*November X, 2021*

Ms. Samantha Power  
Administrator  
US Agency for International Development   
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20523

Dear Administrator Power,

As international NGOs from across the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors, we write to thank you for your inspiring speech at Georgetown University earlier this month. We applaud your vision to ensure that our foreign assistance is more responsive and centered on the needs and aspirations of local actors. We commend your commitment to rebuilding our foreign and civil services to reflect the diversity of the American people. We are pleased that you will be placing more trust and decision-making power in our foreign service nationals. We welcome your steps to mainstream gender equity in USAID Missions with dedicated personnel.

We stand ready to support USAID in achieving its near-term goal that 25% of U.S. foreign assistance directly fund authentically local, autonomous organizations, and its longer-term target to, by the end of the decade, ensure 50% of assistance funds local voices, thereby shifting power to local actors. We appreciate that this effort builds on work begun under the Obama Administration and are confident that your leadership, expertise, and consideration of lessons learned will result in unprecedented success.

As international NGOs we acknowledge that our industry has historically allowed programmatic complexities, short timelines, financial interests, and entrenched power structures to keep many organizations across our sector from becoming full champions and practitioners of locally-led development. We are committed to doing the transformational work required to be allies, connectors, and partners to advance locally led development. We hope to strengthen the networks that place local organizations at the forefront of this work, including by supporting groups around the world who are facing similar challenges so that they can connect and share expertise and resources.

While there are of course challenges inherent to committing a greater percentage of direct foreign assistance to local organizations, there is convincing evidence demonstrating that locally-led programs are more likely to deliver results that are sustained over time. The risks of failing are larger when our foreign assistance programs are not focused on local organizations and local priorities. We are committed to ensuring that risk aversion in partnering with new, local actors does not slow progress, so that U.S. foreign assistance can reach its full impact.

We join you in a determination to maximize the effectiveness and responsiveness of U.S. foreign assistance by investing more of our resources directly in local partners. We know locally-led development will help transform our aid system to become a better tool toward fighting poverty and inequality, make aid more gender equitable, and combat corruption and bad governance. We are ready to work with you to ensure that U.S. assistance is more responsive, inclusive, and locally led.

Sincerely,

1. CARE USA
2. Oxfam America
3. The Hunger Project
4. Interaction

CC:

Paloma Adams-Allen, Deputy Administrator

Isobel Coleman, Deputy Administrator

Michele Sumilas, Assistant to the Administrator, PPL

Don Steinberg, Expert Advisor, Locally-Led Development