USAID POLICY FRAMEWORK:

ENDING
the **NEED**
for **FOREIGN**
ASSISTANCE

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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Habiba Suleiman Sefu, a district malaria surveillance officer, works for the USAID-supported Zanzibar Malaria Elimination Program. Using a tablet, phone, and motorcycle provided by the program, Suleiman is equipped with new tools to fight the disease. Though they might not seem novel, these tools help her respond in record time and help authorities identify outbreaks. Suleiman, a 29-year-old environmental science graduate, believes deeply in the power of science and technology to save lives. Her work through the USAID-funded program is helping eradicate malaria from the island—the prevalence of which in Zanzibar has fallen from 25 percent in 2005 to less than 1 percent today.
Photo: Morgana Wingard for USAID

A MESSAGE FROM USAID ADMINISTRATOR MARK GREEN

Mark A. Green

As I have said since the day I was nominated to be Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), **the purpose of foreign assistance must be ending its need to exist**. I am pleased to present the new USAID *Policy Framework*, which outlines how we will reorient our programs, operations, and workforce around this ambitious, but achievable, vision.

At USAID, we believe that every person, community, and country wants to lead their own bright future. Early in my tenure at USAID, I had an experience that captures this innate human desire. On a trip to Ethiopia, I was walking with colleagues in a small field to observe the distribution of food assistance. I met a wonderful Ethiopian woman who came up to me and said, "First off, I really appreciate this food. We need this grain. But can you help me with irrigation so that I never have to ask you for food again?" In my more than 30 years in development, I have heard this spirit expressed over and over again. Everyone, everywhere, aspires to be independent—to be self-reliant.

This *Policy Framework* puts what we call the *Journey to Self-Reliance* at the forefront of USAID's approach. It reorients our work around fostering capacity and commitment in partner countries across all levels—individuals, communities, and governing institutions—so that they can eventually solve their development challenges without our assistance. As we move boldly in this new direction, we must be innovative and strategic about where and how we work, ensuring that we are focused on advancing countrywide progress toward self-reliance, making investments that have the most impact, and sustaining results for meaningful change. Moving forward, USAID will forge new and creative partnerships by engaging with the private sector more than ever before, and harnessing the knowledge of local organizations with experience in their communities. We will also encourage burden-sharing with our allies, while always remaining ready to provide humanitarian assistance when disaster strikes. And we will measure our success by how much closer each of our investments brings us to the day that our programs can end.

This new approach requires that we undertake transformational changes across our organization. We must embrace and commit to a new way of working, enabling our people to lead, strengthening our policy and programming in support of self-reliance, and continuously striving to improve alignment across budget and policy. I am confident this is the right direction to go, and look forward to working alongside our highly capable team as we improve, evolve, and learn as we go. In doing so, USAID will remain the world's premier development agency.

I invite my fellow Americans, those in the countries where we work, and the international community at large to share in this vision—to partner with us as we empower communities, build self-reliance, and ultimately end the need for foreign assistance.

Mark A. Green
USAID Administrator

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A *POLICY FRAMEWORK*?

The *Policy Framework* serves as the guiding policy document for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).[1] Taking its direction from the United States' *National Security Strategy* (*NSS*) and the Department of State and USAID *Joint Strategic Plan* (*JSP*), the *Policy Framework* translates the goals outlined in the *NSS* and *JSP* specifically for USAID.

This is the third *Policy Framework* USAID has released, following ones in 2006 and 2011.[2] As USAID's operational policy explains, a *Policy Framework* articulates USAID's approach to providing development and humanitarian assistance and the Agency's programmatic and operational priorities that follow from it.[3] These, in turn, inform issue-specific development policies, strategies, and vision papers; budget requests and allocations; country and regional strategic plans; good-practice documents and project designs; evaluations and learning agendas; and overall engagement with partners.

The *Policy Framework* speaks to multiple audiences, including: USAID personnel, implementing and other program partners, partner-country governments and other recipients of USAID assistance, U.S. interagency colleagues, intergovernmental and multilateral counterparts, and stakeholders in the U.S. Congress, the development community, and the public.

WHY ISSUE A NEW *POLICY FRAMEWORK*?

The world is undergoing an era of remarkable development progress but is also facing emerging and increasingly complex challenges. At this pivotal moment, many providers of foreign assistance are adjusting to shifting circumstances abroad and new demands at home. The *Policy Framework* explains USAID's ongoing Transformation[4] and how it will strengthen our ability to confront future needs for and obstacles to development and humanitarian assistance and to make USAID a more effective provider of foreign assistance on behalf of the American people.

To find the *Policy Framework* and related resources about USAID's role in supporting countries along the *Journey to Self-Reliance*, please visit www.usaid.gov/policyframework.
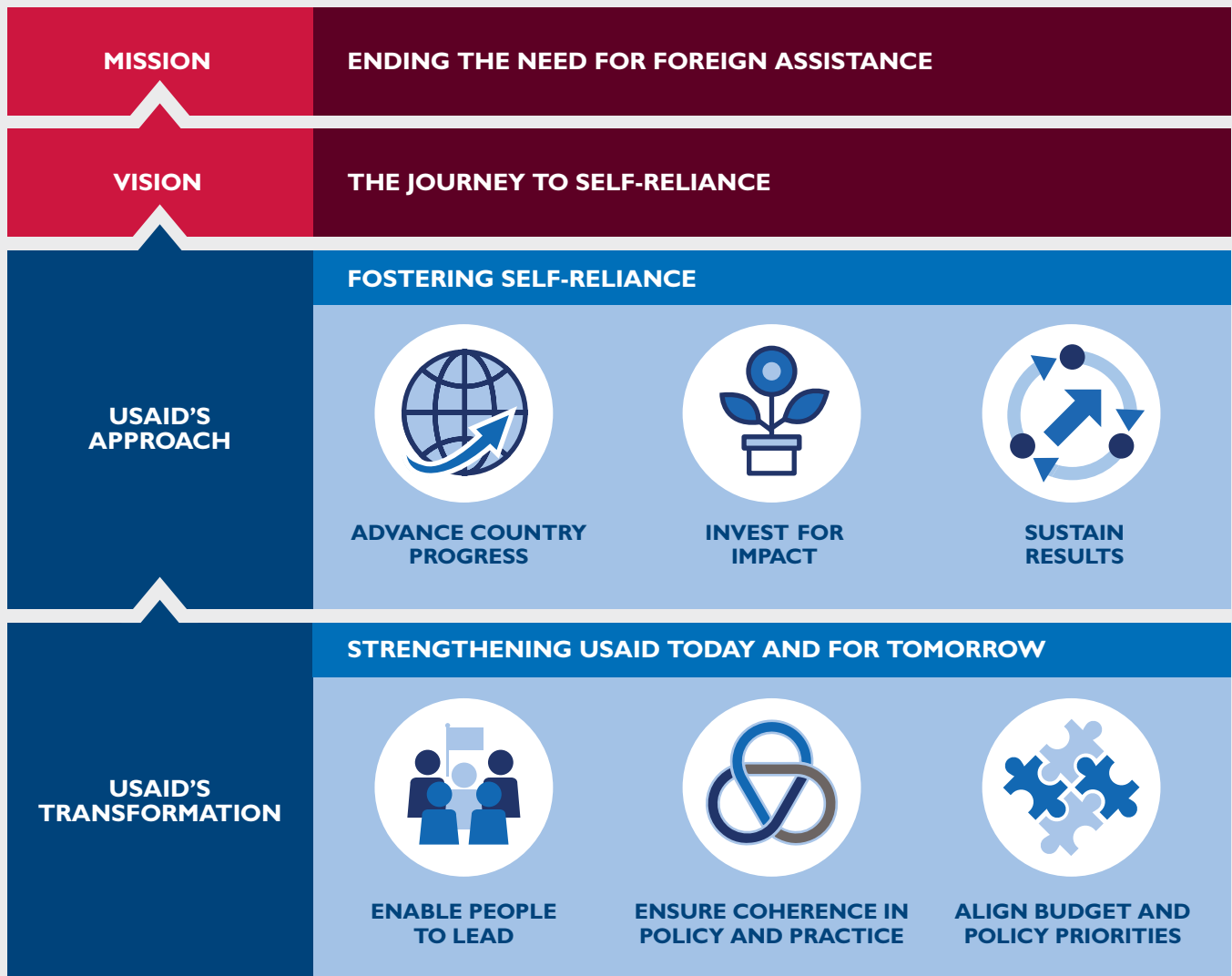

A USAID program in Zimbabwe, part of Feed the Future, supports smallholder farmer irrigation schemes to increase production and productivity of high-value crops like this one: bananas. Photo: Fintrac, Inc.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN MESSAGES OF THE *POLICY FRAMEWORK*?

The *Policy Framework* presents USAID's mission and our vision for achieving it: ending the need for foreign assistance by partnering with countries along their *Journeys to Self-Reliance*. To realize this vision, the document introduces a new, Agency-wide approach to development and humanitarian assistance: fostering self-reliance. This approach is grounded in three mutually reinforcing principles: USAID must (1) advance country progress, by (2) making investments for impact, through (3) programs that sustain results. To apply these principles, USAID must also transform itself as an institution: enabling our people to lead, ensuring coherence in policy and practice, and aligning budget and policy priorities.

FIG. 1 THE *POLICY FRAMEWORK*

MISSION	ENDING THE NEED FOR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE
VISION	THE JOURNEY TO SELF-RELIANCE

USAID'S APPROACH

FOSTERING SELF-RELIANCE

ADVANCE COUNTRY PROGRESS	INVEST FOR IMPACT	SUSTAIN RESULTS

USAID'S TRANSFORMATION

STRENGTHENING USAID TODAY AND FOR TOMORROW

ENABLE PEOPLE TO LEAD	ENSURE COHERENCE IN POLICY AND PRACTICE	ALIGN BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID'S MISSION
ENDING THE NEED FOR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

USAID's vision for a more free, more peaceful, and more prosperous world is built around the compelling yet simple notion that **the purpose of our assistance must ultimately be ending the need for it to exist**. Our assistance model emphasizes programs, initiatives, and investments that support human dignity and build on the innate desire of every community and country to shape their own bright future. USAID will mobilize all of its tools, both development and humanitarian, to protect U.S. security and advance American values and leadership, all while helping our partners on their *Journeys to Self-Reliance*.

We offer a hand up, rather than a hand-out

- » U.S. foreign assistance should never be a hand-out. We should use proven assistance tools to help reform-minded partners reach the point where they can tap into private-enterprise solutions. The growing volume and diversity of development finance is also redefining the role of foreign assistance and development cooperation. In short, to be effective, **foreign assistance must foster self-reliance**, and help countries go from being recipients to partners to, one day, fellow donors.

- » While Americans are generous and always ready to stand with others in their times of need, we believe our **assistance is most effective—and most compassionate—when it strengthens the ability of our country partners to provide for themselves and their citizens**.

Great progress has been made, but we are entering a new era with evolving challenges

- » As we look ahead, we believe that, **in many countries, ending the need for foreign assistance is possible**. Global poverty is falling, health is improving, more children—especially girls—are in school, communities are safer, farm productivity has more than doubled, and more people live in democracies than in the past. Worldwide development gains are a testament to many societies' own efforts and demonstrate that global progress occurs one country at a time. Through on-the-ground partnerships, USAID has made important contributions to these advances.

- » Yet, despite extraordinary progress, **significant barriers to self-reliance remain, and new challenges are emerging**.
  - › While many countries have developed rapidly, others continue to struggle. Some countries even are regressing, in terms of advancing human dignity and citizen-responsive governance. All too often, economic growth is not inclusive and too many are left behind or left out.
  - › Complex crises and natural disasters often derail progress, and underlying fragility is pervasive in many parts of the world. Even in more stable countries, many communities lack resilience to shocks and stresses, particularly in the face of rising environmental pressures. Some 80 percent of the places where USAID has programs are in acute crisis, recovering from crisis, or experiencing smaller-scale upheaval.

Our assistance can help countries overcome barriers to self-reliance and strengthen their resilience to crises

- » **USAID must adopt a more strategic approach** across our portfolio. We must build on programs that lead to self-reliance, and curtail those with diminished relevance or effectiveness.
  - › Strategic USAID assistance can support country partners more effectively in overcoming barriers to sustainable economic growth, inclusive development, democratic governance, and in building human and institutional capacity across sectors.
  - › Targeted USAID assistance can support country partners more effectively in preventing conflict and other crises, responding to and providing relief during them, and promoting resilience and lasting recovery.

As we help others on their *Journeys to Self-Reliance*, we also advance U.S. national security and prosperity

- » U.S. foreign assistance complements America's defense and diplomacy. **Our work to foster self-reliance is an essential tool to safeguard U.S. national security**. These programs curb threats at their source, bolster our economic opportunities and commercial ties, advance liberty and democracy, extend U.S. influence, and ensure we stand with those in need when disaster strikes.

USAID'S VISION
THE JOURNEY TO SELF-RELIANCE

USAID defines self-reliance as the capacity to plan, finance, and implement solutions to local development challenges, as well as the commitment to see these through effectively, inclusively, and with accountability. This definition grounds an approach to foreign assistance that reflects both the evidence we have gathered and the values that underpin our work. As countries gain greater self-reliance, they are able to chart their own development paths and navigate any obstacles along the way.

Self-reliance grows from within

» Countries build self-reliance at multiple levels, and in various ways. We measure a country's self-reliance in the capacity and commitment of its national leaders and institutions. But the self-reliance of communities and organizations within a country underpin countrywide self-reliance.

Building self-reliance requires both commitment and capacity

» To accelerate, spread, and sustain gains, there are some guideposts for each country to follow:

› Countries that have increased self-reliance have built human and institutional capacity across the economy, civil society, the government, and the population.

› Countries that have increased self-reliance have shown a commitment to effective solutions that lead to sustainable economic growth.

› Countries that have increased self-reliance have shown a commitment to inclusive solutions that lead to inclusive development.

› Countries that have increased self-reliance have shown a commitment to accountable solutions that lead to democratic governance.

Protecting progress requires preventing, mitigating, and recovering from crises

» Most countries in which USAID operates are making gains along the *Journey to Self-Reliance*, but many countries are also fragile:

› To prevent crises in the first place, countries must reduce their underlying fragility, including by counteracting drivers of conflict, violence, and other instability.

› When instability does erupt, providing swift relief and mobilizing effective responses can mitigate the impact of crises, which saves lives and livelihoods, supports stability, and forestalls a deeper spiral.

› To ensure rapid and strong recovery from crises, countries must also strengthen resilience to shocks and stresses, including those that result from increasingly strained natural resources and mounting environmental pressures.

How USAID can foster self-reliance

» Overall, self-reliance is increasing. But building self-reliance takes time, and there is no simple route.

» USAID can support endogenous change by championing local solutions:

› This means supporting local capacities and commitments where we identify them, and in whichever ways we are best-equipped.

› Local solutions are not always government solutions. Particularly where commitment is lagging among government partners, we should look to civil society, the private sector, or sub-national authorities.

› Local solutions do not imply ignoring transnational challenges. Coordination and burden-sharing are necessary to build self-reliance.

