



Meeting Minutes

January 7, 2014

**U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.
Washington, DC**

Mr. Peter Lee, Council Chair, welcomed the members and the members introduced themselves. Mr. Lee thanked immediate past chair Ms. Patrice Allen-Gifford for her service and Ms. Allen-Gifford thanked the council for its work during the past year. Ms. Allen-Gifford announced that Ms. Annette Vietti-Cook, Secretary, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, will serve as the Vice Chair this year. Ms. Vietti-Cook said she appreciated the opportunity and thanked Mr. Lee for his confidence. She noted that she has participated in the council for the past few years and appreciated the opportunity to further serve. Mr. Lee thanked USAID for organizing and hosting the meeting and for organizing the October meeting as well that had to be cancelled due to the Government shutdown.

Functions and Responsibilities of USAID Executive Secretariat

Mr. Bob Leavitt, Executive Secretary, USAID, thanked Ms. Christine Brown from his staff for setting up the meeting. Mr. Leavitt talked about the inter-agency process as a critical part of his agency's work. He also talked about the size of the agency, which includes around 9,000 employees with a quarter of them assigned to Washington headquarters. The USAID Executive Secretariat also manages the coordination of the intra-agency action and info memos and other briefings. Their office also organizes their Administrator's travel arrangements. In addition the Executive Secretariat provides the administrative support for the offices that report directly to their Administrator, which includes secure communications, COOP requirements, and basic office support. The office is organized in teams assigned to specific agency sub-offices. But team members can move from team to team to learn about other offices. The office encourages detail opportunities for staff both within the agency internally but also interagency.

Electronic Briefing and Trip Books for Agency Leadership

Mr. Leavitt showed an example of their Administrator's daily briefing book, which is on a secure Web site making the information and documents accessible by iPad. The site is organized with tabs showing different categories, such as documents for review and approval or schedule information for work days or trips. The Web site is secure but only to include unclassified documents. The back end technology is managed using Google documents software. The office's internal IT staff developed the system, but it requires that an organization be on the Gmail standard to be able to use the software in this way. Mr. Leavitt also showed how the office provides the Administrator links to outside news articles using an app called Pocket, which compiles a list of articles for review.

USAID Assistance to Syria

Mr. Leavitt briefly spoke about the four major USAID efforts underway in 1) Syria-Complex Emergency, 2) Philippines-Typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan, 3) South Sudan-Crisis, and 4) Central African Republic-Complex Emergency, and that this was the greatest number of efforts USAID has had to address at the same time. Mr. Rob Jenkins, Executive Director, Syria Task Force, USAID, outlined the history and overall scope of the problems due to the Syrian crisis in terms of casualties and people who are displaced internally and refugees who have left the country. The need for food aid is huge and millions of children are victims in need. A special USAID task force was created to streamline the U.S. Government's humanitarian response. Mr. Jenkins discussed the difficult logistics involved with getting humanitarian assistance into the country.



Best Practice Discussion:

Mr. Lee surveyed members on suggestions for the council's activities for the coming year.

White House Update

The White House Agency Liaison provided updates and guidance on White House case work.

Committee Reports

Membership and Meetings –Ms. Ann Brewer, National Institutes of Health, reported that there are hosts for the meetings through most of the year and some best practice topics have been identified, but host volunteers will be needed for next year and best practice ideas and sponsors can be forwarded to Mr. Lee or the committee's chair, Ms. Pat Morgan, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Web – Ms. Tracy Catoe, Department of Education will be updating the website with Council activities for the year as new information becomes available. The web address is: <http://www.execsec.gov/>

Technology –no report

Plain Writing – Ms. Terry Layton, Department of Commerce, reported that the Department of Commerce will be hosting the June meeting that will include a Best Practice in Plain Language from The Center for Plain Language's Executive Director, Ms. Annetta Cheek. Ms. Layton also asked for members who have suggestions for the committee's work this year or any needs for plain language training to contact her at tlayton@com.gov.

Old Business/New Business

Ms. Allen-Gifford discussed proposed revisions to the Council's Charter to bring it up to date with current practices. She will bring the document to the next meeting for council review.

Adjourn Meeting

Mr. Lee adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.