

Theme of the UAA 2024 Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM will be held at the Center for Global Development on Friday, October 11, 2024, two weeks earlier than normal. UAA members whose 2024 membership dues payments have been received by September 30 can attend. We promise you a very interesting and substantive AGM.

The theme for the AGM will be the nexus between humanitarian aid and development assistance. Recently an extraordinary number of crises and disasters – both natural and man-made – have occurred. These catastrophic events have placed enormous burdens on USAID - and US foreign policy – as the US Government attempts to assist countries confront overwhelming humanitarian demands, while also seeking to maintain focus on the objectives of long-term development programs. Two panels will explore challenges faced by USAID headquarters and field missions addressing both humanitarian and development priorities, and to help partner nations' search for increased resilience and sustainability.

The first panel will focus on Washington policy and institutional issues. US foreign policy supports USAID's efforts to address humanitarian crises abroad. USAID's Administrator is a member of the National Security Council, helping guide US support for effective responses to such crises. West Bank/Gaza, Sudan, and Ukraine are the most obvious current cases, but there are many more. Pressures from US policymakers to focus on the immediate as distinct from the longer term influences USAID staff down to the mission level. The Agency's funding is a never-ending issue, often giving higher priority to short-term issues. Time-consuming but essential inter-agency coordination is required. Personnel issues are also of significant concern, as almost all humanitarian aid is managed from Washington by contract staff, while development funding is largely managed in the field by FSOs and FSNs.

The second panel will focus on the experience of one field mission working to bring the planning and implementation of humanitarian and development programs closer together. USAID Ethiopia will be the focus of this discussion. Over many years, significant funding for both forms of assistance has been provided simultaneously. Both historical and current perspectives will be reflected, examining what has been learned to do the job better. The role of the government, interactions with Washington, staffing issues, differences in funding cycles, and relations with the country team and with other partner agencies (i.e., NGOs, other bilateral and multilateral agencies) are aspects of the field experience we hope this panel can capture.