INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION FORUM

"USAID Anti-Corruption Strategy"
TRANSCRIPT
February 23, 2005

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Americas' Accountability Anti-Corruption Project

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Transcript by:
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.

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February 23, 2005
Brookings Institution Building

This document is a transcript of the event held at the International Anti-Corruption Forum on February 23, 2005. A summary in Spanish is available in Annex 1.

Este documento es una trascripción del evento realizado en el Foro Internacional Anticorrupción el 23 de febrero de 2005. Un resumen en idioma Español se encuentra disponible en el Anexo 1.

TRANSCRIPT

JOSEPH BALCER: My name is Joe Balcer. Welcome to the International Anti-corruption Forum, which is sponsored by Casals International, by Accountability 21, and by the USAID Americas' Accountability/Anti-Corruption Project.

Our program this afternoon will deal with the USAID anti-corruption strategy, it's implications and challenges in terms of implementation. For those of you who have been following corruption for a while, you know that a little bit over a decade ago we didn't talk about it; today it seems like it's one of the few things that we always talk about. It's very difficult to deal with. We've discovered that it's cross-cutting, insidious – it creeps into every aspect of society if it goes unaddressed. And for those of us who have been trying to deal with it for a while, it's a very difficult challenge. Everyone has looked at strategies and approaches to try and successfully confront it. In some cases we have; in other cases we're still looking for the key that's going to open that door to successful, consistent, sustainable approaches to reducing corruption.

USAID has just released its new agency anti-corruption strategy, which makes a number of important recommendations about how the agency should think about and respond to corruption in the countries in which it works. Our panel will present these recommendations and discuss their implications for both USAID policy and its practical implications for implementing that policy in the field. All three of our guests were intimately involved in developing the strategy you're going to hear about, and because of that of course they'll be able to answer absolutely any question that you have about corruption and what you should do to fix it – or they'll come close.

Shall we begin? On my immediate right, Neil Levine, is chief of the governance division at USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. It was the Governance Division that took the lead in developing the USAID strategy. Previously Neil served as deputy director for the Office of Central American Affairs from 1995 till about 2000. He has a strong interest in countries in transition, having worked closely with the USAID mission in Central America to support implementation of the Peace Accords in El Salvador and in Guatemala. From 1998 through 2000, he worked to develop the strategy, the budget justification and implementation of the post-Hurricane Mitch reconstruction program in Central America; a big part of those programs focused on accountability and trying to ensure that as much of that aid as possible actually made it into the field. He has served in the USAID Congressional Liaison Office and prior to that served on the staff of the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs and as a legislative assistant.

Dr. Elizabeth Hart, on my far right, is the senior anti-corruption advisor for the Democracy and Governance Division. She was previously a democracy fellow in that office from 1996 to 1999, working on civil society, democracy and governance strategies, and linkages between democracy and economic growth. Liz then served as democracy and

governance advisor for USAID and its Nigeria mission until June 2000. In fact, that's where Liz and I first met. I had the distinct honor of being team leader for the conduct an anti-corruption assessment in Nigeria about six months after the presidential election there. Liz has international experience in other parts of Africa where she has researched government business relations, stakeholder participation and economic reform.

Jerry O'Brien, in the center, is a senior anti-corruption specialist in the Office of Democracy and Governance. Prior to joining USAID he served as director of International Programs at the Ethics Resource Center for six years. In that capacity he worked to strengthen the capacity of NGOs in developing countries to focus on organizational ethics in business, in government, as well as the value of building educational programs related to ethics. Jerry has served as a consultant to the World Bank and other U.S. and international organizations and he's currently working with the D&G Office's governance team on corruption issues.

What we'd like to do now is proceed with the presentations and then at the end we'll open it up for questions. What we normally do is try and finish by 5:30, so if you're looking at your schedule, that's the formal schedule. You're invited to stay afterwards and chat with our guests.

So let us begin. Neil?

NEIL LEVINE: Thanks, Joe. I'd like to thank Joe Balcer, Sylvia Rodriguez, Casals and Associates for inviting us to present the AID anti-corruption strategy this afternoon. We're delighted with all of you for coming. This is really a very unique audience for us and it really allows us the opportunity to reach three key sectors. U.S. government colleagues are here, representatives of foreign governments, the private sector, academia, the media. All are folks that we want to get this message to, so I thank you all for being here.

I'm going to turn the formal presentation of the strategy over to Liz and Jerry in minute, but I wanted to set both the internal and the external context for which the strategy was developed.

First of all, it's important to know that the tasking for the strategy came from Administrator Natsios, the administrator of AID, and really does carry, I think, his personal commitment to moving our agency to a more frontal approach to the problem of fighting corruption. The lead for developing the strategy was given to the Office of Democracy and Governments in consultation with our policy bureau. But really, given the pervasive nature of corruption and the fact that it affects all development sectors, we formed a reference group within the agency so we could get sector experts from health, from education, from all the other areas of the agency's business. We did some intensive field surveys, inventorying those programs that were currently operating, and we surveyed our mission colleagues for their experience on the ground: what was working, what wasn't working.

We also went outside of AID to all the different sectors, asking for their expert opinions on the effects of corruption in different areas and potential strategies for

addressing the problems. We called in experts for seminars on issues such as the rule of law and corruption, media and corruption, culture and corruption—always a topic which generates a lot of interest. Some of those findings we'll be sharing with you and kind of giving you the backdrop to our recommendations. That's the internal context. I want to say a little bit about the external context and why we think this strategy will make a difference.

First, what the strategy is not. If you're looking through the strategy to find the answer to corruption, I'll save you the read. There is no silver bullet. I don't have to tell this audience that. But what this strategy is, is really an effort to move this agency and put it into a position within the USG to really take on this issue. As Joe mentioned, it is no longer taboo to talk about corruption under the euphemistic terms as "good governance," "financial management," "government performance." The "C" word is out there. Governments know it; they talk about it. They might not always do something about it but they certainly know that it's not just technical issue but a political issue, and I think that's the first aspect of the international context that's changed.

Four more aspects. Support for putting anti-corruption at the center of our approach to development assistance comes from the highest levels of the U.S. government. President Bush, not only in his inaugural address, but most recently in terms of support for building strong democratic institutions and movements, has also put at the centerpiece of his Foreign Assistance Initiatives and the Millennium Challenge Account, a concern for making corruption a hard hurdle for eligibility in that program. And that's based, again, on a multilateral consensus that was reached at Monterey when the MCA was conceived.

A second reason would be the fact that right now AID's initiatives are accompanied by a number of multilateral initiatives, most recently the G-8's Comprehensive Transparency Initiative, CTI, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative being part of that.

The other aspect that's changed in the international realm is the existence of multiple anti-corruption conventions that didn't exist 10 years ago: the U.N. Convention on Corruption, the series of regional anti-corruption conventions that give yet another lever to a pull in terms of influencing policy and the behavior of governments and societies. That was the fourth.

