

**Transcript of
USAID Alumni Association's
Development Issues Discussion
with Tod Preston, MFAN**

October 7, 2025

Stephen Haykin: It's my pleasure to introduce Tod Preston, the Executive Director of MFAN, an organization with which, I think, all of you are familiar. It plays an important role in thinking about the future of foreign assistance at this juncture, with everything that's going on. Tod comes to it with rich experience, including having worked at US Global Leadership Council, which fits nicely with the speaker that we had last week at DACOR, Liz Schroyer. He also has had public sector experience in both executive and legislative arms of government, as well as nonprofit and for profit sectors. So I think a rich background, rich perspective, and a strong organization that he represents. I'm very pleased to have him today.

Just one administrative note. We're going to do this a little bit differently today in that Tod has a hard stop at noon. We usually go on for about an hour and a half. For those of you who would like to stay on and continue the discussion, we will continue after noon to up to about 12:30. I think there's a lot to digest here. And then we'll be able to follow up at the end of the month at our Annual General Meeting. So with no further ado, let me give the floor to our speaker, Tod Preston. Thank you so much for joining us.

Tod Preston: Great. Thank you very much, Steve. Appreciate this invitation. It's a pleasure to be with the Alumni Association. I've been with MFAN for three years, but I know just in my brief time, relatively brief time with MFAN, the Alumni Association has been a good resource for MFAN. We hosted the mission directors on Capitol Hill a couple of summers ago, had a really good attendance there. So thank you for all of that. And, of course, I think many of you know we have many former USAD folks that are involved with MFAN. I'll talk about that a little bit more, but I think I see George Ingram on here, who's one of our individual members and Jim Kunder, and Susan Reichle and Paul Weisenfeld. Richard Parker, among others.

And I also see Scott Radloff on the call here. In one of my earlier incarnations, I worked on family planning and reproductive health for Population Action International, and had the pleasure to work with Scott, and to see programs on the

ground overseas. Unfortunately, we in the family planning community are mourning the death of Duff Gillespie, who some of you probably worked with in your time.

I think it just can't go without saying, but just the destruction that has taken place this year has been just unbelievable and incredibly painful on a number of fronts. You know, the impact of lives on the ground, both people who benefited from US programming and US assistance, but also the employees, whether it's the Foreign Service Nationals or the folks here in DC and across the world in the missions. You know, MFAN had long championed raising the status of USAID. Some of our members thought it should be a cabinet agency. We pushed to have it get a permanent seat on the National Security Council, and with one exception, MFAN does not advocate for funding or resources, but we made one exception for that over the years, and that was for operating expenses for USAID because we knew how fundamental resources were to just effectiveness and so many aspects of USAID that could be done better if there were better resourcing. So I just want to acknowledge the destruction that has taken place and it has been quite a year for MFAN and for everybody. So maybe I'll just start with a little bit of a history and a little bit of a one on MFAN because I don't know how familiar all of you are.

But then I would just love to kind of have a conversation and hear your questions. MFAN was established in 2008. We are a small bipartisan coalition focused around aid modernization and aid effectiveness. We stay small deliberately because we operate by consensus. So we're actually only about 30 members, and that includes both institutional members like NGOs like CARE and Catholic Relief Services and Save the Children, OXFAM, social enterprise organizations like the One Acre Fund, other organizations, such as Give Directly. But then we have several individual members who are former senior officials, either in past administrations, Republican and Democrat, or on Capitol Hill. And I do think that is one of the things that really has worked in MFAN's favor over the years, is that is both the bipartisanship and the depth of expertise among our members who have seen these programs from so many different angles. We traditionally have kind of focused around two overarching pillars. One is accountability. And so that includes, you know, more transparency around where US program is going, and what is it achieving.

So transparency, monitoring and evaluation, has been a kind of a core focus of MFAN since our beginning. We were very, very

active, I'd say the leading actor behind the creation or the adoption of what was called the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act, which was passed by Congress in 2016, which includes a number of requirements for all the agencies to report on a monthly basis all the spending and program information, and then to put that online, so people can see foreign assistance.gov and other platforms.

