 51 billion dollar humanitarian appeal?

[Gillian Caldwell]

It goes back to it's penny wise and pound foolish not to tackle this climate crisis. The long-term expenses and consequences are going to be so much more expensive than the already significant price tag.

We have just a few minutes left because I'm keen to get us back on track so that's three or four min for questions from our audience or online. Does anybody have a question? Yes. Do you have a microphone for her? Great and just please briefly state your name and affiliation. That would be fantastic. Anybody else with a question? Because if so, I'll take two at once.

[Audience Question]

Thank you so much. Okay, my name is Elise Young. I used to work with Asma Lateef at Bread for the World, but now I'm at FHI 360. Thank you all so much. Good to see you C.D. Glin and Paul.

This is really important conversation, crucial, urgent. One question I have is - love to hear... loved what you said C.D. about the importance of women and what you... your question. We have not yet seen in the US government a significant investment in some of the regional and global mechanisms of women and indigenous people who are involved in environmental climate change and sustainable agricultural practices. Like WEDO [Women's Environment & Development Organization], WOCAN [Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management], international indigenous people fighting against climate change. And I'm curious in thinking about what ACFVA can do in the future, in what we can do in public-private partnerships. There's been a lot of focus on the individual farmer or farming household, and not as much on larger bodies of marginalized groups of women, indigenous peoples, and how to engage them in global decision making, in large partnership investments. Any thoughts about where you see potential for that and what can we do to change that? Because women's movements, indigenous people's movements need to be at this table, but we're not yet seeing that investment as much from the US side of things.

[C.D. Glin]

I think it's a great, great point, I mean, first and foremost, I think we need to spend some time with you to learn more about those opportunities. But I look at it from an institution building. I look at it from the standpoint of being able to scale some of our solutions. We aren't going to scale some of these issues and challenges one smallholder at a time or one woman's cooperative at the time. So I think it's essential that we do start moving more towards whether it's coalition, whether it's larger bodies to give them the support, the infrastructure to really bring about more transformational change. And it also caused for engaging governments and some of the issues in the agricultural policies that can focus on women and women's economic empowerment more and more ways. I know, from a business standpoint, our partnership with USAID is essential. It's across 7 countries - it's all of our agricultural supply chains within the potato value chain. So we're really trying to look at scale. That's what the private sector looks at a lot, and so I think you've just given us another model and modality to think about scale of our efforts. So I appreciate that.

[Asma Lateef]

Elise, you mentioned a really important point about leveraging platforms, and I think that is a really under- there are lots of platforms that are really underutilized at the moment, and including, for example, smallholder form organizations at the regional level. The PanAfrican Farmers Organization touches 80 million farmers. That's a huge, huge platform, both to understand the challenges, but also to reach farmers with new technologies, new innovations and make the connections between nutrition and climate smart agriculture. So I - there are other important platforms at the country level we should be thinking about - how to use public procurement, school meals, social protection programs to really reach women and provide potentially a market for their products as well.

[Paul Weisenfeld]

Really briefly, thanks for the question. I agree completely with C.D. and Asma, that it's a great question. What it makes me think about is USAID, I think, has really done a phenomenal job when they developed the women's empowerment and agriculture index. I think that was transformational in thinking about what does empowerment really mean. We kind of used proxies before, but it was very precise and if you have a good measure, you can drive change. And it drove change in thinking about women's empowerment at the

household level and community level. And I think your question really begs the question of how do we think about women's empowerment at a larger, bolder, more transformational level? What would be the equivalent of a women's empowerment agricultural index at that larger level?

[Gillian Caldwell]

I would just add that the USAID Climate Strategy, which has a range of very ambitious goals and takes us through 2030, includes a primary emphasis on empowering and funding the role of women, indigenous people in local communities, and you may be aware, with the 1.7 billion dollar pledge over the next five years specifically for indigenous people in local communities.