USAID'S APPROACH
FOSTERING SELF-RELIANCE

USAID will reorient our programmatic approach to foster self-reliance more effectively. This approach marks a new direction for USAID, but draws on our deep experience and the lessons we have learned. The new approach is grounded in three principles that underpin *why* we provide assistance to each country, *what* assistance will be most effective, and *how* we can ensure the sustainability of our results.

"Fostering Self-Reliance" lays out a number of specific priorities to operationalize these three principles.

To **advance country progress**, USAID will:

FOCUS ON COUNTRYWIDE SELF-RELIANCE
  » Support global development through individual country progress;
  » Redefine our relationship with partner-country governments; and
  » Remain committed to providing relief in times of crisis.

HELP MAP COUNTRIES' PROGRESS TOWARD SELF-RELIANCE
  » Chart a Roadmap for each country's *Journey to Self-Reliance*, and use it as a basis for dialogue and strategic planning;
  » Supplement Roadmaps with additional data and deeper analysis; and
  » Identify points of strategic convergence among country needs, USAID's capabilities and comparative advantages, and U.S. policy imperatives.

TRANSITION AS COUNTRIES GAIN SELF-RELIANCE
  » Adapt our approach as country partners build their self-reliance; and
  » Where capacity and commitment have advanced significantly, undertake strategic transitions.

To **invest for impact**, USAID will:

MAKE STRATEGIC CHOICES
  » Build on local capacities and commitments we are equipped to support;
  » Understand programmatic tradeoffs, and make hard choices; and
  » Use regional and transnational programs to support countries' self-reliance.

HARMONIZE INVESTMENTS IN SUSTAINABLE GROWTH, INCLUSION, AND DEMOCRACY
  » Leverage enterprise-driven development;
  » Support countries' financial self-reliance and fiscal sustainability; and
  » Promote cross-sectoral integration.

ENHANCE CAPABILITIES TO HELP PREVENT, MITIGATE, AND RECOVER FROM CRISES
  » Examine strategic approaches in fragile countries, and prioritize conflict and violence prevention, stabilization, and resilience; and
  » Improve coordination in the transition from relief to development, and in programming at the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

To **sustain results**, USAID will:

REIMAGINE OUR PARTNERSHIPS
> » Diversify our partners;
> » Actively engage the private sector;
> » Diversify our partnership models and expand the nature of partnership;
> » Focus partnerships on measurable outcomes; and
> » Be more creative and flexible in our procurement processes.

STRENGTHEN LOCAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROMOTE SYSTEMIC CHANGE
> » Use assistance to catalyze wider change; and
> » Prioritize sustainable and resilient outcomes.

TAKE BALANCED RISKS
> » Embrace a manageable level of programmatic risk;
> » Manage risks systematically; and
> » Strive to do no harm.

Simon Gachoka, a laboratory analyst for the Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (KEMSA), tests the quality of medicines at the warehouse in Embakasi, Nairobi. Through a partnership with USAID, KEMSA purchases and delivers life-saving drugs quickly and efficiently on behalf of the U.S. Government. Photo: Mwangi Kirubi for USAID

USAID'S TRANSFORMATION
STRENGTHENING USAID TODAY AND FOR TOMORROW

USAID has three core resources: **our people**, the **institutional experience and expertise** they have built, and **the budget we implement** on behalf of the American taxpayers. To realize the vision laid out in this *Policy Framework*, we must harness all three of these resources, and optimize their use.

"Strengthening USAID Today and for Tomorrow" lays out a number of priorities for harnessing these resources as part of USAID's Transformation.

To **enable our people to lead**, USAID will:

» Embrace a culture of leadership;
» Provide staff the incentives and support to be leaders;
» Empower our Foreign Service Nationals;
» Invest in a nimbler workforce and conduct strategic workforce planning;
» Provide support to staff in fluid and non-permissive environments;
» Reorganize ourselves to drive decision-making to Missions;
» Enhance critical technical capabilities by improving our organizational structure; and
» Promote an environment that reflects our values and upholds human dignity.

To **ensure coherence in policy and practice**, USAID will:

» Strengthen policy coherence;
» Ensure country strategic plans and project designs focus on fostering self-reliance;
» Build a robust practice to foster self-reliance; and
» Hold ourselves and our partners to account.

To **align budget and policy priorities**, USAID will:

» Strengthen connections among policy, budget, strategy, and performance functions within USAID; and
» Work with stakeholders to encourage consensus on policy coherence and alignment between foreign assistance appropriations and the vision of the *Journey to Self-Reliance*.

LOOKING AHEAD
IMPLEMENTING THE *POLICY FRAMEWORK* AND LEARNING AS WE DO

This *Policy Framework* articulates USAID's overarching approach as the lead programmer of U.S. development and humanitarian assistance. USAID has begun translating its principles into practice, and will evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts. Learning is inherently iterative, and it can be challenging. But **we must be open to the evidence and adjust as needed.** Through collaboration and collective learning, we will achieve more sustainable results with greater impact. While our approach will evolve as we continue to learn, this document provides a framework around which we will build a better USAID.

At 14, Mohammed left home in Morocco to work odd jobs in construction, but he dreamt of earning enough to provide for his family. When he heard about a USAID program to become a trained electrician, he signed up without hesitation. USAID's support for internship and education programs helps at-risk youth like Mohammed find jobs in which they can thrive.
Photo: Bobby Neptune for USAID

I.

USAID'S MISSION
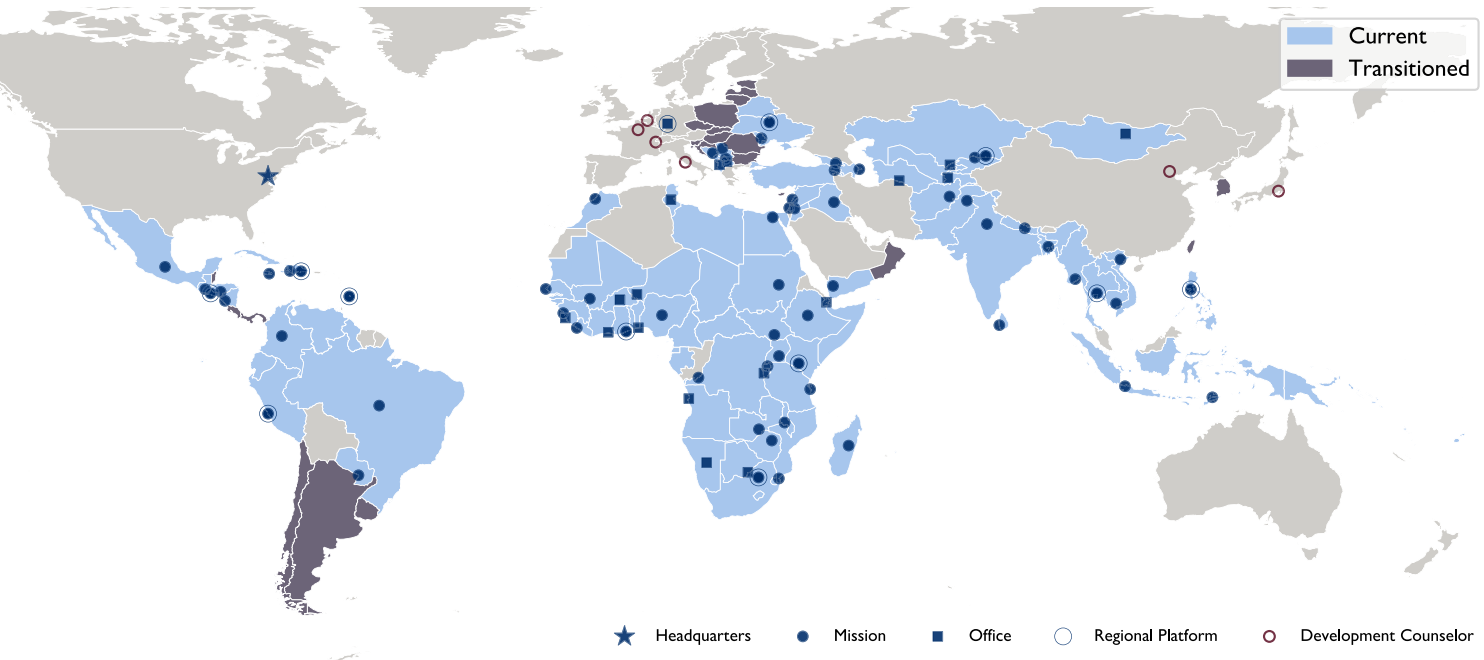## ENDING THE NEED FOR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

In Cambodia, entrepreneur Nanda Pok (center) works with her mentees to prepare coffee beans to be dried. After participating in USAID's coffee-production training program for female business leaders in Southeast Asia, Nanda passed what she learned to other women entrepreneurs in her community, helping them start their own businesses.
Photo: Thomas Cristofoletti for USAID

FIG. 2 USAID'S PROGRAM FOOTPRINT

Current
Transitioned

★ Headquarters   ● Mission   ■ Office   ◯ Regional Platform   ◎ Development Counselor

USAID today has posts in more than 80 countries, programs that reach an additional 40, and development counselors stationed in key partner institutions around the globe. In Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere, USAID also recognizes a number of countries that have successfully and sustainably transitioned from a reliance on development assistance—many to become donors in their own right.

USAID'S MISSION
ENDING THE NEED FOR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

USAID's vision for a more free, more peaceful, and more prosperous world is built around the compelling yet simple notion that the purpose of our assistance must ultimately be ending the need for it to exist.[5] Our assistance model emphasizes programs, initiatives, and investments in more than 120 countries (see Figure 2)[6] that support human dignity and build on the innate desire of every community and country to shape their own bright future. USAID will mobilize all of its tools, both development and humanitarian, to protect U.S. security and advance American values and leadership, all while helping our partners on their *Journeys to Self-Reliance*.

In an era with intensifying competition among global powers,[7] USAID's assistance is a powerful tool—a complement to our defense and diplomacy—to protect Americans and advance U.S. security and prosperity. When we work with societies to help them safeguard liberties, forestall conflict, accelerate growth, and respond to disasters on their own, we enjoy greater security and economic opportunity in the United States.

To this end, USAID offers a proven and compelling assistance model, grounded in a new, more strategic approach. The *Journey to Self-Reliance* emphasizes enabling locally led—and, increasingly, locally financed—problem-solving for enterprise-driven growth; inclusive societies; and transparent, accountable governance. This model of assistance promotes balanced trade, open markets, and democratic norms. Our model contrasts with those that rely on opaque and unfair lending practices, which drive nations into debt and stoke corruption.[8] We want the countries with which we partner to be able to plan, finance, and implement their own development solutions.

Ultimately, the purpose of our foreign assistance is to end the need for it to exist. We anticipate a day when countries around the globe can secure freedom, attain peace, and expand prosperity on their own and with their own resources. This goal is ambitious, but, in many countries, achievable.

> USAID offers a proven and compelling assistance model, grounded in a new, more strategic approach. The *Journey to Self-Reliance* emphasizes enabling locally led problem-solving.

The *Policy Framework* helps us translate this vision into action. In the pages that follow, we describe:

I.	**II.**	**III.**	**IV.**	**V.**
How we can be more effective if we focus on investing to build self-reliance, and the important role of USAID's work within the larger U.S. national-security and foreign-policy architecture: **"USAID's Mission: Ending the Need for Foreign Assistance"**	What we understand a country's self-reliance to entail and how outside actors like USAID can support it: **"USAID's Vision: The Journey to Self-Reliance"**	The new programmatic and operational approach we must embrace to foster self-reliance more effectively: **"USAID's Approach: Fostering Self-Reliance"**	How we can more effectively use our budgetary, institutional, and, especially, human resources to enable this approach: **"USAID's Transformation: Strengthening USAID Today and for Tomorrow"**	How we will implement and iterate on the commitments laid out herein: **"Implementing the Policy Framework and Learning as We Do"**

WE OFFER A HAND UP, RATHER THAN A HAND-OUT

The U.S. Government is a global leader in foreign assistance. We provided more than $35 billion in development and humanitarian assistance in 2017, a small fraction of the U.S. federal udget (about 0.88 percent), but the largest total contribution of any bilateral donor. USAID, as the lead U.S. international development and disaster-response agency, invests most of this assistance, nearly $20 billion each year.[9]

> Foreign assistance should never be a hand-out. We should use proven assistance tools to help reform-minded partners. Studies show that **assistance can boost a country's growth, reinforce stability, and is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars**.
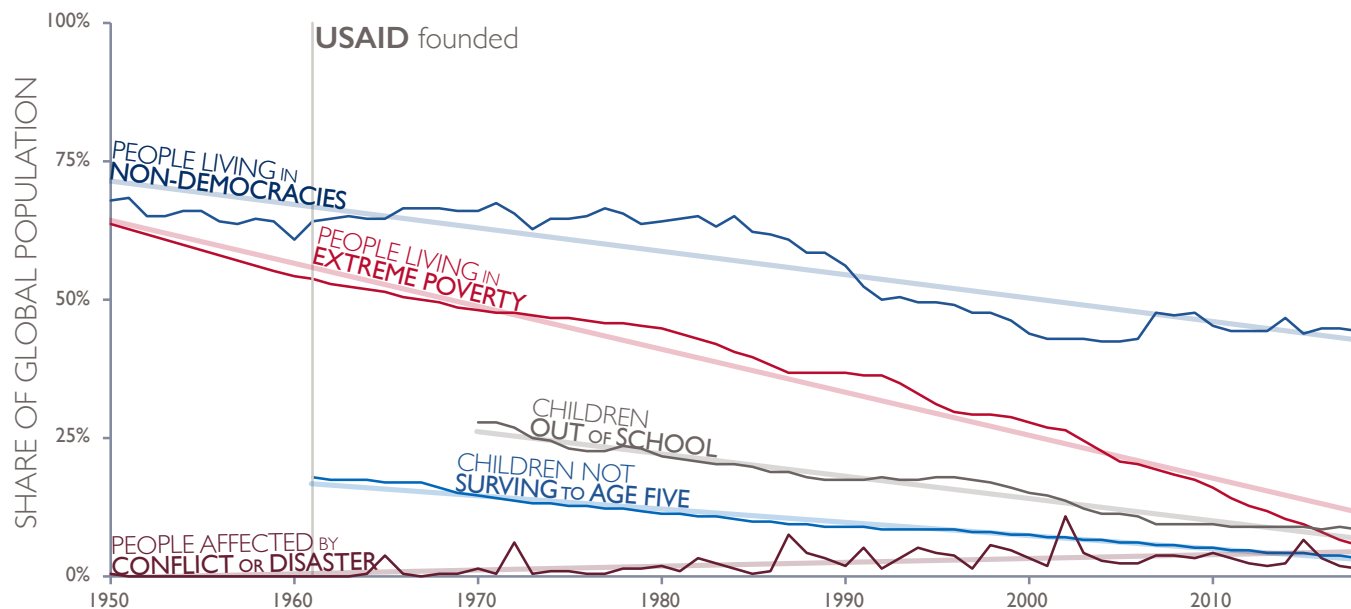
U.S. foreign assistance should never be a hand-out. We should use proven assistance tools to help reform-minded partners reach the point where they can tap into private-enterprise solutions. Independent studies show that assistance can boost a country's growth, reinforce stability, and is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars.[10] Recent research finds that assistance has accelerated development gains; on average, the return on investment is valued at more than 10 percent. For instance, a sustained inflow of assistance results in faster economic growth, raises the share of investment, increases educational attainment, boosts life expectancy, and reduces extreme poverty.[11] Likewise, in the midst of conflict, assistance has been shown to improve the chances that a country regains stability.[12]

While Americans are generous and always ready to stand with others in their times of need, we believe our assistance is most effective—and most compassionate—when it strengthens the ability of our country partners to provide for themselves and their citizens. We recognize that our assistance is not meant to be indefinite, or to supplant a country's own initiative or obligations. To be effective, foreign assistance must foster self-reliance, and help countries progress from recipients to partners to fellow donors. If we are successful, the societies with which we work will thrive sustainably. Countries will enjoy financial independence by reducing reliance on external grants, concessional financing, and unsustainable debt. Self-reliance will also reinforce people's dignity and countries' autonomy, and enable greater ownership of their development agendas. In the long run, it will also reduce costs for the American taxpayer, and help secure a more stable, economically open, and democratic world.