I think what you'll see is central to these recommendations is the idea that we're going to be most effective when we can marry our technical and programmatic assistance in foreign aid to a high-level policy dialogue that really does put anti-corruption close to the center of our bilateral and multilateral concerns and is backed up with both policy and assistance to help countries respond to that.

At this point I'll turn things over to Jerry and Liz and look forward to your questions. Thank you very much.

JERRY O'BRIEN: Thank you. Can I give you sort of a sense of where we're going here today? What we'd like to do is give you a retrospective view of where we've been

and what got us to this point before we begin to talk about the content of the strategy and the kinds of recommendations it makes to move us forward. And then we want to spend a little bit of time thinking about what some of the implications in the strategy are for the kinds of partners that we find in the room with us today. So that's essentially the agenda for the presentation.

As Neil pointed out, we did a fair amount of research, a fact-gathering from our colleagues in the field and around the agency, and I think the first thing we learned was that our field missions were way ahead of the thinking in Washington, that they were out there fighting corruption in successful and important ways, and we really didn't have a lot of information about what they were doing; we realized there was a vast mine of information out there for us to mine. So we were delighted to find out just how sophisticated some of the thinking in some our missions was and the kind of learning that we already had to incorporate into our strategy. I think also some of the comments that I'll make about the research that we did and the information that we gathered you'll see reflected later in the recommendations in the strategy when Liz talks about that piece of it.

This slide essentially shows us a little bit about the shape of our programs – in what sectors were we working? It's pretty obvious, as least when we did this in FY'02, corruption was seen as a DG issue…a democracy and governance issue, or an economic growth issue, and all of the other sectors combined only accounted for about 10 percent of a pretty significant dollar investment, upwards of $200 million a year.

As Neil also said, we gathered an inventory of anti-corruption activity. We came up with a list of about 500 specific activities at 80 different missions that had a fairly explicit anti-corruption element to them, and from this enormous list of activities we extracted something of a typology to help us understand what our anti-corruption programming looked like, at least at that point.

I think the important thing that this slide illustrates is that the majority of our programming efforts in dollars were going into two major areas. One is civil society programs, essentially trying to establish a constituency for reform, building demand for reform, and institutional strengthening, working with governments to help them strengthen the various oversight or control institutions in the government. Another thing that became immediately obvious to us was that, despite investing over $200 million a year in anti-corruption programs, we still saw that corruption was an enormous problem, and so we realized that while this might be all good work, it clearly was insufficient and it was clearly not a broad enough analysis.

This just gives you some sense of how this investment was made regionally. No surprise. The Latin America Caribbean region and the Europe and Eurasia region, accounted for the lion's share of our programming, and Africa and Asia and Near East accounted for a much smaller portion. That obviously is changing, as a result of Afghanistan and Iraq and other issues. Generally we're seeing a shift away from funding in Latin America and Europe and Eurasia, and anti-corruption programming is also following that trend.

One of the most interesting questions we asked our field officers was, what were the constraints they faced when they thought about doing anti-corruption programming. There were some very interesting things that came out of that. Clearly the idea that this is a long-term problem, and to address it is a long-term effort was the single largest constraint cited. Obviously staffing and resource constraints are always an issue. Lack of political will figured over and over in our conversations with field staff. And donor coordination was also singled out as being an important constraint or an important hurdle that needed to be addressed in order for us to be able to do this effectively.

Some of the key drivers—the flip side of that question is what were the key drivers? What made missions decide to begin to program in the anti-corruption area? And this is very interesting. I think the most important driver that was cited was the interest of other U.S. government agencies. This essentially is the embassy. And I think it's interesting that around this time embassies began to identify this is as something they wanted to work on. I think historically we would do anti-corruption surveys and bring them to our colleagues at the embassy. They'd say, that's a great analysis; this is very interesting; it's too bad we have to burn this, because they just didn't want to release the survey and then have to deal with the fallout from it.

Our thinking on anti-corruption has changed significantly and now embassies are much more willing to have a direct conversation with host country counterparts and are much more interested in supporting USAID efforts in this area; that I think is an important change. Missions' interest is also an important area. Many mission directors and mission staff recognize the degree to which corruption is undermining their efforts to achieve a whole range of sectoral results; failure to address that simply meant that their efforts would continue to be compromised. And of course host country interest in this was another area that was often cited as being a driver.

Interesting that 92 percent of all missions said they would respond favorably to a host country request to do something about corruption. Kind of an interesting anomaly: 67 percent of missions said that in the E&E region—in Europe and Eurasia—I'm not quite sure why that is; we didn't have time to analyze that, but I think, as Neil pointed out earlier, governments come quickly to rhetorical commitment to corruption, and perhaps an earlier rhetorical commitment in that region sort of led to a more jaded analysis of the reality of that commitment.

And finally, increased political will on the part of governments. The emergence of a new government elected on an anti-corruption platform or even the emergence of an anti-corruption champion somewhere in the government was seen as being enough for the mission to say, we'll get behind that effort and support that. And also, increased pressure or interest on the part of non-government actors was also seen as something that a mission would respond to favorably.

Some thinking about what our mission saw as effective and ineffective programming. I think the single, big message from that conversation was that you can't do just a single program to address corruption. Corruption is the result of a confluence of many factors and any attempts to address it must be equally broad-based, equally nuanced

and multi-pronged. Often a lot of our programming was a response to a problem. We would see corruption in this sector and think, well, great, how do we design a program that addresses corruption in that sector? Essentially we were trying to treat a symptom and not treat the underlying disease. And I think the idea that you need to treat the underlying dynamics of corruption, need to address the dynamics that create that symptom was the lesson from this for us.

On some of the key factors, in terms of making approaches successful, we arrived again at political will. Many missions said, the need to build effective constituencies for reform—we'll come back to this later—is a very important piece, a necessary but insufficient piece. And again, assistance to strengthen government institutions – as I pointed out earlier on the bar chart that showed that the majority of our programs were in these civil society kinds of programs and institutional strengthening, and fortunately were consistent, the mission folks seemed to feel that in fact those were important strategies. And when we talk later about the strategy, about some of the new things that we feel we need to begin to address, it's important to stress that we're not suggesting any backing away from these kinds of programs that missions have articulated being so successful. And then finally, local ownership of these programs was seen as a critical factor.

The single main factor, as I said before, was the absence of political will. No amount of desire on the part of the U.S. government or anyone else is going to be effective if you don't have real political will on the part of your host government counterparts. A couple of examples of why programs fail—the discretion of public awareness programs: we've done a tremendous amount of public awareness programs, and missions told us they were important, but public awareness programs not linked to specific reforms or not linked to specific behavior change that you're trying to engender, seem to be much less effective. Saying, we have a lot of corruption here and it's a really bad thing—that kind of public awareness doesn't get you very far. Programs that suggested that here's a government reform and here's what you as a citizen need to know about it, what you need to do about it, how you need to access it and where to go if you can't—those kinds of public awareness campaigns linked to a specific reform tended to be much more effective.