The rack-up show that we're 19 percent of the 20 we should be at the first year of the five-year pledge towards that. The challenge is only 7 percent of those funds are going to the local communities themselves, right? There's intermediaries and this relates to USAID's primary emphasis on localization, which Administrator Power referred to. The Biden administration's also placed a heavy emphasis on gender and on the empowerment of women, and we have very ambitious goals in terms of increasing the funding and programming we're doing that's supportive of women's empowerment, and conscious of the unique role they play in the world today. So I think at that I'm going to need to let Nisha back up on stage so we'll just depart with thanks to all of you. Thank you so much. Let's give them a round of applause.

[Nisha Biswal]

Thank you so much. Such an important conversation and really we could have devoted another hour just to exploring some of the insights that our panelists had to share. But it gives you a sense of the richness of the conversations that ACVFA is able to take on.

I want to bring the second panel up. We're going to have a conversation now on the challenges and opportunities in democracy and anti-corruption, and Ro Tucci who is USAID's Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Rights, and Governance is going to come up and moderate that conversation with Kristin Lord, President and CEO of IREX; Saad Mohseni, Founder and CEO of the MOBY Group; and Dan Twining, the President of the International Republican Institute.

Thank you very much, and Ro, over to you.

[Ro Tucci]

Alright, well, thank you. You okay? Alright, well, Administrator, you started us off with talking about the acute crises confronting the world right now, and we just finished talking about the climate challenge. And really at a time when we're supposed to be working or must be working hand in hand with our global partners, we find ourselves squarely confronted with a growing attack on democratic values, norms, and systems. And contributing to that is this worrying trust deficit, right, between citizens and institutions, kind of lays the foundation of democracy. I mean, this trust is deeply eroded by many of the issues we'll touch on today and in the working groups.

So we mentioned mis- and disinformation, and how it manipulates perceptions and impedes debate, and entrenched and politically motivated corruption. So we obviously don't want to be beholden to these threats and challenges as we talk about often. We want to capitalize on the opportunities to inspire civic

and political actors and engagement and surge support to reformers who are fighting these freedoms, tackling corruption, rebuilding the social contract.

We also want to think about how we work alongside other actors critical to the response, private sector mainly. So as we dive into these questions, but thinking about how aid in the development sector adjusts its approaches and given the interconnected nature of these problems, I hope we can pull on these threads: building trust, tackling corruption, engaging the private sector, surging in democratic openings.

So with that frame, so let me start with you first. The way we receive information is dramatically different these days. Whether that's COVID or thinking about corruption, it's much different in our lifetime than in previous. Can you give us a snapshot of what you think is needed in the media and information space, in these environments to improve access to accurate reliable information so that we have an informed citizenry? And just to add on to that, one more question: how do we push or work alongside companies, especially our social media companies, to improve the access to reliable information?

[Saad Mohseni]

Thank you. Well, it's a very complicated question, and we live in very complicated and very challenging times. But there are enormous opportunities for us all as well. If you look at Iran, if you look at the Middle East, even in Afghanistan and Eastern Europe, including the Ukraine and Russia.

There's much for us to do. I just want us to think about the information ecosystem, and I want to go through that. There's a supply side, the demand side, and the conduits that connect them.

First and foremost on the supply side. There are two pillars to that: there's the journalism. the fact checking, the editing. It's so important to continue to invest in capacity building. and help people across the region, especially in our neighborhood in terms of getting journalists and people who report on issues to do it properly. And I think in a lot of ways, you'd be surprised that even places like Afghanistan, people are a lot more intellectually humble and astute than they're given credit for. Similarly in Iran, in those places. So I think this is really important. This has to continue.

I know the U.S. government has done so much in the international community. In Afghanistan, and we're still reaping the benefits today 20 years on despite the fact that the Taliban are in power in the country. On the demand side, we talk about resilient citizenry. Important that they get uncensored information, they have access to information, they're well-informed, that they can think critically, and they have the tools to get the information that they need.

And it's a... I think dealing... you know, how do you get people to think critically? This is a, you know, multi-generational challenge. And one of the things that USAID can do, even as part of its education programs, they have to promote children thinking critically. When we were doing programs at Sesame Street, this is one of the things that we thought about many many years ago. And also, I think, in the short term, things like digital literacy, that's important. Access is important. In places like Afghanistan, people forget - I mean, the women in Iran are doing this extraordinary thing - but even in Afghanistan, women are gathering now in people's homes and using Whatsapp and then using Telegram and then using Twitter

to amplify their messages. This is really important for civil society and the people of Afghanistan, and of course the women. But the general population as well.