The increasing volume and diversity of development finance is also redefining the role of assistance, and of development agencies like USAID. Developing countries have become far less dependent on outside aid.[13] When USAID was founded, foreign assistance accounted for more than two-thirds of incoming financial flows to developing countries. Today, it makes up less than one-fifth, increasingly outstripped by private investment, expatriates' remittances, and a growing pool of countries' own domestic public financing. Public spending varies widely across countries, however, and the lowest-income countries have far fewer resources to mobilize.[14]

Likewise, the growing consensus around principles for the effectiveness of aid makes building self-reliance a shared priority. For example, country ownership and responsibility are at the core of the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, which recognizes the need to mobilize all available sources of financing, including a country's own domestic resources, private investment, and foreign assistance, to achieve nationally owned and led development priorities.[15] Many countries' and regional organizations' agendas and planning documents espouse the same principles (*e.g.*, the African Union's Agenda 2063).[16]

FIG. 3 GLOBAL GAINS: AN ERA OF EXTRAORDINARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

In the era since USAID was founded, the world has made unprecedented development progress. People worldwide experience greater freedom, less poverty, better health, and improved education, and they are less likely to be affected by conflict or disaster. These gains have been spread across all regions of the world. Of course, the good news is not without caveats. While democracy has spread, progress has stalled in recent years. And while conflict and disaster today affect fewer people than in past decades, such crises remain worse today than in the post-World War II era when USAID was founded.

GREAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, BUT WE ARE ENTERING A NEW ERA WITH EVOLVING CHALLENGES

The world is at a pivotal moment. Many countries are experiencing an era of remarkable development progress after unprecedented gains against poverty, disease, hunger, and inequality.[17] But substantial barriers remain, and countries also face emerging and increasingly complex challenges.[18] Relatively few countries have achieved the self-sufficiency to no longer need foreign assistance.

DEVELOPMENT GAINS SHOW SELF-RELIANCE IS POSSIBLE

As we look ahead, we believe that, in many countries, ending the need for foreign assistance is possible. Overall, people's lives and livelihoods are getting better, with everyday improvements that signal a declining (if not ended) need for foreign assistance in many places (see Figure 3).[19] These advances are foremost a testament to societies' own efforts. They demonstrate that global progress reflects the aggregate achievement of countless, dedicated people and organizations across many countries.

» **Poverty is falling at the fastest rate in history.**[20] In the 80-plus countries in which USAID has Missions or Offices, the number of people who are living in extreme poverty fell by more than 400 million since 1990, despite overall population growth.[21] The global population in extreme poverty dropped by nearly two-thirds. The share of people who are living on less than $1.90 per day is now less than 10 percent.[22] When USAID was founded in 1961, more than half the world lived below this line.[23]

» **People are healthier than ever before.** Compared to 1990, the number of children who die before their fifth birthday has dropped by more than half,[24] and maternal mortality has fallen by nearly half as well.[25] More than one-third fewer children are stunted from chronic malnutrition.[26] The combined incidence of HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis has fallen by nearly one-third since 1990, too, and other diseases, like yellow fever and guinea worm, have receded even further.[27]

» **More children are in school, and workers have greater access to opportunity.** The share of primary-age out-of-school children has dropped by half since 1990, to less than 10 percent worldwide.[28] Gender parity is also greater: as many girls attend primary school as boys today.[29] And a generation of workers has moved off farms to new employment in cities, while better tools and techniques have more than doubled agricultural productivity in developing countries, and created jobs both on and off the farm.[30] In urban and rural areas alike, technology has linked people to information, services, and one another. Partly because of these rapid changes, the global middle class has grown three-fold since 1990, to some 3.2 billion people.[31]

» **For most people in most countries, the world is far safer than in the past.** While it varies year-to-year, the trend in deaths from natural and human-made disasters, including violent conflicts, has continued to decline since USAID's inception in 1961; the rate is less than half what it once was.[32]

» **More people today — more than 4 billion — live in democracies than at any time in history.** More than half the world's population now lives in democratic countries.[33]

For more than 50 years, USAID has contributed to development gains through on-the-ground country investments and partnerships. Ours has been just one part of a much larger story, but a meaningful part. We played a central role in the "Green Revolution" in the 1960s, for example, credited with saving 1 billion people from starvation.[34] In the 1970s, we supported the collective vaccination effort that eradicated smallpox, a disease that once took 1 million lives each year.[35] Since the end of the Cold War, we have supported 35 countries in taking major strides toward full democracy.[36] An independent study found that, in a given year, $10 million of USAID democracy assistance improves competitive elections, political participation, and other democratic practices five times faster than in its absence.[37] Since the early 2000s, we have mobilized powerful campaigns to combat AIDS and malaria that have helped prevent more than 20 million deaths.[38] More recently, we helped mobilize global action to end hunger and malnutrition, which has left more than 23 million fewer people living in hunger and poverty.[39]

SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS REMAIN TO WIDESPREAD AND LASTING SELF-RELIANCE

Despite extraordinary progress, many countries today face both ongoing challenges and new barriers to self-reliance (see Figure 4).[40] Our work alongside our many local, international, and interagency partners is far from done. While many countries have developed rapidly, extending the benefits of growth and sustaining positive trajectories over time can prove difficult. Considerable challenges remain, and new ones are emerging, to helping countries develop beyond a need for assistance.[41]

Certain communities, and even entire countries, are being left out or left behind.

» **While some countries are developing rapidly, others continue to struggle.** In the world's poorest countries, large proportions of the population live at or near subsistence levels.[42] And closing the gap could be more difficult than in the past. Innovations like automation and artificial intelligence threaten to eliminate future jobs, and well-worn paths to growth, such as a surge in labor-intensive basic industry, might no longer be available.[43] Even growing countries could encounter a "middle-income trap," as their competitive edge in low-wage labor is dulled by progress itself. Countries can fall into this trap if they do not invest in commensurate economic, social, and political transformation, or fail to manage sustainably the natural resources on which they depend.[44]

» **Not all people share in a country's development progress, even in fast-growing ones.** The world's poorest, women, youth, the landless, persons with disabilities, politically and socially marginalized groups, and other vulnerable populations often face limited access to public services, political voice, and economic opportunity.[45] For example, in many countries, women and young people are far less likely than men to own productive assets.[46] A country's most vulnerable populations can fall behind, despite broader gains. Emerging technologies can extend the reach of affordable health care, education, energy, and financial services, for example, to poor or rural populations, but disparities in access (*i.e.*, "digital divides") also could further widen opportunity gaps, particularly for women and members of marginalized groups. For every person connected to high-speed broadband, five are not, which inhibits their participation in the digital economy.[47] In extreme cases, inequality can dampen a country's growth.[48]

> In many countries, ending the need for foreign assistance is possible. Overall, people's lives and livelihoods are getting better.

» **Certain countries are regressing, particularly on democracy.** While the number of people living in democracies has grown steadily over the past century, progress has slowed. Some democracies also backslide, for example, when regimes consolidate one-party rule, abolish term limits, corrupt political processes, tamper with elections, weaken judicial independence, restrict civic activity, attack the media, or intimidate political opposition.[49] These actions erode people's essential, and often hard-won, freedoms. They also make countries prone to economic mismanagement, corruption, social fractures, and political turmoil.[50] For the first time since the 1970s, democracy is deteriorating in as many countries as it is advancing.[51]
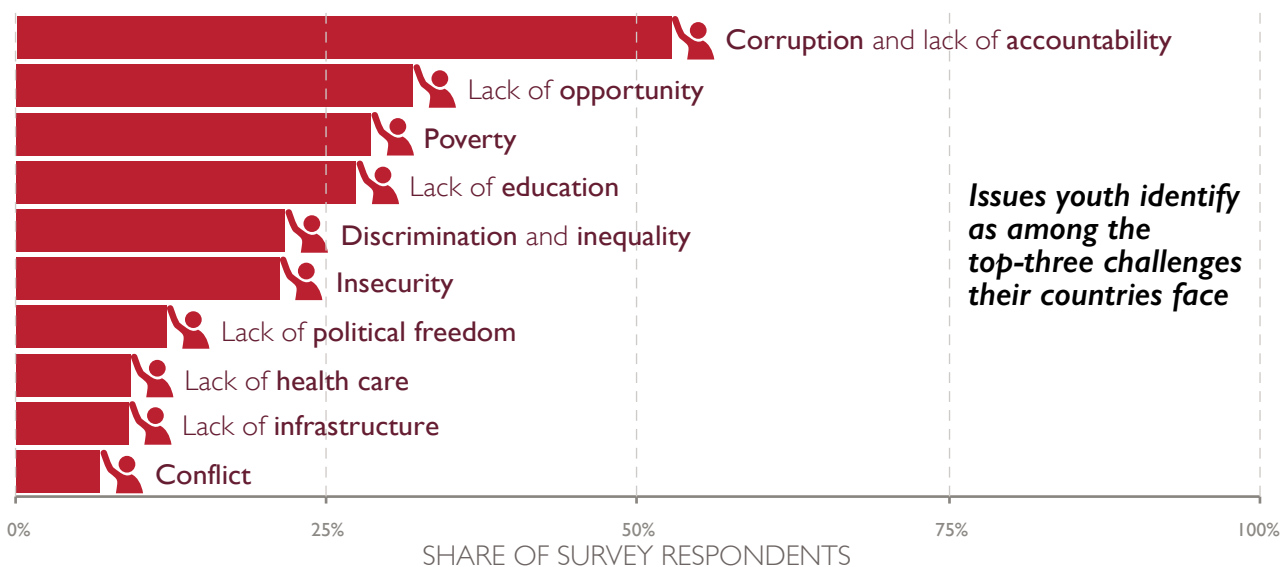
> Despite extraordinary progress, many countries today face both ongoing challenges and new barriers to self-reliance.

MANY COUNTRIES ARE VULNERABLE TO CRISES AND INSTABILITY THAT CAN DERAIL PROGRESS

» **Complex crises and natural disasters are worsening.**[52] While the deadliness of natural disasters has declined considerably, the number of disaster events has risen in the past century, as has their economic cost.[53] And while the number of conflicts has fallen from its peak, by some measures global levels of violence have worsened.[54] At the same time, protracted conflicts, some exacerbated by drought and other environmental stresses, have led to a series of unprecedented humanitarian emergencies that have forcibly displaced a record-high 68.5 million people as of 2017.[55] In modern conflicts, women and children suffer disproportionately from resultant hunger, displacement, and disease, and combatants frequently deploy sexual violence as a weapon of war.[56]

» **Fragility and risk of instability are pervasive.**[57] Although a handful of glaring crises grab the headlines, a much wider array of countries is at risk of similar trauma, including those that are recovering from past conflicts that could return to violence.[58] Because of ineffective governance, exclusionary politics, corruption, and festering social tensions, countries are vulnerable to armed conflict, extremist and political violence, and even state collapse.[59] And in the "paradox of progress," the benefits of a more empowered and connected public are accompanied by rising demands on authorities,[60] which can unsettle even seemingly stable countries, especially non-democratic ones.[61] Likewise, as economies and populations grow, competition over increasingly scarce natural resources can aggravate underlying social tensions.[62] Outside actors and events also stir trouble: unstable neighbors, non-state actors with global reach (*e.g.*, terrorists, hackers, criminal networks), and states with malign intent.[63]

FIG. 4 A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE: FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Corruption and lack of accountability
- Lack of opportunity
- Poverty
- Lack of education
- Discrimination and inequality
- Insecurity
- Lack of political freedom
- Lack of health care
- Lack of infrastructure
- Conflict

Issues youth identify as among the top-three challenges their countries face

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

SHARE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Despite rapid progress, many countries still face substantial challenges. Drawn from a global survey conducted by the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Community, among 12,149 respondents ages 18 to 35 across 110 countries in which USAID has programs, nearly 6,800 (56 percent) listed corruption, non-transparency, and a lack of government accountability as among the top-three problems their countries face. More than 4,200 (35 percent) cited a lack of employment and economic opportunity, and more than 3,800 (32 percent) named poverty as among the chief challenges.

» **Many communities lack sufficient resilience to shocks and stresses.** Environmental hazards like droughts and earthquakes, pandemics, and other calamities, often not bound by sovereign borders, can overwhelm even relatively strong national and local institutions.[64] Other global shifts present unfamiliar problems, including rising migration, technological disruption, and the accelerating depletion and degradation of natural resources.[65] Countries have no blueprint to manage these problems, such as the alarming rate of biodiversity loss today. Other trends that create opportunity at the same time pose risks. For example, the rapid urbanization that has opened job opportunities and pathways out of poverty for many also concentrates pressures on the environment, service-providers, and the social fabric.[66] Similarly, youth bulges offer the promise of a "demographic dividend" (a large, youthful generation that is entering the workforce), but can also fuel violence, unrest, and outward migration if youths lack access to employment and civic engagement.[67]

OUR ASSISTANCE CAN HELP COUNTRIES OVERCOME BARRIERS TO SELF-RELIANCE AND STRENGTHEN THEIR RESILIENCE TO CRISES

Given the complexity of today's challenges, we must work each day to deliver enduring development outcomes—from healthier families to safer communities, from sustainably managed environments and food systems to markets that generate better employment, and, ultimately, to countrywide self-reliance.

USAID's assistance can help partners confront both new and persistant challenges. Strategic USAID investments can support country partners more effectively in overcoming barriers to sustainable economic growth, inclusive development, and democratic governance, and in building human and institutional capacity across sectors. Likewise, targeted USAID investments can support country partners more effectively in preventing conflict and other crises, responding to and providing relief during them, and promoting resilience and lasting recovery.