Similarly, we have the flip side. There are examples when governments have in fact come up with good reform programs but failed to get the word out, failed to educate people on how to take advantage of those reforms. One example of this is procurement reform. We've done some very effective procurement reform in countries and then failed to work with the business communities so that they could understand how those procurement reforms could benefit them; we failed to provide training they would need to participate in this new and reformed system. And so essentially, perhaps, not much changed, not because the reform wasn't good but because we failed to do the public awareness that should have gone along with it.

Institutional reforms absent political will—I think we've seen this in lots of countries, for example working with audit institutions. We've trained audit institutions so they can do audits in accordance with international auditing standards and then wait years before we ever see an audit actually released by the audit board, or an audit of any consequence in any case released that is in any way critical of the government. So we have a world-class

audit function that doesn't have the political independence to exercise the oversight function.

And finally, the failure to take a long-term approach. That's another sort of refrain that we kept hearing. So many of the pressures that we're under are to come up with short-term wins and short-term programs. We have 18 months to get this done, we have a five-year planning cycle, and this is a problem that needs to be addressed over generations, and our failure to get that or to respond to that will continue to be a challenge.

And finally, a couple of ineffective approaches that I think hang together. Donor-driven programs: we've learned pretty effectively that just because we want it doesn't mean it's either a good idea or is going to be effective. Also, programs that are based on anecdotal evidence or reaction to a perceived problem are not the best way to design our programs.

I think an example of both of those is this proliferation of anti-corruption commissions, very often mandated by the U.S. government or by USAID. But perhaps in environments where we haven't done the appropriate analysis, to ask ourselves, does this government have the governance capacity to stand up, manage and make sustainable an anti-corruption commission? Is that an appropriate strategy given the level of governance capacity in a particular country? These are examples of donor-driven programs or programs that are not appropriately calibrated to the capacity of the host government; essentially they're a mismatch between governance capacity and the strategy that we have sometimes adopted.

And, finally, this question of coordination came out repeatedly. This seems a key challenge. We know that donor coordination is important and all of our strategies say this. We'd like to suggest that perhaps this is more challenging in the area of anti-corruption and more important in the area of anti-corruption. My health colleagues wouldn't agree with this, but I think if we're talking about child immunizations we can agree that you do it here and I'll do it there and then we have an effective coordination on child immunizations. We're pretty clear what we're talking about and how to go about doing this. You know, if we're talking about infrastructure, I mean, we both don't have to build the road. You build the airport; I'll build the road. I don't want to oversimplify that, but I think when you get to something like fighting corruption, we don't even agree on what the problem is. We don't agree on the definition of the problem. We certainly don't agree on the strategies to confront it. It's so much more fuzzy and complex a problem; even defining the problem requires a huge amount of effort.

So I think that this question of donor coordination is something that we're going to have to keep revisiting and make the case for investing the time and resources in doing that in ways that we haven't perhaps tried. In any case, our field colleagues, again, are way out ahead of us in a lot of ways, and they gave us examples of a number of both formal and informal mechanisms to increase coordination. And this is within a sector in a country, across SO teams—strategic objective teams—within the mission, across the USG, involving all of the U.S. government actors in a given country in coordinating mechanisms.

And then of course, perhaps even more importantly, with external donors, which is donor coordination, coordinating with other bilateral donors as well as multilateral donors, and then diplomatic coordination. All of these kinds of coordination were seen to be important by our colleagues in the field.

So that is a little bit about where we've been and how we got to the blank page; Liz will tell you what we put on it.

ELIZABETH HART: Good afternoon, everybody. Well, now that we've heard about what happened in the real world, I get what some people might consider the unenviable task of talking about sort of the analytical approach that we took with the new strategy. So what we're going to do is start with a little background on where USAID was in its thinking about fighting corruption; this diagram is emblematic of where we started. Some of you might be familiar with the USAID anti-corruption handbook that came out in '98, '99, something like that. It really addressed questions of administrative corruption and what we could do to improve the performance of institutions. It drew very directly from Robert Klitgaard's work, the famous equation of corruption equaling monopoly plus discretion minus accountability, and Klitgaard's effort to set up some recommendations for how to resolve the principle agent problem in institutions; how to get agents, actors in a bureaucracy to behave in a manner in keeping with what is assumed to be the intentions of the leadership of the bureaucracy of the country to do the right thing to make the system work.

So that is really where we started with institutional reform questions. We did a lot of work—as you remember from the slide that Jerry showed us on finance and customs reform—on local government work, a lot of different areas working on strengthening institutions.

The one exception to that was that that handbook and a lot of our programming was aimed at civil society. And that was the one place where, even though at the time I'm not sure if we really named it this way, the programs we were working on were trying to also bring into play the question of grand corruption: how do you change the actual motivations of the people that are running the country and making the decisions?

And this is where we were. You saw the graph that Jerry showed. We invested quite a few resources and we all turned around five, 10 years later and said, wow, corruption is still really a problem here. So that was the mandate for us--to re-look at the analysis of corruption and how we thought about it.

So basically, if the old idea was how do we get actors in a bureaucracy to behave in keeping with their intentions—we assume the good intentions of elites and leaders—what do we do when their intentions are not so good. What happens when the elites and leaders aren't setting a standard of good governance or serving in the public interest? So that is what the USAID Anti-Corruption Strategy asks us to look at.

If you have had the pleasure of reading the footnotes in the strategy, you'll see that we drew heavily on Michael Johnston's work on analyzing the dynamics of corruption and he drew on Huntington's old analysis of wealth chasing power and power chasing wealth. So in a developing environment, this new strategy asks us to look back at what leads to corruption in a society.

And this is really just the outline of what the thinking is. In a situation of low institutionalization, which defines, to a greater or lesser degree, most of the countries that USAID works in, you're dealing with situations of political opportunities and economic opportunities being out of balance in one way or another and of using those opportunities as ways to consolidate power and wealth. And as we all know, the nexus between power and wealth often involves corruption—not always but often.

So these are the dynamics, this is what we were drawing on, and the question of governance capacity in that situation is the one that is really critical. And again, we're dealing with situations where oversight is weak because governance capacity is usually weak. And as the dynamic continues, the problem usually gets worse.

So what the new strategy is asking us to do is, first of all, take seriously the problem of grand corruption; secondly, look at the dynamics that produce it; and then figure out how to address those dynamics. And as you see here and when we move to the next slide, it means expanding the model so that in addition to looking at just the institutional environment and promoting a civil society demand for change, we're also looking at those two dynamics of political competition and economic competition—how do we broaden those areas and how do we help promote the checking and balancing that can happen when political competition and economic competition are more rather than less open.