Last, but not least, in terms of the intermediaries. The platforms, who's capable of choking off that information? Is it governments? Social media platforms? How can we mitigate these risks? In some countries you can lobby, you can advocate. In some other countries, you have to create alternative ways for people to get information. I mean Starlink is an opportunity, but it's expensive. It's not accessible. And this is where USAID and others can work with technology companies to help get information to people.

And as far as misinformation, disinformation is concerned, it's easy and it's hard. It's about informing people. They have to be well informed. It's about fact checking, and it's about balanced public discourse on issues. But - and if you look at the regions that we're active in, people need help. Like in Iran, for example, there are not enough outlets, for example. In Afghanistan, we have enough outlets; we don't have capacity. In certain other - in Iran, they don't have Internet, for example. So there are different challenges in different places, and one of the ideas that I think should be considered would be like a special forces unit within USAID that can deal with these issues immediately working with the private sector in the US, with technology companies, and also with partners in our neck of the woods. Thank you.

[Ro Tucci]

Great, thank you. It feels like we're moving in that direction with an agency wide effort and thinking about the ecosystem. So it sounds like we might be on the right page, but we welcome your guidance to keep that moving forward.

Okay, so let me switch gears over to Kristin. Kristin, we know that one of the fundamental aspects of strengthening democracy is an engaged citizenry. I think we're building on a critical - a citizenry that thinks critically. But how do we then take that next step of getting them more engaged and rebuilding that trust with the institutions? So even in our own country, I think that is a bit of a challenge. We find too often that people are tuned out, or feeling disillusioned or disconnected from the public sector. So tell us a little bit about, in your capacity, how do we cultivate and engage young people in particular, and support these reformers in multiple different ways so that they become the leaders of tomorrow? What are some of the insights that you've seen or the interventions that have worked? And how does that build trust to really get at that trust deficit that we're talking about?

[Kristin Lord]

Great, thanks so much for the question, Ro. I think it's really important to start with first principles for a second, you know. Why does it matter so much that we have young people engage in democracy if we want it to work and we want to build trust in public institutions? I think there is a one word answer. We're short on time. Math. It is math.

There are 1.2 billion young people between the ages of 15 and 24 on the planet right now, and that will go to 1.3 billion by 2030. And if we look at some key countries, India alone has 300 million young people under the age of 16. So if they all decide to form a country today, they would be the fourth largest country in the world.

Let's look at Nigeria, where the median age is 18 years old. Nigeria is on track to be the third most populous country in the world by 2050. And then let's look at our own southern border, which I know is an issue of major concern to Americans. If we look at Latin America in the Caribbean, there are 154 million young people between the ages of 15 and 29. If we look at Guatemala, which has the largest youth population in the region, 60 percent of the population is under 30, and more than a quarter of Mexico's population is under the age of 15 years old.

So let's also think about who's on the frontline mobilizing for reform. Someone mentioned Iran in the last panel. Those are young people on the streets of Iran, especially young women. They're the ones who are really out in the streets mobilizing for change in their own societies.

And then let's just think about sustainability for a minute. Studies showed growing disillusionment and democracy among young people around the world. And personally, if we really care about democratic institutions as a way of solving complex problems in ways that engage multiple stakeholders and balance their interests. If all these young people and I gave you some numbers have growing disillusionment, I don't see a path forward. So let's turn to your question, Ro about "Okay, Kristin, what do we do?"

Well, first of all, I think we really have to pay attention to this gap between the change young people want to see and how they feel that they can engage to act on it. And I want to give an example from one of USAID's own programs, Youth Excel, which recently did a survey in Malawi. And this survey of young people in Malawi found that 70 percent of youth respondents said that climate change is a real issue of concern for them. But 30 percent report taking direct action on climate change and 25 percent thought of politics as a way to take that action. So I think if we want to see that action through trusted democratic institutions, we have to find some way of closing that gap.