An Afghan pupil reads a poem to her classmates at a girls school in Kabul. In 2018, USAID programs across Afghanistan reached nearly 650,000 students through community-based education, including 300,000 girls.
Photo: Patrick Baz, AFP

AS WE HELP OTHERS ON THEIR *JOURNEYS TO SELF-RELIANCE,* WE ADVANCE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY AND PROSPERITY

The U.S. *National Security Strategy*[68] and Department of State and USAID *Joint Strategic Plan*[69] affirm the value of U.S. foreign assistance. This assistance "can promote stability, prosperity, and political reform, and build new partnerships based on the principle of reciprocity."[70] As we work with governments, civil society, and the private sector in countries to strengthen their self-reliance—their ability to lead their own development journeys—we will transition our partnerships from traditional donor-recipient relationships to new forms of strategic engagement, including stronger security alliances, commercial ties, and triangular cooperation as countries become donors and international leaders themselves. Through this work, we support stability abroad, reduce threats to Americans at home, and help generate economic opportunities for U.S. businesses and workers.

» **USAID's assistance protects America's security by curbing threats at their source.** Our programs help support stability, counter violent extremism, strengthen citizen-responsive security, and increase our partners' capacity to deter aggression, counteract malign influence, and respond to disasters.[71] Our programs also nurture country and regional capacity to respond to transnational challenges, from arresting the illicit flow of drugs, wildlife, and people to responding to disease outbreaks before they become deadly pandemics.[72] These programs save money as well as lives. Disrupting pathways to, and counteracting the conditions that enable, instability before it erupts is far more cost-effective than responding after the fact.[73] (See *NSS* Pillar I and *JSP* Objectives 1.2 and 1.3.)[74]

» **USAID's assistance bolsters America's economic opportunities and commercial ties.** Our programs enable more vibrant markets; effective policies; reliable infrastructure; healthy, educated, and productive populations; the sustainable use of natural resources; and other drivers of a country's economic growth. By supporting capacity to spark and sustain growth, we strengthen the foundation of long-term, global prosperity. As economies grow, their demand for U.S. exports grows, which multiplies opportunities for U.S. firms and creates more jobs for American workers.[75] (See *NSS* Pillar II and *JSP* Objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.)[76]

» **USAID's assistance advances the foundational American values of liberty, democracy, and the rule of law.** Supporting citizen-centered, democratic governance and respect for human rights reinforces U.S. strength and security. Our programs champion American ideals as a means to combat the spread of authoritarianism, terrorism, and corruption. We promote freedoms of speech, religion, and assembly; the ability to choose leaders democratically; and the right to due process and equal administration of justice.[77] Ultimately, our programs strengthen U.S. bilateral relationships, and amplify the United States' voice in the global competition for ideas.[78] (See *NSS* Pillar IV and *JSP* Objectives 1.3, 3.3, and 3.4.)[79]

» **USAID's assistance extends American influence.** The United States has a record of assistance that has offered countries strategic, mutually beneficial partnership, rather than lingering dependence. Our programs provide a powerful alternative to those of authoritarian governments that propose seemingly generous offers but that can lead to unsustainable debt loads, the forfeiture of sovereign assets, mercantilist and imbalanced trade deals, and myopic trade-offs that undermine a country's sustained development.[80] In contrast, USAID can help countries build capacity and commitment to mobilize domestic public resources, open markets, harness private capital, and strengthen pillars of democratic governance, so that they are able to lead and sustainably finance their own development.[81] We look to the day when recipients become allies, commercial partners, and donors themselves, as many former recipients have, from Chile to Poland to South Korea.[82] (See *NSS* Pillar IV and *JSP* Objectives 1.4 and 3.1.)[83]

» **USAID will always be there when disaster strikes.** Our longstanding commitment to providing humanitarian relief projects U.S. leadership, and it expresses our values of generosity and compassion. While USAID's humanitarian mandate is to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and mitigate the economic and social impact of disasters,[84] our work can foster goodwill and, therefore, reinforce our foreign policy and diplomatic standing. At the same time, we must be aware of potential unintended or adverse consequences of providing relief in conflict-affected and politically-fraught environments. That is why we remain committed to providing needs-based humanitarian assistance, which has been central to USAID since its establishment.[85] USAID's humanitarian action to protect vulnerable populations, provide disaster assistance, reduce the risk of disasters, and build resilience to future shocks and stresses is grounded in the principles of humanity, impartiality, and operational independence. Upholding these principles in moments of crisis enables countries' long-run self-reliance and global stability. (See *NSS* Pillar IV and *JSP* Objectives 3.4 and 3.2.)[86]

To achieve our mission, **we must embrace a new, more strategic approach**. We must take a hard look at all of our programs, build on and replicate those that are effective, and also be willing to end those that are unable to demonstrate impact.

Recognizing the value of foreign assistance to American security and prosperity, we must ensure every dollar USAID spends benefits U.S. national interests. (See *JSP* Goal 4.)[87] We best serve these national interests by working tirelessly to achieve our development and humanitarian mission. We envision a world with fewer threats and greater stability; more vibrant economies fueled by healthy, educated, and empowered populations; stronger alliances built on shared values; a coalition of increasingly self-reliant partners; and a commitment to helping one another in moments of crisis. USAID's assistance contributes to these ends, which will benefit Americans, the citizens and countries that receive U.S. assistance, and our other partners around the world.

To achieve our mission, however, we must embrace a new and more strategic approach. (See *JSP* Objective 4.1.)[88] In the past, USAID's activities have been effective in many places, but wide-ranging assistance portfolios have not always been sufficiently strategic. We have provided assistance in pursuit of too many goals, in too many places. In some countries, we have continued programs despite a marked lack of commitment from the government or other essential local partners. In others, we have provided too little assistance to make a meaningful difference for the country's development. Some programs have continued out of inertia, without showing sustainable results. We must take a hard look at all of our programs, build on those that are effective, but also end those that do not demonstrate impact.

This strategic shift will be measurable. We will be able to assess our implementation of this approach as we embed its principles in our policies, Mission strategies, technical guidance, project designs, performance measures, evaluations, and budget-formulation and resource-allocation processes.

This new approach applies the lessons we have learned in recent years, institutionalizes work already underway, and sets an ambitious vision for our future. The next section, "The Journey to Self-Reliance," describes this vision for how our partners in countries can build toward self-reliance. The subsequent section, "Fostering Self-Reliance," describes how we will change our own approach to better support them along these paths. The final two sections, "Strengthening USAID Today and for Tomorrow" and "Implementing the Policy Framework and Learning as We Do," describe the institutional reforms we will undertake to enable this approach, and our next steps for implementing it.

USAID's partners in Ethiopia use WATEX and iGens technology to locate sites suitable for water schemes. Over the course of two years, USAID and its partners drilled 13 boreholes using the remote-sensing technology in Ethiopia's Somali Region, dug 10 rural wells, and rehabilitiated and expanded 17 existing water schemes, serving 235,000 people and millions of livestock in total. Photo: Kelley Lynch for USAID

USAID'S VISION
THE JOURNEY TO SELF-RELIANCE

In Kathmandu, Nepal, workers at Himalayan Bio Trade Pvt. Ltd. make flowers out of lokta bark paper and prepare them for export—part of a long legacy of USAID initiatives that jointly support environmental conservation and income generation among rural communities. Aveda, the U.S. cosmetics firm, uses the handcrafted paper for holiday gift packaging. Photo: Jason Houston for USAID

USAID'S VISION
THE JOURNEY TO SELF-RELIANCE

Self-reliance entails a capacity to plan, finance, and implement solutions to local development challenges and a commitment to see these through effectively, inclusively, and with accountability. These solutions take many forms, from expanding access to finance for small businesses to ensuring more transparency from public officials, and they can come from government, the private sector, civil society, or the wider population.

As countries gain greater self-reliance, they can chart their own development paths and navigate obstacles along the way. These countries are more stable and cohesive, more resourceful and resilient. Responsive to their own population's needs, these countries are also responsible members of the global community and, in time, they spread and sustain freedom, peace, and prosperity without outside assistance.

USAID defines self-reliance as:

> › A **capacity** to plan, finance, and implement solutions to local development challenges

and

> › A **commitment** to see these through effectively, inclusively, and with accountability.

This definition grounds an approach to foreign assistance that reflects both the evidence we have gathered and the values that underpin our work.

SELF-RELIANCE GROWS FROM WITHIN

Countries build self-reliance at multiple levels. At the highest level, we see a country's self-reliance in the capacity and commitment of its national leaders and institutions (see Figure 5). They advance a free, peaceful, and prosperous society by enabling people and vital political, economic, and social systems to thrive—from justice systems to health systems—and empowering and cultivating them, rather than exploiting or corrupting them. National-level capacity and commitment do not appear spontaneously, but instead emerge from within, as local systems, institutions, and communities become more self-reliant.[89]

> "
> *While each country must lead its own development journey, because we believe in the innate desire of people to want to lead their own future, we can help as partners by incentivizing reforms that strengthen in-country capacity and help them mobilize their own domestic resources.*
> — USAID Administrator Mark Green[90]

The self-reliance of communities and institutions within a country—and the complex systems they make up—are the determinants of a country's overall self-reliance. Networks of people and organizations in government, civil society, and the private sector (and even outside actors like USAID) that function well and interact constructively produce broadly beneficial goods and services. For example, when policymakers, administrators, teachers, parents, faith leaders, and others collaborate effectively, they can provide widely accessible, equitable, and high-quality basic education that is financed sustainably, withstands political changes, and overcomes other challenges, like cultural norms that resist girls' schooling. In turn, a better-educated cohort of students reverberates throughout society, and produces even more capable policymakers, administrators, and teachers for the next generation. As local systems like these become stronger, more cohesive, and more adaptable, and can mobilize the resources needed to sustain themselves, the whole country becomes more self-reliant.

Self-reliant systems are also inclusive. Open to a wide array of individuals and groups, especially women, youth, and marginalized or vulnerable populations, these systems benefit when all individuals participate in them. When people gain and apply skills and knowledge; have access to nutritious food, clean water, land and other resources, and essential services like health care; and enjoy freedom to make choices to shape the course of their lives and that of their communities, they contribute more actively to overall self-reliance, such as by starting new businesses or voting in elections.

Within a given country, certain systems are often more self-reliant than others. For example, a country may boast a capable nation-wide health network but struggle with political marginalization and violent extremism that can feed off it. Such imbalances are more the rule than the exception. Strengthening relatively weak institutions and ensuring the outcomes they deliver reach everyone, including historically excluded populations, is central to each country's long-term development.

FIG. 5 USAID'S COUNTRY ROADMAPS

Metrics of progress at the national level along the
Journey to Self-Reliance

Public-sector, civil-society, and private-sector **commitment** to enact solutions effectively, inclusively, and with accountability
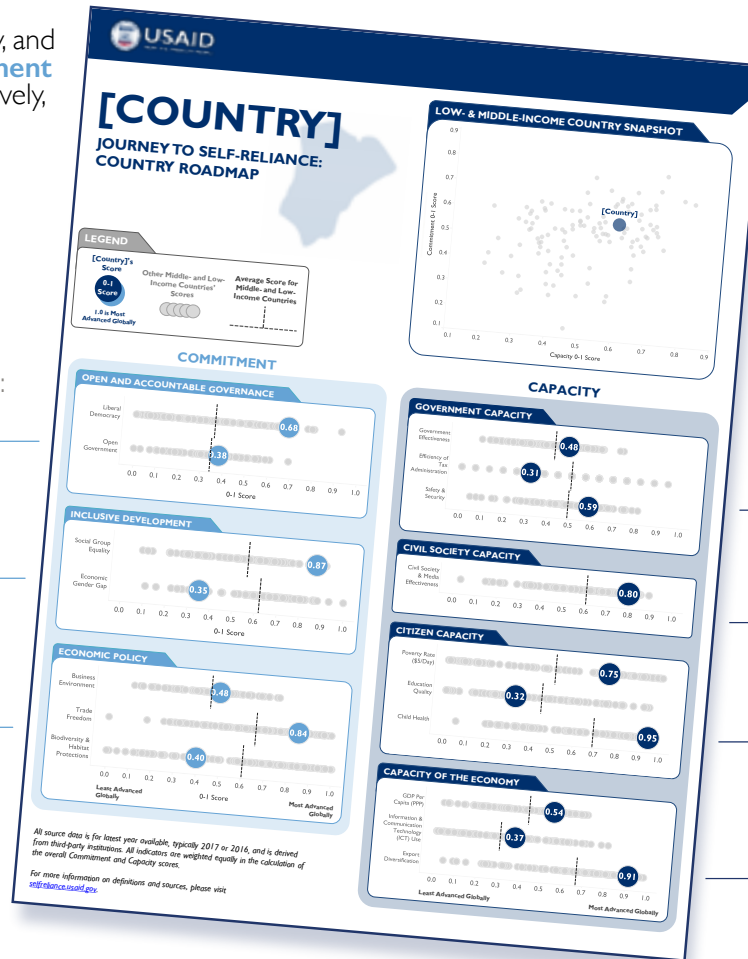
Human and instutional **capacity** across government, civil society, the economy, and the wider population to plan, finance, and implement solutions to local development challenges

MEASURES OF **COMMITMENT** TO:

Accountable solutions

Inclusive solutions

Effective solutions

MEASURES OF THE **CAPACITY** OF:

Government institutions

Civil society institutions

The population

Economic institutions

To help us understand where a country is along its Journey to Self-Reliance, what its most pressing needs may be, but also what are areas of relative strength that we can help build on, USAID has identified a set of Self-Reliance Metrics to measure capacity and commitment.[91]

Our Country Roadmaps display each country's overall capacity and commitment, as well as sub-dimensions of each relative to other low- and middle-income countries, based on national performance on 17 third-party, publicly available indicators. On the "commitment" side, we measure open and accountable government, inclusive development, and economic policy choices. On the "capacity" side, we assess capacity across government, civil society, the citizenry, and the economy.

The Roadmaps provide a starting point for deeper analysis, a framework for making choices about our use of resources, a common language for USAID to use across Missions, and a basis for dialogue with local partners.

The sample, above, is USAID's Fiscal Year 2019 Roadmap. USAID will update the data for each Country Roadmap annually and may refine the design and adjust features over time. For more on USAID's Country Roadmaps, see: *selfreliance.usaid.gov.*

BUILDING SELF-RELIANCE REQUIRES COMMITMENT AND CAPACITY

To accelerate, spread, and sustain progress toward greater self-reliance, there are guideposts for countries to follow. Each context is unique, but countries that have seen rapid, widespread, and sustainable gains often have had problem-solvers who embraced a set of commitments to effective, inclusive, and accountable solutions.[92] These values, in turn, have helped them build human and institutional capacity across government, civil society, the economy, and the wider population.[93]

Commitment and capacity across government, civil society, the economy, and the population have helped countries solve three fundamental problems: how to increase productivity and sustainably expand goods and services; how to distribute these goods and services widely and raise people's standard of living; and how to make decisions collectively about using shared resources fairly and legitimately while protecting people's freedoms.[94] That is, countries that have built institutions to advance sustainable economic growth, inclusive development, and democratic governance have gained greater self-reliance. They have also devised solutions to protect gains by preventing, mitigating, and recovering from crises that threaten to set them back. The interactions among growth, inclusion, and democracy are complex and context-specific, but they tend to reinforce one another in the long run.[95]

> Countries that have built institutions to advance **sustainable economic growth, inclusive development, and democratic governance** have gained greater self-reliance.