The other, I would say, overarching pillar has been country ownership or locally-led development, as it's more recently called localization, the idea that we should be partnering more directly and putting more organizations on the ground in the lead in terms of both design and implementation of programs. For a number of reasons, in many cases, it can be more effective, more cost effective, and certainly in terms of some of the sustainability issues around building the capacity among local entities so that eventually US assistance can transition away.

Those have been two of the pillars. We've been very active in a number of other areas such as development finance. So we were quite involved in the legislation that created the US International Development Finance Corporation, the DFC, the successor to the overseas private investment corporation. Rob Mosbacher, who was the head of OPEC during the George W Bush administration is one of our members, and we remain quite active on issues related to the DFC, in terms of trying to preserve its development mandate, which is particularly a challenge now, even before the Trump administration, in terms of policy makers wanting to allow the DFC to invest in high income countries and really stray from its focus on putting capital into markets where private capital is not easily accessible in low income countries.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation, of course, another key agency -- they tend to have the gold standard in terms of metrics and data. And so that agency, we're pleased to see that it has more or less dodged the bullet to some degree in terms of some of the destruction that's taken place this year.

Another kind of key aspect of MFAN that kind of runs throughout our work is education, particularly among policy makers on Capitol Hill, both in terms of the merits of foreign assistance and why it's important, but also around initiatives that can make it even more effective and even more accountable. We were very involved in the creation of the Caucus for Effective Foreign Assistance, which some of you may know, both the House and Senate have these caucuses that are organized around a

specific theme or a specific topic or issue. This has been a bipartisan forum since its creation in 2011, and has traditionally, depending on who is co-chairing, the COE has been a really important way to bring together staff both publicly and privately to talk about key issues, emerging issues, and put forward kind of a constructive, proactive way for members to engage in strengthening foreign assistance, globally and development and humanitarian affairs. I mentioned just earlier in terms of operating expenses that, unlike a US Global Leadership Coalition or Interaction or the Global Health Council, we don't focus on funding, we don't advocate for funding. We focus on how to program programs in a more effective, more sustainable way and how to do various efforts to modernize these programs to make sure that the return on investment as much as possible, both for recipients on the ground, but also for US taxpayers. We are, I think, known as an important thought leader and convener. Again, non-partisan, kind of no nonsense. We're not a bomb thrower. And so this year, we have really tried to focus on trying to stem further destruction, and, particularly when it comes to USAID, salvage what remains of USAID and make sure that in terms of the reorganization and restructuring of the State Department, that there will be the capacity and the expertise in order to implement effectively what remains of the foreign assistance portfolio.

We came out with some recommendations in mid-March specifically around that topic. When it was fairly clear that USAID was going to be dismantled and not survive, we put out some specific recommendations for how to structure things in the State Department to preserve coherence, capacity and expertise. We were quite concerned, justifiably, that the remaining development and humanitarian, global health programs would be scattered throughout the department, fragmented, no real senior leadership, no cone per se. So we recommended the creation of a deputy secretary or, an undersecretary, someone who was senate-confirmed and to align all those programs in one cone, so to speak. A couple of weeks later at the end of March, the administration put forward its first or proposal to the Hill. And as we feared, it was fragmented across the department in no coherent way. There was no senior official Senate-confirmed accountable. So, fortunately, as things have evolved, and a subsequent proposal they put out in May, they did create a new undersecretary for foreign assistance. So we viewed that as a positive development. More recently, some of you might have seen we put out a proposal just a few weeks ago around the operational capacity at the State Department and identifying

about ten to 12 critical functions that the State Department will need in order to be able to implement foreign assistance effectively.

And we frankly benefited from some pro bono work from former USAID employees and putting together that package and those recommendations. You know, we're following, needless say very closely. What's going on now is, the dust is to some degree settling, some staff have been put in place at the State Department. And now the real challenge comes in terms of what they actually will be doing, what the administration will be doing in terms of implementation. And of course, all the various issues around the rescissions and the impoundments. We, have been engaging quite a bit with Capitol Hill around State Department reauthorization and the fiscal year 2026 appropriations bills. And we can get into that more if you all are interested. So I think I will pause there. But just to say that this has been a very, very challenging time for everyone. And MFAN is really grateful for the expertise we have from our members, including many former USAID employees, and we'll continue to kind of look to all of you as a resource as things evolve. So thank you, Steve. I'll pause there.