That also begs a question of how. Don't have much more time, but want to point first of all to youth - to USAID's own youth policy, which I think has some good practical answers in there. And I'm going to distill - I won't read through all of it - but let me point to a couple of suggestions. One is, we have to look at youth's assets. Participating in democratic societies is a skill. It's a - and it's a mindset. Skills need to be built. Skills need to be built through education and also experience. So we need to give young people those opportunities, plain and simple. And then we also need to see young people as those leaders, as those changemakers and get rid of the obstacles in their way.

And I know the Africa Leaders Summit is coming up. So I definitely want to point out the Young African Leaders Initiative as a really great example of how those leaders have been empowered, how they have been networked with each other, and how they are then going forward to promote change in their own societies.

I'm going to close with this issue of trust. What do we know about what builds trust. One is, are institutions delivering for people? And I think Dan's going to talk a little bit about this in a minute. And the great thing is there's a positive feedback loop here. The Lancet recently published some groundbreaking research saying that the societies that were best able to deal with the COVID challenge were not the richest, were not the - were not the ones with any particular level of education, were not the

ones with any particular form of government. They were the ones with the most trust in public institutions. But we know from the literature on trust that what builds trust in public institutions is actually delivering for people and delivering for young people in particular.

Last point: people have to believe - young people have to believe - that leaders are not just there to serve themselves. They're there to serve them, and that means that we have to build active engagement, active listening into all.. everything that we do, so that young people trust that people do have these more broader, magnanimous interests in mind. These civic interests in mind. They're not just lining their own pockets. They're not just serving their own cronies or groups. So that was a quick answer, but I know many in the room could add to it a lot.

[Ro Tucci]

Yeah, thank you. No, I think that was a great teaser and I think, you know, we are going to - you did this segue perfectly over to Dan. We're just going to take one minute to say that I think one of the areas - we talk a lot about the social movements that we see around the world right now, and the protests going on, and we know that young people are some of the most engaged in those movements. And so I think one of the things that USAID is working to do is enhance our support to those movement leaders and those movement activists and enhance the efficacy of their work. And then think about, I love the catchphrase, "From protest to policy." How do we transition from that moment of protest into becoming a leader? Whether it's a politician, a political leader, or a civic leader. But there's a whole set of skills that are needed to make that transition as well.

So once - Dan, now over to you - once we've supported these young leaders, and they've emerged... we're seeing them emerge all over the world right now, how can we quickly and flexibly support these leaders to help these democracies thrive?

We know that there's a moment, a window of opportunity, for these democratic openings. I know IRI has been doing some research on, you know, what to look out for: fragmentation, giving space to these leaders. I think one of the quotes, one of your colleagues said, is buying time for these leaders to make progress. So give us a little bit of insight into how we can adjust our approaches to help these windows of opportunity become more successful, these emerging leaders.

[Dan Twining]

Good, thanks, Ro. Excellent question. I'm really proud to be here with you and the Administrator. I think these are things that Republicans, Democrats, and Independents can all agree on as we work to go out in the world and support democratic momentum. We see people standing up and fighting all over the world. And we've seen democratic transitions fail or not deliver in places from Sudan to Tunisia, not because people don't want democratic reform and deliverables, but in fact, because those transitions did not produce the goods. So, as you have suggested, we at IRI undertook a two-year research project. I'm going to use my notes to share, not just what I think, but what we determined based on looking at a lot of evidence around these transitions, and what works in terms of quick developments of support.

The first thing to say is that when you are a leader, say, a civil society leader who suddenly finds yourself in power, and you're trying to figure out what to do and how to deliver for democracy, you do face a set of

real challenges. Your reform movement may be subject to fragmentation, which autocratic actors can exploit. Movements may contribute to a democratic opening, but of course, then not have experience in the governing dimensions of how to deliver, leading to a crisis and confidence in the public. Young democracies, of course, struggle to recover from economic crises, which by the way dictatorships often leave them with terrible economic inheritances, as we've seen. And reform movements, of course, also don't face simply a level playing field. They're often malignant external actors as well as malign internal actors, who want to pull them back into a more autocratic past, or help a former autocratic regime return to power

So we found seven specific ideas for what to do in these situations broadly.