CAPACITY OF PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS

Building capacity requires commitment, but these characteristics also reinforce each other. Increasing human and institutional capacity is an essential part of a country's development, although the process is incremental: greater capacity tomorrow, and the problem-solving it enables, builds on existing capacities today. The channels by which countries build capacity are also interwoven. Rapid and broad-based economic growth, for example, has a profound effect. Fast-growing countries have reduced poverty, raised living standards, and strengthened institutions.[96] A group of 28 countries, including long-standing USAID partners like Ethiopia, Guatemala, Nepal, and Pakistan, have slashed extreme poverty by more than 25 percentage points since 1990.[97] Yet steadily rising living standards have not resulted from effective, pro-growth economic policy alone. For instance, women's empowerment and the expansion of girls' education is also one of the most powerful development forces today.[98] Two-thirds of countries have now achieved gender-parity in primary education, and the entry of more women into the labor force could unlock $12 trillion in global economic output.[99] Economic transformation, social change, and political reform—together—fuel capacity development.

COMMITMENT TO EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

Sustainable economic growth often follows a commitment to effective economic policy and responsible stewardship of a country's natural resources.[100] A key component of building self-reliance is enterprise-driven economic transformation, often enabled by a concerted program of investment and reform.[101] In some countries, this transformation begins on farms, driven by the spread of tools and technologies that increase agricultural productivity. As farm output rises, the labor force shifts to industry and services, including in the agriculture sector, which add nearly twice the value per worker.[102] But other models are available. For instance, in many African countries today, informal trading and services drive economic growth, which has been strong in recent years.[103] In all cases, however, economic development rarely happens organically; it starts with effective policies, such as fair, efficient regulatory and trade regimes that encourage competition, promote entrepreneurship and innovation, safeguard private property, and allow enterprises to grow.[104] Similarly important are policies that ensure macroeconomic stability: well-managed monetary policy, responsible public financing, and open markets.[105] Countries rich in natural resources might use them to boost growth, but resources can also be squandered, and even stoke conflict and corruption.[106] Countries that have institutionalized protection and sustainable management of resources, such as through fishing regulations to ensure sustainable stocks, can use them to fuel economic expansion indefinitely.[107]

In 2014, Maha Al Ashqar's school in Jordan was one of 41 to begin a USAID-supported pilot project helping more than 300 teachers learn remedial teaching techniques in reading and math. After a year, more than three-quarters of the students improved their reading skills by one or more grade-levels.
Photo: Thomas Cristofoletti for USAID

COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE SOLUTIONS

Inclusive development takes a commitment to inclusivity and countering social exclusion, promoting cohesion, and investing in the future. Countries in which entire populations are excluded from the benefits of growth, however rapid, cannot be considered self-reliant. Excluding some groups socially, politically, or economically feeds grievances, and can lead to violence.[108] Societies with greater social cohesion, interpersonal safety, and intergroup trust, on the other hand, tend to be more peaceful, productive, and resilient.[109] Moreover, sustained economic transformations rely on a large base of capable workers and entrepreneurs, both women and men.[110] This requires investing widely in human capital, protecting human rights, and ensuring people have equitable access to economic opportunities, infrastructure, natural resources, civic participation, and other public goods and services. In particular, investments in education are essential. Increases in basic literacy, for example, boost economic growth, lower fertility rates, reduce crime, and increase civic activity.[111] Likewise, better health care and improved nutrition contribute to stronger, more productive workers, who live longer and have a higher quality of life.[112] Conversely, gender gaps in education and employment tend to stifle growth.[113]

COMMITMENT TO ACCOUNTABLE SOLUTIONS

Democratic governance requires a commitment to accountability, openness, and political legitimacy. Over time, governments must forge compromises among competing constituencies in ways that are perceived as fair. They must allow for political processes that converge on agreed priorities, and mobilize action to pursue them. They must also allow people and private enterprises to flourish, rather than limiting economic opportunity to those in power. The misuse of political power can fuel crime and discord, aggravate social divides, or stall growth itself. For example, instability is 30 times higher in countries with highly polarized politics.[114] While a handful of non-democratic countries have had growth spurts, they are just as likely to experience economic stagnation or collapse.[115] Authoritarian regimes might seem stable, even self-reliant, but their brittle equilibriums can easily crack. Countries with sustained development, on the other hand, tend, at minimum, to have controls on executive power, such as effective legislatures and independent judiciaries.[116]

PROTECTING PROGRESS REQUIRES PREVENTING, MITIGATING, AND RECOVERING FROM CRISES

Countries that have continually built self-reliance have also devised solutions to protect gains by preventing, mitigating, and recovering from crises that threaten to derail progress. Most countries in which USAID has programs are progressing along the *Journey to Self-Reliance*, but many are also prone to setbacks, even reversals. In fact, a majority of countries in which USAID works exhibit a significant degree of fragility: roughly 20 percent are in acute crisis; 20 percent are either recovering from or prone to crisis; and 40 percent experience, or are at risk of, smaller-scale shocks and stresses, such as communal violence and rampant crime.[117] Furthermore, past upheavals like the Arab Spring show that fragility is not confined to the world's poorest countries.[118]

In fragile countries, the need for local problem-solving is especially critical. Often, countries should prioritize finding "good-enough" solutions.[119] In settings where there are severe capacity deficits or key actors lack commitment, ambitious, large-scale development initiatives can prove overwhelming, even counter-productive. Instead, finding locally led and practicable solutions that can help countries prevent, mitigate, and recover from crises while building toward self-reliance, such as improving citizen-security in violent areas or reducing chronic vulnerability in drought-prone ones, is essential.[120]

PREVENTING CRISES

To prevent the worst impacts of crises, countries must confront the dynamics that feed underlying fragility: weak institutions, a broken social compact, or a fragmented society. Disaster, unrest, large-scale violence, and outright collapse often cause death and destruction, divert resources from long-term investments toward crisis-response, and cost countries the opportunity for steady, sustained development.[121] For example, on average, violent conflict deprives countries of up to 4 percent of annual growth, and more than 8 percent in severe cases.[122] A country's fragility is like a complex, chronic medical condition: treating it requires a multi-pronged and often experimental approach that can include, for example, facilitating equitable access to security and justice, building social and economic ties among communities, and strengthening mediation and alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms.[123] Countries (and their external partners) can also capitalize on transitional moments, such as elections, to bolster legitimacy and address simmering grievances.[124] Ensuring women and other marginalized groups participate in decision-making is similarly critical, such as while crafting peace agreements or in reconciliation processes.[125]

MITIGATING CRISES

When crises do erupt, mitigating their human and economic impacts through swift, effective relief and targeted responses can not only save lives and livelihoods but help forestall a downward spiral and regain stability. In the last two decades, natural disasters affected 4.1 billion people, nearly twice the number in the 20 years prior, and more people (68.5 million) are forcibly displaced now than ever before, mainly by war.[126] Confronting humanitarian emergencies has become even more important as they become more complex and intractable. Conflict and political instability compound environmental stresses like droughts, and *vice versa*, and lines that distinguish traditional conflict, violent extremism, and criminality are becoming blurred.[127] Countries that mobilize effective responses to such emergencies can prevent their escalation, promote stability, and counter chronic vulnerability to crisis. Important in these efforts is protecting women, girls, and vulnerable populations in the midst of conflicts.[128] Relief and targeted stabilization efforts must also build a bridge to long-term development by enabling rapid recovery, lasting political settlements, and resilience.

RECOVERING FROM CRISES

Countries must build household and community-wide capacity to absorb, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses, both idiosyncratic and systematic. Many people in extreme poverty, for example, even in middle-income countries, have few assets, are more likely to live in disaster-prone areas, and have little capacity to cope with even more minor disruptions, like a bout of malaria or a workplace injury.[129] Efforts to reduce vulnerability among specific groups can build their resilience, for instance by providing livestock insurance to pastoralists in drought-prone areas.[130] Societies must also rise to wider challenges, including climate-related shocks and stresses. For example, worsening droughts, heat waves, and flooding can endanger whole populations and their livelihoods, and creeping changes in temperature and rainfall may reduce crop yields or alter disease patterns.[131] More local environmental threats are equally dangerous; declining air quality, degradation of land, deforestation, water scarcity, loss of biodiversity, and marine pollution threaten communities' health and incomes, and can stoke clashes over dwindling resources.[132] Overall, half of the world's population is predicted to face water shortages in the next 20 years, and one-third of the world's arable land is degraded, which hampers food production.[133] Investments in resilience (*e.g.*, protecting vital natural resources, sustainably managing their use, promoting mitigation of and adaptation to climate-related challenges, strengthening health security, as well as conducting research and disseminating technological innovations that bolster these efforts) help societies withstand rising pressures on the resources on which they depend.[134]

> A majority of countries in which USAID works exhibit a significant degree of fragility: roughly 20 percent are in acute crisis; 20 percent are either recovering from or prone to crisis; and 40 percent experience, or are at risk of, smaller-scale shocks and stresses, such as communal violence and rampant crime.

HOW USAID CAN FOSTER SELF-RELIANCE

Self-reliance is increasing around the globe. Nearly three-quarters of the countries in which USAID works saw gains in both country-level capacity and commitment in the past decade (see Figure 6). Most others saw improvement on one dimension or the other. Only a handful of countries experienced declines, many of which correspond with acute crises.[135]

Building self-reliance takes time, however, and there is no one, simple route. While most countries are headed in a promising direction, the average rate of improvement suggests the journey will be long. Year-to-year, even decade-to-decade, progress is often uneven. For example, very few developing countries have seen strong, steady economic growth over multiple decades. More often, they have alternated between periods of rapid economic expansion and episodes of stagnation or decline.[136] Moreover, each country's constraints and opportunities (*e.g.*, geography, demographics, resource endowments, political institutions) are unique. There is no one formula for success.[137]

Real progress is possible, but it is incremental. Steady progress requires long-term, compounding investments in capacity and sustained commitment to reforms. For example, the development of political institutions, productive value chains, or citizens' trust in the state often take generations to fully mature. Likewise, reorienting government, society, and business to confront emergent challenges is costly, time-consuming, and often politically fraught. Even the wealthiest countries grapple with internal tensions and external threats, and they frequently rely on cooperation with others to manage shared problems. In many settings, ending the need for foreign assistance entirely will be a long-term endeavor.

FOSTERING SELF-RELIANCE REQUIRES SUPPORTING LOCAL SOLUTIONS

USAID and other outside actors can support endogenous change when they champion local solutions. This *Policy Framework* urges us to support commitment to and capacity for local problem-solving, innovation, and community-minded leadership, where we identify these characteristics, and in the ways for which we are best-equipped. The development record and our measures of self-reliance help us understand the types of solutions that have the most impact. But we know that there is no prescription for the effective use of foreign assistance across all contexts.[138]

Local solutions also are not always government solutions. In cases when USAID and its international partners see a lack of commitment in the government, where national leaders and state institutions are corrupt or corrosive, abusive or exclusive, foreign assistance can still support other partners. There can be organizations in civil society or the private sector, or sub-national, municipal, or community-level leaders who seek effective, inclusive, and accountable solutions. Championing their efforts can be extremely valuable. In the same way, country-led development does not necessarily imply a state-led agenda. In fact, when the state marginalizes or persecutes certain populations, its agenda is inherently not that of the entire country.
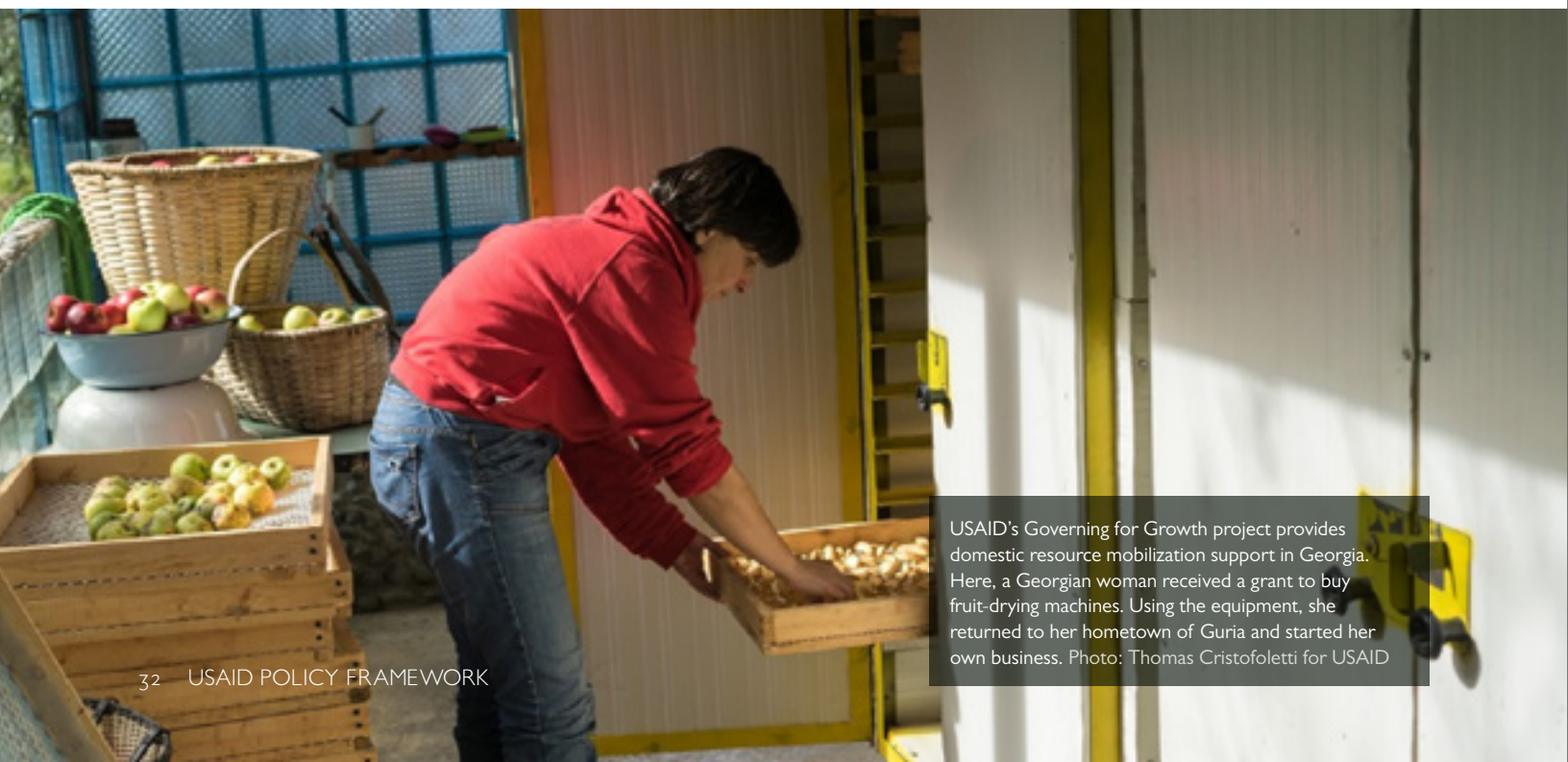
> *Our assistance should be designed to empower people, communities, and government leaders on their Journey to Self-Reliance and prosperity.*
> — USAID Administrator Mark Green[142]