Haykin: Great. Thank you very much. What I'd like folks to do, since there are so many of us, is to send your questions through the chat function of Zoom. And my co-Chair, Gail Spence, will consolidate questions as appropriate and put those forward. But in the meantime, while we're giving people a chance to key those in, Tod, perhaps, I'll ask you to talk a little bit more about MFAN's reactions to the current state reauthorization debate or state of play.

Preston: Sure. Yeah. And in terms of what's happening on Capitol Hill? Yes. As you all know, it's been many, many years since a comprehensive state authorization bill was passed, and it's a very daunting prospect to take on, even when there's a fair amount of bipartisanship and partnership on legislative issues. Of course, that is decidedly not the environment we are in now where it's just very, very hyper-partisanship. And just speaking candidly to this group, the Congressman who has taken over the chairmanship of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Brian Mast from Florida, is relatively, I think you could say safely, fairly partisan. And so it has injected a level of level of discord into the discussion that is going to make it very, very challenging to move a package through both chambers and to actually get it signed into law.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee took up nine different bills dealing with various aspects of state reorg and various, families within the State Department. There were a couple bills that were relatively bipartisan and did reflect genuine input from both sides of the aisle, but in most cases, that was not the case, and so what you have being reported out are fairly partisan bills that would be, difficult to pass through the floor of the House, not to mention in the Senate, where even though we do have, of course, some partisanship over there -- there is a better working relationship between Democrats and Republicans on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, for example, with Chairman Risch and ranking member Jeanne Shaheen. The Senate is not inclined to take on a comprehensive reauthorization package. So I don't think we will see that moving into any kind of real serious legislative undertaking over the remainder of this year.

Haykin: Gail over to you.

Gail Spence: Okay. First question by George Ingram. Can you mention something about the Global Health Strategy? What is your assessment?

Preston: As some of you might know, a few weeks ago, the administration issued a new Global Health Strategy. This was unveiled at UNGA in New York. We did a comprehensive analysis, needless to say, of the strategy and you want to be constructive and acknowledge positive aspects where there are ones, but also just be very candid where there are deficiencies. You know, it was positive to see them actually put forward a strategy and acknowledge some of the benefits of investments in global health over the years. So that, of course, is a positive thing, but there are many concerning aspects of the rest of the document. For those of you that have read it, it's quite critical and dismissive of the role of NGOs, including the role for technical assistance and technical support. It defines global health very narrowly in terms of AIDS relief and malaria, but leaves out, maternal and child health and nutrition, and of course, sexual and reproductive health and rights. So it's a very mixed bag, I think it's fair to say. But you can find our statement on our website or I can go into more detail if anybody is interested.

Spence: Next question, Julian. How does MFAN see the future of USAID as an agency? And what is the likelihood of the 26 appropriation moving forward, what's it going to look like? The last question related is, have you seen the full Shaheen - Risch

NDAA amendment on the state reauthorization, because apparently there's not a lot of it posted publicly online?

Preston: I'll just read through the chat here and just kind of start from the beginning. In terms of the future of USAID, we always supported having an independent agency, and of course, would like to think that at some point, an independent agency could return. That, of course, is not likely to happen anytime soon. And even if you assume that perhaps in 2029, there will be a Democratic administration, I don't think we can bank on the fact that USAID would be brought back to life. So I think there's a, a lot of uncertainty on that fact, and what happens over the next few years, of course, is going to be very, very important. But I think MFAN certainly would advocate for having a USAID, whether it's called USAID or I don't know. No, but having an independent agency back, is very, very important.

In terms of appropriations, so yeah, I mean, as everybody knows, we are in a shutdown now because Congress, as often as the case of late, wasn't able to pass the FY 26 appropriations bills by the beginning of the fiscal year on October 1. And yes, as this person notes, so the House Foreign Affairs I'm sorry, the House Appropriations Committee did pass a bill this summer, which, given where we are and given partisan control of the House, had some encouraging signs.

