

**REPORT ON
USAID ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING
October 21, 2016 – Center for Global Development,
Washington, DC
“LEARNING FROM HISTORY”**

This report is intended to provide the many UAA members who were not able to attend the annual meeting a sense of the outstanding presentations and discussions that marked this day-long gathering focused on Learning from History. The day’s focus on the history of American foreign assistance programs was designed to highlight that many of the principles and objectives of today’s USAID programs are rooted in beliefs, policies and actions dating back to the early days of this nation. The morning program opened with a focus on the pre-USAID period and the afternoon closed with three former USAID Administrators and the current Administrator, Gayle Smith, offering their guidance for the next Administration.

This summary can neither do justice to the richness of the discussion nor capture another primary objective of this gathering – the opportunity for friends and former colleagues to see each other again and to meet a number of the younger generation of USAID staff who were invited to attend.

The following paragraphs will guide you through the day’s events. Follow the links to the appropriate document or see a video presentation of the event.

The **Agenda** for the day and the **speakers’ bio-data** are [attached](#).

Co-Chair Introduction The AGM provides a brief opportunity to bring members up-to-date on organizational developments. Carol Peasley announced that contributing members now number over 300. Attendees were asked to help ensure that more former colleagues, including FSNs, were made aware of the UAA and its many activities. The UAA depends entirely on volunteers. Accordingly, members were urged to become more active participants in the various committees. (See a full summary of Carol’s remarks [here](#).) Members were urged to review and comment on the formal [Report to](#)

Members and 2017-19 Strategic Plan. [View the Video](#) (section begins at 15 minutes/0 seconds)



First Panel – “Learning from the History of U.S. Foreign Assistance 1790-1950” In a panel moderated by USAID’s Jim Bever, John Sanbrailo, Julia Irwin and Curt Tarnoff described a stimulating array of illustrations of over two centuries’ of foreign assistance initiatives, both public and private, culminating in the Marshall Plan. (See a summary of their remarks [here](#).) [View the Video](#) (section begins at 25 minutes/15 seconds)



Second Panel – “Lessons from USAID Country Experience” This panel, moderated by CGD’s Casey Dunning, featured consideration of lessons learned from four country cases by Michael Pillsbury (Taiwan/Korea), Jim Fox (Costa Rica) and Larry Heilman (Bolivia). (See a summary [here](#).) [View the Video](#) (section begins at 0 minutes/0 seconds)

Board Election Results The re-election to the Board of Tish Butler and the election for first terms of Juan Buttari and Barbara Seligman were announced; they were succeeding Nancy Pielemeier and David Cohen who had completed their second two-year terms.



Annual Alumni Awards Frank Almaguer, Chairman of the Awards Committee, announced that Kathleen and Paul Vitale and David Garms were this year's awardees. (See the text of the presentations [here.](#)) [View the Video](#) (section begins at 11 minutes/0 seconds)



USAID Administrator Gayle Smith In a wide ranging talk, the Administrator emphasized the many positive changes within USAID over the past few years, the greater bipartisan support for foreign assistance and the increased respect for USAID in interagency fora. She stressed the importance to the Agency of the career staff and of learning from their experience, and she expressed the hope that in the new Administration there would be continuation of major multi-year efforts to strengthen the Agency's human resources and procurement systems. (See a full summary of her talk [here.](#)) [View the Video](#) (section begins at 46 minutes/05 seconds)



Panel of USAID Administrators – The Center for American Progress’ John Norris moderated a panel of three former USAID Administrators – Peter McPherson (1981-87), Brian Atwood (1993-1999) and Henrietta Holsman Fore (2007-2009) – and the current Administrator. Their broad topic was “Lessons from the Past for the Next Administration”. They reflected on what they wish they had known in advance when they first became head of USAID and on what advice they would have for a new Administrator. It was a great treat for all to see and hear these four great USAID leaders interacting and largely agreeing on a range of important policy and practical suggestions about USAID and its future. (See a summary of their discussion [here](#). Read the CGD blog – Four Recommendations from Four Generations of USAID Leadership [here](#).) [View the Video](#) (section begins at 1 hr., 20 minutes/10 seconds)

Attendance – Total – about 160: UAA Members –120; Speakers – 14; Guests and USAID Young Professionals – 26.