

Foreword

Never before has the world experienced such significant progress in human development and at the same time seen such rapid and unpredictable changes in the forces that affect development. 700 million fewer people live in absolute poverty today than 20 years ago. The share of children dying before their first birthday is half of what it was in 1975. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, democracy has swept across developing countries. And today more developing countries are experiencing sustained broad-based economic growth than ever before.

We at USAID are proud to be a part of this great progress. Our investments in health and education, support for agriculture and food security, encouragement of democracy and good governance, and assistance to governments in building capacity and encouraging private investment has helped build greater prosperity and stability, both for our partner countries and for the United States.

But the forces affecting development are changing rapidly. Private-sector capital flows are seven times larger than what they were a decade ago, and now dwarf development assistance. The Arab Spring has ushered in new possibilities for democracy and growth in the Middle East, but also led to new challenges and uncertainties. Conflict and extreme poverty are increasingly intertwined. The growing success of many emerging markets has lifted millions from poverty, but also has unleashed much greater demand for natural resources, energy, and food. Climate change threatens to slow and possibly even reverse development gains in many countries.

USAID and others working in developing countries must both embrace these changes and evolve with them in order to continue to be effective in supporting and sustaining development. Creating space to evaluate and better understand key development trends is essential to adapt to the rapid transformations in the development landscape. Rather than chase the latest fad or

jump between shifting priorities, we must seize pivotal opportunities that we know can leave behind generational legacies of success. To that end, USAID is engaging with the smartest, most innovative, and most experienced thought-leaders and practitioners from around the world to stimulate debate around key development challenges and opportunities.

We call this effort *Frontiers in Development*. Designed to encourage forward-looking, provocative discussion and debate and to strengthen the analysis, design, and implementation of development programs, *Frontiers in Development* is aimed at cultivating innovative analysis and leadership to expand the Agency's learning and to increase our effectiveness. We are starting these conversations both through these essays and by holding a forum at Georgetown University from June 11–13, 2012, to debate, discuss, and learn from each other in person.

This collection of essays includes ideas from some of the brightest minds and best practitioners in development, some of whom you will be familiar with, and others you may not recognize. The essays include insights from people working in private, non-profit, and security sectors; from higher-income and lower-income countries; and from foundations, governments, and academia. Many of the authors, such as President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Bill Gates, and Paul Collier, are widely recognized as critical thinkers within the development community. Other contributors, including Admiral James G. Stavridis and Kay Warren, are tremendous leaders in their own respective fields and have applied their unique expertise to valuable effect in this volume. Thirteen essays come from USAID staff selected through an Agency-wide contest to seek out the best ideas, and six other essays were selected through an external contest open to the general

public and run by Devex on behalf of USAID.

These essays do not necessarily reflect the official positions of USAID or the U.S. government. We did not select only those essays that support our own views or approaches. Rather, we selected essays based on their ability to encourage forward-looking and provocative debates on critical issues. From Emilia Pires' treatise on working effectively with fragile states to USAID's Cameron Khosrowshahi and his frontline report on entrepreneurship during political upheaval, we hope that this collection will inspire new thinking among development practitioners across a range of issues and challenges, and set the stage for our discussions at Georgetown and beyond.

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We would like to express our deep appreciation to the organizations and individuals that have made this publication possible. Both the publication and the Forum are funded entirely through the generous contributions of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Georgetown University has generously agreed to host the Forum on its beautiful campus in June. Many people at

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It is our hope that this collection of essays and the Forum itself will be the first of a biannual series to support the Agency's ongoing efforts to be at the leading edge of understanding and meeting development challenges. Ultimately, our success is driven by the practitioners and staff at USAID, our partner organizations, and most importantly the people and leaders of the countries where we work who dedicate themselves to solving current and future challenges. Please join us as we work to chart a course together for exploring and better understanding the Frontiers of Development.

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