First, foreign assistance can help large diverse reform coalitions overcome collective action dilemmas. It's actually often hard for these groups and leaders to come together and cohere and make decisive governing progress. So helping them with shared decision making, helping them coordinate and convene, making sure that those processes are inclusive of young people, of civic activists, and others - not just a small clique at the top is very important.

Second, extending support for reform parties to help them compete at scale across the country by reducing their costs for organizing and helping them mobilize votes. That's very important.

Third, we really should and can overtly support and provide direct assistance to citizen-centered movements as they transition into governance. This actually is very important, not simply in terms of material, but in terms of our moral and public support, for messaging their democratic progress. And then, of course, providing direct forms of assistance to help them translate all that democratic energy into effective governance.

Fourth, and I think this is important. Ro, I know we've talked about this. We got to think about not just the demand side of the equation, but the supply side. When a democratic transition occurs, there is enormous bottom-up momentum from citizens, from young people, from activists, from civil society organizations. We need to invest in the supply side. Right? What's actually going to deliver effective governance? It's strong political parties, it's functioning parliaments. It's leaders who actually can govern, including at the local level. So invest in that supply side, not simply that demand side. The demand side gets you to the democratic transition. The supply side is what helps you actually deliver democratic progress in government.

And then just final three suggestions to close out on how to support very actively in the early stages reformist leaders who come to power.

We want to help them demonstrate tangible benefits from democracy, right? So five, our support should focus on helping leaders supercharge and expedite reform experts, including providing temporary debt relief, right? Often they do have an economic inheritance, which is fairly disastrous. I know the Administrator and you have thought very creatively about what implement- what tools can we use beyond just democracy assistance to help these countries deliver and often it's that quick-hit financial support, including debt relief.

Six out of seven, USAID can expand governance support to these new leaders to help them effectively administer, conduct public administration, not just at the national level, but really importantly, at the local level; that often government will deliver best for citizens in a transition moment at the local level. And we want to expand effective efficient governance that can take on leading issues in that country.

Finally, last recommendation, we can support ongoing reform efforts by strengthening the capacity of non-state actors, including civil society and the private sector, to work together in holding local and national governments accountable. Now that's a little different from working together to deliver on a democratic opening. In fact, we think there's a role for the civic side and the private sector to hold new governments accountable, so that they have incentives to deliver on those reform agendas. Sometimes there are ways to leverage international friends to do this. Just as a final example, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Costa Rica created an alliance for development and democracy that enlisted the private sector to help support democracy strengthening across their region. So let's think creatively about supporting these coalitions.

[Ro Tucci]

Great, thank you. We look forward to diving into those points. I think they'll give a lot of guidance to our current initiative. Alright, let's hand it over to you all for some questions and answers. Yeah. Should we go in the back?

[Audience Question]

Thank you very much everyone. My name is Blair Glencorse from the Accountability Lab. I thought I'd ask a question that maybe pulls the threads together across the things that all three of you said and that's about storytelling... narrative building. I agree with much of what you've suggested. I think part of the challenge with all of this, with young people in particular, for example, is that we don't communicate back "What's happening?" We don't always communicate with people in the ways that they understand and meet them where they are. How can USAID do that better or work with its partners? Saad, you might have ideas on this, in the private sector, to build stories around these efforts and communicate to the people that matter to build support for this reform.

[Ro Tucci]

Great, thank you. But do we have one more before we go back to the panel?

[Audience Question]

Morning, Chris Weber, SIL LEAD. Whether it's combating climate change or misinformation, or promoting democracy or education or health. All these, these sectors that USAID cares about so much. Efforts diver- to diversify, to be inclusive, and to localize necessarily will fall short if the world's minoritized languages are ignored. I think, also misinformation. So many minoritized communities somehow receive the misinformation in their language, but they don't receive the correct- corrective information in their language. Language inclusivity is the most crosscutting measure you can take to bring about meaningful diversity, inclusivity, and localization. So I just want to encourage you to keep that in mind as you implement your programs.

[Ro Tucci]

Great, thank you. Thank you, Chris. Okay, over to you, Saad. I saw you eagerly want to jump in on that storytelling question, and Kristin as well.

