

Report on the March 6, 2023, Business Meeting  
of the Development Issues Committee

The Development Issues Committee convened a business meeting on March 6. Approximately 12 members participated.

Co-Chair, Stephen Haykin commenced by thanking Stephen Giddings for his more than eight years as co-chair of the Committee.

The meeting focused upon operational concerns of the Development Issues Committee (DIC). The co-chairs observed that the scope of potential activity for the Committee is expanding and that it is necessary to identify priorities and adopt a new approach by breaking down the tasks of the Committee into more discrete and manageable actions.

**USAID Policy Input:** One of the activities of UAA is to provide feedback to USAID on draft policies. It was proposed that the UAA Board of Directors should seek to deepen dialogue with USAID's Counselor to identify upcoming policies for UAA feedback. There is a need for a single point of contact within UAA for USAID to refer policies for comment. This will likely be a DIC Co-chair, with a Board member as back-up. This POC, supported by other UAA members, will also need to monitor communications from the USAID Industry Liaison (OAA), to identify policies for comment. Since turn-around times for comment are often short, it was suggested that comments be solicited through a Google-Docs template, as is the practice at the Society for International Development. Further discussion will be needed with the Board on how widely to solicit comments each time and on whether to present comments as UAA's position or as a compilation of comments by individuals. Finally, the POC, in consultation with Board members, will seek to identify a UAA member with subject matter expertise to coordinate comments on each issue as it is identified. One additional suggestion is for the DIC to identify on a periodic basis (perhaps annually), those development policy issues of greatest interest to UAA, in effect to get out in front of any official policy-making process.

**Development Discussions:** Participants supported continuing development discussions along three lines. First, the co-chairs will continue to organize approximately 10 discussions per year on current development topics. The co-chairs encourage other members to step forward to organize and lead specific sessions. Second, participants complimented Alexander Shakow on his exceptional leadership of the UAA-DACOR speaker series. The DIC seeks an additional volunteer to assist in managing the UAA-DACOR relationship. Third, the Book Club has been on hiatus for nearly a year. Stu Callison, who has done an excellent job of coordinating this group in the past, will stay on as Book Club coordinator until a replacement can be found. It was agreed that he will issue a new call for volunteers to identify books and lead discussions on them as well as a volunteer to coordinate the Book Club.

**Mission Coaching:** UAA will follow up with PPL to clarify the status of a proposed Agency Notice making UAA volunteers available to Missions to assist on Program Cycle exercises such as mid-term stock-taking. The DIC must identify a POC with USAID/PPL to coordinate this relationship and seek someone to fulfill this role. Further discussion, with PPL and internally, is needed to clarify the operations of the Mission Coaching program, which is still in a pilot phase.

**External Relations:** UAA has numerous formal and informal relationships with like-minded or "affinity" organizations, including DACOR, AFSA, ADST, American University, USGLC and Society for International Development. Anne Simmons-Benton volunteered to update and supplement a list of these relationships. The DIC seeks volunteers to serve as managers of those relationships with organizations that are of interest to the Committee, for instance SID.

Given the volume of administrative work of the committee, one participant suggested that the DIC could hire an intern. This will be discussed with the Board.

One participant recommended that Board Members and DIC Co-Chairs could enrich the setting of priorities and the profile of UAA by reaching out to high profile USAID Alumni, some of whom are UAA members and some not. Specific names of former Administrators and Assistant Administrators, among others, were mentioned to illustrate the point.

The Development Issues Committee co-chairs thank all attendees for their virtual participation and all who provided written input in advance of the meeting.

Stephen Haykin and Gail Spence, Co-Chairs