In addition, seeking local solutions does not mean ignoring transnational problems or public goods. All countries, even relatively self-reliant ones, are affected by actors and events outside their control. For example, the crisis of forced displacement strains institutions in countries near those in turmoil, compounding the economic and security threats they already face. More than 85 percent of refugees reside in neighboring countries, on average for nearly a generation.[139] Extremists, often from abroad, can use social media to rad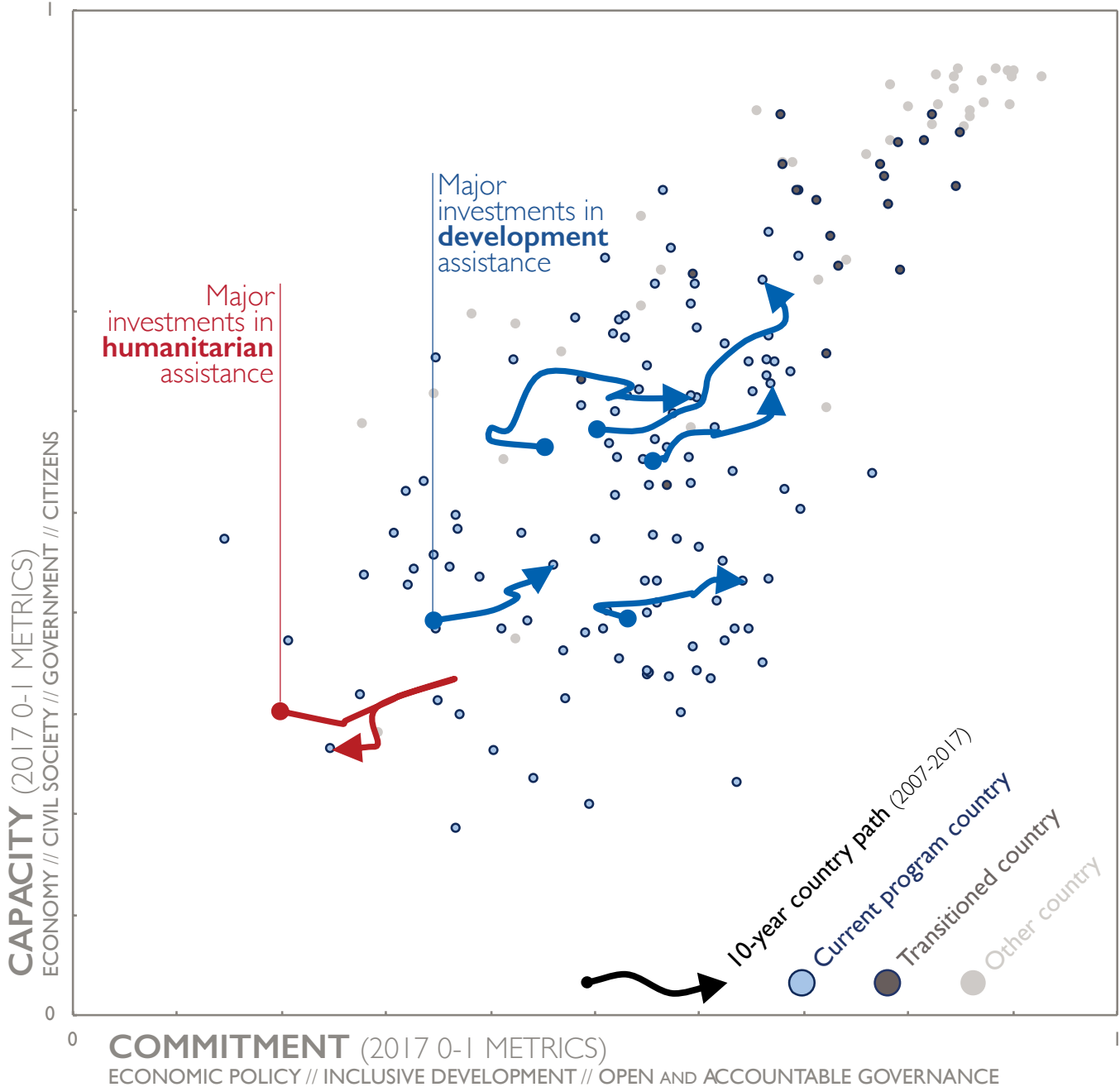icalize youth within communities.[140] Natural disasters and environmental pressures frequently affect multiple countries, and many times require a coordinated response. Multilateral organizations, alliances, and networks can help manage such cross-border challenges.[141] Coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among countries are vital to their own self-reliance, and the more self-reliant countries are, the more effective they are at sharing these burdens.

To be a more effective partner to countries seeking to build their self-reliance, USAID is adopting a new approach, focused on fostering self-reliance. Where we have been effective at doing so, we will continue and expand on those programs; where we have not, we should acknowledge failures, analyze and learn from them, and direct resources to more effective efforts. The next section lays out the changes we will make as an Agency—and, in many cases, already are making—to realize this vision.

USAID's Governing for Growth project provides domestic resource mobilization support in Georgia. Here, a Georgian woman received a grant to buy fruit-drying machines. Using the equipment, she returned to her hometown of Guria and started her own business. Photo: Thomas Cristofoletti for USAID

FIG. 6 USAID'S PARTNERS HAVE GAINED CAPACITY AND COMMITMENT

USAID's Country Roadmaps provide a snapshot of countries' current levels of commitment and capacity. We can also see that many of USAID's major partner countries, across regions, have made substantial (if not always linear) progress in the past decade. Still, not every country is progressing. Countries in crisis, in particular, including major recipients of USAID humanitarian assistance, have seen declines in commitment and capacity, trends that can precede crisis itself.

The illustrative paths depicted, above, show the actual changes in commitment and capacity metrics over the past decade, to arrive at the point where those countries are today on their Journeys to Self-Reliance, among six major USAID partners around the globe.

III.

USAID'S APPROACH
FOSTERING
SELF-RELIANCE

A USAID-supported training session for teachers
in Mbandaka, Democratic Republic of the Congo.
In 2017, USAID trained more than 15,000
teachers in early-grade reading instruction. The
trainings focused on using instruction materials
developed in three national languages, for both
formal and non-formal schools.
Photo: Julie Polumbo for USAID

USAID'S APPROACH
FOSTERING SELF-RELIANCE

USAID will reorient our programmatic approach to more effectively support the government, civil society, and private sector in countries as they build self-reliance. This approach draws on our understanding of what self-reliance entails, of what drives progress on a country's *Journey to Self-Reliance*, and of the challenges each country faces. We will apply the lessons we have learned as an Agency from decades of humanitarian and development practice around the world.

This approach marks a new direction for USAID, grounded in three principles:

> **In every country, there are areas of both high and low capacity, and of both high and low commitment.** Our task is to seek out and intensify bright spots, those beacons of institutional effectiveness, visionary leadership, or grassroots reform.

ADVANCE COUNTRY PROGRESS

This principle demands that we understand **why we provide assistance** in each country. Supporting entire countries as they move toward self-reliance requires that we analyze the context and our role in it, meet our country partners wherever they are on their development journeys, and ensure our partnerships evolve as countries build self-reliance.

INVEST FOR IMPACT

This principle requires that we make choices about **what** assistance we **provide** in each country. We must invest our resources strategically and deliberately to make a broader and more meaningful impact that enables countries to accelerate progress, harness enterprise-driven development, and address both new and persistent challenges.

SUSTAIN RESULTS

This principle obliges us to rethink **how** we provide assistance in each country. To achieve lasting results, we must tailor partnerships to strengthen the systems in which we operate, embrace new roles and work with new partners, including those in the private sector, and take balanced and manageable risks while striving to do no harm.

Each principle is necessary to reorient our approach; none alone is sufficient. Together, they imply changes to how we devise policies and country strategies, align with national and regional development plans, employ evidence and analysis, write technical guidance, design projects and activities, seek out partnerships, conduct procurement, measure results, and incorporate learning. This *Policy Framework* sets out a number of high-level priorities for applying these principles. We will continue to develop more detailed guidance to help operationalize these priorities (*e.g.*, for using Country Roadmaps as part of strategic- and budget-planning exercises), which will accompany this document.

To improve the effectiveness of our assistance, we must apply these principles in all of our work. While this approach encourages a constant focus on countrywide self-reliance, often a given intervention operates on a smaller scale. National-level measures of self-reliance help us look across countries to recognize those with relatively high and low levels of self-reliance and to make more strategic decisions within them based on objective indicators. At the same time, in every country, there are areas of both high and low capacity, and of both high and low commitment. And in no country can we generate capacity or commitment on our own. Our task is to seek out and intensify bright spots, those beacons of institutional effectiveness, visionary leadership, or grassroots reform.

While we ought to be ambitious in the change we can effect, we must also understand the limits of our manageable interest. Many determinants of self-reliance lie well beyond what USAID can influence. We are but one of many actors in a country, each of whom contributes, positively or negatively, to a country's self-reliance. Nevertheless, with the changes described herein, USAID can ensure our assistance has a more meaningful, sustainable, and positive impact that redounds to the benefit of the United States and the rest of the world.

In Isla de Amargura, Colombia, Jose Blanquiceth harvests cacao on his farm. USAID has helped farmers like Jose grow better cacao and get a fairer price for their crop, by connecting them to the chocolate industry. These programs also help provide farmers in coca-growing areas alternatives to the illegal drug trade.
Photo: Thomas Cristofoletti for USAID

1. ADVANCE COUNTRY PROGRESS

USAID will prioritize countrywide progress toward greater self-reliance, everywhere we work. To do so, we must focus on the country as our first unit of analysis—on the unique set of challenges and opportunities each country faces. In doing so, USAID will meet our partners wherever they are on their *Journeys to Self-Reliance.*

FOCUS ON COUNTRY-WIDE SELF-RELIANCE

» **We will support global development country-by-country.** In contrast to what has been a tendency to target specific problems that are global in scale, our ambition will be directed toward advancing wholesale, sustained progress within individual countries. Achieving any worldwide target relies on the sum of efforts across many nations. We will shift our focus to enabling the capacity and commitment of the government, civil society, and private sector within each country to drive their own development comprehensively.

» **We will redefine our relationship with partner-country governments.** Our government partners should always have a vested interest in the success of USAID programs, founded in mutual accountability and shared objectives. Where there is a demonstrated commitment to—or at least an earnest aspiration for—effective, inclusive, and accountable problem-solving and co-financing, government-to-government agreements, be they with national or sub-national government entities, are central to achieving shared results. Agreements must carefully consider incentives and how they can help reinforce specific commitments, such as for policy reforms or cost-sharing. Agreements should also enhance critical capacities, such as through use of country financial systems and the co-design of projects. Conversely, where commitment is lagging, we should consider whether we could put our resources to better use through other types of partnership or in other places.

> Our **government partners should always have a vested interest** in the success of USAID programs. Where there is a demonstrated commitment to problem-solving and co-financing, government-to-government agreements are central to achieving shared results. Where commitment is lagging, we should consider whether our resources will be effective or could be put to better use.

» **We will remain committed to providing humanitarian relief in times of crisis.**[143] Our commitment to providing need-based assistance during natural or human-made disasters is among USAID's foundational principles. As humanitarian need rises and resources remain limited, the United States will also look to others around the world to share the burden fairly of providing relief to those affected by crisis.

HELP MAP COUNTRIES' PROGRESS TOWARD SELF-RELIANCE

» **We will chart a Roadmap, updated annually, for each country's** *Journey to Self-Reliance* **as a basis for dialogue, strategic planning, and further analysis.**[144] Roadmaps provide a high-level snapshot of each country's degree of self-reliance, comparable across countries. We will use them to engage local partners, and to help us understand their perspectives on overarching national needs, opportunities, and constraints. We will also use them to help orient strategic planning in our Missions, and as a prod to dive deeper into particular issues. As described above, the Roadmap, which we will update each year, analyzes a standard set of publicly available, third-party metrics of the overall capacity and commitment levels of each country, and reveals how they change over time.

> We will help **chart a Roadmap for each country's** *Journey to Self-Reliance.* The Roadmap analyzes overall levels of capacity and commitment, and the opportunities and challenges they reveal.

» **We will supplement Roadmaps with additional data and deeper analysis.** We will fill in the Roadmap's outline with a more nuanced, in-depth understanding of each country's development challenges and opportunities for effective assistance. For example, more granular assessments that help us understand the nature of market dynamics, constraints to inclusive economic growth, the manifestation of gender inequality and other forms of exclusion, or the contours of the political economy, will allow us to more meaningfully assess a country's context and both its opportunities for and barriers to advance development progress.

» We will identify points of convergence among development needs, partner-country priorities, U.S. policy imperatives, and USAID's strengths and comparative advantages, framed around the Roadmaps. To take effective action, we must balance our understanding of the specific challenges a country faces for building self-reliance, our local partners' own plans and priorities, the larger U.S. national-security and foreign-policy objectives our assistance helps advance, and our unique capabilities and constraints as a development agency relative to other donors and U.S. Departments and Agencies. We will use strategic-planning processes to locate these areas of convergence.

TRANSITION OUR PARTNERSHIPS AS COUNTRIES BUILD SELF-RELIANCE

» **We will adapt our approach as country partners build self-reliance.** We will regularly review and, when needed, adjust our methods of engagement, in-country presence, and objectives. We must ensure our approach in each country reflects that country's levels of capacity and commitment, and that we calibrate it toward objectives shared with local partners, both inside and outside government. For example, if an established program has not evolved in kind as an essential local counterpart has gained capacity, we will explore new approaches. Likewise, we must consider how we can better empower our cadre of Foreign Service Nationals and local implementing partners to apply their expertise in new ways as capacity and commitment grow.

> We will **undertake strategic transitions** where capacity and commitment have reached more advanced levels. A strategic transition is a recognition of the country's success, and is a moment for celebration.

» **We will undertake strategic transitions where capacity and commitment have reached more advanced levels.** A thoughtful and deliberate strategic transition, in close coordination with country partners and other U.S. Government Departments and Agencies, helps ensure our assistance relationship matures over time, progressing from a donor-recipient dynamic to one of enduring economic, diplomatic, and security partnership. This is a recognition of a country's success and is a moment for celebration. A strategic transition does not necessarily signal the end of USAID's engagement but, more typically, its evolution. For example, a strategic transition might mean that USAID, in concert with other U.S. Government actors, focuses on helping a country deepen trade relationships and access to international markets; increasing technical and educational exchanges; or encouraging mutual responsibility in managing shared burdens, such as emergency response.

2. INVEST FOR IMPACT

USAID will be a better partner to countries by providing assistance strategically that builds on existing areas of capacity and commitment and helps solve pressing challenges. To do so, we must first recognize that our human and financial resources are limited, and that we must allocate them judiciously, by treating them as investments in countries' self-reliance.

MAKE STRATEGIC CHOICES

» **We will build on local capacity and commitment where we identify them, and in the areas we are best-equipped to support.** We should design programs based on an assessment of particular opportunities for us to build on existing or emergent capacity or commitment. Where these attributes are lacking, or where long-running programs have not led to expected and sustained increases in capacity or commitment, we should seek alternative approaches and partners, or explore other uses of our resources.