And there are lots of different ways to define those things. Elections are part of it but we also know that elections can actually produce corruption dynamics as well. We're certainly not suggesting that we should stop thinking about those other issues—those institutional issues; but rather think a little more broadly in our own analysis and look at the kinds of things that we can be doing to address not only the administrative corruption problem but also the grand corruption problem.

And I think the really important point is that a lot of this analysis leads us back to things that you say it already does so this isn't actually something that puts us out into a whole new area; we already work on promoting political competition and competition of ideas, and all of those things that you need in a society that is able to enforce its own accountability. We already work on promoting economic competition and reducing monopoly, and improving the performance of stakeholders in the economic system.

So I think what we're really looking at here is how we can do these things better and putting an anti-corruption lens on some things that maybe we haven't put the lens on quite so carefully in the past. If you are promoting economic competition through privatization, I think a lot of us can look at some of the privatizations that have gone on around the world and realize that they didn't actually reduce corruption. So there are

some ways that we need to be looking at that more carefully to make sure that they are actually reducing corruption instead of increasing it.

I think the other thing about this is a lot of the tools that are available when you are thinking about economic and political competition, if not the institutional reforms we were already doing, have a much longer time horizon on them. So this again gets back to the long-term efforts and as we define fighting corruption, are there times when we really are just looking at promoting governance and promoting democracy, and how do those build into our ultimate goal of reducing corruption. This is the real challenge I think for USAID; to do that and to deal with our mandates for short-term results.

But moving on to the recommendations from the strategy, there are four main recommendations. That first one is to deal more directly with the question of elite and grand corruption. Again, this is to complement work we are already doing in institutional reform, not to leave it behind. There are some people who read the strategy and say, well, tell us what to do; just don't tell us to think about this. And we've actually tried to provide a number of programming ideas that can help to address grand corruption—many of them having to do with political and economic competition but others are a little more indirect in their approach.

The other thing that this recommendation really pushes us toward is the issue of the role of diplomacy in our efforts to fight corruption and to help our partner countries fight corruption around the world. So this is leading us to a lot more discussions with our colleagues at the State Department, and as Jerry also mentioned, getting the messages coordinated with other donors as well.

Improving tools for strategic response—what we're really looking for here is to improve our ability to respond to this much expanded understanding of what corruption is all about—what drives it; who is involved with it; those kinds of things. Some of you attended a seminar a couple of weeks ago on a new assessment methodology that we are developing that uses the degree of institutionalization and the level of economic and political opportunities as key variables in trying to work out of a typology of countries.

We received a lot of good feedback on it. This will help our missions get at least a sense of where to begin with dealing with the corruption problem – if you can place a country in a certain category, then you may be able to say, we are at this stage of addressing corruption or we're at that stage of addressing corruption. So that is one thing we want to do, try to develop a strategic framework to help at least begin that discussion about what the right approaches are with missions who don't always have people who are spending all of their time thinking about this and so sometimes need some tools to move forward.

Another issue that we are grappling with in the agency right now in terms of strategic response is the ability to respond rapidly. We all know and we can all cite examples of reformers who have come into power on anti-corruption agendas—many of them very serious about it and they have a very short period of time to make things work. And USAID has not always—in fact, has too rarely been in a position to respond as quickly

as we would like in those situations. So one of the debates in the agency right now is whether or not we can set aside funds that are available for that kind of quick response while missions realign their programs to respond to a new political reality in the country.

In addition, we are trying to do a lot more analysis and research, and a lot more learning about the programs that we have already done. This is going to be a big priority for us as we go forward. And I'll talk a little bit about what implications that might have for some of the implementers and others in the room.

The third recommendation—mainstreaming anti-corruption throughout our programs—is one of the messages we're trying to get out as we do events like this; the other is that corruption is not just a Democracy and Governance issue; it has a home in our Office of Democracy and Governance at USAID but there is a lot of investment that missions identify as having anti-corruption results that come out of the economic growth sector as well.

But there is corruption in health; in education; in natural resources management, in just about everything we do. And some of those issues actually have a much more daily concrete impact on the people that we are trying to assist. So one of our big efforts in rolling out this strategy within the agency, doing additional research, is to talk about how other sectors will be incorporating corruption analysis and efforts to reduce corruption throughout the agency's programming, not just in democracy and economic growth.

There is another reason to look at this. Sometimes I think the political dynamics around improving the delivering of healthcare are going to be a lot easier to negotiate than the political dynamics around, getting the bad guy out in that ministry or getting, somebody else out the door who needs to go. It may be easier for reformers in our partner countries to start addressing problems in some of the service delivery sectors than it will be to do the other. That being said, at the same time, the other realism that we have to bring to this is when you are doing that kind of reform, where can it go if there is really some high-level corruption at the top? So all of those things have to be taken into consideration.

Finally, we need to develop a learning organization. Any of you who have worked with USAID for a long know that we collect information, but not as much as we need and we don't evaluate as much of what we collect as we should. We will be putting a higher priority on these two activities.

The new strategy was officially released on the 1st of February with an announcement from the USAID Administrator. Some of you may have been at the ACVFA meeting on February 16th, where the administrator spoke of this as well as the new fragile state strategy; Barbara Turner, head of our policy bureau, spoke on it as well. We are initiating a lot of internal processes to get the implementation going, but rather than talk about that, we thought we would talk a bit about the implications for some of the constituencies that are represented here today: partner governments, implementers of USAID programs, other donors.

So starting with the other donors. Jerry, I think, already said what the real issues are around the challenge of coordinating anti-corruption work. We have got a big job ahead of us but this is something that we have already been doing quite a bit with at the headquarters level, and the missions are doing a lot in the field. But this is going to be an area where you can expect to see increasing interaction around the donors.

We have been participating with the development assistance committee of the OECD on these issues; we also have been working quite frequently with DFID and the World Bank. In that regard, we hope to do joint assessments, as we move forward, and expand our knowledge management, our sharing of knowledge and those kinds of things.

For host country governments. Some of the things up here are not just results of our strategy. In fact, our strategy may be more a reflection of developments that are producing some of this as well. There is a high level commitment to this issue in the U.S. government right now and our strategy is part of that. I think we can expect to see and host governments can expect to see increased dialogue on this issue from donors, from embassies, as this continues to gain momentum, as the concern grows about what holds back development.

There are greater opportunities as well for host country governments. Neil mentioned the G-8 initiative and I think there is probably no one in the room who hasn't heard about the MCA. That is generating an enormous amount of interest as well.

International commitments are there and that is something that creates opportunities for both host governments and for us to work with host governments. Once a country has signed onto the U.N. convention, the OAS convention, that gives us all an opportunity to say, okay, we have agreed to something here; we would like to get our signature on some other things as well. Once those agreements are made then we can move forward on doing some implementation in those areas.

And I guess the downside is because of the higher attention to this issue, there is going to be we think greater scrutiny and risk for performers who fail to live up to the commitments they have made.