[Saad Mohseni]

Well, I think it's... it's a very important question. I mean for us, it's a no-brainer. We find creative young people, and we empower them and those stories can be told in different ways on different platforms. Today, we were sort of blessed that we can be platform agnostic. Stories are created for television, for linear platforms, for digital platforms. Thirty second stories. And different versions resonate with different audiences.

But I think it's, you know we've worked from Ethiopia all the way to India. Everyone can tell a story in their own way, and I think imposing ways to tell our stories is probably not the right way. Just empowering these young creative people. I think that's the way to go.

[Kristin Lord]

And what struck me about both questions is they really get to this imperative to invest in people: to give people skills to discern misinformation, disinformation; to tell stories. And I think the development community is very focused on projects. But I honestly think that one of the places we're most successful is when we invest in people and give them those capacities. And I want to applaud - I'm into positive reinforcement - so I want to applaud USAID for its investment in the young people of Ukraine. Since 2014, USAID has provided broad-based, extensive investment in building the... the skills, the capacity, the ability to discern disinformation of young people in Ukraine. And I think there has been no one more brilliant at storytelling in the past decade, that I can remember, than Ukrainian young people who are getting their stories out to the world.

And I think USAID ought to take some credit. They are telling stories, and they're also leading at the local level. They are stepping up. And I'll close with this, just to get at some other questions you raised, Ro. They're also volunteering in their own community. They feel that sense of ownership, that sense of civic participation. And through investment in youth centers and other youth activities, USAID helped to cultivate that habit so when the worst happened, young people were ready. They don't even need to be asked.

[Ro Tucci]

Great, thank you. Let me try to get back on time. We have time for one more question. Question? Oh, there, right there.

[Audience Question; Vera Zakem]

Thanks so much everyone. Very fascinating conversation. So my question is really around technology. We know that it's not just about access to information, but access to technology that touches not just democracy, but every single sector of development, and quite frankly, the ability for democracy to deliver. So when we talk about mis- and disinformation and the both - I love this, Saad, that you brought in both supply and demand side, something, we are sure, definitely looking at USAID. But also things like digital authoritarianism and digital repression. When we think about, you know, the protests in China or in Iran

and others, if you will, democratic, if you will, uprisings around the world. How important it is to actually have access to technology and those type of capabilities, as well to address that side of the coin so it's not just the access to information. So I'm wondering if any of the three of you can talk about that for a second.

[Ro Tucci]

Okay, you and then Dan.

[Dan Twining]

Yeah, it's a great question. I think we have to remember that a lot of these technology tools were created in Western and open societies, and they have been abused and manipulated by authoritarians in ways that frankly preempt the ability of people to organize or speak freely. I mean, there's- they're going five steps back in kind of democratic development in literally being able to use tech tools to intervene before people can do anything, even get together in a house and talk with their friends.

So we're seeing that in real time in China. I think the fact- we should be clear-eyed in understanding that the reason China has more internal security forces using technology to repress and control citizens than it does in its army, which is the world's largest. It should remind us that dictatorial leaders see their citizens as the greatest danger, and we, I think, all collectively need to do a much better job in helping.

I think sometimes we think there are kind of these silver bullet solutions, but in fact, just, low-grade initiatives around VPNs and secure communications messaging can be game changers. And we've seen that in places like Belarus and Iran despite very difficult circumstances. Saad talked about Starlink and other forms earlier. We were talking about how frustrating it is to watch Iranians rise up without appropriate, frankly, technology and information environment support. Some of these solutions, I think, are not as complicated, and we need to invest a little more. Have a little more faith that people can make correct decisions themselves without a whole lot of intervention from us, but they need to be able to communicate securely and organize freely.

Can I make one quick point about - I thought Blair asked an excellent question. I didn't get a chance, about storytelling, just for 30 seconds.