I mean, the level of the overall cut to the 150 account was far less than the Trump administration had proposed. It was a 20% cut, which, of course, in normal times would be devastating, but relative to where we are.. I would say another very important thing in the bill is it actually had directives around many traditional development sectors, whether it's, water, sanitation and health, food security, women and girls, a number of things in there that were very positive. So that shows you that there still is Republican support for some of the kind of traditional fundamentals of US development assistance. And, of course, on global health, the bill was relatively positive. But yes, as Julian notes, the appropriations process in the Senate has really stalled, and there has not been a State Foreign Ops bill marked up in subcommittee in the Senate. So it remains to be seen whether or not we will get an actual compromise between what the House has put forward and what the Senate will put forward, or if we will go into a continuing resolution through the through the remainder of FY 26. And, there are pros and cons in terms of do we want kind of a new appropriations, or just stating that the status quo FY 25 levels, maybe that wouldn't be so bad. There really are some complications on how you view

that. I do see George Ingram. Did you want to make a comment now, or yes?

George Ingram: I would like to make a comment now that I find it very instructive that this administration has taught us that where you stand is where you sit. And, when MFAN was founded, one of my founding principles was to be against earmarks. Now, we are not saying anything about the earmarks in the Appropriations Bill. And quietly, we're very happy they're there in order to get important programs funded.

Preston: Yeah, that's a really good point, George. Thank you for making that. And then, Julian, I think your last question on the state of text. No. That text on the Senate side seems to be a very close held piece of legislation, so I have not seen it.

Spence: Okay. Next question from Karen Freeman. What about global disaster assistance? Have you seen any signs of maybe a strategy or policy on the US response to Gaza?

Preston: Well, I don't know about... maybe not Gaza specifically, but I think there is a very big lack of a strategy around most anything related to development or humanitarian assistance. And so that is a major concern we have in terms of what's going to happen. And we've already seen, of course, some of the very, very restricted responses that the US has had thus far with some of the disasters overseas.

Spence: Question by Sumitra in reference to localization. Are there any further opportunities for collaboration in this area? Sustaining these efforts will not only allow us to share credit for the outcomes achieved, but also help us to grow together collectively.

Preston: Localization, development. Yeah. This has been a huge priority for MFAN. And we really worked and tracked quite closely what the agency had been doing in the last administration under Administrator Power. It was making some progress, I mean, not nearly as much progress as we had hoped and thought should have been achieved, but recognizing the difficulties. It's a complex process. I do think you're starting to see this in some of the dialogue, whether it be from leaders overseas, talking about the importance of programs that they want to have far more input and design and a say in and issues around, domestic resource mobilization, providing technical assistance to help countries whether it's the tax systems or accounting systems, whatever they need to be able to raise and

utilize more revenue to invest in these programs from their domestic budgets.

In terms of localization, there is some support on both sides of the aisle for this. I think that there is a recognition that, again, it can be a way to do programming more effectively and more efficiently. And, I think with a greater focus on ending foreign assistance or certainly trying to transition countries, it certainly will be an issue that MFAN will continue to push, that merits a lot more attention.

Spence: Next question by Mark Ingman. How does MFAN in the broader community continue to highlight the importance of foreign aid to US interests and US values? Because there seems to be a lot of misinformation about foreign aid and USAID professionals by the administration?

Preston: Hey Mark, it's good to see you.

As you know, Mark, foreign assistance has always been an easy political scapegoat and political target. There's always been a lot of misunderstanding in terms of what percentage of the federal budget it represents. Polls consistently show the American people think it is upwards of a quarter of the federal budget or more when it is only 1 percent. And it is always vulnerable to a bad headline. Where there are good stories and success stories, they really don't get the attention they deserve. I think this has been a problem for years. But, of course, when you have a president that misrepresents the facts and feed the flames of misrepresentation that really puts us in a different environment. So the narrative really has been overtaken by opponents of foreign assistance. And that is something that the community really needs to focus upon and aggressively in terms of talking about what has worked, all the lives that have been saved and how this has benefitted the US. Talk about future trading partners, like South Korea, that were recipients of foreign assistance that now are important allies on a number of fronts.

In terms of MFAN, we talk about the success stories, what's worked and we talk about how to use these models to expand to other areas of foreign assistance. For example, with PEPFAR, 25 million lives saved and upwards of 70 percent of programs have transitioned to being locally led. That's a real important success story. And other programs like the Global Fund, GAVI and things of that nature.