I think we're really going to be pushing our own bureaus and we hope that they will then go to their implementers for people, again, outside of the democracy and governance sector to really start thinking about how corruption affects what they are trying to achieve in their sectors. So for the partners that are working on this as well as the people within USAID, this is going to be on the agenda.

Anti-corruption partners may have an opportunity to work with other partners working in other sectors. People who are working on anti-corruption, you have other work you do in democracy and governance, if not other sectors, and I think this is a real opportunity for you to spread the word within your own organizations so that you can be entrepreneurial and pro-active with missions in including anti-corruption considerations in a wide range of programming; so that your rule of law folks know some of the same issues that your anti-corruption folks know and you are able to address that. Or, if you're an

organization that works across many sectors, your people are doing the same thing or at least aware of the same issues.

We will have a broad research agenda. There is already one on fragile states in conflict; we're trying to determine how this strategy fits in with the work that the agency is doing on fragile states and conflict. We have started a discussion about the role of corruption in promoting or reducing conflict. Again, I think with the fragile states, this is a place for partners to be looking at how they can contribute to that process and develop new approaches to address elite and political corruption.

Political corruption is the next issue that is going to come up for us—that and conflict—as something that we're really trying to get a handle on; how our programs need to address corruption that is involved in and circulates around political competition, the political process.

(Off mike question)

MS. HART: We're not making a distinction between political and administrative corruption but between grand and administrative, and the specific kind of corruption, whether it's grand or administrative that circulates around the political process. Well, we can have that discussion. (Laughter.)

And then finally, we expect we'll be doing a lot more evaluation so this is another area that our partners can be involved in.

With that, we'll open it to questions to the whole panel – (chuckles) – so my colleagues can weigh in on these issues as well. Thanks for your attention and we'll take questions up to now.

MR. BALCER: Feel free to direct your questions to any individual – to Neil, Jerry, or Liz, or throw it out there and all can respond.

Q: I was disturbed by an editorial that – I'm Herb Werlin and I have written extensively on something called secondary corruption. This has maybe not reached your research yet, but secondary corruption is different because it suggests that there is a distinction between corruption in rich countries and poor countries. In rich countries, it's excessive greed; in poor countries, it's weakness of governance – inability to deal with that.

But the question I'm asking is that – The New York Times had an editorial a while back supporting the millennium fund. It said we should not make poor people hostage to bad governments. I argued – and I don't know whether any of you agree with me -- that you cannot help poor people without really worrying about their governments and particularly about their corruption.

And I was just – I am going to pass around an article I wrote on that subject and will let you feedback to me any – I may not have enough of these, but I'll pass it around –

anything you have on – any reactions that you might have on this – I'm sorry, I don't have enough copies –

MR. BALCER: While those are being passed around, would any of our panelists like to comment?

MR. LEVINE: Thank you for sharing the article with us. We'll take it back. I had not seen The New York Times editorial but based on what you have shared with us, I think we're inclined to agree with your perspective and disagree with The New York Times on that. The responsibility of governments to govern in the public interest is an interesting question for us and something we probably do less work on; it might be something that we need to add to this strategy—the development of a public ethos on governing in the public interest—Is something that is a little tricky for the outside donor but it's something that has been identified to us as an area for further work and study.

But generally, I think we work with the governments we have—those that are recipients of aid. They are going to get foreign assistance to deal with humanitarian issues that affect poor people. The Millennium Challenge Account is designed for additional resources to those countries that have already made economic and political decisions to govern in the public interest, to manage their resources appropriately, and therefore we'll put foreign assistance resources to better use.

MR. BALCER: Please introduce yourself before you ask your question.

Q: Jim Michel with DPK Consulting.

It seems to me that if you're absolutely right about the need for engaging other agencies of our government and then when we talk about political will—our political will counts for – (chuckles) – a lot. Having been involved in some of this effort to produce coherent policies and actions—thinking back to the 1970s with issues of human rights, for example, where the president, the Congress, the major cabinet departments were aligned with a policy message that was consistent and a development agency, USAID, could work within that policy environment, and it had much more potential for being effective in the relevant timeframe that Liz referred to. I just wonder how are you doing with getting that kind of coherence, if you can speak to that?

MR. LEVINE: I think we're doing quite well. In fact, I think in terms of the rhetorical commitment, we have all of the running room we need. I think this was borne out by the survey; you saw it on one of the slides; it was a surprise to us that the number one driver of anti-corruption was the interest of other U.S. government agencies – and as Jerry mentioned – principally the embassy.

One example of that—in the Latin America region, the initiative to start pulling people's visas, denying visas and access to travel to the United States—sent a little, I don't know if we can call it a shockwave, but certainly sent a wave of concern through folks that, you know, this isn't business as usual, that folks are paying attention to what is going on, that it will affect the relationship with the U.S. And then most interestingly for us, it sort of

affected the atmosphere in which our ability to speak about anti-corruption—and for those programs, be they focused at the administrative level, or in civil society, or grand corruption—had more traction because of the policy dialogue.

Obviously there are going to be countries where those discussions are difficult; they might not make it onto the agenda, but in general, I think the playing field in terms of the policy coherence is in much better shape; much better shape.

MR. BALCER: Madam Ambassador.

Q: Thank you very much. My name is Edith Ssempala. I am the ambassador of Uganda. I just wanted to first of all thank you for this dialogue because I think it is very helpful.

I wanted to give an example of some of the dilemma that our countries face in balancing the rule of law and fighting corruption, and having no capacity sometimes to detect and be able to do it in a way that is professional and that is fair, and is transparent. Some time back when I was the ambassador to the Nordic countries, a company that I had been having dialogue with on issues of corruption and the fact that it is not acceptable for us, for them, or any company for that matter to give a bribe to anybody. And that if we find out, it will not be doing us a favor and they would have no future in Uganda.

And so he brings evidence, a letter actually, that an official had written for a bribe. And so I was very happy because, you know, at least I thought that our dialogue had now produced some results. So I presented this to my government and we wanted to prosecute this official of government, but the evidence that he had was not sufficient so we wanted more cooperation from them—wanted them to actually witness and they declined.

So what the government did, what the president did was to dismiss the official. He was a prominent secretary actually but no judicial proceedings could be taken. And I don't think that is an effective way of fighting corruption.

So we in Uganda believe that corruption is a cancer. If you don't deal with it, it is going to eat society and finish it. But we need to really have strong partnerships, and I think we need capacity because in the case of Uganda, it is very clear that there is political will. The president talks about it in almost all of the forums he speaks. The motivation for privatization in Uganda was good—because he referred to profiteers as the dens of thieves, a world of thieving. But we find that we do not have sufficient capacity sometimes to prosecute and merely dismissing people– it may even appear as if there is no political will but on the other hand, how do you prosecute people when you don't have sufficient evidence to prosecute them?