Blair - Accountability Lab does great work. We're proud to work with you in some tough places around the world. I think we have to go back to establishing the link between free people and free markets that only open societies with effective rules of law, property rights... those are the true determinants of prosperity. I think we've slightly let Chinese propaganda and kind of democratic disarray sever the idea that only open societies deliver the kind of development outcomes that USAID and others exist to manage. And that if we can put democracy and accountability and transparency and good governance front and center and help advance those around the world, that solves a whole bunch of other development challenges for us around poverty, around malnutrition, around health, etc. So I think we have to reconnect the whole rather than talking about things in a stovepipe fashion.

[Ro Tucci]

If you want to make a final comment on that?

[Saad Mohseni]

No, I totally agree with that. I know we're short on time.

[Ro Tucci]

Okay, yeah, we'll wrap up. Well, let me thank our panelists for kicking off this discussion. We didn't get to go deep into anti-corruption, but that will be another theme that we'll discuss in greater detail in the working group.

So let me hand it back over to Nisha - oh, to Jodi.

[Jodi Herman]

Ro, thank you. Saad, Dan, Kristin, thank you so much for that conversation. I am super energized by this conversation. I'm Jodi Herman, the Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs at AID, and really have the pleasure of working with this committee, with the Administrator, with Nisha, and with Sophia on ACVFA.

So this was a really great, innovative conversation. I just wanted to recap a couple of things for you here. These ideas around harnessing democratic momentum, radical advances in climate adaptation, and to the Administrator's point: what we're looking for are solutions and progress that are part of our programs, but that programs aren't driven - but that programs aren't driving our agenda, but progress and solutions are driving our agenda and our funding decisions.

So on climate, C.D. Glin noted for us the need to operationalize within planetary boundaries to achieve sustainable food systems. And Paul and Asma picked up there, obvious- obviously to us, climate and food don't operate in their own vacuums, and that we need to utilize global recognition of continued and accelerating crises to innovate solutions, right? So this is around women. What can women bring to this? We know that they do in diversification of commodities. All of these ideas we're looking forward to working within our subcommittees on ACFVA to discuss more about.

Democracy, which is really my history, so, so glad to see colleagues here today from that community. Kristin, the 1.2 billion young people inhabiting the globe, right? Their demands, their interests. They require support from democratic institutions that can meet their needs, that can deliver for them like this was... this is something that came up in all of our conversations. How are we delivering for people? How are we delivering for young people so that they can have confidence in their governments, in their leaders, and in the systems that they need to live and to support their.. and to support their livelihoods.

Dan, you really gave us a great number of solutions there, but I think if I had to summarize it, it still comes back to the same idea of supply side. How do we deliver for people? How do we pick up on the bright spots initiative that AID has launched? How do we help democratic systems that are making those transitions? How do we make them... how do we make those effective? How do we seize those opportunities and not lose them all in the interest of, of course, us people globally in our national security?

So USAID has a global mission and the great honor to do this work that impacts the lives and livelihoods of people. And the Biden administration is striving to make USAID the most effective it can be. And to do that, as you all noted today, we need to evolve the way that we tackle challenges. We're really grateful to have the insights of this committee and the expertise of ACFVA members to help us think through and respond to the unprecedented challenges discussed today: support for struggling democracies, food security, climate imperatives.

I'm excited by the conversation. We're grateful to have all of you here today who joined us whether you're in person or here online. It's a really... a key role of this committee to take in your ideas and thoughts- the committee members, but also the public. We want to hear from you: from civil society, NGOs, the private sector, all of you. We have more ACFVA committee members in the room today that weren't on stage with us. But say hello to them: Derek Mitchell; Katherine Marshall; Teresa Barger; Liz Schroyer, who we can't forget last night's very memorable event for USGLC, who really made the case for foreign assistance; Sara Menker; Levon Esters, and Olga Wall. Thank you all for being here with us today. We know you're going to make continued contributions to the role of this committee and push us to think about how we can do a better job of meeting the challenges that impact us all.

Today's conversation sets the stage for our work and we look forward to seeing the progress that it will bring. We look forward to convening next year for another public meeting to hear an update on the role of ACFVA and the subcommittees that will be meeting during that time frame. We hope that you will all continue to engage with us. Thanks to all of you for being here. Thank you, Administrator, for leading us, and Nisha and Sophia, of course, and Don Steinberg. Thank you for making this possible. We appreciate it.