Spence: Back to appropriations and the State Department's capacity to manage foreign assistance. We're hearing that the capacity is not there to manage current programs that are active and have been merged into State. So, any suggestions that can improve the likelihood of success and support foreign assistance at the State Department?

Preston: This is an area where Congress, of course, is a key player. As we've all seen, there has been a reluctance, at least publicly, for Republican members of Congress to speak out with some of their concerns about what has happened, thus far. But, as George and I pointed out with the House's FY 26 appropriations bill, there are some positive aspects of the bill in terms of capacity issues. So one, I think, where putting pressure on Congress and educating Congress on what is needed for the staffing and expertise at State Department to be able to implement these programs is very important. So that is why we issued the report on the operational or lack of, readiness of the State Department earlier in September.

I think that more people are in place in the administration and the State Department and the dust is beginning to settle and they are looking in some case to implement what remains. There is going to be a bit more receptivity to listening to folks on the outside who have something to offer in terms of guidance and expertise on what you need to do to be successful. Because, we want the State Department to be successful. We want these programs to be implemented in a meaningful way. So, I think there will be more attention to that and we're already beginning to see a little but more receptivity to have discussions about that within the executive branch.

Spence: What kind of candidates for Undersecretary for Development can we expect to see at the State department, for foreign assistance?

Preston: That's a really good question and this is a question that a lot of us are eagerly anticipating. It's really anybody's guess. We've seen some of the nominees for other positions at State and for the US International Development Finance Corporation, but no one this far for this position. So we hope that there will be somebody who has some real background and expertise in these areas. But, that is by no means guaranteed.

Spence: Do you think that there is going to be an increase in the level of staffing for foreign aid at the Department of State?

Preston: I think it depends on what we're talking about in terms of time horizon. I think, being cautiously optimistic, that over the next couple of years, there will be an increase because there is going to be a need to increase. And, I think, there will be more pressure on the remaining portfolio to be implemented in a meaningful way, so that there will be a recognition that they do need more capacity.

Spence: Next question, Charlie Anderson. So, in this current environment, how are donors - are there any engagements with other international donors who have experienced the loss of their separate development arms on how to adjust effectively? I know that Canada and DFID have merged their foreign assistance branches with their version of the State Department? How are they adjusting, the donor community, to the lack of US engagement on aid?

Preston: Well, it is a major, major problem as you would expect. And that is one of the very harmful aspects of all that has been happening in that it's coincided at a time when other major donors in Europe have been scaling back their contributions and their generosity as well.

MFAN had a meeting a few weeks ago with a visiting delegation of Members of Parliament from the UK, all different parties - Labour, Conservatives, and Liberal Democrats. In many cases, the challenges that we are facing in the US are similar there in terms of the domestic support for foreign assistance has gone down. There's much more focus on the needs at home, domestic needs. This retraction, this stepping back of the US in terms of funding and just overall leadership comes at a very, very bad time because so many other countries are doing the same.

Spence: In reference to the perceptions of foreign aid, Ted Morris. What do you see -- how Project 25 is going to view and assistance going forward? What are the critics going to say or their concerns or resistance?

Preston: The community would have been better served if some of the tenets of Project 2025 had been implemented, instead of what DOGE and others did. As concerning as some aspects of that report were, that the Heritage Foundation put out last year, they didn't call for the abolishment of USAID and actively recognized some important functions of the agency. So, that has been a pretty sharp change.

I would say, and MFAN and George know this, MFAN has to balance dealing with the immediate problems and challenges right now, in terms of programs and capacity, but also looking out a little farther on the time horizon, whether it is two years or 2029, where perhaps we will have another administration and more opportunity to rebuild and re-vision. What does this look like? Because we need to start planning and there are important initiatives and efforts underway that are starting to have these conversations. I know we're having them in MFAN. But, of course, there are so many immediate needs as well. And I think this is one of the reasons that, even in our first restructuring proposal of the State Department - USAID reorganization that we stressed having the programs under one cone with one Senate-confirmed official. Because, potentially, down the road, if the environment could support such a thing, that could make it easier to transition back to an independent agency.

Spence: Next question by Miranda Beckman. What are your thoughts on the appetite for a congressional audit or some other assessment of how the State Department has been implementing foreign assistance?

Preston: Appetite for audit or other assessment. I would say that we are making, the community is making slow progress. I would say that there is not too much appetite or certainly not enough appetite on both sides of the aisle to actually make that become law and to be in a position where there is sufficient bipartisan support for that. Could we be there next year? Could we be there in a couple of years? I think that it is definitely a possibility.

Spence: Have you identified any best practices? This is by Brianna James. Have you identified any best practices on how government partners are stepping in to fill the gap that you say is left behind?

Preston: I probably have to defer on that question to some of our issue experts. I would say, in general, I don't think we have seen many key best practices but I don't know. But, George, I don't mean to put you on the spot, if you have anything you wish to offer.

Ingram: I don't have anything to offer and the main reports I've seen, it is the Chinese who have stepped in in a few instances and picked up or continued USAID projects. But, given the fact that eight donors, Western donors, have been cutting back assistance, they haven't been stepping in. Some foundations have

stepped in and continued projects, short-term. But, they don't seem to have the resources to really fill the gap that USAID leaves.

Spence: Next question by Jay. The FSNs and the USAID Missions played a key role in implementing the programs overseas. Have we seen any attention given to restoring local hiring in overseas Missions, in the State Department?

Preston: Yes, this is a critical issue as I mentioned at the top in terms of the loss of those local staff that were so dedicated and, during COVID for example, really stepped in and kept things operating. But no, I'm not seeing much movement on that front in terms of trying to rebuild those staff.

Spence: And another question by Karen Freeman. Is MFAN engaging Rubio and senior leadership as they confront the global issues of conflict and disaster? Are you currently engaging?

Preston: We and our members certainly are engaging and trying to engage. I mean this is, Rubio of course is a very interesting case because, as folks know, when he was in the Senate, he was quite active and quite supportive of a number of foreign assistance programs, from democracy, rights and governance to global health. So we have been engaging his staff and our members have as well, particularly our members who have been doing on-the-ground work for many years and are seeing firsthand the problems that have and the suffering that are happening because the US is no longer there. You know this is an important area where getting members of Congress and their staff overseas to see things on the ground in terms of codels and staffdels has been has always been important but it's very important now and there have been a few different trips that have been going out recently to see those impacts on the ground. So it's a work in work in progress with the administration.

Karen Freeman: Can I just can I just pipe in for a second? Tod, thanks so much for all of this. Really do appreciate it. It seems like we can get into the nuts and bolts of all of the things and technical details that we care so much about and we know makes assistance run. I'm just wondering if strategically

and, in part your previous comment kind of got at that, if we're strategically trying to look at the pain points that the administration is having? There's so many and where we can meet them where they're at and engage in the discussion of again? I raised the issue before if there is any success in Gaza? Is that an entry point for a discussion of the injection of foreign assistance re-engagement with the foreign assistance community and possibly using that as a window to change their thinking on that? I have to say, when I heard Rubio this weekend on the talking heads, I was somewhat heartened by the fact that at least he was looking beyond and saying there are so many things that have to be planned out. Normally we would be part of that planning process. So, if there's a conversation or if there are conversations that you're seeing emerge on other pain points that the administration's experiencing that we might be able to engage them at that point on the need for foreign assistance in those areas.

Preston: Yeah, Karen, it's a really good point. I think you know the issues around lifesaving assistance, whether it's kind of the emergency humanitarian relief or some of the global health programs which continue to poll very well. I think that is an area where that is a pain point for the administration and whenever the next big natural disaster is, I think there is an expectation from the American people that we will be able to respond and be there on the ground to help. So, I think that's an issue but also as we were talking about a little bit with this new global health strategy, whether it's around HIV/AIDS or malaria or tuberculosis, there is some receptivity to wanting those programs to succeed because they're fairly easy to quantify in terms of what is being accomplished and they're harder to malign and distort in terms of what they're actually doing on the ground. So I would identify those two issues. I mean a challenge at the same time is, as we know, is this administration wants to be very transactional in their in their foreign policy and use these programs in a very transactional way. So identifying how these programs actually whether its issues in terms of migration or countering China access to critical minerals, some of those much more narrow US self-

interest vantage points -- that is an angle that's very important to keep in mind.