So my proposal therefore would be that really a lot of support is given to create capacity to detect and to detect timely, and prosecute those who obviously are involved. Thank you.

MR. BALCER: There in the back.

Q: My name is Alice Thomas and I am with ABA's Asia Law Initiative. I also want to thank you for the presentation today and I think I agree with everybody body in the room that it's very encouraging to see you taking a very straightforward approach to the issue of corruption and all of the work that went into creating this strategy.

My question is how is the strategy is going to be conveyed to the missions and actually implemented by the missions? Because several of the ineffective approaches that you identified, specifically I noted the failure to take the long-term approach and recommendations unsupported by research, are really how the missions have problems that continue to exist in the missions today. And I'm wondering, again, how this is going to get implemented by funding cycles, by funding mechanisms, by six-year strategy plans, and all of the other limitations that the missions have.

MS. HART: (Chuckles.) Well, I think any one of us could say just about the same things. Those are exactly the biggest challenges we have. As far as we know, we haven't found a solution to short-term funding cycles yet. You know, we're in a place where we hope we can continue to make the case but it is an uphill battle.

How is it going to get out to the missions? Well, some of us will be traveling – (scattered laughter) – but in addition, we have – part of what I spoke about or what I referred to but didn't speak about is a very long list of presentations that we are doing within bureaus and we hope that those will result in opportunities to present to mission directors when they gather.

I know Jerry and Neil are going to be presenting to the program officers from the LAC – the Latin America Missions – next week is it? We just did some training in Latin America for democracy and governance officers there. They said, you know, why couldn't we bring all of the people from our mission to this thing. So resources are always a constraint.

But we do have a pretty aggressive agenda of at least trying to get the word out—our office at least, and we hope that the others that will be reviewing strategies, country strategies as they come in. We now have something to rely on—this strategy. We can say you need to be addressing these issues in what you are doing, in your planning as well as your actual implementation.

MR. O'BRIEN: To just add to that, Liz mentioned that we did a training week in Latin America in two different countries, and as I said earlier, a lot of the thinking and the strategy we learned from missions so the other thing is absolutely true; missions are absolutely waiting for this; they embraced the strategy when we released it and they said, oh, this is great; help us do this; this is exactly what we needed to make the case.

And so in this first couple of months, we have had very positive response from mission colleagues who seem to agree with the kind of recommendations we are making and are looking for tools to help address some of the kinds of problems that they are facing. And in fact, we are developing a number of training modules and workshop type

events to help missions; for example, a mission-wide training event that would help missions develop a common vocabulary across all of the sectors and then a common understanding so that they can begin to mainstream or to implement any of the number of the recommendations or the strategy. But the point is missions are really very receptive to this message and we're delighted with that.

I would just like to make one comment in response to the ambassador's. We agree absolutely with everything you said. And just the need to prosecute criminals is obviously a critical challenge that governments need to rise to. The kind of comparative advantage that USAID has had has been in prevention and education; so strengthening institutions, creating institutions that are not as susceptible to corruption or helping create environments in which it becomes too risky to engage in this kind of activity.

So the idea is we want to prevent this kind of corruption before the horse is out of the barn. That is perhaps a better long-term strategy than to be focused on prosecuting people after they have committed the crime—to create an environment in which it is less likely to have corruption at that level. So I think much of our work is focused on prevention and education, not to suggest that the other is not important but our work has tended to focus on the other side of that equation.

MR. BALCER: A question right here.

Q: Yes. Tony Lanyi from the IRIS Center at the University of Maryland.

This question is really in line with Ms. Thomas' question, which I was very sympathetic with. And that is that there seems to have been in the last few years several major developments that have sort of hit USAID and that USAID has been forced to respond to. And I'm just wondering how the whole anti-corruption drive can somehow be integrated with these new demands.

One of course is most recently the humanitarian crisis because of the tsunami; the previous one of course being the situations in Afghanistan and Iraq; another being the growing size or intellectual fashion that the thing to do is to try to promote private sector business. And just taking those three and the MCA threshold being perhaps a fourth, how do you – how are you navigating through the reallocation of resources and effort that these sort of waves of demands on USAID are provoking.

MR. Levine: Our first response has been cloning these two folks to participate. It's true and each of those items you've named has presented kind of unique challenges to us. Taking them in order: tsunami reconstruction and post-tsunami reconstruction issues; we are just now kind of transitioning from the immediate recovering phase to reconstruction. And last week, Jerry and I met with folks in our Asian Near East Bureau to talk about what potential lessons learned there are; in my case, just the background in dealing with Hurricane Mitch, I find the issue is that there are fewer lessons than I thought that may apply.

But we are just beginning to scratch the surface. It's really on our part to make folks aware of the strategy and to put at their disposal the kind of technical assistance, advice and council, in the design of reconstruction programs that build in from the start an attention to accountability, not only for accountability of AID or donor funds, but also the long-term use of reconstruction funds by communities and national governments. That was embedded in the Mitch program; I think it is a worthy lesson to pass on. We need to get an audience there with the folks that are developing the budget justification for the supplemental and for ultimately the program designers.

Iraq and Afghanistan—Iraq is almost *sui generis*. AID's influence in program design matters under an operation governed largely by other departments of governments proved to be an almost insurmountable challenge at the beginning. Now, with things back into more of a State-AID channel as opposed to a DOD military, we do have much more influence. Jerry went out to—as part of an inter-agency group—to Iraq last summer. I would say that we would probably have better luck going out this summer in terms of having a little bit more running where our anticorruption message would be heard. We have been commenting on prospectively what is ahead and trying to root this issue at a policy level in terms of what now in terms of anti-corruption approaches we can take.

Finally, MCA Threshold countries. Liz, myself, others are intimately involved in the review of the MCA Threshold proposals that are coming in. The first set was reviewed two weeks ago. These are country proposals for those countries that qualified last year; seven countries qualified for MCA Threshold programs. The process works. Countries develop proposals that are reviewed and then passed on recommendations to the MCC board to proceed to the next phase, which is the development of an MCA – MCC Threshold country program.

There will be another wave of proposals coming in next month for those countries made eligible in FY '05. So we have a seat at that table; we are raising both democracy and governance questions as well as we're looked to for input on the technical approach. If the country has proposed an anti-corruption program—a procurement reform program, auditing program—does it hold water? Is it technically sound? Is the budget adequate? Do we think there is a risk in the political will to make this happen?

Q: Richard Werksman from the State Department.

Congratulations. I think it's a fantastic document, especially this idea of integrating anti-corruption work into other programs. I think one of the obstacles that the corruption fight has seen is that federal program people find themselves confronted with a real problem. If I go after corruption in this particular program, I'll never get anything done. I have to deal with the cards I was dealt, and if it means getting less done—because we're not going to go after the officials that we are dealing with who are corrupt—well, so be it. So I think that is a real challenge but I think ultimately it certainly is going to be worth it.

