

Hope or hype? One US lawmaker says help is on the way. By Anna Gawel, Devex NewsWire, 22 Jan 2026

The status of U.S. foreign assistance comes up at the World Economic Forum in Davos — with cautious but clear optimism from a key lawmaker.

Development advocates are holding their breath for — and pinning their hopes on — the [proposed \\$50 billion in U.S. foreign aid spending](#) that could pass Congress very soon.

But as we've been cautioning for over a week now, **it's still a big "could."** Perhaps most importantly, the budget, far more than what President Donald Trump was seeking, still needs to be signed by Trump himself.

To the casual outside observer, that looks like a tall order. But to an influential Democratic lawmaker, [it looks like a distinct possibility](#).

“**Things are better than we all know and believe**, and we can and should be proud of what we've accomplished together,” says Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, declaring that “next week, we will finish passing in Congress, **and the president will sign** \$50 billion dollars [of foreign aid].”

Is that hope more like hyperbole? Time will tell, but there are signs that the administration is serious about reinstating some development assistance — as long as it aligns with its “America First” principles.

That includes the [U.S. International Development Finance Corporation](#), or DFC, which has seen a significant boost in its mandate and funding. On the former though, there are concerns that strategic interests in middle- and high-income countries will come at the expense of poverty alleviation in lower-income ones. But Coons remains positive.

“Yes, it is going to do more than initially imagined in critical minerals and working with middle- and upper-income countries, but the reauthorization fight, which is ongoing right now, is about keeping [DFC] development-oriented,” he says.

He also points out that if the \$50 billion bill is signed, **the U.S. will remain the world's largest foreign aid partner**, my colleague Elissa Miolene, [who's in Davos](#), writes.

That may evince skepticism in bruised aid advocates, but Coons asks for patience: “We are having a fight over who we are as a country,” he says. “Give us a little time to have that fight over who we are. **Don't give up on us. We will be back.**”

Read: [Sen. Coons expects Senate to pass, Trump to sign \\$50B aid budget bill](#)