Spence: I have a question. It seems a lot of your members are seem to be institutional organizations that are NGOs that focus on grassroots development or what I call Band-Aid. Do you partner with other organizations that focus on like sustainable transformational development or partnering with businesses? You say when it was created it was focused on transforming government countries that so that they could lead their own development not be depended long-term on external assistance and I think that's one of the criticism is that we are creating programs where there's no end in sight so as part of something that I guess we'll have to think about reform. People ask, we've been in some of these countries for 25-30 years. It's like raising a kid. How long do you raise a kid should they become seniors or at some point. Some of the countries that developed the fastest didn't get any foreign aid like Singapore, UAE, Qatar, they had the leadership and the vision and transform. So one of the reforms discussion is should we be doing Band-Aid or community development or should we be doing game changing transformational of the country's capacity to lead their own development?

Preston: Well, it really goes back to what I was saying in terms of one of the two pillars that MFAN's focus on since 2000 since we were created in 2008 has been country ownership and locally led development and all of our members are very supportive of that. You know even some of them recognize that that is going to impact their bottom line but also knowing that there is a role for them to play in terms of the technical assistance and the technical support to move those countries to eventually to whatever you if you want to use the journey to self-reliance from the from the administration of Mark Green at USAID. So, yes, private sector engagement, working with new and other partners -- everything was not perfect at USAID by any means and that's why MFAN has really never been a defender of the status quo because we've seen and we know that there are ways to do things more efficiently and more effectively. And, I think all

of our members would absolutely agree that we need to be at raising up these local partners and civil society organizations. And that's one of the very these organizations are among the ones that are getting the most impacted by what's happened over the last eight months. And the progress that was starting to be made under Administrator Power, of course, that is all just gone by the wayside. So, it's a real tragedy, but I think we were talking about earlier that I still think there are opportunities to help build capacity and sustainability so that these countries eventually can transition off of US assistance.

Haykin: I'm going to jump in here. I'm mindful of your time schedule and our agreement before we started, Tod, so I believe you may have to move on. I really do appreciate the hour you've spent with us and I think we've got greater insight into where MFAN stands on different things. By the same token, I'd like to invite people to stick around. George, I saw you had a hand up. There may be others who have some comments to add. So I'll turn the floor back to you, Tod, for any final comments. And thank you very much for stimulating our conversation

Tod: Yeah, thank you. I apologize that I have to hop. I actually have to get up to Capitol Hill for a meeting about some legislation, but I've really enjoyed talking with you and would love to hear more from you all about what you see as kind of the critical capacity issues that need to be rebuilt at the State Department. And again, that's where we really look to our members like George and like Jim Kunder and Susan Reichle and Paul Weisenfeld and others to really kind of provide the issue expertise and the depth of experience that you all have lived throughout your lives. And so I just thank you for everything you've done for this for this country.

Haykin: Once again, thank you. Thanks very much, George Ingram, I'd seen your hand up a minute ago. Is there something you wanted to add?

Ingram: In response to Karen's intervention, it occurs to me that one of the pain points is going to be the capacity of staff

at State Department that is going to be assigned to carry out foreign aid. And I'm thinking about the USAID Alumni Association mentoring program of staff at USAID and I'm wondering if there's any plan to transfer that over to the State Department and try to get the State Department to sign on to continuing that mentoring program. And I apologize I have to run too because Tod and I have a meeting on the Senate staff.

Haykin: Well, thanks for your suggestion. We'll take that up. And, thank you very much for your participation today.

Ingram: See you.

Haykin: We're longtime fans.

Ingram: I've been watching you all for a while. It's good to have your input. Well, I know I know that some of you all consider us a pain in the ass sometimes, but we are supportive of aid.

Haykin: Take care. Any other reactions to today's forgoing discussions? This was one of our discussions that are leading into the Annual General Meeting at the end of the month. We hope that we'll see many of you there and that there is really a rich discussion on both where we see the future of the development profession going as well as the UAA as an organization. And we hope that this session helped inform that discussion and we look forward to continuing further discussions as we go forward.

I might just ask Alex, do we have any other programs scheduled for the month of October before the AGM?

Alex Shakow: No, nothing is scheduled.

Haykin: I think that's a pretty heavy lift the AGM. So, see many of you there if not before. Take care and unless there's any final comments. Oh, Karen, I think you have your hand up again.

