

Dear Congress:

Work with us to fight corruption and injustice.

We call on you to support reforms at USAID that are aimed at fighting corruption and strengthening human rights in our countries, and to oppose earmarks and set-asides for special interests that cost both dollars and lives.

As leaders and activists fighting corruption and defending human rights in our home countries, we often risk our lives to change our countries for the better. The United States can be our partner by directly supporting our efforts to lead change on the ground.

USAID is strengthening its ability to partner with us by eliminating large, inflexible contracts and by working more directly with local governments, businesses, and civil society organizations like ours. These are crucial requirements for fighting corruption and defending human rights.

We know that as members of Congress you want to “follow the money” to protect taxpayer dollars. So do we. However, USAID’s overreliance on contractors often makes it more difficult for us to follow the money. Ultimately, our governments need to be held accountable by our own people—as you are held accountable by your own taxpayers. Bypassing local organizations and governments defeats the purpose of aid, which is to help countries help themselves.

USAID is working to break this cycle. We hope you will support its efforts to invest modest sums—less than one third of USAID’s total investments—through local watchdogs, businesses, and governments in developing countries. More than anyone else, we know the costs of corruption, and we want to work directly with the US government to end it. Please join us and support USAID’s efforts to invest in our future.

Sincerely,

Orazio Bellettini Cedeño
Executive Director,
Grupo FARO (Ecuador)

Leonor Briones
Convenor, Social Watch
Philippines

Aroma Dutta
Executive Director,
PRIP Trust (Bangladesh)

John Githongo
CEO, Inuka Kenya Trust

Hussein Khalid
Executive Director, Muslims for
Human Rights (Kenya)

Semkai Kilonzo
Co-chair, Budget Transparency,
Accountability and Participation
Movement (Tanzania)

Bhekinkosi Moyo
Program Director, Trust Africa

Nader Nadery
Chairman, Free and Fair
Election Foundation of
Afghanistan

Iara Pietricovsky
Co-director, INESC Instituto
de Estudos Socioeconômicos
(Brazil)

Emmanuel Saffa Abdulai
Executive Director, Society
for Democratic Initiatives
(Sierra Leone)

Livingstone Sewanyana
Executive Director,
Foundation for Human Rights
Initiative (Uganda)

Hassan Shire Sheikh
Director, East and Horn
of Africa Human Rights
Defenders Project (Somalia)

Lumba Siyanga
Program Coordinator,
Women for Change
(Zambia)

Richard Ssewakiryanga
Executive Director, Uganda
National NGO Forum

John Ulanga
Executive Director,
The Foundation for Civil
Society (Tanzania)

Ou Virak
President, Cambodian
Center for Human Rights

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