

**Remarks by Ambassador Randall L. Tobias  
U.S. Director of Foreign Assistance and Administrator, USAID  
"Mobilizing to Help Those in Need, While Building Capacity"**

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Thank you very much for that kind introduction and thank you all for welcoming me here today. It is indeed an honor to deliver the fourth annual Fritz Lecture on Improving Humanitarian Assistance.

For many of us here today, humanitarian assistance is an important part of what we do for a living. We have a passion for it, and it is not hard to understand why. Somewhere in the world someone's life is better because of the work we do each day in responding to these urgent and compelling needs.

When disaster strikes, the assistance community mobilizes. We work together to help save lives and to minimize suffering. We do what needs to be done, and we do it reasonably well.

And when we finally issue the last situation report on a disaster, we trust we have given the people we have helped the ability not only to cope, but also the ability to overcome and - ultimately - to flourish. This is a difficult task and one the United States Government does not take lightly.

Simply responding to emergencies as they arise is not adequate. When we respond we must also assure that we do not harm the country's developmental track, and that we try to improve the capacity of the country to cope.

We recognize that humanitarian assistance does not stand alone. Our foreign assistance budget encompasses much more than emergency relief. If we are to spend the American people's money wisely - we must focus our efforts on both immediate needs and mid- and long-term reconstruction in a continuous way.

To that end, we have begun to expand the universe of people who serve on a Disaster Assistance Response Team - or a DART - to include a broader range of disciplines, to ensure that we are not missing the forest for the trees. As a general practice when staffing a DART, we make it a point to include mitigation specialists, those who can help build local governance capacities, and others who focus on longer-term impacts. We pull in personnel from various bureaus and offices across the United States Government to work on crises, in order to tap into all available expertise.

In recent disasters, the civilian agencies of the U.S. Government have worked much closer with the United States military. The logistics and air support capabilities the military provides bring essential and unprecedented capacity to U.S. response efforts.

Congress first authorized the military to begin humanitarian assistance activities in 1986. Almost 20 years later, our Chinooks were the most recognizable symbol of U.S. assistance in the aftermath of last year's earthquake in Southeast Asia.

But the U.S. Government cannot and should not try to do it all.

It is my sincere hope that we as part of an international community can better defer to local expertise to manage a crisis. To do that, we must continue to promote and encourage local capacity. Basically, when it comes to humanitarian assistance, the ideal is to work ourselves out of a job.

The United States is constantly working to help mitigate disasters and build local and national capacity to respond, should a crisis strike.

In the Latin American and Caribbean region, USAID's Regional Disaster Assistance Program has trained nearly 43,000 participants, and certified more

than 4,200 instructors in 26 countries. Many of the people trained have now assumed leadership roles in national disaster management organizations, and presently conduct training in their own countries using their own resources.

In Asia, we have a Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response - or PEER - that is active in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines. PEER aims to provide the capacity to train local organizations' members as experts in the areas of medical first response, collapsed structure search and rescue, and hospital preparedness. PEER's impact was evident during tsunami relief efforts in Indonesia, when more than 20 PEER-trained hospital preparedness professionals reached the disaster area within 24 hours.

But history has also shown us that humanitarian crises cannot always be mitigated or managed with national capacity, no matter how much training is given or preparedness is achieved. There will always be responses that require great international effort.

So expanding the base of donor governments, as well as greater involvement from international organizations, NGOs and the private sector is also a necessary, indeed essential objective.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - OCHA - has brought like-minded countries together in a Donor Support Group to not only help OCHA, but also to build alliances for better collaboration within the humanitarian community. The United States chaired the Donor Support Group from July 2005 to 2006.

During our tenure in leading this group, the United Arab Emirates became the support group's twentieth member and the first member from the Middle East. We must continue to

encourage broadening the circle of humanitarian assistance donors, to include nations that have not traditionally played a role in humanitarian assistance, and we hope others follow the lead of the UAE.

There is a certain irony in my having been asked by The Fritz Institute to speak to you today. For most of my adult life, I've been part of the private sector. The Fritz Institute helps apply private sector expertise to disaster relief. And I speak from experience when I say that there are indeed untapped resources and expertise in the private sector that can help us improve humanitarian response.

To continue to broaden the circle of donors, the case for engaging the private sector in disaster relief is a strong one. That is one of the reasons that the Global Development Alliance was created at USAID. The private sector has resources and expertise that has proven to be invaluable in a disaster response, and they need to be more aggressively and creatively engaged.

Many corporations have philanthropic arms or corporate offices in affected areas. Because of their high visibility and urgency, natural disaster situations are compelling causes for corporate support. As a result, corporations are often able and willing to quickly channel monetary and in-kind resources for both immediate disaster relief as well as mid- to long-term reconstruction, but they may not know how best to plug in.

As you might imagine, more involvement from non-traditional actors can pose a coordination problem. It requires a common recognition of operating principles as well as buy-in to overarching plans from among a wide variety of groups around the world, each differently situated and often with divergent priorities.

As good stewards of humanitarian assistance, we must all make a concerted effort to reach out to non-tradi-

tional donors, encouraging appropriate giving, and helping to provide the tools and the processes to enable them to better leverage their contributions.

In disaster situations, the President repeatedly asked CEOs of prominent American companies to provide leadership to encourage private donations for relief and reconstruction efforts. Through such efforts, we have not only been able to raise awareness, but we've also been able to meet and exceed private sector donation expectations, while helping channel resources to those most in need.

Humanitarian assistance is but one aspect of U.S. foreign assistance. And as you might imagine-serving concurrently as the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance and Administrator of USAID affords me a unique perspective.

I have been charged with leading the transformation of U.S. foreign assistance programs to ensure that our foreign assistance is used as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet Secretary Rice's transformational diplomacy goal.

The overarching goal of U.S. foreign assistance is to help build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system.

Some initially raised concerns that the specific words "poverty alleviation" do not appear in the goal.

Others said that the goal itself sounds too "political," in that it focuses directly on state governance.

For some, the goal as stated feeds the fear that "development assistance" is now being overtaken by foreign policy concerns-and that short-term goals will overtake our long-term development objectives.

As many here have heard me say before, I couldn't disagree more.

The foreign policy of the United States is now recognizing what has been a best practice in the development arena for at least a decade: that empowering human potential and achieving transformational development requires more than a short-term response or even a long-term provision of services.

As President Bush has said, true development requires far-reaching, fundamental changes in governance and institutions, human capacity and economic structures, allowing countries to move toward having both the will and the ability to create and maintain economic and social progress without dependence on foreign aid.

A crucial element in all of this is the role of host governments, themselves.

Despite the noblest of intentions, we know outsiders cannot, with sustainability, secure citizens' health and safety, educate a critical mass, or create the conditions needed for economic growth-all of which are necessary for development. All of these must become the responsibilities of governments, themselves.

And citizens must understand that their governments are responsible.

They must make demands of their governments, and reject excuses for failure. That's one of the most fundamental underpinnings of democracies.

I made this point recently to fellow donors at the Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery.

As many of you know first hand, within days of the outbreak of violence in Lebanon-a team effort, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, UN agencies, and the NGO community-began operating in southern Lebanon, providing much-needed medical treatment, evacuating the injured and saving lives under dangerous conditions.

With support from the American peo-

ple, the United States Government was among the donors who provided relief in the early days of the crisis.

And we appreciate the brave efforts of implementing partners who literally put their lives on the line to deliver that relief.

Yet, while our engagement in Lebanon began as a humanitarian response in the midst of a crisis, as we turn our focus to recovery and long-term reconstruction, it is vital that donors-and our partners-work with the Government of Lebanon to identify ways we can support its priorities. And that, in turn, the Government of Lebanon step up to playing its appropriate leadership role. You see, in Lebanon today-as was the case when Secretary Marshall launched the Marshall Plan in 1947-it's not about us it's about them.

And we must stay focused on gauging whether what we're doing to help them is coordinated, comprehensive, and mutually supportive-so that they

will be able to sustain the gains of our investments in the long term.

The process we are now implementing seeks to integrate U.S. foreign assistance planning, budgeting, programming, and results reporting at every level. The goal is to better ensure that we are providing the necessary tools and incentives for host governments to secure the conditions necessary for their citizens to achieve their full human potential.

The reforms include a framework that many of you may well have already studied at length. The framework is built around five priority objectives of foreign assistance that, if achieved, support our overarching goal by helping move countries toward self-sufficiency and strengthening strategic partnerships.

And humanitarian assistance is one of the five priority objectives laid out in the framework, along with peace and security, governing justly and demo-

cratically, investing in people, and economic growth.

The new structure for foreign assistance will help us pull together a comprehensive picture for decision making. On the macro level, the new structure will give us a better sense of where our development dollars are being spent. When you translate that to the micro level of an emergency response, the new structure will allow us to better target our efforts.

With the new structure, I believe we will be better able to help those in need, while building-and ultimately deferring to-local capacity. Those who have spent years working on humanitarian response know that the ideal is to work ourselves out of a job by helping build local and national capacities.

That is our objective, and I look forward to working with you toward that ideal.

Thank you very much.

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