The question I have has to do with changing of attitudes toward corruption. I didn't hear anything in the presentation of where changing people's attitudes toward corruption. Thank you.

MS. HART: I think that's been something that USAID has been working on for a long time through both its work with civil society and also with some governments. When we have partner governments that are really interested in promoting this issue, we work on helping them develop their anti-corruption campaigns and their education programs. So it's not just on the civil society side.

But changing people's attitudes; we could have a long discussion about that; there are number of different ways that you can address it. Part of it is seeing things being done differently in the country as well. And, as you know, we often have very long discussions about just how deeply ingrained a culture of corruption or expectations of corruption really are. We would all probably say that there was a culture of corruption in Chicago at the turn of the century, but it was proven not to be an immutable thing.

I think you change attitudes as much by governance working better and by slowly showing where a few people are brought to justice as well; all of those things. So in fact, I think in some ways the whole strategy addresses that issue. But it has always been an explicit part of what USAID has done and I think it will continue to be.

Q: Good afternoon. It's Lawrence Groos with Booz, Allen, and Hamilton. Thank you very much for the presentation. I have a two-part question, but don't worry; it's not that long.

First, the strategy itself; is it a living document? Is it going to be visited every year? Reproduced? What is the forecast for that? I think that would be interesting to note. (Scattered laughter.)

Secondly and more substantively, I wanted to follow up on the ambassador's point actually about the importance of evidence and corruption. One of the single difficulties in implementing corruption programs is being able to effectively measure corruption, and that is important for two reasons, first, because the government—whether it's Uganda or any other country—needs to know how widespread the problem is; and second, obviously USAID and the U.S. government needs to be able to measure the impact of the program in stopping or lessening corruption.

How in your mind or in your perspective does this strategy further USAID's understanding of measuring corruption and addressing that?

MR. LEVINE: Yeah. I'll give you the boss's view of reproducing the strategy – (chuckles) – every year and then Liz will give you the implementer's view.

I would say, yes, it is a living document and it is related to the answer to the second question in that we identify areas for further research and we identify places where we see kind of an abounding challenge. Jerry pointed out donor coordination, Liz pointed out evaluation.

I think in terms of measuring corruption, one of the things we have done recently, as Liz mentioned, is development of our assessment methodology. Before we did that, we wanted to do a review of the all of the existing barometers, assessments – everything – survey data that is out there to make sure that we, in going forward, weren't trudging over ground that was already covered or if somebody had an assessment methodology we thought was worthy of refinement that we would take on that.

What we found is there are a number of tools to measure corruption. What I think is at the core of your question is that we have a lot of work to do on evaluating the efficacy of USAID programming against corruption. I think what we have talked about—and there is a resource question attached to this—is building in from the start as part of program design, a way to measure our programs' impact along the way.

And whether that could be something that we bear as a central office cost—that we develop a set of pilot interventions to measure and to establish a good baseline, and follow the program for a number of years with the burden of the evaluative cost borne by us and the implementing cost borne by missions—that we might begin to get at this question. I think this is probably the greatest challenge that we face and it's not just for anti-corruption; it's for almost any foreign aid intervention and particularly of acute concern in the DG area.

But I think that is the direction. And so it feeds back to your first question. Is it a living document. I think what we would like to do is say that further work needs to be done, further refinement—probably not another strategy—but kind of the next generation of handbooks that we come out with; we'll probably take up those issues.

MS. HART: Just on the measurement question. When we started looking at this assessment methodology, not without the ability to revisit this decision, but we pretty much came to the decision that there are an awful lot of measures already out there. I think Jerry might want to talk about the LAC surveys.

We don't think we're going to be trying to develop any new measures. We do a lot on indicators of program effectiveness and that at some point bumps into the question of how do you measure corruption in a country. But we think there are an awful lot of measures already out there, all with their warts. But, at this point, I don't think we have any comparative advantage to do a new one. But that being said, there is some work that we are supporting in Latin America that is pretty interesting.

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, some of you may find this interesting. I don't actually have the website but I would be happy to get it to anyone who is interested. We have for a number of years been doing governance surveys in the LAC region. And just recently we have completed a whole series of them throughout all of Mexico, Central America, Colombia, Dominican Republic – I think nine or 10 different countries. And one of the interesting elements of these surveys is that they actually measure corruption victimization. So they don't say, do you think this is a corrupt country? They say, have you in the past year paid a bribe? Have you paid a bribe to a police officer, to this ministry or that ministry? And so it really is people's actual experience with corruption.

Now, clearly this is measuring only administrative corruption because we're not asking ministers if they took a hundred thousand dollar bribe for contracts. But it gives very interesting insights and it's also statistically quite rigorous and it gives lots of ability to cross-tabulate the data and come up with very interesting correlations and so –

It's on a website now that is under development and shortly it will be available to the public. It's very interesting data. And the user can go in and do cross-tabs yourself. And so it really is very interesting and it's a rich resource and particularly interesting on corruption.

MR. BALCER: Was there a question in the back?

Q: Thank you. I'm Eric Picard with USAID's Bureau for Asia and the Near East. And I wanted to get back to the donor coordination point – sort of the next generation of donor coordination. I think a lot of representatives of various developing countries who happen to be partners of USAID around the world are here and they might have something to say or add to this. I think the next generation seems to be a broader policy dialogue among the donors – bilateral and multilateral in the host country governments.

And the World Bank poverty reduction strategy plans for these different countries is one good example. There are others—the Millennium Challenge Account would be sort of the bilateral corollary on the U.S. government side. But the U.S. participates in the poverty reduction strategy plans. For example, with USAID, field offices providing input to the U.S. government position, which is verbalized or represented through the Treasury Department.

In any case, not to complicate the point, but what do you think of the prospects for U.S. participation in this broader policy dialogue? For example, the poverty reduction strategy plans; the sector-wide approaches are another example where donors get together and pool resources in a particular sector. It's an obvious opportunity for donors to show their political will in a united way vis-à-vis the host country governments and to maintain the pressure and the oversight, and provide carrots and the sticks.

MR. LEVINE: Eric, I think you put your finger on one of the challenge areas we face. I think your question boils down to, what are the prospects that we are going to lift our game in this area? And it's hard to answer that question. I think what we find at the implementing level is that donor coordination is a real time burner. It takes the time of the ambassador, the mission director, and then our technical colleagues—the implementing partners—and then what is the tradeoff that they face?

And I guess one school of thought says nothing succeeds like success. If you find that you're being undercut by the fact that your donors are not coordinating—we're going right, they are going left—it indicates quite clearly where you have to spend your time. I think, from where we sit, we are very interested in mining the experience of missions where they have been successful and seeing if it holds a promise for other areas, be it the poverty reduction strategy papers or, based on my own experience, in the run up to

consultative group meetings. In the latter, you have all of the donors together; you have the countries there without much of the theater of a consultative group meeting itself, but often the month before that when you can gather the donors and ask what is the combined donor voice on this question of corruption going to be? What are the essential elements we would like to see in a government's program for moving forward? That would be hammered out well in advance of a consultative group. What the expectations of donors are for continuing a program of support or initiating a program of support would be communicated to the government before, during, and after the meetings.