» **We will understand programmatic trade-offs, and make hard choices**. We will inform these choices initially with Country Roadmaps, but refine them through strategic- and budget-planning processes that mobilize other analysis and incorporate the perspectives of local partners. Ultimately, we should treat programs as investments in sustainable economic growth; inclusive development; citizen-responsive, democratic governance; and crisis-prevention, -mitigation, and -recovery. We will match our ambition with the resources on hand and the bounds of our manageable interest; we will identify USAID's strengths relative to other assistance-providers in a given context; we will be selective in our programming; and we will agree upfront upon performance targets. On the other hand, where other international partners are better-placed to intervene, we have insufficient resources to achieve economies of scale, we lack competent and credible partners, or we otherwise doubt our efforts will have lasting impact, we should redirect our resources to better use.

» **We will use regional and other transnational programs to support countries' self-reliance.** We will strategically support cross-country programming, burden-sharing, and development cooperation where these contribute to individual countries' self-reliance. This may include, for instance, supporting regional systems to conduct disease surveillance and respond to pandemics; countering transnational criminal networks and violent extremist groups; helping to manage shared resources and cross-border challenges; strengthening pivotal regional economic communities; bolstering alliances that share knowledge and pool resources for scale; and investing in research and technological innovations. Where programming primarily supports individual countries, however, even if implemented across a wider region, we will devolve responsibility to the relevant bilateral Mission or Office.

> We will match our ambition with the resources on hand and the bounds of our manageable interest; we will identify USAID's strengths relative to other assistance providers in a given context; **we will be selective in our programming**; and we will agree upfront upon performance targets.

HARMONIZE INVESTMENTS IN SUSTAINABLE GROWTH, INCLUSION, AND DEMOCRACY

» **We will leverage the central role enterprise plays as an engine of development.**[145] Businesses create 90 percent of jobs in developing countries, and new and better employment provides the surest pathway out of poverty for most people. While some USAID programs are grounded in market-based approaches (*e.g.*, by taking a "value chain" approach or collaborating with businesses to spur innovation), many are not. Yet there is no area of USAID's work in which the private sector does not play an essential role. We must always under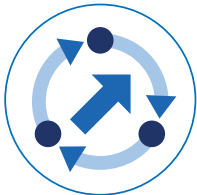stand the market dynamics that affect our activities, more proactively explore market-based approaches to programming, and seek opportunities for transformative investments, such as in drivers of job-creation. USAID's first-ever *Private Sector Engagement Policy*, released in December 2018, articulates how USAID is harnessing the power of enterprise-driven development to help fuel progress toward self-reliance. Collaboration with interagency partners, such as the new U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and in broader initiatives like the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative and Prosper Africa, is also integral to supporting enterprise-driven development.

> We will **leverage the central role enterprise plays** as an engine of development. There is no area of USAID's work in which the private sector does not play an essential role.

» **We will support financial self-reliance and fiscal sustainability.**[146] Countries that depend primarily on an inflow of assistance cannot be self-reliant. Strengthening capabilities and reinforcing incentives to finance development domestically, and in perpetuity (*e.g.*, to generate public revenue; administer it effectively and responsibly; harness local and international private capital, including remittances, for investment; and adopt market-based approaches that allow the self-funded provision of goods or services), advance self-reliance. We will engage both the local private sector and civil society to mobilize resources, inform how the government uses funds, and bring independent accountability to government activities. We can create or expand projects specifically to mobilize domestic resources, or incorporate a priority for sustainable financing into larger programs, spanning sectors.

> We will **support financial self-reliance**. Strengthening capabilities and reinforcing incentives to finance development domestically, and in perpetuity, can advance self-reliance.

» **We will promote cross-sectoral integration.** Technical specialties and program areas allow useful divisions of labor within USAID, but they do not reflect the real world. It is impossible, for example, to separate children's education from their health and nutrition, their parents' livelihoods, norms around the equality of girls' and boys' schooling, or the government's administrative effectiveness. Our programs must recognize this interconnectedness. We will institute regular, meaningful cross-sectoral collaboration and, where appropriate, integrated programming.

ENHANCE CAPABILITIES TO HELP PREVENT, MITIGATE, AND RECOVER FROM CRISES

» We will examine strategic approaches in particularly fragile countries and prioritize the prevention of conflict and violence (including violent extremism), stabilization, and building resilience.[147] In the same way that USAID will use the Country Roadmaps and other tools to recognize countries that have steadily built self-reliance and are continuing to make progress, we must acknowledge those that fail to do so, especially those mired in protracted crisis, or at persistent risk of instability. In these settings, we should review our programming more systematically and ensure that we focus on the core problem set, respond and adapt to local contexts, leverage critical local partners, assess risks, be experimental, and learn from activities that have worked in comparable settings. This could include, for example, reinforcing pockets of citizen security where they exist; better prioritizing, layering, and sequencing our programs; ensuring our assistance objectives align with U.S. political and security goals, including through close coordination with interagency partners; and exercising strategic patience while holding both our partners and ourselves accountable.

» We will strengthen the transition from relief to development and improve coordination at the nexus of humanitarian action, development assistance, and stabilization, peacebuilding, and conflict prevention.[148] When there are acute or complex crises, we will provide emergency assistance that meets immediate needs. But we must also work collectively toward rapid recovery and longer-term resilience, while guarding against future instability. In particular, we will increase joint analysis and planning among the array of USAID personnel and implementing partners focused variously on humanitarian, development, and peace and stability objectives. Strengthening humanitarian-development-peace coherence helps foster local capacity along the continuum from prevention to recovery. In addition, through civil-military cooperation, closer collaboration with the U.S. Departments of State and Defense on humanitarian assistance and stabilization, and interagency coordination generally, we will leverage other U.S. Government capabilities to advance shared objectives across the assistance spectrum, from prevention to relief to response to resilience to longer-term development. In all cases, our efforts must recognize a setting's unique political economy and local dynamics, we must design programs that lay a foundation for sustainable development, and we must prioritize doing no harm.

3. SUSTAIN RESULTS

USAID will extend the reach and sustainability of our programmatic results. To do so, we must use our partnerships to support whichever individuals and institutions can contribute to self-reliance in ways that catalyze wider and more meaningful change.

REIMAGINE OUR PARTNERSHIPS

» **We will diversify our partners.**[149] We must reimagine with whom we can partner. We will be creative and diligent in seeking out, and working with, the right partners for the right activities, identifying those organizations and individuals best able to effect change and contribute to sustained results. Doing so requires that we look beyond our traditional partner portfolio to new collaborators, especially those with deep roots in the communities and institutions we support and who are committed to fostering self-reliance. We should also work more closely with interagency counterparts, from prioritizing stronger coordination with the Departments of Defense and State, as the lead implementer of assistance in stabilization settings, to forging a more coherent, self-reliance-oriented approach with the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, and others in more stable contexts.

> We will **actively engage the private sector**. Private firms provide employment and improve productivity, and can prove powerful development partners.

» **We will actively engage the private sector.**[150] Private firms provide employment and improve productivity, two indispensable elements of long-term development and self-reliance. Historically, development actors have sometimes shied away from working with business. But domestic and international firms can prove powerful development partners where we have common cause, uphold shared values, and can jointly pursue development objectives as equals.

» **We will diversify our partnership models and view the nature of these partnerships more expansively.** We must re-examine how we conceive of partnerships. Often, they entail financial arrangements, but not always; even where they do, partnerships have other important dimensions. For example, we should be a leader of in-country development cooperation, de-conflicting donor efforts, identifying gaps, and seeking economies of scale. Similarly, consultation, information-sharing, and transparent and earnest exchange is as important to the success and sustainability of our efforts as the technical design of a project itself, especially in our partnerships with community groups and local civil-society organizations. Such organizations are often linchpins of accountability and inclusion; they enjoy legitimacy among local populations and have a deeper understanding of their needs.

» **We will focus partnerships on measurable outcomes.** We must raise the bar for what constitutes an effective partnership; it is not merely a contract or agreement to deliver a service. We will seek creative, effective solutions through partnerships that demonstrate quantifiable results. We and each of our partners should, at the outset, determine specific, measurable objectives; specify our respective contributions to achieving them; and make commitments to mutual accountability, including by strengthening in-country capacity for collecting and analyzing data. Ultimately, each of our partnerships should bring together and collaborate with those groups and organizations that are the most committed to the objectives we share, connected to their communities, and capable of solving a pressing challenge a country faces.

» **We will be more creative, responsive, and flexible in our procurement processes.**[151] Exploring new and more effective partnerships (*e.g.*, with innovative local organizations, financial institutions, emerging community leaders, or fast-growing local enterprises) will require greater use of co-creation, working with organizations that have never before done business with the U.S. Government, and employing novel financing arrangements, including through close collaboration with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation. We must also make more use of innovative procurement mechanisms, such as venture-style financing, open innovation or challenge models, Broad Agency Announcements and Annual Program Statements, and other tools to broaden and work more effectively with our pool of partners. USAID's new *Acquisition and Assistance Strategy* details the shifts we are making to be a more-effective partner, and to create more diverse partnerships.

> We will be more creative, responsive, and flexible in our procurement processes. Exploring **new and more effective partnerships** will require co-creation, working with organizations that have never before done business with the U.S. Government, and employing novel financing arrangements.

STRENGTHEN LOCAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROMOTE SYSTEMIC CHANGE

» **We will use our assistance to catalyze wider, lasting change.** To broaden the reach of our program results with finite resources, we will design projects, not to deliver a set of outputs, but to effect broader, positive change. To do so, we should apply a "systems lens" to our country strategies and project designs. Programs should always consider the larger context in which they operate. Each program should first understand the constellation of actors and institutions relevant to achieving meaningful and lasting results, their interrelations, and the incentives that guide them. A systems lens is also an inclusive one, meaning we must engage under-represented voices in strategic planning and designing our projects, such as women, youth, and other marginalized groups. Ultimately, each program should support specific capacities and commitments that we believe will lead to valuable, systemic outcomes. Employing digital technologies more widely can also multiply our impact. USAID's forthcoming *Digital Development Strategy* will help our Missions apply digital tools and emerging technologies more effectively to design more creative, innovative activities.[152]

» **We will prioritize sustainability and resilience and measure our long-term impact.** We must plan and design programs that seek longer-term, often harder-to-measure, but ultimately much more meaningful results. We will seek system-level outcomes and account for systemic risks, such as the threat of conflict, economic collapse, natural disaster, or environmental stress. We must also expand monitoring efforts to determine whether our interventions are, in fact, strengthening institutions and improve our capabilities to measure systemic change, including by investing in higher-level and *ex-post* evaluations to verify that we have contributed to changes sustained over time.

TAKE BALANCED RISKS

» **We will embrace a manageable level of risk to achieve results.**[153] Seeking more sustainable, resilient, and wider-reaching results will require prioritizing long-term outcomes, measured by their lasting impact, rather than near-term outputs. USAID's Risk Appetite statement holds: "If we are going to achieve our long-term objective of ending the need for foreign assistance, we must take smart and disciplined programmatic risks." We should accept and learn from activity- and project-level failures so that we increase the likelihood of larger program- and strategy-level impact.

» **We will manage risks comprehensively.**[154] Pursuing innovative, creative programs and partnerships can be riskier, but they are often worth the reward. At the same time, we must anticipate potential fallout from failure and provide sufficient accountability. Accepting more risk means we must take steps to manage, mitigate, or reduce it, as much as possible, which USAID's Enterprise Risk-Management System will allow us to do. The system is data-driven, aggregating continual inputs from across our Operating Units, and will weigh potential development outcomes alongside other potential risks (security, fiduciary, reputational, *etc.*). Managing risk holistically allows us to invest resources more strategically, oversee performance rigorously, and makes us better stewards of taxpayer dollars.

» **We will strive to do no harm.** While we ought to embrace an appetite for certain programmatic risks, we must also minimize the risk that our programs inadvertently cause harm. Several procedures are in place to do so, but we will apply these more systematically, and better integrate their guidance. Do-no-harm processes include: maintaining zero-tolerance for sexual harassment, exploitation, or abuse among staff or partners;[155] following standard operating procedures and field guidance to prevent and respond to human-trafficking abuses;[156] enforcing child safeguarding standards to prevent, identify, and address child abuse, exploitation, and neglect, including in voluntary family planning, HIV/AIDS, and youth programs, in partnership with the community;[157] pursuing environmentally sound design and management of projects and conducting Environmental Impact Assessments for all activities;[158] conducting market analyses to ensure food assistance and other humanitarian resource transfers do not undermine local production or markets;[159] conducting Social Impact Assessments and, where relevant, seeking free, prior, and informed consent from affected indigenous peoples for activities with potential adverse impacts;[160] and designing programs that are sensitive to conflict triggers and adhere to "do no harm" principles to reduce the risk of exacerbating conflict.[161]

In the village of Kailash in Nepal, a USAID-funded project helps sustainably harvest materials in community forests while forging partnerships with international business. The cooperatives that are set up through the project pool products and distribute them to socially conscious and conservation-minded buyers worldwide. Photo: Jason Houston for USAID

IV.

USAID'S TRANSFORMATION

STRENGTHENING USAID TODAY AND FOR TOMORROW

Fenix International is a leading pay-as-you-go solar company, providing affordable energy solutions to those living off-grid. USAID was an early supporter of Fenix's expansion into Zambia; after only nine months, Fenix has reached more than 30,000 Zambian households, like this one.
Photo: Fenix

USAID'S TRANSFORMATION
STRENGTHENING USAID TODAY AND FOR TOMORROW

USAID has three indispensable resources: our **people**; the body of evidence-based **policy**, expert practice, and institutional knowledge they have developed; and the **budget** we implement on behalf of the American taxpayers. We are the largest bilateral aid agency in the world, and the lead programmer of U.S. Government development and humanitarian assistance. Our highly capable workforce ensures we perform this work with diligence, professionalism, and in support of U.S. interests.

To realize the vision laid out in this *Policy Framework*, we must harness these resources, and optimize their use. This is the aim behind our Agency-wide Transformation. Foremost, we must enable our people to lead the Agency forward. We also must ensure that our policies and programs are thoughtful, evidence-based, and support the goals articulated here. Finally, we must ensure that we can use our budget to support our policy goals most effectively.[162]

> **USAID's workforce is our greatest asset**, and the Agency must continue to invest in it. The people of USAID are dedicated, experienced women and men who are passionate about finding effective, enduring solutions to some of the world's most intractable challenges.

1. ENABLE USAID'S PEOPLE TO LEAD

USAID's workforce is our greatest asset, and the Agency must continue to invest in it. We have a staff of nearly 10,000 people, the majority in Missions overseas.[163] They are dedicated, experienced women and men who are passionate about finding effective, enduring solutions to some of the world's most-intractable problems. A recent survey found that 90 percent regularly find inspiration in their work, and in the work of their colleagues.[164] To capitalize on the talent of our workforce, we must empower staff at all levels to be leaders, ensure they have equality of opportunity, and provide them the incentives, training, tools, and support structures to do so, so that we maintain the skilled, adaptable, and mobile workforce we need now, and in the future.[165]

» **We will embrace a culture of leadership.** Our people should feel empowered to be catalysts for change, and to lead in the interagency, the international development community, and in engagement with local partners. In line with USAID's Leadership Philosophy statement, we will cultivate leadership at all levels.[166] Fostering self-reliance requires a shift in thinking from administering traditional development and humanitarian assistance. As part of this, we should encourage staff to build and nurture relationships that can lead to long-term, effective partnerships, even if these relationships fall outside of current project-management activities.

