



## **MFAN: SFRC Bill Seeking to Strengthen USAID Adds to Aid Reform Momentum**

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**July 28, 2009 (WASHINGTON)** – *This statement is delivered on behalf of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) by Co-Chairs David Beckmann and George Ingram:*

MFAN commends Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry (D-MA), Ranking Minority Member Dick Lugar (R-IN), and Senators Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Bob Corker (R-TN), Ben Cardin (D-MD), and Jim Risch (R-ID) for introducing the *Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009* (S.1524). The bill aims to start the process of foreign assistance reform, and we urge Members of both parties to support its final passage.

There is clear, bipartisan momentum behind efforts to modernize the U.S. foreign assistance system to meet the diverse geopolitical and economic challenges we face. While there are many issues to be resolved, we are optimistic about success because both houses of Congress and the Obama Administration are making dynamic progress:

- [Ninety-three bipartisan Members of the House](#) are supporting Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Howard Berman's [Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009](#) (H.R. 2139), which has similar provisions to the Senate bill on prioritizing development policy and transparency;
- Secretary Clinton is moving forward with the first-ever [Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review \(QDDR\)](#), a blueprint for our diplomatic and development efforts. She also secured strong funding for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the 2010 budget and has taken the lead in forging the administration's new global food security initiative;
- President Obama promised a empowered, streamlined, 21<sup>st</sup>-century development agency during the campaign, and there are indications that the White House may issue a Presidential Study Directive to make sure overall U.S. development policy—whether related to trade, agriculture, climate change or finance — is more strategic and coordinated; and,
- Both Chairman Kerry and Chairman Berman appear ready to revisit in coming months the badly outdated Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

Chairman Kerry, Ranking Minority Member Lugar, and the other supporters of S.1524 deserve praise for proposing a basic goal to which all of these reform efforts can generally ascribe: making our foreign assistance more effective at promoting global development and good governance, as well as reducing poverty and hunger. The Senate legislation would strengthen USAID and introduce new transparency measures for foreign assistance, both of which would help reach these broader goals.

There has been a long delay in the appointment of a USAID Administrator. This position needs to be filled to provide leadership for the agency, help guide the reform process, and voice a global-development perspective in the councils of government. The new USAID Administrator will co-chair the QDDR and should also be given a seat on the National Security Council.

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