Karen Freeman: In terms of structuring thought forward and whatnot, I know that we're concerned about our brethren, our profession, our FSN's out there. Keep programming. I just think that for the time being, I would encourage folks to really try to pitch up in terms of the level of thinking on the future of foreign assistance. If we come off as being well, we just want to restore USAID, we want to put what we know back in place, I think we're going to lose that battle. So, I would encourage folks to pitch up in the conversation and talk about development issues far more than our personal losses at this stage in the game.

Diana Putman: Let me add on to that because I think I know a lot of us are sort of somewhat hearing oh well there's a group here and a group there that are actually starting to try to do that but we don't know how to tap in or how to where who these people who they are who's running this how do we do that and I mean I feel very strongly that this needs to be led by a younger generation of people who can be who have been engaging more than most of us did with a lot of the new types of funding mechanisms, new types of organizations that are out there and so yeah, foreign aid needs to look quite different. It needs to be fit for purpose for the future. And so we can contribute though from many good ideas and lessons that were around starting in the '60s, '70s and 80s that this generation knows nothing about. And we know, hey, that was very a really good way to go about doing business. And so I just hope that those of you who are involved in some of these groups would be willing maybe I don't know maybe to share with UAA so we could start kind of a list and see who's which ones are interested in having more of us participate. I think we are willing to do that. But we just don't know where to start.

Shakow: You know the website the UAA website has a lot of information on organizations that are doing all kinds of things whether it's saving documents or stimulating discussions. I see on the chat there were a couple of suggestions there so there is a lot going on and there are a lot around and Karen to your point, the theme of the very first panel for the AGM is really

to focus on the future of development cooperation not excluding aid. Of course, aid has an important role to play in it or foreigner's official development assistance does but it is the melding together of various sources of finance of knowledge and other things. So, so that we hope will be an opportunity first for the panel to discuss these things and then to get at least in half an hour of discussion from the attendees at the AGM both virtual and in place and other ideas based on their one year or 30 years of experience as Diana has suggested. I mean there are a lot of things you don't want to just repeat if they haven't worked. So I mean it is not a subject that is going to be resolved at the end of this month. This is going to go on for quite a long time and there are various Center for Global Development, the Brookings Institution and many others are holding seminars or symposia. Even Devex I think is doing something this week in anticipation of the World Bank - IMF annual meetings coming up where this whole subject is being explored and so I think it's just to try to keep alert to those and engage people and hopefully the AGM will not only decide that there is a future for the alumni association even if there is no future for aid as we have known it.

Haykin: Cheryl, you have your hand up.

Cheryl Anderson: I just wanted to add that there are a lot of Signal groups that are populated with people who have started their own new activist organizations around the topics of aid. And so I just would strongly recommend that people engage in those signal groups and be part of the conversation.

Spence: Yeah. And I think there's something that's missing here. USAID was a government agency and all these different groups and organizations they represent very narrow interests and agendas. I think that aid as a part of the US government agency I think we need to look at what is the official US government development policy or framework and how do these organizations fit under it because I see there's a lot of influence in our Congress which is good but also bad and it hurt aid in the long term because it moved us from doing sustainable development to

focusing on a whole lot of narrow selfish interest by these organizations. Maybe that's something that UAA can help the administration whether we like it or not is to create a solid framework so when they do evaluate who to support or not support. They can seriously ask, does this meet the end goal or the objective or not? Because we used to do sustainable development where we when the project could go on without us and that has changed severely over the years. I saw it firsthand myself when we had outstanding project design and when they got rid of our ability to design sustainable projects in-house and that's where the quality went down people start complaining about the design because they didn't understand real development they didn't understand the process the thoroughness that we needed to do it, So I think this is something UAA can help this administration or the next administration is to identify an official development policy that is bilateral because we're a government agency. We're not a private organization looking out for well we are we're looking out for the narrow selfish interest of the US government national security council foreign policy and the people and train people before when they come to aid we all have our viewpoints but they also have to be trained in what that official development policy is as well and I think that's something that we stop doing. Thank you.

Haykin: Anyone else who wants to have the floor at this point? Okay. In that case, we look forward to seeing many of you either in person or online on the 31st at the AGM. Well, so long. Take care everyone.

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