

GLOBAL WATER

2020

The Honorable Mark Green
US Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20004

May 2, 2018

Dear Administrator Green,

This is in regard to USAID's reorganization and the "Future USAID Structure."

First, a thank-you to you and the Agency for your outreach to stakeholders and for welcoming feedback during this time of transition.

That said, there seems to be a significant marginalization of water and WASH (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene) in the proposed redesign that threatens to undermine gains in global access to WASH and stall countries' progress toward self-sufficiency.

We realize that the organizational reform is still a work in progress. But our and others' concerns have been confirmed by the one-pager describing the "Bureau for Resilience and Food Security," the power-point titled "Strengthening our Capabilities for Relief, Resilience and Response," and by comments in public settings by USAID officials.

Our concerns and requests include the following:

1) Water within the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security: The Bureau's goals are framed almost exclusively through a food lens, with numerous references to 'hunger,' 'food security,' and 'agriculture.' There is a single mention of 'water objectives' and no reference to WASH. The Bureau's one-pager has room to spotlight "the three objectives of the Global Food Security Strategy" but omits the Administration's unprecedented, Congressionally-mandated, Global Water Strategy, which builds on USAID's effective 2013-2018 Water and Development Strategy. The Bureau's intent to end malnutrition will hinge no less on water than on food—water to irrigate crops, of course, and safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene to prevent the WASH-related diarrheal and parasitic intestinal diseases that cause half the developing world's malnutrition in the first place.

We would urge those involved in the redesign process to:

--consider naming this the Bureau for Resilience and Food and Water Security, and creating a Center of Excellence for Water and WASH.

--ensure that staffing and intended objectives and results of the Bureau and its water-related Center of Excellence and Leadership Council are aligned with the Water for the World Act's WASH and health priorities.

--ensure that the DAA/Global Water Coordinator position description is written to make clear a responsibility to coordinate water and WASH activities across all Bureaus and Offices of USAID and to help co-lead, with the Department of State, the US government's efforts to implement the Water for the World Act.

2) Water's and WASH's link with the Bureau of Global Health: The current chart notes how Water will link to Nutrition in the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, and suggests how Water will connect to Bureaus for Conflict Prevention and Humanitarian Assistance. But, at least judging by the chart, Water seems to have little connection with the Bureau for Global Health. WASH-related diseases cause 80% of the sicknesses in developing countries and kill more children under five than AIDS and measles combined. Access to adequate WASH will affect, and in some cases determine, the long-term success of every US Global Health initiative—from PEPFAR and Maternal and Child Health, to efforts to address antibiotic resistance and pandemic disease. We assume that some WASH-related staffing and programs will not only continue within the Bureau of Global Health, but will be elevated.

The Bureau for Resilience and Food Security has a laudable goal of “strengthening multi-sector coordination.” We would urge those involved in the redesign process to:
--ensure that water and WASH activities within that Bureau link closely with Bureau of Global Health.

3) Water within the Office of the Associate Administrator for Relief, Resilience and Response: The single brief page describing the “Objective and Results” of the Associate Administrator’s Office has room to make repeated references to ‘food security’ but lacks any mention of water. Water plays a key role in Humanitarian Assistance, Conflict Prevention and Food Security.

Given water’s cross-cutting character, we urge those involved in the redesign process:
--to add “strengthen USAID’s capacity to promote Water Security” in the explicit top-level mission/mandate of the Office of the Associate Administrator.

Again, we appreciate the willingness of USAID to consider comments during this closing window of reorganization. The Water for the Poor Act in 2005, the Water for the World Act of 2014, and accompanying Congressional appropriations, have enabled USAID to achieve enviable success in strengthening many countries’ movement toward self-reliance by improved access to WASH and other documented water-related achievements. USAID’s Water Office has led the Agency in measuring the long-term effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance investments. It is critical that this progress should not be jeopardized in the new reorganization.

Thank you,

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NB: Global Water 2020 receives no funding from USAID.