» **We will provide staff the incentives and support to be leaders.** We will adjust our personnel-management systems so that measures of job performance and opportunities for career advancement reflect the diversity of our workforce and the approaches and values described above. We will reward staff for creativity, innovation, experimentation, learning from failure, and collaboration across sectors and with new or non-traditional partners. Staff also need time and space (*e.g.*, built into their work plans) to engage thoughtfully with the development problems countries encounter, explore creative solutions, and cultivate strong partnerships through which to pursue them.

» **We will empower our Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs).** Making up the single-largest segment of USAID's workforce, FSNs are the vanguard of our efforts to foster self-reliance. Their deep and nuanced understanding of their own countries is vital to identifying promising opportunities for programmatic partnerships, and their often long tenure in Missions strengthens relationships with local actors and provides the continuity necessary to see longer-term results. USAID has already taken steps to give FSNs a greater voice, including by establishing the FSN Advocacy Council[167] and creating the post of FSN Senior Advisor at several Missions. We are also expanding professional-development opportunities, such as the FSN Fellowship program and the FSN Talent Project.[168] And we will continue to amplify the voice and influence of FSN colleagues, especially as USAID undertakes strategic transitions and seeks new ways of collaborating with governments, the private sector, and other local partners.

» **We will invest in a nimbler workforce and conduct strategic workforce-planning.** Strategic workforce-planning ensures that we have the most-talented people in agile staffing mechanisms. More flexible hiring in a system that provides for greater mobility will allow USAID to put the right team in the right place at the right time, such as to surge staffing in response to emerging or ongoing crises or bring in specialists to support a strategic transition. USAID is exploring options to pilot a system in selected Bureaus for non-career, excepted-service positions that uses broad talent models and consolidates a number of hiring mechanisms, such as personal-service contractors (PSCs), institutional-support contractors, and fellows.[169] This system would reduce management burdens, improve equity in benefits across positions, and enable greater flexibility to hire and move our people as needs change. Complementary efforts include the creation of a Hiring and Reassignment Review Board and the development of a workforce-planning tool.

» **We will provide adequate support to all staff in fluid environments, especially non-permissive ones.**[170] We will develop programmatic support for incorporating rapid learning, monitoring the external context, and responding both strategically and tactically as situations change. We will accompany this with demand-driven operational support, such as guidance on third-party monitoring, adaptive procurement, and enhanced physical security.

» **We will reorganize ourselves to drive decision-making to Missions.** To enable an approach focused on fostering individual countries' self-reliance through our bilateral relationships and other local partnerships, we are pursuing changes in Washington to better support the vital role that Missions and other overseas posts play. Our proposed and ongoing changes involve realigning functions and processes to drive the design of projects and other decision-making to Missions. In parallel to the changes in headquarters, we must make it easier for staff in Missions to collaborate across technical areas and design integrated, cross-sectoral programs and partnerships. In support of these changes, all regional, functional, and operational Bureaus will generate vision papers to complement country strategies and sectoral and other issue-specific policies.

» **We will enhance critical technical capabilities by improving our organizational structure.**[171] In Washington, we propose reorganizing Bureaus and shaping our workforce to create a more field-focused and functionally aligned headquarters that improves efficiency, programmatic coherence, and ultimately enables USAID to more effectively foster self-reliance. For example, we have proposed that all staff who work on private-sector engagement come together under a Bureau focused on democracy, development, and innovation. We are also merging our humanitarian assistance into a single unit to ensure the more effective integration of food and non-food programming. Housing all humanitarian personnel together can better-support comprehensive strategies, joint planning with development counterparts, and more rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, we propose harmonizing our expertise in humanitarian assistance, conflict prevention and stabilization, food and water security, and resilience. This consolidation would enhance our effectiveness in complex environments, and allow us to more seamlessly help countries prevent, mitigate, and recover from crises.

» **We will promote an environment that reflects our values and upholds human dignity.**[172] Updated policy and reporting channels will enhance USAID's long-standing policy of zero-tolerance for sexual misconduct in the workplace, and reinforce the Agency's commitments to preventing abuse and exploitation in programs, and of program beneficiaries.

2. ENSURE COHERENCE IN USAID'S POLICY AND PRACTICE

USAID will harmonize policies, country strategies, and the practice of investing development and humanitarian assistance. Coherent policy and practices ensure a unity of effort, and lead to more consistently effective assistance programs. Policy coherence also ensures USAID will continue to be a transparent and reliable partner that speaks with a unified policy voice in the interagency and internationally.

This *Policy Framework* is both USAID's highest-level development and humanitarian policy document and articulates a framework for USAID's contribution to broader U.S. national security and foreign policy. In this way, it serves two important functions for strengthening coherence: (1) It bridges Administration policy priorities (as laid out in the *National Security Strategy* and *Joint Strategic Plan*) and USAID's approach to development and humanitarian assistance, and demonstrates how they align; and (2) it establishes what fostering self-reliance entails, and how it can constitute a more-effective development and humanitarian practice across technical sectors and geographic regions.

» **We will strengthen policy coherence.** Our body of development policy[173] (policies, strategies, and vision statements, as well as the good-practice documents that help operationalize them), along with our day-to-day decision-making and

programmatic implementation that reflect this higher-level policy, will consistently support the goal of ending the need for foreign assistance. Specifically, we will align the implementation of existing policy with this goal, establish new policies to further elaborate on the approach to fostering self-reliance, and work with external stakeholders to build broader consensus around this vision.

» **We will ensure country strategic plans and individual projects focus on fostering self-reliance.** Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSs),[174] and the projects we design to support them,[175] should embody the self-reliance approach. CDCSs provide a place to apply the higher-level principles that underpin this approach ("advancing country progress," "investing for impact," and "sustaining results") in a strategy that also accounts for U.S. foreign-policy priorities for each country; the development plans and agendas of partner-country governments and other local partners; and analysis of the specific constraints to, and opportunities for, building capacity and commitment in that setting.

> We will ensure country **strategic plans and individual projects focus on fostering self-reliance**. CDCSs provide a place to apply the higher-level principles that underpin this approach: (1) advancing country progress; (2) investing for impact; and (3) sustaining results.

» **We will build a robust development and humanitarian practice to foster self-reliance.** We will need to deepen and broaden our programmatic practice, specifically in areas that advance this new approach and the principles that underlie it. For example, we must expand the use of systems tools and develop better guidance for measuring system-wide change. We will monitor and evaluate programs in ways that account for complexity and uncertainty, and that capture sustainability and resilience. To form more-effective partnerships, we will also need to strengthen capabilities to co-create, collaborate, and facilitate, especially with the private sector. And to improve our work in fragile contexts, we will integrate conflict-sensitivity across sectors and find innovative ways to address the low levels of capacity, commitment, trust, and social cohesion that pervade fragile countries.

» **We will hold ourselves and our partners accountable.** To ensure that we align efforts in support of fostering self-reliance, we will establish an Agency-wide plan to monitor implementation. We will identify key actions and practices in Washington and in Missions that demonstrate we are putting into action this approach, and develop methods to track them. As much as possible, we will limit new burdens placed on our Operating Units, such as by relying on existing data-collection and reporting processes.

3. ALIGN USAID'S BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

USAID will strive to improve alignment between our use of budgetary resources and the development, humanitarian, and broader national-security policy goals we seek to achieve. Various foreign assistance fund accounts, legislative requirements, and Congressional and Administration directives unintentionally create a proliferation of increasingly fragmented and potentially competing priorities, rather than adding up to a fully reconciled, integrated approach to development and humanitarian programming. USAID's own structure and processes also often limit our ability to respond swiftly to emerging challenges, or seize opportunities to support local partners. As a result, we are sometimes unable to fund programs that our evidence suggests will be most effective in supporting progress along the *Journey to Self-Reliance*. Alleviating these tensions and reconciling priorities will allow more strategic investment in the programs that are most likely to have a meaningful impact, and will allow USAID to build on activities that deliver sustainable results while curtailing those that do not. Aligning budget and policy priorities requires both that USAID make internal changes and pursue concerted dialogue with external stakeholders.

» **We will strengthen connections among policy, budget, strategic-planning, and performance-management functions within USAID.** We will link our budget requests and allocations more directly to the Self-Reliance Country Roadmaps and USAID's CDCSs, the Agency's main strategic-planning documents. A CDCS reflects USAID's policies, articulates Mission objectives, and incorporates analysis of country needs and priorities, partnership opportunities, and programmatic results and performance. The annual processes to

> USAID will strive to **improve alignment between our use of budgetary resources and the policy goals** we seek to achieve.

formulate budgets and allocate resources should, as much as possible, adhere to these multi-year strategic plans, and address the gaps identified with the Roadmaps. These processes should also allow space to respond to changes on the ground. We will refrain from basing budget requests primarily on prior-year funding levels, programmatic mortgages, or "pipelines" of previously appropriated resources. To support this, we hope to unite, in a single Bureau for Policy, Resources, and Performance, the units that coordinate policy-development, Mission strategic-planning, the formulation of budgets and allocation of resources, and Agency-level performance reporting. This new structure would strengthen these complementary functions, increase integration among them, and better support our Missions.

» **We will work with stakeholders in the Administration, the interagency, and Congress, as well as externally, to encourage closer alignment between foreign-assistance appropriations and our approach to fostering self-reliance.** We intend to communicate, consult, and collaborate more effectively with various external stakeholders who determine, or influence, USAID's appropriated funds, so they understand our Agency's vision and support the results we aim to achieve. Our policies and evidence, including Country Roadmaps, will inform these conversations and help us build a shared understanding of what leads to self-reliance and how USAID's investments can effectively help countries achieve it. We will also work with stakeholders to encourage greater coherence among both Congressional and Administration budget directives and the consideration of their cumulative effect in light of larger foreign-policy goals, in the same way we will seek more coherence among our own Agency's policies. This might not result in fewer directives *per se*, but perhaps we can achieve a better alignment of priorities and appropriated funding. As we have seen in the past, Administration officials, legislators, advocates, and international partners have worked together to galvanize support for reforms to U.S. foreign assistance, from the launch of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the President's Malaria Initiative, to the creation of the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation. We hope a new movement will embrace this call for a more comprehensive, country-focused approach to development.

In Kenya, USAID grantee KickStart International provides low-cost, manually powered irrigation pumps that enable farmers to increase their incomes. KickStart has sold more than 320,000 pumps, which have contributed to $210 million in new farm profits and wages annually.
Photo: Kickstart International

V.

LOOKING AHEAD
IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY FRAMEWORK AND LEARNING AS WE DO

Damisa Rahila, a volunteer for the USAID-funded
SMILE program, teaches children in Sakwatawa,
a small community in Nasarawa state, Nigeria.
Here, SMILE is providing education to 75 students;
most had not previously received formal education.
Overall, the SMILE program will reach 600,000
vulnerable children and 150,000 caregivers.
Photo: Douglas Gritzmacher for USAID

LOOKING AHEAD
IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY FRAMEWORK AND LEARNING AS WE DO

This *Policy Framework* articulates USAID's overarching approach as the lead programmer of U.S. humanitarian and development assistance; it is also a call to action. To realize its vision — to take seriously a pledge to work with the government, civil society, and the private sector in countries to move toward a day when they can meet their own development objectives without foreign assistance — requires our collective, collaborative effort. We must apply and refine the principles herein earnestly and thoughtfully as we develop policies, strategies, and technical guidance; as we plan, design, and implement programs; and as we evaluate them, learn, and adapt. We also must consult an array of stakeholders, listen to local communities that we support, and begin a dialogue about self-reliance with partner governments.

USAID has already begun putting principles into practice. Our technical units are issuing sectoral guidance that explains how specific program areas can foster self-reliance; at the same time, they will ensure this guidance is not siloed, but shared and made complementary across sectors. Regional Bureaus are analyzing self-reliance within country and regional contexts to inform future strategies. And policy and management units are adapting guidance for strategic planning, the design of projects, adaptive management, monitoring and evaluation, and acquisition and assistance to incorporate a focus on self-reliance. New policies, such as the *Private Sector Engagement Policy* and the *Acquisition and Assistance Strategy*, elaborate on these concepts.

USAID is also prepared to learn.[176] Through a structured, consultative process, we will seek to understand what works to foster self-reliance, and how to translate this knowledge into improved policies, strategic plans, projects, procurement processes, and program management. We will do this on parallel tracks: near-term, we will assess ongoing processes in real-time, such as in Missions that are currently developing CDCSs, and capture and apply lessons as we learn them. Looking ahead, we will also undertake a series of more-rigorous evaluation efforts. As we compile evidence of which interventions are effective for fostering self-reliance, and which are not, we will build a more comprehensive knowledge base, which we will then use to create tools for all stages of USAID programming, from strategy to conception to design to implementation to monitoring and evaluation.[177]

Learning is inherently iterative, and often challenging. We must ask hard questions, challenge assumptions, be open to new (and perhaps disconfirming) information, and then be willing to adjust our approach. We must also encourage USAID staff and our partners to scrutinize existing approaches, and experiment with new ones. And we must invest the time and effort, as well as human and financial resources, to see this agenda through. We can also harness our technological investments in artificial intelligence, blockchain, and other new digital tools to improve learning, and these reinforce our commitment to being a state-of-the-art development and humanitarian agency. This is also an important opportunity to listen to local voices, understand their perspectives, consider their advice, and invest in them.

Collaboration will lead to better results. Ending the need for foreign assistance requires that a wide array of local and international actors take ownership of effective approaches to development. Equally important to applying lessons to USAID's own assistance programs will be sharing and amplifying these lessons widely, so other local and international actors can learn from, and build on, what we find to be effective. In addition, convening an ongoing dialogue about self-reliance will ensure that a diversity of development actors contribute to this growing evidence base.

The ideas outlined in this *Policy Framework* are not rigid. They form the beginning of a body of knowledge and practice that we will expand on, refine, and adapt as needed. In time, we will revisit this document itself. For now, however, USAID's *Policy Framework* provides us a structure around which we will build a better USAID.

Baseball Cares, a partnership between USAID and Major League Baseball, helps improve basic education in the Dominican Republic, focusing on reading skills, opportunities for children with disabilities, training for teachers and principals, and combating bullying, child abuse, and domestic violence. The project draws on the country's passion for baseball to get kids enthusiastic about learning.
Photo: Thomas Cristofoletti for USAID

NOTES

An Indian woman arranges a display of grains and seeds at Millet Fest 2012, in Hyderabad. The three-day event promotes the use of millet seeds as part of a daily diet, and awareness of their nutritional benefits.
Photo: Noah Seelam, AFP/Getty Images

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Cover: USAID and the Global Shea Alliance help 16 million women from 21 African countries collect, harvest, and sell shea products around the world. By fostering links between these communities and the global market, USAID helps families engage in international trade and earn a reliable source of income—supporting them and their countries on the *Journey to Self-Reliance*.
Photo: Douglas Gritzmacher for USAID