



MFAN Supports Call by Former Secretaries of State for Robust Development and Diplomacy Funding

June 25, 2009 (Washington, DC) - *This statement is delivered on behalf of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) by Co-Chairs David Beckmann and George Ingram:*

Today, [eight former Secretaries of State published a Politico column](#) calling for Congress to provide more robust funding for development and diplomacy and bring these civilian instruments of U.S. foreign policy into better balance with national defense efforts. Perhaps most importantly, the former Secretaries said, "Providing the personnel and financial resources to manage our diplomacy and development policies is an urgent matter of national security."

MFAN strongly supports this call, particularly as it relates to strengthening the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), America's premier development agency which works to alleviate poverty, fight disease, and, as the signatories of the column said, help "developing countries achieve rapid, sustained and broad-based economic growth." As they also said, "such efforts are critical to helping us weather the worldwide recession that grips us."

We agree, and would go further. We believe that providing robust funding and resources for development is only part of the recipe for changing the way the U.S. engages with the world and addressing the urgent challenges we face. We must also modernize the U.S. foreign assistance system – our primary mechanism for carrying out development – in order to make sure that any resources committed to these efforts are spent effectively and get into the hands of people who need help most. This will be a big challenge, due to the fact that the foreign assistance system has more than 60 different government offices carrying out development programs. The legislation governing the system has not been updated in two decades. The Obama Administration and Congress can change this situation by passing a strong FY10 International Affairs Budget and taking these key steps towards modernization:

- **Immediately naming an experienced and savvy USAID Administrator, and giving that person a seat at the National Security Council** so that he/she can bring a high-level development voice to critical foreign policy discussions;
- **Incorporating the Administrator into the process of developing America's first-ever, government-wide National Strategy for Global Development**, a move supported by House Committee on Foreign Affairs Chairman Howard Berman (D-CA), who introduced [bipartisan legislation \(H.R. 2139\)](#) on the topic (which now has 53 bipartisan co-sponsors);
- **Clarifying the Administrator's role** in relation to other agencies involved in U.S. foreign assistance, including the State Department, MCC, and PEPFAR; and,
- **Empowering the Administrator to rebuild the policy and budget planning capacity at USAID**, as well as restore the technical development expertise at the agency.

For more information, please visit www.modernizingforeignassistance.net.