



April 1, 2022

1289 local civil society actors and signatories
via Anita Kattakuzhy
Director of Policy
Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR)

Dear partners,

Thank you for your thoughtful letter in response to my address at Georgetown University last November and the vision for inclusive development we at USAID put forward there. Based on consistent feedback that I received from staff and partners since being sworn in as Administrator last year, I have made the promotion of local leadership in our assistance one of our key priorities. But, as you well know, despite years of well-meaning efforts to boost the percentage of USAID funding that goes to local partners and change the power dynamic between donors and local partners, far more work remains to be done.

That is why I am so grateful for your support for our agenda and for outlining steps we can take together to fulfill it; indeed, many of the steps you outlined are core to our approach. This work involves four principal lines of effort. First, we will provide higher portions of our assistance directly to credible and accountable local civil society and businesses. Second, we will work to change power dynamics among local actors, intermediaries, and donors by empowering marginalized populations and creating a seat for them at the table, especially in countries where civic space is under attack. Third, we will further draw on the wisdom and on the ground experience of local partners like you in the formulation of our country strategies, factoring in the unique political, social, cultural, economic, and environmental conditions in a given country and targeting the barriers to change. Finally, USAID will serve as a global public advocate and thought-leader for community-led and inclusive development, using our convening authority, partnerships, voice, and example to urge other donors, international agencies, international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and development companies to adapt their policies and practices to better partner with and support the communities we serve.

As you suggest, there are many challenges that stand in the way of inclusive and community-led development. We have already benefited greatly from our conversations with you in the areas of policy and programming, procurement reform, staffing, measurement, risk management, funding, partnership, engagement, and coalition building, and we look forward to continued dialogue. In particular, we are seeking your continued input as we issue a new Policy Framework, adopt a new strategy for acquisition and assistance, simplify our procurement regulations and

requirements, implement a new localization initiative in Central America (Centroamérica Local), and update the Agency's Risk Appetite Statement.

I would also like to highlight two other areas for collaboration. USAID recently launched a new website, WorkwithUSAID.org, a resource hub designed to assist new and current local and international partners to navigate how to work with USAID. This hub identifies a wide variety of programs designed to promote local engagement, including the New Partnerships Initiative, Local Works, and Unsolicited Solutions for Locally Led Development. This site was developed after broad consultations with civil-society and business groups to simplify the ofte-burdensome process of working with USAID, and we welcome your assessment of how we can improve this tool even further.

In addition, we have circulated for public comment a draft of our new strategy to promote Local Capacity Development, rooted in the principles of inclusivity, equity, and locally led and sustained development. This strategy drew on extensive consultations and focus groups with local organizations, and we look forward to continuing to work with you throughout its finalization and implementation.

Building an effective, inclusive development approach will require close collaboration with local actors and civil-society organizations like yours. We thank you again for your feedback, your continued commitment to this cause, and your willingness to help us usher in reforms after so many previous attempts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Power". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a distinct "Power" at the end.

Administrator Samantha Power