But I think what we have found in the strategy or in our survey, is few examples that we felt comfortable with and sort of left with this very anodyne recommendation of donor coordination—do more of it. We weren't satisfied with that and so we have identified that as an area of further work.

MR. BALCER: Perfect. That brings us right to 5:30 and I think we should express our appreciation, our gratitude to our panelists.

MR. BALCER: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. BALCER: With this forum, Casals is starting something new. We have transcribed the presentation today and it will be posted on the ResponDanet website, www.respondanet.com, just as soon as we can get it up there.

So thank you all for coming.
(END)

ANNEX. SUMMARY IN SPANISH
ANEXO. RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

USAID presenta su Nueva Estrategia Anticorrupción en el Foro Internacional Anticorrupción

La Agencia de los Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo Internacional (USAID) presentó su nueva Estrategia Anticorrupción durante el Foro Internacional Anticorrupción organizado por el Proyecto USAID/Rendición de Cuentas/Anticorrupción en las Américas, realizado el 23 de febrero de 2005 en las instalaciones del Instituto Brookings en la ciudad de Washington DC. La presentación estuvo a cargo de Neil Levine, Elizabeth Hart y Jerry O'Brien, altos funcionarios de la División de Gobernabilidad, Oficina de Democracia y Gobernabilidad de USAID, Buró para la Democracia, Conflicto y Asistencia Humanitaria (DCHA).

USAID presentó su Estrategia Anticorrupción ante la diversa audiencia compuesta de más de 40 representantes de organizaciones donantes, embajadas, firmas contratistas, universidades y medios de comunicación, que se congrega regularmente en este Foro. La nueva estrategia tiene un nuevo enfoque y contiene recomendaciones sobre cómo USAID puede responder de una manera más efectiva al problema de la corrupción. Esta importante iniciativa tiene el compromiso personal del Administrador de la USAID, Andrew S. Natsios quien, en palabras del Sr. Neil Levine, "fue él, con su compromiso personal, que nos incitó a desarrollar un enfoque más frontal para combatir la corrupción."

La Oficina de Democracia y Gobernabilidad, en coordinación con el Buró de Políticas, asumió el liderazgo de dirigir esta importante tarea de desarrollar la estrategia. La corrupción es un problema muy complejo que afecta el desarrollo de todos los sectores de una sociedad, por tal motivo, por tal motivo, la Oficina decidió formar un grupo de referencia dentro de la agencia contando con expertos en temas de salud, educación y otras áreas. El Sr. Levine explicó que para poder desarrollar esta estrategia, se realizaron encuestas en el campo, donde USAID tiene Misiones. De tal forma que se pudo inventariar aquellos programas que están en plena operación, y al mismo tiempo se entrevistó a varios colegas de USAID en el campo, que por su experiencia pudieron informar sobre estrategias anticorrupción que en la práctica funcionan y no funcionan. De igual manera, se hicieron varias consultas afuera de USAID, a expertos sectoriales, a quienes se les pidió su opinión sobre los efectos de la corrupción en sus sectores y un menú de posibles estrategias para combatir la corrupción.

El Sr. Levine dejó en claro que la estrategia representa un esfuerzo real de colocar a USAID en una posición central dentro del gobierno de los Estados Unidos de enfrentar este problema. Esta iniciativa de la USAID viene acompañada de un número de esfuerzos multilaterales, entre ellos, la Iniciativa del Grupo 8 sobre Transparencia. También existen un número de convenciones anticorrupción que no existían diez años atrás, por ejemplo la

Convención de las Naciones Unidas contra la Corrupción, y una serie de convenciones regionales contra la corrupción que coadyuvan a influenciar las políticas de los gobiernos. La idea central de acuerdo al Sr. Levine es que "seremos más efectivos cuando enlacemos nuestra asistencia técnica y programas en ayuda externa en un diálogo de políticas de alto nivel que realmente coloque la anticorrupción cerca de las preocupaciones bilaterales y multilaterales, y éstas a su vez, sean respaldadas por políticas y asistencia que ayuden a los países a responder a las mismas."

Por su parte, el Sr. Jerry O'Brien enfatizó la importancia que representó el trabajo de investigación realizado, el mismo que incluyó encuestas al personal en el campo de las Misiones de USAID. Precisó que se llegó a catalogar una lista de cerca de 500 actividades especificas en 80 misiones diferentes que tenían un elemento anticorrupción explícito, y de esta enorme lista de actividades se derivo una topología básica para ayudar a conocer y entender mejor los programas anticorrupción que están actualmente en vigencia.

El Sr. O'Brien agregó que la evidencia analizada en el campo demuestra que que no se puede desarrollar solamente un programa para enfrentar la corrupción. La corrupción es el resultado de la confluencia de muchos factores y para poder enfrentarla con efectividad, la respuesta debe ser integrada y multidimensional.. Es decir, muchos de los programas responden a síntomas pero no necesariamente tratan la enfermedad. "Muchas de nuestras misiones señalaron que los factores principales [para enfrentar de forma efectiva la corrupción] son la voluntad política, la ayuda a fortalecer instituciones gubernamentales y el sentido de propiedad local de estos programas."

La nueva estrategia anticorrupción de USAID prioriza cuatro áreas amplias de trabajo: combatir los desafíos de la corrupción a gran escala y administrativa, desplegar los recursos de USAID de forma estratégica, incorporar objetivos y actividades contra la corrupción en todos los sectores de actividades de USAID e incrementar el conocimiento anticorrupción de USAID. Por su parte, la Dra. Hart indicó que la primera área de trabajo- combatir la corrupción a gran escala- debe complementar las iniciativas de reforma institucional aun vigente en muchas países.

La Dra. Hart dijo también que "al mejorar nuestros instrumentos para responder estratégicamente se podrá mejorar nuestra capacidad para responder a este concepto mucho más amplio que encierra la corrupción –cuáles son los factores determinantes, quiénes participan...". Añadió que "...existe una nueva metodología de evaluación que estamos desarrollando que utilizará los grados de institucionalización y el nivel de oportunidades económicas y políticas como variables claves para analizar la corrupción y para desarrollar estrategias pertinentes.

Asimismo, la Dra. Hart señaló que se está tratando de mejorar la capacidad para responder rápida y estratégicamente a los desafíos de la corrupción.

La corrupción hoy en día es sin ninguna duda una barrera principal para expandir el desarrollo y fortalecer los procesos democráticos, y reducirla es una prioridad para USAID. La implementación de las acciones que recomienda esta estrategia, contribuirá a que USAID pueda hacer una contribución significativa a la lucha contra la corrupción.