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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1903

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FINANCE

INTELLIGENCE

RANKING MEMBER, SMALL BUSINESS

March 26, 2010

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
State, Foreign Ops Subcommittee
122 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Ranking Member
State, Foreign Ops Subcommittee
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Gregg:

We are respectfully writing to request that the following report language be included in the FY2011 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill.

The American University in Kosovo is a fully functioning university awarding two-year and four-year degrees with current enrollment of about 600 students. To date, development of the University has been primarily through tuition and local Kosovar contributions. In the near future, Kosovo may become an independent state, however, there is an enormous lack of personnel with the modern administrative and technical skills required to manage the public services that can transform Kosovo into a prosperous and democratic state. The American University in Kosovo, in partnership with the Rochester Institute of Technology, is working with the U.S. Department of State to establish the U.S. School of Public Service. The U.S. School of Public Service would educate Kosovo's future public servants by providing a curriculum targeted to the most pressing public infrastructure and public administration challenges that face Kosovo. Report language indicating Congress' belief in the value of this project would help ensure that it becomes a reality.

The following report language is respectfully requested on behalf of the American University in Kosovo for the FY2011 appropriations bill:

"The Committee continues to support programs that help Kosovo to develop the human and institutional resources needed for self-government, particularly programs that help meet the pressing need for the modern administrative and technical skills required to transform Kosovo into a prosperous and democratic state. The Committee encourages the Department of State to consider a proposal to enhance the capacity and make sustainable the School of Public Service at the American University in Kosovo to enable it to better train Kosovars to build and manage their own public services and infrastructure."

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The stability of Kosovo is a priority issue for the U.S. The American University in Kosovo and the State Department have developed a strong working relationship in recent years and the University believes that the report language would solidify that relationship and facilitate good policy decisions relating to U.S. funding in Kosovo.

Next, Seeds of Peace is a nonprofit, nonpolitical organization dedicated to empowering young people from regions of conflict with the leadership skills required to advance reconciliation. Since its inception in 1993, Seeds of Peace has grown from a summer camp hosting 46 Israeli, Palestinian, and Egyptian Seeds, into a year-round, multi-faceted leadership development and coexistence program that has graduated nearly 4,000 young leaders from 22 countries worldwide.

While Seeds of Peace has broadened its reach to youth from regions of conflict around the globe, the Middle East remains its primary focus. The organization maintains regional offices in Tel Aviv and Ramallah and implements a full schedule of activities throughout the Middle East and South Asia. Every summer for the past sixteen years, Seeds of Peace, headquartered in New York City, has brought American, Israeli, Palestinian, Egyptian, Jordanian, and, more recently, Indian, Pakistani, and Afghan teenagers together to its International Camp in Maine with the goal of dispelling fear, hatred, and misunderstanding, and to foster a new generation of leadership.

The following report language is respectfully requested on behalf of Seeds of Peace for the FY2011 appropriations bill:

“The Committee recognizes the importance of conflict resolution and reconciliation programs as a tool for creating a climate of peace in regions of conflict. The Committee is recommending support for reconciliation programs and activities which bring together individuals of different ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds from areas of civil conflict and war. Funding should be made available through an established process for organizations that provide such programming, including Seeds of Peace. The Committee recommends the Department of State actively consider proposals submitted by Seeds of Peace.”

Next, the International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM) is a non-profit public-private partnership that received funds from 12 governments to develop a topical microbicide for HIV prevention. Funds have been included in the State, Foreign Operations bills for over a decade to enable USAID to engage in research on methods of preventing the spread of HIV. Microbicides are a promising technology that is supported by USAID. Women are at the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, representing nearly half of the 33 million people worldwide currently infected with the virus. As mothers, caregivers and, increasingly, the population with the highest risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, women face unique challenges in managing their own health and the health and well-being of their families.

Women urgently need access to safe, effective, and self-initiated HIV-prevention options at affordable prices. With dozens of agents that interrupt HIV infection identified and under study for use as microbicides, the accelerated development of a safe and effective microbicide product is achievable and should be made a high priority.

The most recent chapter on early generation microbicide products (non-HIV specific, “blocker” products) closed with an announcement in late 2009 of MDP 301 trial results on PRO 2000, which found this early-generation product statistically no more effective than a placebo. Now, microbicide research is in a new and promising chapter as the focus shifts to developing and testing a potentially highly-potent generation of microbicide products containing Antiretrovirals (ARVs). Sufficient investment from both the public and private sectors and a sustained commitment to moving the most promising products through well-designed clinical trials as quickly as possible could put a licensed microbicide product into the hands of the world’s women in the next five to seven years.

Biology and culture combine to put women at greater risk of contracting HIV than men, especially in developing countries. Marriage is no protection; in fact, it can increase a woman’s risk. Treatment has been revolutionary but treatment alone is no solution: for every person newly put on AIDS treatment, several more are infected with HIV. It is well understood that we cannot treat our way out of this epidemic, and that developing new prevention approaches is key. However, existing HIV prevention strategies are not enough. The global community urgently needs new prevention options, especially those that empower women to protect their own health and well-being. This is where microbicides can play a vital role.

The following report language is respectfully requested on behalf of the International Partnership for Microbicides for the FY2011 appropriations bill:

US Agency for International Development

Microbicides

The Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) plays a key leadership role in promoting the need to develop new HIV prevention technologies. Recognizing that microbicides would address a central weakness of the existing continuum of HIV prevention strategies – the lack of a discreet method that women can initiate to avoid HIV transmission – the Committee urges OGAC to work with USAID, NIH, CDC, and other appropriate agencies to coordinate and increase investment in microbicide research, prioritizing support for “next generation” ARV-based microbicides. The need for PEPFAR to support microbicide development and access was highlighted in the PEPFAR reauthorization bill (Public Law 110-293). The Committee has requested that OGAC provide a written report identifying ways

that it can play a larger role in supporting microbicide development and eventual product introduction (H.Rept. 111-366).

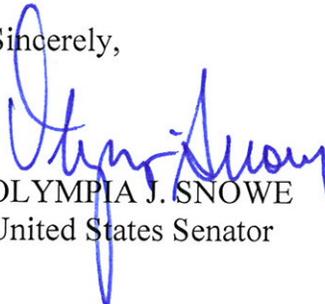
Lastly, the International Center for Research on Women has requested language on behalf of several groups, including: CARE, Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), Equality Now, Family Violence Prevention Fund, Global Action for Children, Global AIDS Alliance, International Women's Health Coalition, National Council of Jewish Women, Pathfinder International, Plan USA, School Girls Unite, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society, and Women Thrive Worldwide. The ICRW works with policy-makers in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the United States to help shape discussions of reproductive health. Their work has resulted in state-level policy changes in India that will lead to better reproductive health for women and girls. They also worked with parliamentarians from several sub-Saharan African countries to increase awareness of and funding for women's reproductive health. They support legislation that could help curb child marriage in the developing world.

Therefore, the following report language is requested on behalf of the International Center for Research on Women and the various groups:

The Committee recognizes that the practice of child marriage undermines investments of the United States and the international community in programs that seek to improve education, health, economic, and legal status for women and girls in some developing countries. The Committee urges USAID to consider the prevalence of child marriage when developing country operating plans and encourages USAID to increase programmatic focus on this issue. USAID is directed to consult with the Committees on Appropriations on efforts to expand programs in this area. In addition, the Department of State should include information related to child marriage in its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

Once again, thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact my staff with any further questions.

Sincerely,



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator