

# Is Anyone Listening? Does US Foreign Assistance Target People's Top Priorities?

**Benjamin Leo**

## Abstract

The United States government has made repeated declarations over the last decade to align its assistance programs behind developing countries' priorities. By utilizing public attitude surveys for 42 African and Latin American countries, this paper examines how well the US has implemented this guiding principle. Building upon the Quality of Official Development Assistance Assessment (QuODA) approach, I identify what people cite most frequently as the 'most pressing problems' facing their nations and then measure the percentage of US assistance commitments that are directed towards addressing them. By focusing on public surveys over time, this analysis attempts to provide a more nuanced and targeted examination of whether US portfolios are addressing what people care the most about. As reference points, I compare US alignment trends with the two regional multilateral development banks (MDBs) – the African Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Overall, this analysis suggests that US assistance may be only modestly aligned with what people in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America cite as their nation's most pressing problems. By comparison, the African Development Bank – which is majority-led by regional member nations – performs significantly better than the United States. Like the United States, however, the Inter-American Development Bank demonstrates a low relative level of support for people's top concerns.

The paper concludes with a number of policy questions, which should be considered if the US government plans to concertedly pursue closer alignment with local concerns and priorities. These include whether the US government should: (1) require regular citizen surveys to help formulate foreign assistance strategies and programmatic priorities; (2) recalibrate health assistance programs in Sub-Saharan Africa; (3) increase support for the African Development Bank; (4) expand under-utilized private sector-based development tools, such as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation; (5) increase its engagement in select Latin American countries to help combat crime and insecurity; (6) better leverage the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which is the only U.S. development institution with an explicit mandate to support country-based priorities; and (7) expand support for USAID's under-resourced economic growth programs, such as the Development Credit Authority.

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## Should US development assistance prioritize citizens' most pressing problems?

*“Too often, donors’ decisions are driven more by our own political interests or our policy preferences or development orthodoxies than by our partners’ needs.”*

–Secretary Of State Hillary Clinton – Busan High Level Forum, November 2011

### **A. Case for strong US development alignment**

The lack of donor alignment with developing country priorities – represented by governments, parliaments, and the general population – has plagued the development field for decades. However, the importance of focusing development assistance on what partner countries prioritize – not what donor governments think they want or need – is now a widely accepted principle. Through successive high-level forums over the last decade, the United States and other governments have made a series of increasingly expansive commitments to promote local ownership over development policies and programs.

- In 2003, through the Rome Declaration on Harmonization, more than 40 development agency leaders committed to ensure that assistance is delivered in accordance with partner country priorities, including poverty reduction strategies and similar approaches. In turn, partner country governments were “encouraged” to design harmonization action plans.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2005, through the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, partner countries committed to exercise leadership in developing and implementing national development strategies through broad consultative processes. In turn, donor governments committed to align their assistance with these national development strategies.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2008, the Accra Agenda for Action broadened the scope of country ownership by emphasizing developing country governments’ accountability to domestic constituents – including parliaments, political parties, local authorities, the media, academia, social partners and civil society.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2011, donor and partner countries commit to deepen, extend and operationalize the democratic ownership of development policies and processes.<sup>4</sup>

These commitments, coupled with several other initiatives<sup>5</sup>, have helped to accelerate the centrality of national development strategies as guiding blueprints. Existing OECD-DAC

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.oecd.org/development/effectiveness/31451637.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.oecd.org/development/effectiveness/34428351.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/fourthhighlevelforumonaideffectiveness.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative (HIPC) required that countries develop poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs).

monitoring efforts that gauge donor alignment and support for country ownership have largely focused on two core components: (1) whether assistance is focused on sectors and themes identified within the recipient countries' national strategies; and (2) whether donors channel their assistance through the government's own country systems.<sup>6</sup> For the U.S. government, these multilateral commitments have helped to accelerate the preparation and adoption of joint development strategies.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the U.S. Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) and Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) on Global Development both include specific commitments to promote country ownership and joint decision-making.<sup>8</sup>

While this represents a significant improvement, existing methodologies and practices do not address the fundamental question of whether donor governments – including the U.S. – are prioritizing those issues or themes that matter the most to local populations. Nearly all national development strategies are highly comprehensive documents and encompass every possible development issue, sector, and theme.<sup>9</sup> As a result, these strategies are not instructive for identifying the most pressing problem(s) facing the respective country or prioritizing what types of issues to focus on. In practice, donor governments can support country ownership in a very broad sense even though there is little practical need to limit programmatic focus areas beyond what they would already support.

Given this, there is a policy question of whether donor alignment decisions should also reflect supplementary information about local population priorities, concerns, and problems. In this regard, there are several possible approaches. First, donors could actively utilize public attitudes surveys – such as Afrobarometer and Latinobarometer – to help tier national (or even subnational) priorities and concerns. Second, they could regularly track government budget allocations as a proxy for national priorities.<sup>10</sup> Although, this would require some ability to recognize or control for how donors' off-budget spending levels impact developing countries' budget priorities. Ideally, donor governments and organizations would utilize both types of information on an ongoing basis to determine what issues are the most pressing priorities for developing country governments and their constituents.

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<sup>6</sup> See OECD (2011).

<sup>7</sup> For additional information, see <http://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/planning/country-strategies-cdcs>.

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.state.gov/s/dmr/qddr/> and <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/09/22/fact-sheet-us-global-development-policy>.

<sup>9</sup> By illustration, Kenya's Vision 2030 includes three pillars (economic, social, and political), six priority economic sectors (tourism, agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, IT-enabled services, and financial services), six priority social sectors (education and training, health, environment, housing and urbanization, gender, and youth), and five priority political themes (rule of law, electoral process, democracy and public service delivery, transparency and accountability, and security and conflict management). Put differently, the Vision 2030 priorities essentially cover every single assistance category that is tracked and reported through the OECD-DAC *Creditor Reporting System*.

<sup>10</sup> This paper does not examine potential donor alignment trends with developing country governments' own budget priorities. Future research would make a constructive contribution to the broader country ownership and donor alignment agenda.

However, donors will need to grapple with difficult philosophical questions if they decide to truly pursue alignment principles. One central issue is whether they should respond to what citizens cite as the pressing national problem(s) even if these public attitude survey responses do not reflect low or lagging development outcome trends. In other words, whether donors should disregard what people say is the most important and instead function as a social safety net or service provider of last resort. For example, should they provide an outsized focus on health interventions in a country with a high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate even if the local population cites health problems as a third or fourth tier issue? Or, should they instead focus on what people most frequently cite as their top concerns – such as promoting jobs/income and investment in physical infrastructure – as the most likely way to deliver a long-term exit from dependence?

Beyond development policy considerations, there may be a compelling U.S. foreign and national security argument for focusing assistance on what people cite as the most pressing national problems. First, democratically elected governments must, to some extent, respond to their constituents' needs. By illustration, when 60 percent of Salvadorans cite crime and security as the biggest national problem, then it becomes a first-tier political issue for elected officials (if it was not already). Or, when Tanzanians consistently cite infrastructure as their most pressing problem,<sup>11</sup> then national leaders will prioritize this sector in government plans.<sup>12</sup> Focusing U.S. development assistance on these problems is a strategic way to gain and retain strong democratic friends and allies in the world.

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<sup>11</sup> Roughly 30 percent of Tanzanians have cited infrastructure related concerns as the most pressing national problem over three successive Afrobarometer surveys (2005, 2008, and 2012).

<sup>12</sup> See President Kikwete's speech at the Center for Global Development in March 2008, which focused exclusively on the need for infrastructure financing – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC6AVMm1Z3g>.

### **Box 1 – What drives donor allocation decisions?**

There is a large and rich literature examining donor governments' rationale for providing assistance (the 'why' question), why some countries receive more assistance than others (the 'who' question), and why some types of assistance are better funded than others (the 'what' question).<sup>13</sup> Prior to the late 1980s and early 1990s, Cold War considerations played a prominent role in determining both overall volumes and which countries received larger assistance envelopes. In the last two decades, several donors – such as the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) and the UK Department for International Development (DfID) – have increasingly allocated assistance on the basis of average income levels, poverty prevalence, and institutional quality.<sup>14</sup> However, recent analyses find that many donors' selectivity may have actually declined over the last 15 years – particularly when viewed against governance factors such as corruption perceptions.<sup>15</sup> Several other studies have focused exclusively on U.S. bilateral assistance allocations.<sup>16</sup> They typically find that a mix of national security (terrorism, post-conflict, and drug trafficking) and development need considerations have driven assistance patterns over the last decade.

### **B. Why (some) flexibility matters at home and abroad**

Ultimately, policy decisions about how to align U.S. assistance with people's most pressing concerns must reflect a range of political, methodological, and programmatic considerations. Simply put, it should not, nor cannot, be pursued in a black and white or highly prescriptive manner. In some instances, U.S. policymakers and/or politicians may ultimately decide with adequate reasoning to deviate from targeting the most pressing concerns of people living in developing countries and instead focus on second or third tier (yet still important) problems. Within this context, several specific limitations or issues must be considered:

- **Domestic Political Considerations and Constituencies:** There can be an inherent tension between pursuing what U.S. lawmakers and their constituents believe should be prioritized and what the intended beneficiaries are most concerned about. Relatedly, domestic interest groups play an important role – which may or may not reflect ground-level views and priorities.<sup>17</sup> In practice, the relevant congressional committees do not receive or require regular analysis of public attitude surveys or

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<sup>13</sup> For examples, see Dollar and Levin (2004), Schraeder, Hook, and Taylor (1998), Burnside and Dollar (2000), Alesina and Dollar (1998), Hout (2007), amongst others.

<sup>14</sup> See OECD (2012).

<sup>15</sup> See Kaufmann and Penciakova (2012).

<sup>16</sup> See Moss, Roodman, and Standley (2005), Bazzi, Herrling, and Patrick (2007), and Norris and Veillette (2012).

<sup>17</sup> For example, the global health community has outsized influence in the U.S. legislative system. A highly effective and outspoken ecosystem of organizations regularly lobbies to secure robust funding for global health priorities, such as HIV/AIDS, family planning, and child vaccinations. On the other hand, there are few political champions for those issues that top the list of citizen priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa or Latin America, such as jobs/income, security, or infrastructure.

local government budgeting priorities during their appropriations decision-making process. In some respects, the argument goes that if the U.S. Congress is willing to provide large-scale support for certain issues, then that is what should happen. By extension, if the U.S. government shifted to an approach driven solely by local preferences, then congressional support could weaken over the near- to medium-term.

- Built-In Bias Towards More Straightforward Input-Outcome Models: Relatedly, U.S. policymakers and politicians have become increasingly focused on parallel service delivery models that are less dependent upon local political circumstances, such as providing life-saving medicines or immunizations. Often these activities rely upon technical or logistical solutions, which can be pursued in complex and/or weak institutional environments. By contrast, issues such as private sector development and employment opportunities have received less donor attention, partly due to their complexity, dependence upon benign or supportive domestic political economy conditions, and difficulty in establishing concrete linkages between assistance activities and policy and development outcomes.
- Programmatic Lead Times and Portfolio Management: Donor governments often have limited ability to adjust their project portfolios over the short-term or even medium-term.<sup>18</sup> For example, USAID often builds up a sector capability – including staffing and contractor relationships – over a period of several years. The sustained expansion of global health programs across Sub-Saharan Africa illustrates this dynamic. It can be difficult to quickly reduce this footprint, along with the related financing streams, to respond to new or other preexisting citizen priorities.
- Comparative Advantage: The U.S. or other donor governments may have a particular comparative advantage in certain sectors. The establishment of core competencies and a successful track record of results are often established over years or even decades. By illustration, the African Development Bank has a strong comparative advantage in infrastructure while the U.S. has an advantage in the health sector. In fact, donors may completely lack technical capacity in certain programmatic areas – which would have to be built from scratch. Collectively, these institutional and bureaucratic dynamics can significantly restrict donors’ ability or willingness to adjust their engagement models.
- Broader Donor Landscape: Relatedly, the U.S. or other donor governments do not operate in a vacuum. Dozens of donors typically provide programmatic assistance simultaneously in a given developing country. It would be inadvisable for all of them to focus on the one issue that local people most frequently cite as the most pressing

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<sup>18</sup> While citizen concerns have remained relatively static over time (see section III for details), there is a certain degree of localized volatility in year-to-year issue response rates. In certain cases, there have been pronounced shifts in very short periods of time. By illustration, the rapid deterioration of political and social stability in Mali during 2012 (while the Afrobarometer field team was conducting interviews) sharply impacted responses patterns. While food security and jobs/income were top priorities during the 2002, 2005, and 2008 surveys, security concerns dominated responses in 2012.

national problem. In many countries, this could lead to under-resourcing pressing needs – such as health and education – even if they register as second or third tier concerns.

- **Questionnaire Limitations:** Afrobarometer and Latinobarometer surveys do not solicit respondent views about what donor governments, or the U.S. specifically, should prioritize in their development assistance programs. Therefore, we currently must rely upon a simplifying assumption that citizens would want donors to focus their programs on their most pressing problems. However, it is possible that citizens may prefer that the U.S. government help to address other concerns due a variety of reasons. For example, they may believe that their national or local governments should be solely responsible for providing specific types of services. Relatedly, they may not believe that the U.S. government would be effective, or has an appropriate role, in addressing certain issues (e.g., addressing national security concerns).<sup>19</sup>

## **What are people in Africa and Latin America most worried about?**

### **A. Methodology**

Drawing upon previous work<sup>20</sup>, Afrobarometer and Latinobarometer public attitude surveys are utilized to gauge what people believe are the most pressing problems facing their country.<sup>21</sup> Both questionnaires have included standardized questions during successive surveys over time.<sup>22</sup> However, the two organizations ask slightly different questions.<sup>23</sup> Afrobarometer asks respondents to provide their views about the most pressing problems facing the nation that the government should seek to address. In contrast, Latinobarometer does not reference government action.

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<sup>19</sup> While this concern could apply in certain circumstances, such as parallel delivery of health and education services, it should not apply for capacity building or government reform programs. By illustration, even if citizens believe that their government should be solely responsible for public security, they may still welcome U.S. financial assistance for the procurement of new technology, equipment, personnel, and other tools that would help to improve law and order.

<sup>20</sup> See Ben Leo and Khai Hoan Tram, *What Does the World Really Want From the Next Global Development Goals?*, ONE Campaign, September 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Afrobarometer registers up to three responses. Latinobarometer only registers one response from surveyed individuals. For methodological comparability across the two examined geographic regions, this study focuses only on Afrobarometer's first response data.

<sup>22</sup> Afrobarometer has completed five rounds of surveys since 1999. These include: (1) 1999-2001; (2) 2002/2003; (3) 2005/2006; (4) 2008; and (5) 2011/2012. Latinobarometer has conducted annual surveys since 2004 that include this standardized question.

<sup>23</sup> The Afrobarometer questionnaire uses the following language – “In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?” The Latinobarometer question uses the following language – “In your opinion, what do you consider to be the most important problem in the country?” The wording of these two questions did not change during the time period examined in this study.

- Response Categorization: Afrobarometer and Latinobarometer field staff code questionnaire responses according to a set of predetermined categories.<sup>24</sup> Afrobarometer does not include the environment or climate change as a possible response category. Latinobarometer does not include agriculture or food security as a possible response category. These standardized categories are then aggregated into nine thematic areas (see appendix I for specific details). Of these, eight are utilized for both Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. These include: (1) jobs and income; (2) infrastructure; (3) economic and financial policies; (4) inequality and poverty; (5) security and crime; (6) health; (7) education; and (8) governance. Sub-Saharan Africa also includes a ninth thematic area for food security related concerns. Latin America also includes environment related concerns.<sup>25</sup>
- Country Coverage: The Afrobarometer and Latinobarometer surveys currently cover 42 developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa<sup>26</sup> and Latin America<sup>27</sup>. Collectively, these countries have a total population of nearly 1.2 billion people.

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<sup>24</sup> For Sub-Saharan Africa, currently there are 33 standardized response categories. In addition, Afrobarometer includes 24 country-specific categories, which typically relate to topical issues (e.g., removal of sanctions in Zimbabwe). For Latin America, there are 27 standardized response categories.

<sup>25</sup> The majority of categorization decisions are relatively straightforward. However, two thematic areas require further explanation and consideration. First, agriculture related issues in Sub-Saharan Africa – farming, land, and agricultural marketing – are categorized under the jobs and income theme. This is due to their implicit impact on employment and income generation prospects. The food security theme includes three of Afrobarometer’s standardized response categories – food shortages/famine, drought, and food prices. Therefore, this approach utilizes a more limited definition of food security, which is focused on the availability and consumption of affordable food. A plausible alternative approach would categorize these issues under a broader food security theme, thereby emphasizing the linkages between domestic food production, distribution, and consumption patterns. Second, a separate theme is utilized for inequality and poverty related concerns. This includes four standardized response categories for Sub-Saharan Africa (destitution, orphans/street children, discrimination/inequality, and resettlement of IDPs) and three response categories for Latin America (poverty/social inequality, distribution of incomes/social justice, and social problems). Arguably, these issues could have been categorized under a broader jobs and income theme or possibly under a broader governance theme. However, the approach taken here specifically highlight issues related to socio-economic inequality – which appear to be on the rise in many developing countries.

<sup>26</sup> The earliest Afrobarometer questionnaire used in this study (round two) covered 16 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. These include: Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Eight countries were added during the subsequent survey rounds, including: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, and Togo. In terms of language coverage, Afrobarometer covers 14 Anglophone countries, 8 Francophone countries, and 2 Lusophone countries. Overall, these 24 countries account for roughly 60 percent of the total population in Sub-Saharan Africa. Afrobarometer currently does not cover the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Ethiopia, or North African nations. However, it plans to extend coverage to many of these countries during its ongoing round five questionnaire process.

<sup>27</sup> The Latinobarometer questionnaire covered the same 18 countries annually between 2004 and 2010. These include: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Collectively, these countries account for over 95 percent of the total population in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## **B. Summary findings**

Sub-Saharan Africa: At the regional level, the most frequently cited problems in Sub-Saharan Africa are: (1) jobs/income; (2) infrastructure; (3) economic and financial policies; and (4) poverty and inequality. Taken together, these four issues have steadily accounted for roughly 70 percent of Afrobarometer survey responses since 2002. Interestingly, concerns related to jobs and income has declined over the last decade – falling from 40 percent of responses in 2002/2003 to roughly 28 percent in 2011/2012. On the other hand, the percentage of Africans citing infrastructure as the most pressing national problem has doubled. Roughly one-in-five respondents now raise this as their most pressing concern compared to one-in-ten a decade ago. On the good news front, food security concerns (e.g., food shortages) have declined dramatically on a relative basis compared to other cited problems – falling from roughly 14 percent of responses in 2005/2006 to slightly less than 8 percent in 2011/2012.

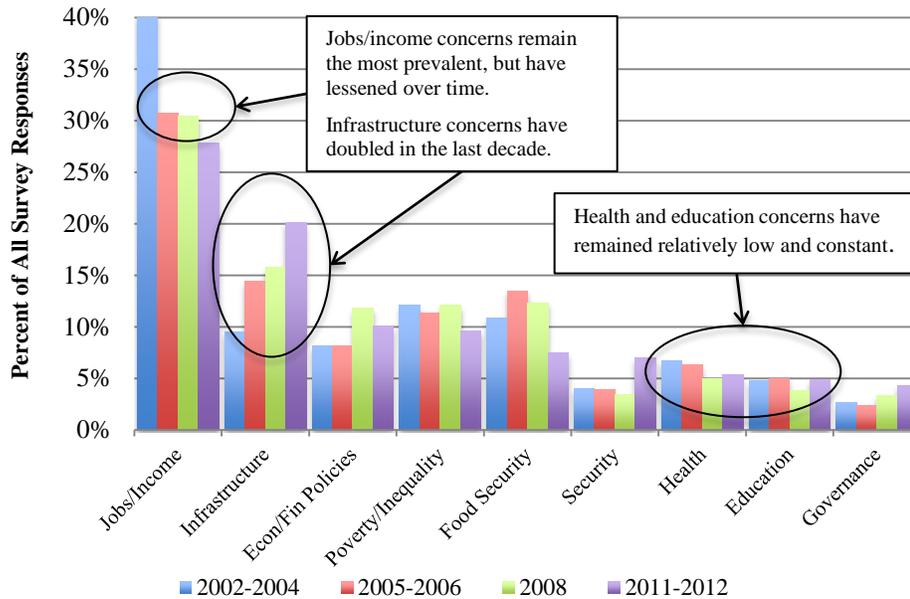
The most surprising results concern public views about social services. At the regional level, Africans have consistently failed to cite health and education as a top tier problem.<sup>28</sup> This is particularly surprising given the region’s high child and maternal mortality rates. Moreover, health concerns have remained more or less constant (at between 5 percent and 6 percent of all responses) over the last decade despite massive investments by national and donor governments and steady improvements in national health indicators.<sup>29</sup> Between 4 percent and 5 percent of Africans have raised education as the most pressing national problem, even though it is typically considered as a critical ingredient for employment and income levels over the medium- and long-term.

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<sup>28</sup> This potentially could illustrate peoples’ perceptions that their national governments and donor governments are already addressing their health and education needs, instead of communicating that health- and education-related issues are a relatively lower concern. However, survey response rates have remained largely constant over the last decade at the regional aggregate level. For Sub-Saharan Africa, earlier Afrobarometer questionnaires pre-dated the large-scale donor increases in health and education assistance. See Leo and Tram (2012) for additional discussion of these potential dynamics.

<sup>29</sup> These survey response trends hold across a range of different cross-tabs (e.g., rural/urban, gender, age, and education level). There are modest differences in how frequently rural inhabitants cite health-related issues as the most pressing problems (6 percent versus 4 percent for urban inhabitants).

**Figure 1 – Most Pressing Problems in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2002-2012**



Source: Afrobarometer and author calculations

At the country-level, the most frequently cited national problems remain: (1) jobs/income; (2) infrastructure; and (3) inequality and poverty. Jobs and income appear among the top five list in every African country across the four different Afrobarometer survey rounds.

Infrastructure is raised in every country except for Burundi.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, it is currently the number one problem in five countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mozambique, and Tanzania). Inequality and poverty appears within the top five in all except six country surveys over the last decade.<sup>31</sup> Acute food security concerns are largely concentrated in a handful of highly vulnerable countries, such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Malawi, Senegal, and Zimbabwe. The percentage of people citing security-related concerns has increased over time in many places – and now appears as a top five problem in eight African countries.<sup>32</sup>

Health has ranked among the top five problems in 11 African nations at different intervals over the last decade. Within this, it has been a top three concern in only 5 countries (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Namibia, and Tanzania), also at various times.

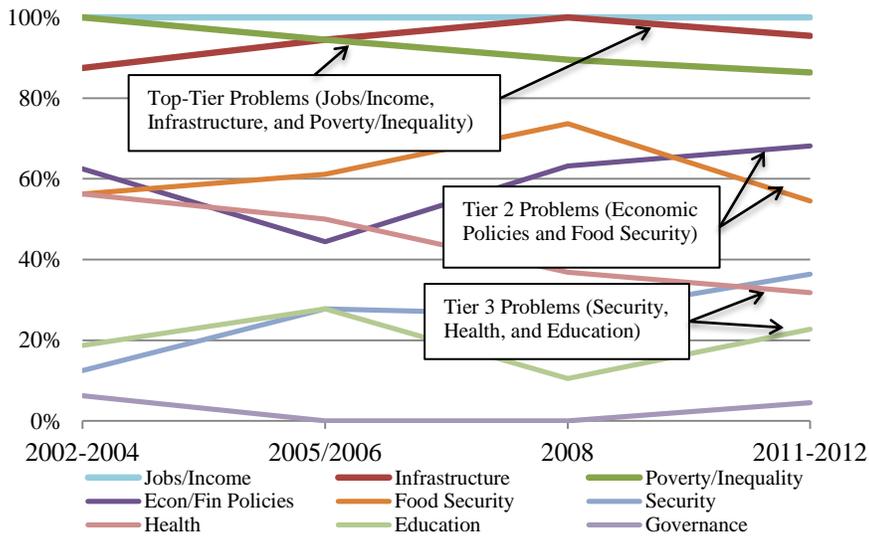
<sup>30</sup> In Burundi, the top five most pressing problems are: (1) inequality and poverty; (2) security; (3) governance; (4) jobs and income; and (5) food security.

<sup>31</sup> The exceptions are Benin (2006), Senegal (2008), Zimbabwe (2008), Liberia (2012), Sierra Leone (2012), and Tanzania (2012).

<sup>32</sup> These include Burundi (18 percent of responses), Cape Verde (18 percent of responses), Lesotho (4 percent of responses), Mali (33 percent of responses), Mauritius (21 percent of responses), Namibia (6 percent of responses), Nigeria (13 percent of responses), and South Africa (8 percent of responses). It was the number one issue raised in Mali during the last Afrobarometer survey, which coincided with the political instability and civil conflict in the northern part of the country.

Based on public attitude surveys, it has never registered as the top concern in an African country during the last 10 years. Currently, it is viewed as a top five national problem in seven countries, including: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.<sup>33</sup> Education only appears to be a top national problem in a handful of African countries – most notably in Ghana (3<sup>rd</sup> highest issue, 13 percent of responses), Liberia (3<sup>rd</sup> highest issue, 15 percent of responses), and Zambia (3<sup>rd</sup> highest issue, 10 percent of responses).

**Figure 2 – Top 5 Most Pressing Problems Cited in Sub-Saharan African Countries, by Frequency Count**

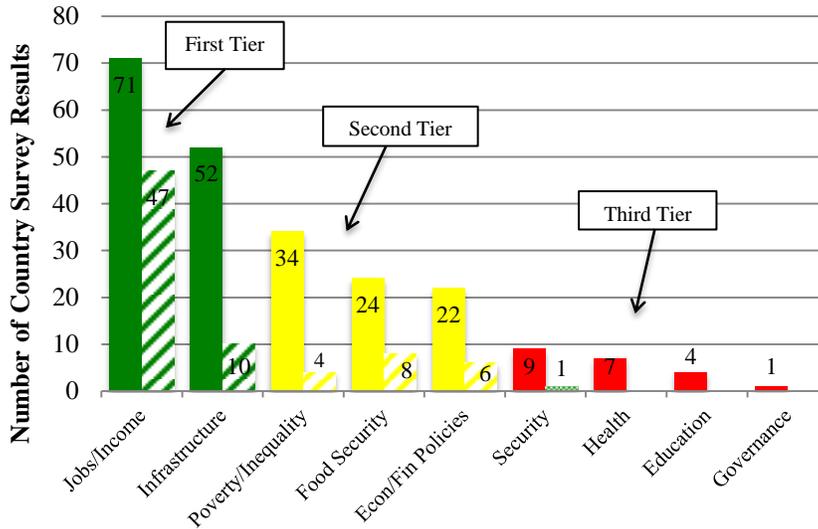


Source: Afrobarometer and author calculations

The picture becomes even more striking when counting how many times each respective issue has registered as a top 3 national problem over time. When this frame is applied, the issues can be categorized into three distinct tiers, including: (1) first tier (jobs/income and infrastructure); (2) second tier (inequality/poverty, food security, and economic/financial policies); and (3) third tier (security, health, education, and governance).

<sup>33</sup> In Benin and Botswana, health related issues are cited as the fifth most pressing national problem and accounts for 4 percent and 5 percent of all survey responses. In Burkina Faso, it is the second most frequently cited problem, with 18 percent of all responses. In Mozambique and Uganda, health is the fifth concern and accounts for 6 percent and 9 percent of all survey responses. Lastly, health related concerns are the fourth most frequently cited problem in Tanzania and Zambia, accounting for 12 percent and 9 percent of survey responses.

**Figure 3 – Top 3 and Top 1 Most Pressing Problems Cited in Sub-Saharan African Countries, by Frequency Count**

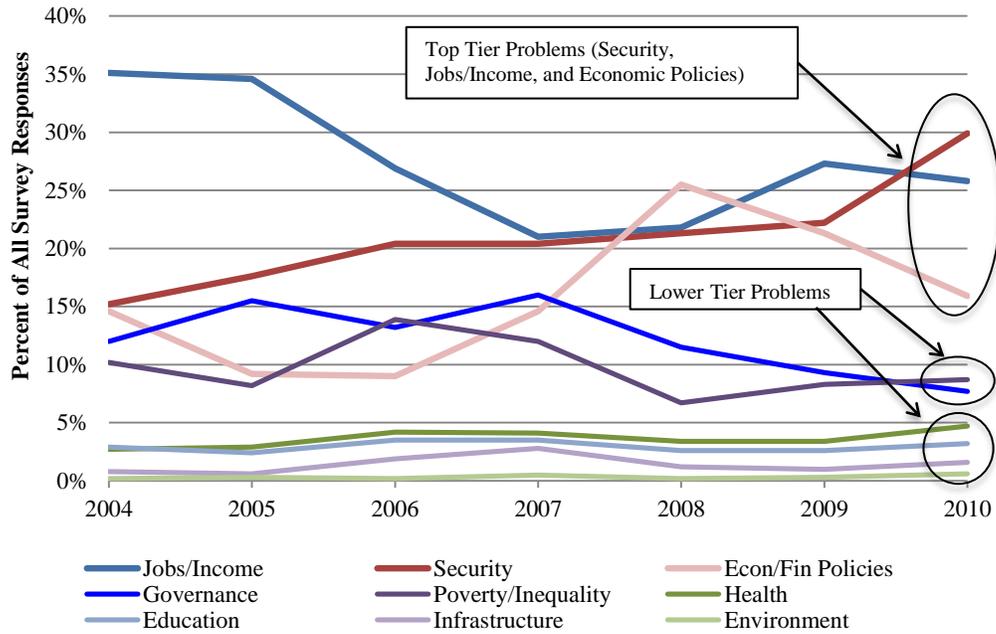


\* Solid columns correspond to the top cited problem and shaded columns correspond to the top three problems.

Source: Afrobarometer and author calculations

Latin America: At the regional level, the most frequently cited problems in Latin America are generally divided into three tiers as well. The first tier includes: (1) crime and security; (2) jobs and income; and (3) economic and financial policies. Taken together, these three thematic areas have accounted for between 56 percent and 72 percent of Latinobarometer survey responses during the examined time period. Most notably, the percentage of survey respondents citing crime and security as the most pressing problem affecting their countries doubled between 2004 and 2010 (from 15 percent of responses to 30 percent). In 2010, it overtook jobs and income for the first time as the most frequently cited problem across the region. As with Sub-Saharan Africa, jobs and income related concerns have declined slightly over time – falling from 35 percent in 2004 to roughly 26 percent in 2010. After a spike in 2008 and 2009 (due to the global financial crisis), problems related to economic and financial policies have returned to their starting levels in 2004 (roughly 15 percent of all responses).

**Figure 4 – Most Pressing Problems in Latin America, 2004-2010**



Source: Latinobarometer and author calculations

The second tier includes inequality/poverty and governance related issues. After survey response rates increased during the mid-2000s, they both have declined to below 2004 levels. Currently, approximately 9 percent of Latin Americans surveyed cite inequality/poverty as the most pressing problem in their countries. Roughly 8 percent cite governance-related issues.

The third tier includes four issues that have consistently accounted for less than 5 percent of survey responses, including: (1) health; (2) education; (3) infrastructure; and (4) the environment. In sharp contrast to Sub-Saharan Africa, infrastructure has only accounted for between 1 percent and 3 percent of survey responses over time. Environment-related problems have essentially remained a rounding error – reaching a high point of only 0.60 percent of all responses in 2010.

At the country-level, there is a stark divide in the most frequently cited national problems.<sup>34</sup> Jobs and income has appeared in the top five list of most pressing problems in every Latin American country since 2004. Crime and security has been a top five problem in every examined country since 2008. During the entire time period examined, there were only five instances when crime and security did not appear on the list of most pressing national

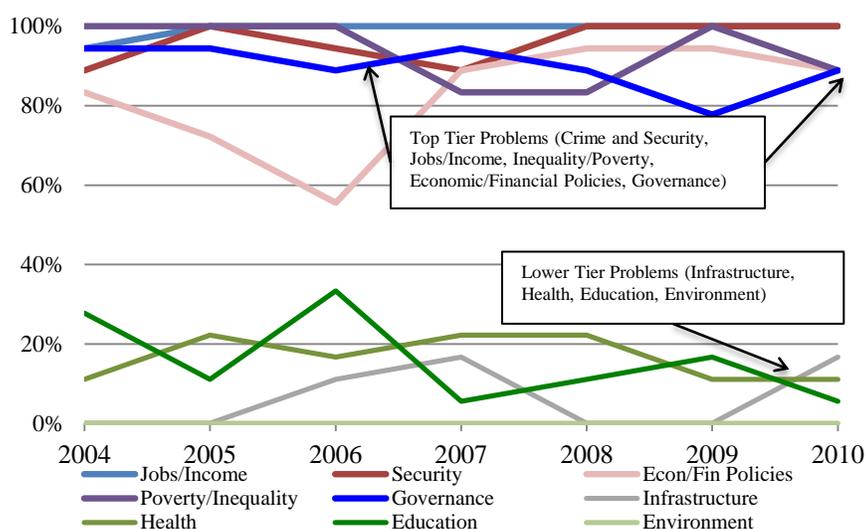
<sup>34</sup> The same issues are regularly cited amongst the top five national problems by Latin American survey respondents, including: (1) jobs and income; (2) security and crime; (3) economic and financial policies; (4) poverty and inequality; and (5) governance.

problems.<sup>35</sup> In 2010, it was the most frequently cited problem in over half of the Latin American countries.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, economic and financial policies, inequality/poverty, and governance appear as a top five national problem roughly 90 percent of the time.

Concerns related to health and infrastructure appear localized in a few countries. For example, only Brazilians and Chileans have consistently raised health related issues as a top five national problem over time.<sup>37</sup> In fact, over one-third of Brazilians now raise health related issues as the most pressing national problem – more than any other issue. The Dominican Republic is the only country where people regularly raise infrastructure related concerns, albeit as a fourth or fifth order issue. Latin Americans have not raised the environment as a top five national problem at any point since 2004.

Education is seemingly perceived as a lower-tier problem in essentially every Latin American country. It was not raised as a top three problem in any nation between 2004 and 2010. However, education was cited as the fourth or fifth most pressing problem at isolated occasions in 13 different countries during the seven-year period.

**Figure 5 – Top 5 Most Pressing Problems Cited in Latin American Countries, by Frequency Count**



Source: Latinobarometer and author calculations

<sup>35</sup> The exceptions include: Bolivia (2004), Dominican Republic (2004), Nicaragua (2006, 2007), and Peru (2007).

<sup>36</sup> These include: Argentina (37 percent of responses), Colombia (41 percent of responses), Costa Rica (45 percent of responses), Guatemala (53 percent of responses), Honduras (30 percent of responses), Mexico (42 percent of responses), Panama (56 percent of responses), Uruguay (34 percent of responses), and Venezuela (66 percent of responses).

<sup>37</sup> Beyond Brazil and Chile, the only other Latin American countries where health has been cited as a pressing national problem include: Costa Rica (2007, 2008), Paraguay (2005, 2008), Uruguay (2005, 2008), and Venezuela (2006, 2007).

## How does US assistance align with citizens' most pressing concerns?

### A. Methodology

Methodology: This paper builds upon the approach developed by Nancy Birdsall and Homi Kharas for the Quality of Official Development Assistance Assessment (QuODA).<sup>38</sup> To gauge U.S. alignment with the most frequently cited national problems, sector-level commitments to African and Latin American nations are categorized and mapped to the nine previously mentioned thematic areas. Figures come from the OECD's *Creditor Reporting System* (CRS) database and include the combination of official development assistance (ODA) and other official flows (OOF).<sup>39</sup> CRS data is aligned with the thematic areas at either the DAC sector code or CRS purpose code level (see appendix IV for further detail). The percentage of total U.S. commitments is then tracked against the top one, three, and five national problems or concerns (as cited by survey respondents) with a one-year time lag following the completion and dissemination of Afrobarometer and Latinobarometer public attitude surveys.<sup>40</sup> These shares are then reported over time at either the country- or regional-level.

Limitations and Caveats: There are several methodological limitations that must be considered when interpreting the analytical results. First, this approach does not account for the interconnected nature of development sectors.<sup>41</sup> Second, measuring donor alignment based solely upon gross financial flows does not fully capture the inherent differences in addressing certain types of citizen concerns.<sup>42</sup> Lastly, foreign assistance, even if it is the largest and most prominent tool in many cases, represents only one way the U.S.

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<sup>38</sup> See Birdsall and Kharas (2010), *Quality of Official Development Assistance Assessment*, Brookings Institution and Center for Global Development, page 52. My approach differs slightly by: (1) focusing on ODA and other official flow commitments (versus just gross ODA disbursements); and (2) utilizing public attitude surveys over an extended time period to gauge broader alignment trends.

<sup>39</sup> The OECD defines 'other official flows' as transactions by the official sector with countries on the 'list of aid recipients' which do not meet the conditions for eligibility as official development assistance or official aid, either because they are not primarily aimed at development, or because they have a grant element of less than 25 percent. See <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1954>.

<sup>40</sup> Disbursement data is not utilized due to lengthy project or program life cycles, which make it difficult to measure U.S. responsiveness to local public views and priorities over time.

<sup>41</sup> For example, investments in health, education, infrastructure, or governance can have a significant impact on people's ability to secure gainful employment and/or increase their income levels. Arguably, nearly every type of development investment could impact jobs/income over the near-, medium-, or long-term. Therefore, there may be a systemic downward bias against measuring how well donors are reflecting jobs/income related concerns in their assistance portfolios.

<sup>42</sup> For example, a small USAID or U.S. Treasury Department technical assistance project focused on helping to improve the Dominican Republic's economic and financial policy environment may adequately prioritize and respond to local citizens' concerns. However, if it only represents a modest share of total U.S. assistance, then this methodology would suggest that the U.S. government was not placing a significant prioritization on this sector.

government provides support for developing countries. Trade policy, promoting foreign direct investment, and national security policy can all have a positive (or negative) impact on addressing people's most pressing concerns.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, due to these methodological limitations, an appropriate degree of caution should be considered when interpreting results.

## **B. Sub-Saharan Africa**

*"Fighting HIV/AIDS isn't just a first-tier priority of our foreign policy...it's also a test of our values."*

–Secretary of State John Kerry, New York September 2013<sup>44</sup>

If most Africans are primarily concerned about jobs/income and infrastructure – along with inequality, food security, and economic and financial policies to a slightly lesser extent – then how do U.S. assistance patterns stack up? The short answer is not very well. At the aggregate level, only 16 percent of U.S. assistance has been focused on what Africans definitively cite as their most pressing problems (jobs/income and infrastructure). Instead, nearly 60 percent of U.S. assistance over the last decade has been targeted towards secondary or tertiary concerns (health, security, education, and governance). Over half has supported health-related interventions alone, which rarely appears as a priority concern despite its widespread support amongst U.S. lawmakers and advocacy organizations.

In fact, the percentage of U.S. commitments targeted towards jobs and income related issues has actually declined since 2009 despite a ramping up of USAID's Feed the Future programs – falling from 11 percent to 6 percent in 2011.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, infrastructure-related assistance has risen steadily – from 1 percent of all U.S. commitments in 2006 to an annualized average of 6 percent since 2009.<sup>46</sup> This has been driven almost exclusively by large Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compacts. On the other hand, health assistance (and general multi-sector assistance) has increased over the same period.

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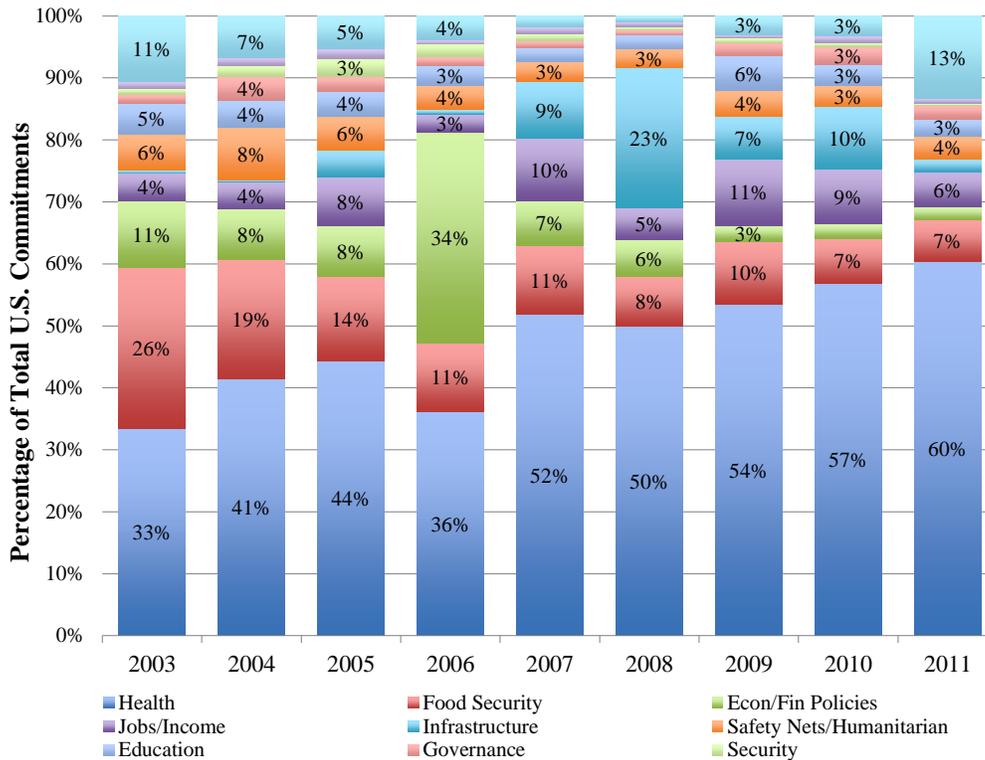
<sup>43</sup>This is particularly relevant for middle-income countries in Latin America, where the U.S. has a series of free trade agreements, bilateral and regional security arrangements, and bilateral investment treaties.

<sup>44</sup> Remarks at a Global Health Event with Partner Countries (PEPFAR), see <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/09/214733.htm>.

<sup>45</sup> As noted previously, the majority of Feed the Future assistance activities are categorized under the jobs/income theme instead of the food security theme.

<sup>46</sup> This represents the average commitments between 2009 and 2011 (7 percent, 10 percent, and 2 percent).

Figure 6 – U.S. Commitments to Sub-Saharan Africa by Area, 2003-2011<sup>47</sup>

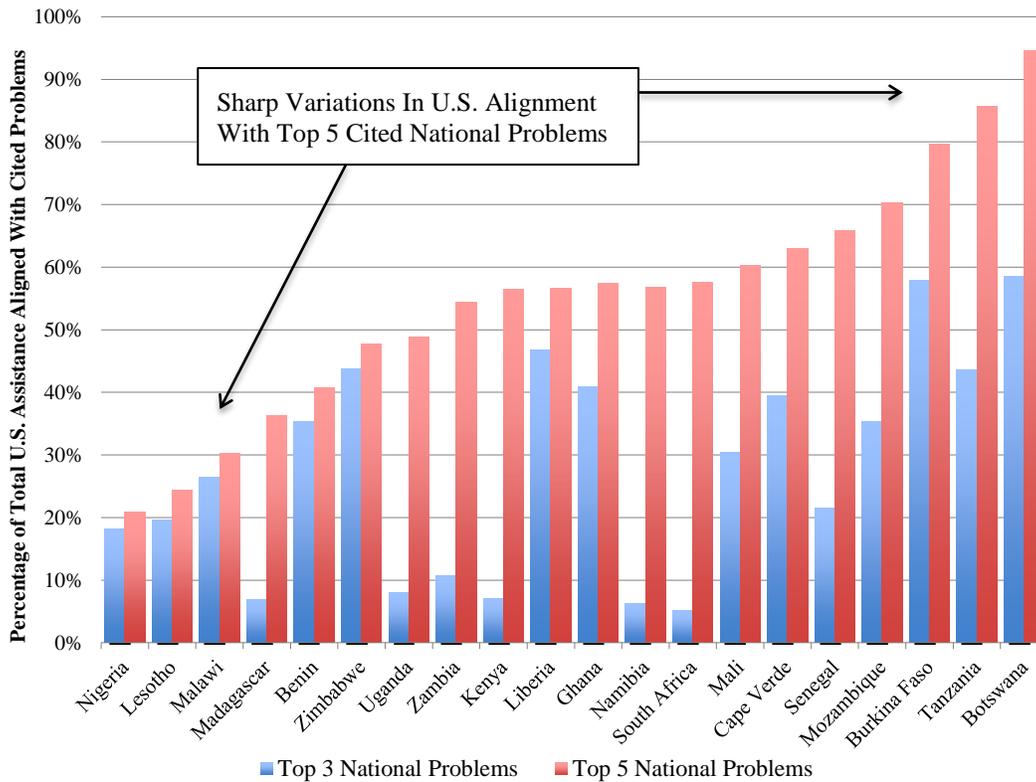


Source: OECD-DAC Creditor Reporting System and author calculations

There are wide differences in country-level alignment patterns. On average, less than one-third of U.S. assistance has been aligned with people’s top three concerns in 11 African nations over time – including: South Africa (5 percent), Namibia (6 percent), Kenya (7 percent), Madagascar (7 percent), Uganda (8 percent), Zambia (11 percent), Nigeria (18 percent), Lesotho (20 percent), Senegal (22 percent), Malawi (26 percent), and Mali (30 percent). In fact, U.S. alignment with core concerns has exceeded 50 percent *in only* two African countries (Burkina Faso and Botswana). In Burkina Faso, the MCC’s compact – which focuses largely on infrastructure (the most pressing concern for Burkinabe people) – has driven this trend. In Botswana, large assistance programs focused on the health sector (the third most cited concern) explain the close alignment.

<sup>47</sup> Figures include both official development assistance (ODA) and other official flows (OOF). The economic and financial policies outlier in 2006 was largely due to \$615 million in debt relief for Nigeria.

Figure 7 – U.S. Alignment with Country-Level Problems, Average for 2003-2011



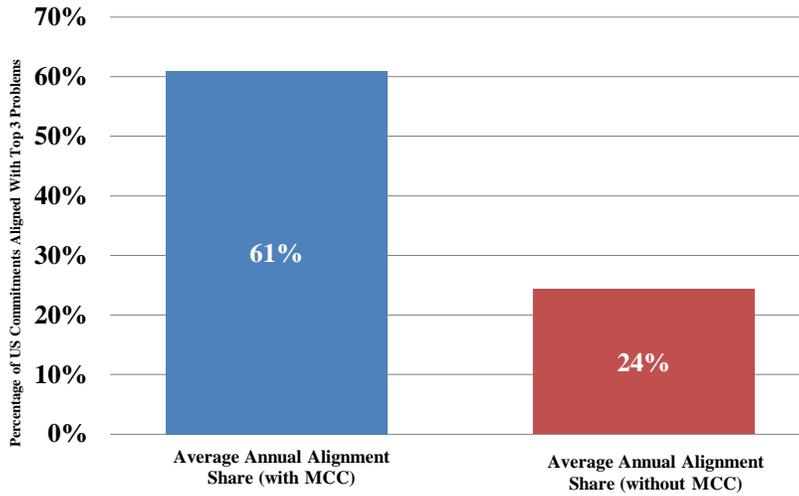
Source: Afrobarometer, OECD Creditor Reporting System, and author calculations

MCC Effect on Alignment: The MCC has played a leading role in fostering greater US alignment in compact-eligible countries, largely due to its unique mandate to support locally led priorities. As illustrated below, the US alignment share has been dramatically higher during MCC compact commitment years than during non-compact years or in MCC-ineligible countries. Typically, the MCC’s model has translated into sizable, aligned infrastructure investments in eligible countries, such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, and Tanzania.<sup>48</sup> Of the ten African countries with the highest US alignment share, seven have received significant MCC assistance.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Infrastructure-related concerns were the most frequently cited problem in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Tanzania. It was the second most frequently cited problem in Ghana and Mozambique, and the third most frequently cited issue in Cape Verde, Lesotho, and Mali.

<sup>49</sup> This includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, and Tanzania. The three non-MCC countries with relatively strong US alignment include: Botswana (due to health programs); Liberia (largely due to jobs/income programs), and Zimbabwe (due to food security assistance).

**Figure 8 – The MCC Effect on US Assistance Alignment in Sub-Saharan Africa<sup>50</sup>**



Source: Afrobarometer, OECD Creditor Reporting System, and author calculations

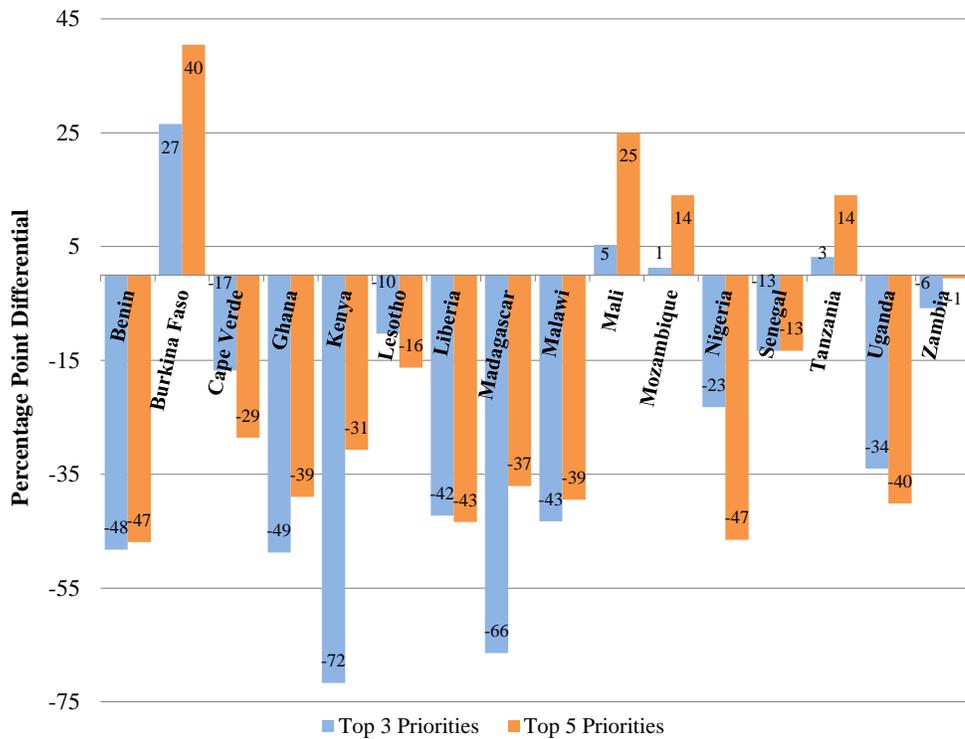
U.S. and African Development Bank Comparison: The African Development Bank (AfDB) is significantly more aligned with what Africans cite as their nations’ most pressing problems. On average, 48 percent of its portfolio has directly addressed the top three concerns cited in Afrobarometer surveys compared to only 26 percent for U.S. assistance.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, 70 percent of its assistance aligns with people’s top five concerns compared to 56 percent for U.S. programs. However, the U.S. exhibits stronger alignment in four countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique, and Tanzania) where the MCC has committed large-scale financing for infrastructure and jobs/income. This is especially true in Burkina Faso, which demonstrates the greatest differential with the AfDB. In Mozambique and Tanzania, PEPFAR programming has also aligned with concerns about health issues. Beyond these exceptions, the AfDB exhibits much stronger country-level alignment with African people’s most pressing concerns.

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<sup>50</sup> Figures represent a simple un-weighted average across African countries since 2003. The left-hand column corresponds to the average US alignment share in MCC countries during the compact commitment year. The right-hand column represents the average US alignment share in non-MCC compact commitment years (for MCC-eligible countries) as well as countries that are not eligible for MCC compacts.

<sup>51</sup> This comparison does not include Zimbabwe since the AfDB Group does not have a significant active portfolio due to the existence of loan arrears.

**Figure 9 – Difference Between US and AfDB Alignment with Citizens’ Most Pressing Concerns<sup>52</sup>**



Source: Afrobarometer, OECD Creditor Reporting System, and author calculations

This trend is largely driven by the AfDB’s greater focus on the private sector (jobs/income), infrastructure, and economic and financial management policies – which register as top citizen concerns in nearly every African country. Collectively, these three programmatic areas have accounted for over 90 percent of AfDB assistance to the examined countries. In contrast, aggregate U.S. commitments in these three areas account for only 22 percent of total commitments.

### C. Latin America

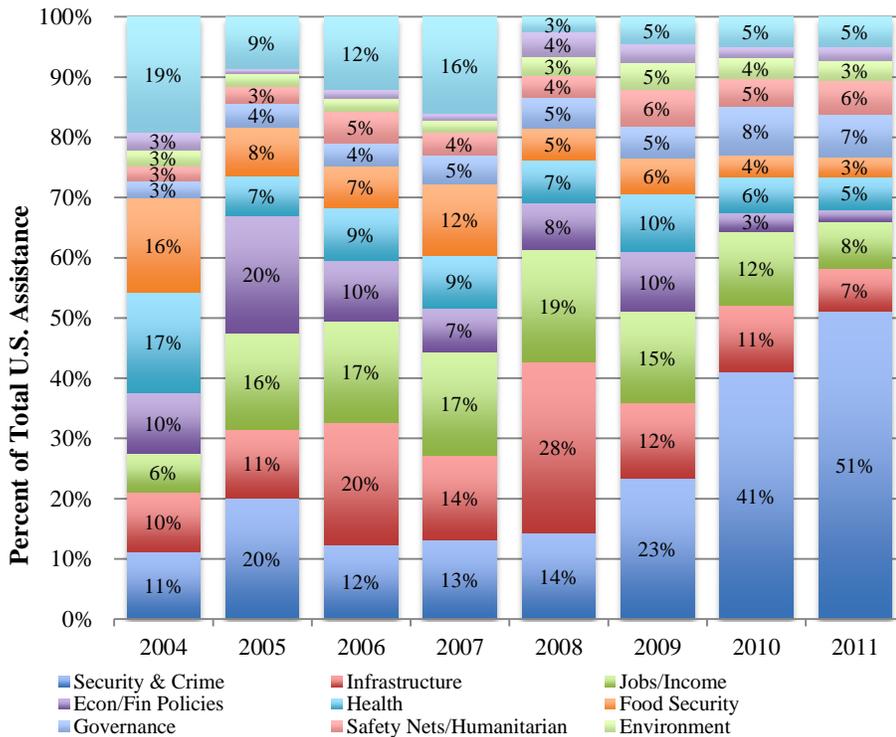
*“...I applaud the countries of Central America, who are working together to take on one of the biggest barriers to development, the lack of sufficient security, by working to reform a criminal justice sector and fight corruption.”*

–Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Busan 2011

<sup>52</sup> Positive figures illustrate where the U.S. demonstrates greater alignment with what people cite as the most pressing national problems, while negative figures illustrate greater AfDB alignment.

At an aggregate level, U.S. assistance to Latin American nations is increasingly dominated by crime and security concerns. Over half of U.S. commitments targeted these issues in 2011 – up from only 14 percent in 2008. Although, its share of total U.S. commitments have fallen steadily – from 28 percent of commitments in 2008 to only 7 percent in 2011. Support for jobs/income related issues has remained significant over time, accounting for roughly 16 percent of total U.S. commitments since 2004. The remainder of U.S. assistance has been distributed fairly evenly across thematic areas related to health, food security, governance, education, and environmental issues.

**Figure 10 – US Assistance to Latin America by Thematic Area, 2003-2011<sup>53</sup>**



Source: OECD-DAC Creditor Reporting System and author calculations

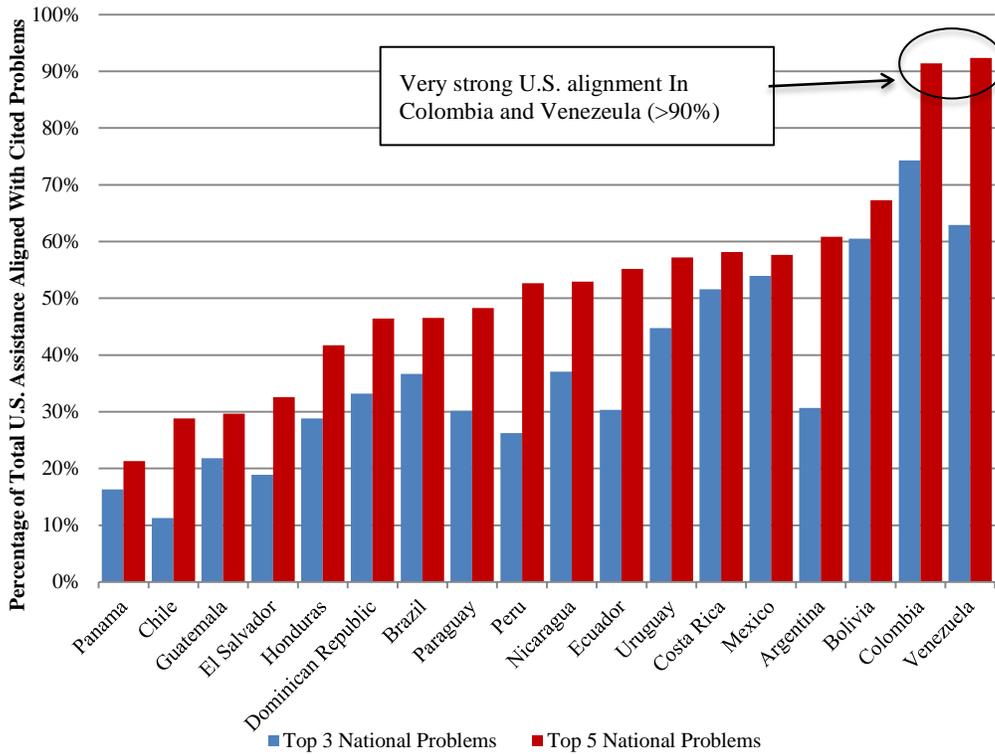
On average, the U.S. demonstrates only modest alignment with what Latin Americans cite as the most pressing problems in their countries. Overall, roughly 13 percent of U.S. assistance has targeted the most pressing national problem over time. Slightly more than one-third (37 percent) has targeted the top three most pressing problems. Lastly, just over half (52 percent) has focused on the top five problems cited by survey respondents.

However, there are wide differences in country-level alignment patterns. On the low-end, less than half of U.S. assistance over time has focused on the top five citizen priorities in

<sup>53</sup> Figures include both official development assistance (ODA) and other official flows (OOF).

Panama (21 percent), Chile (29 percent), Guatemala (30 percent), El Salvador (33 percent), Honduras (42 percent), Dominican Republic (46 percent), Brazil (47 percent), and Paraguay (48 percent). On the other end, more than two-thirds of U.S. assistance has targeted the top five national problems in Bolivia (67 percent), Colombia (91 percent), and Venezuela (92 percent). Large-scale security and/or governance programs account for the stronger alignment in these latter countries. In contrast, the modest U.S. focus on crime and security concerns in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama explains the relatively low degree of alignment.

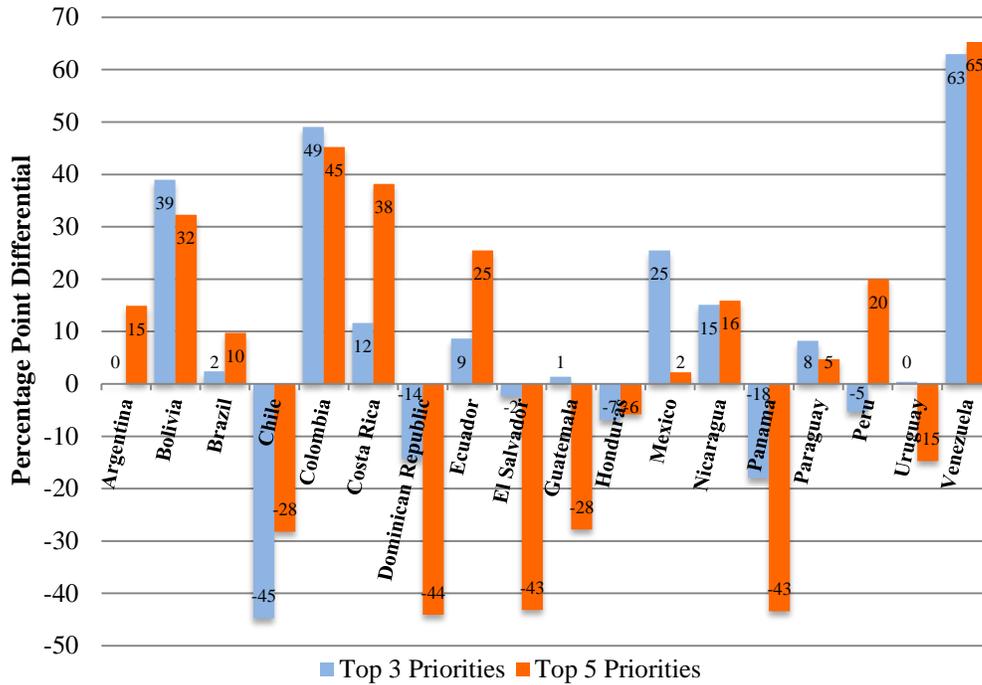
**Figure 11 – U.S. Alignment with Country-Level Problems, Average for 2005-2011**



Source: Latinobarometer, OECD Creditor Reporting System, and author’s calculations

U.S. and Inter-American Development Bank Comparison: Compared to the U.S., the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) demonstrates a slightly lower degree of alignment with what Latin Americans cite as their nations’ most pressing problems. On average, 30 percent of its portfolio directly addresses the top three concerns cited in Latinobarometer surveys compared to 37 percent for U.S. assistance. Roughly 50 percent of its assistance aligns with people’s top five concerns compared to 52 percent for U.S. programs.

**Figure 12 – Difference Between U.S. and IDB Alignment with Citizens’ Most Pressing Concerns**



Source: Latinobarometer, OECD Creditor Reporting System, and author’s calculations

In contrast to the AfDB, there is a wide degree of variation in how U.S. and IDB alignment compare across countries. The U.S. is significantly more aligned in 11 countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela). On the other hand, the IDB is more aligned in 7 other Latin American nations (Chile, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Uruguay). There are no discernible cross-country patterns that would explain these alignment differences. Instead, they appear to be driven by country-specific dynamics. By illustration, the U.S. has provided large assistance commitments to help address crime and security concerns in Colombia and Mexico (the overwhelmingly most pressing national problem cited by citizens there). However, nearly half of U.S. assistance to El Salvador has focused on infrastructure development – which has never risen to a top 5 national problem over the last decade.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>The Millennium Challenge Corporation’s \$461 million compact with El Salvador explains this heavy relative emphasis on infrastructure. Interestingly, the Salvadoran government was responsible for selecting the compact’s thematic area(s), with consultative input from civil society and the private sector. Moreover, these MCC investments ultimately were designed to unlock employment and income opportunities for Salvadorans through improved linkages with domestic and regional markets – which would align with the nation’s most pressing problems. This latter point illustrates that a range of thematic areas (particularly infrastructure) have an indirect (and sometimes direct) impact on jobs and income related issues.

## Box 2 – US Partnership for Growth Approach to Alignment

The Partnership for Growth (PFG) is a relatively new development framework aimed at accelerating and sustaining broad-based economic growth within a select group of emerging market countries. The model involves the use of constraints-to-growth analyses and joint country action plans (JCAPs) to target and remove high priority barriers to growth. The resulting plans are employed over a five-year period by both the U.S. and the partner government using a range of different aid and non-aid tools. To date, four countries have been selected as PFG partners (El Salvador, Ghana, the Philippines, and Tanzania). Each is currently engaged in developing the respective JCAPs or in the early stages of execution. Country ownership is one of the core PFG principles. Partner countries are required to play prominent roles in all aspects of the decision-making process, from policy conception through implementation. U.S. and partner country economists jointly lead each constraints-to-growth analysis and JCAP.

## Policy Considerations and Recommendations

U.S. politicians and policymakers should reflect upon this potential misalignment between U.S. assistance commitments and people’s most pressing concerns in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. More specifically, they should consider the broader implications for U.S. development policy effectiveness, U.S. foreign policy and influence, and national security policy. It is particularly important during an era of budget austerity and increasing pressure to reduce U.S. foreign assistance budgets.

If the U.S. government intends to continue emphasizing a country ownership and alignment based development approach, then it needs to take more concerted steps to solicit and incorporate local citizen views when developing engagement strategies. Several additional policy questions related to US development policy tools should be explored as well.

- (1) *Should the U.S. government require regular citizen surveys to influence the formulation of foreign assistance strategies and programmatic priorities?* The Afrobarometer and Latinobarometer surveys provide an instructive guide into people’s concerns.<sup>55</sup> However, dedicated survey instruments could provide a more thorough and customized foundation for determining U.S. (and other donors’) development priorities. For example, the surveys could include questions that help to identify where U.S. development activities could both match people’s priorities and have the greatest marginal impact.
- (2) *Should U.S. health assistance programs in Sub-Saharan Africa be recalibrated?* In recent years, signature global health programs have been largely protected from budget cuts –

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<sup>55</sup> While USAID has been a longtime financial supporter of Afrobarometer, it is unclear how much it has utilized the survey data for programmatic purposes. The U.S. government does not provide financial support to Latinobarometer (see <http://www.latinobarometro.org/latino/LATCorporacion.jsp> for further details).

while most other development programs have come under increasing pressure.<sup>56</sup> If the U.S. government wants to take country alignment principles seriously, then policymakers cannot avoid a thoughtful and careful examination of the budgetary tradeoffs presented by the heavy focus on African health programs. PEPFAR has already begun to shift financial and operational responsibility for HIV/AIDS programs in a few middle-income countries, such as South Africa.<sup>57</sup> However, further transition planning would be required in other focus countries. Importantly, any potential transition would take time and must be predicated upon national governments and private sector providers filling the ensuing gap – thereby protecting the progress achieved to date.

- (3) *Should the U.S. scale up its support for the African Development Bank?* The AfDB performs significantly better than the U.S. government at responding to Africans' most pressing development-related concerns. As a result, the U.S. should consider adjusting its budget allocations in favor of scaled up contributions to the AfDB (in addition to meeting its ongoing general capital increase commitments). This could be an effective and leveraged way to increase U.S. support for top-tier concerns related to infrastructure and jobs/income. Relatedly, the U.S. government may need to explore potential steps to improve the IDB's alignment with Latin Americans' most pressing problems, particularly in the areas of crime/security and jobs/income.
- (4) *Should the U.S. unleash under-utilized private sector-based development tools, such as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)?* If Africans and Latin Americans are acutely worried about economic opportunities (e.g., jobs/income), then the U.S. should consider buttressing its existing institutions and tools tailored to promoting U.S. investment abroad. Currently, one-quarter of OPIC's \$16 billion portfolio is focused on Sub-Saharan Africa, making it the largest region by volume. It is followed closely by Latin America, which accounts for roughly one-quarter of OPIC's total portfolio as well. Moreover, OPIC has roughly \$13 billion of additional deployable capital – which would not require congressional appropriations. A recent Center for Global Development paper outlines a number of concrete ideas for unlocking this latent potential – including hiring more staff, providing OPIC with equity and technical assistance authorities, and consolidating related programs spread across multiple government agencies under OPIC's management.<sup>58</sup>
- (5) *Is U.S. engagement on crime and security in Latin America sufficient?* U.S. support for regional governments' efforts to combat growing crime – including drug cartels and gangs – has expanded significantly over the last five years. Nonetheless, public concerns remain on the rise and now outrank jobs/income as the number one

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<sup>56</sup> See <http://www.cgdev.org/blog/global-health-fares-relatively-well-fy14-state-and-foreign-ops-appropriations> and <http://www.cgdev.org/blog/fy14-state-and-foreign-ops-appropriations-development-wonk's-primer>.

<sup>57</sup> See <http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/pepfar.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Leo, Moss, and Schwanke (2013), *OPIC Unleashed: Strengthening US Tools to Promote Private-Sector Development Overseas*, Center for Global Development. See <http://www.cgdev.org/publication/opic-unleashed-strengthening-us-tools-promote-private-sector-development-overseas>.

problem across the region. As such, U.S. policymakers may need to consider whether existing country-level efforts are adequate. Particularly in places where security-related assistance accounts for a small share of total U.S. commitments, such as the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama.

- (6) *What is the future of the MCC – the only U.S. development institution with an explicit mandate to support country-based priorities?* Where the U.S. has exhibited strong alignment in Sub-Saharan Africa (and Latin America to a lesser degree), the MCC has typically played a central role. Along with OPIC, it is the premier U.S. vehicle for addressing economic opportunity priorities in eligible countries (and infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa). U.S. officials should explore options for better leveraging MCC operations – including ways of using compact financing to crowd in large-scale private investments – as a means of increasing development resources directed as citizen’s concerns and priorities. The MCC’s 10-year anniversary in early 2014 provides an opportune moment to consider these adjustments.
- (7) *Should the U.S. government expand support for USAID’s under-resourced economic growth programs, such as the Development Credit Authority?* USAID’s economic growth and trade programs have long been under-resourced, particularly when compared to global health and humanitarian assistance outlays. Even when the Feed the Future initiative is incorporated, USAID provides only modest support to help address job/income and infrastructure related concerns – particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Going forward, it should actively consider options for scaling its efforts in these areas, such as through greater support for the Development Credit Authority program.

## **Conclusion**

The United States government has made repeated declarations over the last decade to align its assistance programs behind developing countries’ priorities. By utilizing public attitude surveys for 42 African and Latin American countries, this paper examines how well the U.S. has implemented this guiding principle. Overall, this analysis suggests that U.S. assistance commitments are only modestly aligned with what people in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America care the most about – jobs/income, infrastructure, and crime and security. By comparison, the African Development Bank – which is majority-led by regional country shareholders – performs significantly better than the United States. Somewhat surprisingly, the Inter-American Development Bank – which is also led by regional shareholders – demonstrates a low relative level of support for people’s top concerns.

These findings raise a number of strategic questions for U.S. policymakers and politicians that span development policy, foreign policy, and national security considerations. At their core, these questions may ultimately revolve around a philosophical debate about whether U.S. assistance should largely function as a social safety net and service provider of last resort in developing countries. Or, whether it should be driven by what ordinary people believe are the most pressing problems in their country. As this debate intensifies, the U.S. government should decide whether it will proactively solicit and respond to citizens' views or whether it will unilaterally assume that development needs and personal priorities are one in the same.

# Appendix I

## Afrobarometer: Survey Response Categories

Jobs/Income	Economic/Financial Policies	Food Security
Wages, incomes and salaries Unemployment Farming/agriculture Land Agricultural marketing Poor work ethics (Botswana only) Union matters (Tanzania only)	Management of the economy Rates and Taxes Loans/credit Foreign Exchange (Malawi only) Fuel (Malawi only) Currency devaluation and inflation (Malawi only) Fuel subsidy, high fuel prices (Nigeria only) Use of foreign currency (Zimbabwe only) Lack of foreign currency (Zimbabwe only) Agriculture input subsidy problems (Malawi only) Inflation, high food/commodity prices (Uganda only)	Food shortage/famine Drought Food prices/Cost of living/Commodity prices
Health	Security	Governance
Health AIDS Sickness/Disease Alcohol related issues (Botswana only) Drug/substance abuse (South Africa only)	Crime and Security Political violence War Civil war Political instability/political divisions/ethnic tensions Domestic violence/VAW/rape (Malawi only)	Corruption Gender issues/women's rights Democracy/political rights Lack of transparency (Botswana only) Same sex relationships (Malawi only) Presidential term limit (Uganda only) Constitutional matters (Tanzania only) Leadership (Tanzania only) Immigration related issues (Botswana only) Removal of sanctions (Zimbabwe only)
Infrastructure	Education	Poverty and Inequality
Transportation Communications Infrastructure/roads Electricity Housing Water supply Toilet facilities (Ghana only) Sewerage/Sanitation (Namibia only) Flood management and control (Nigeria only)	Education	Poverty/destitution Orphans/street children/homeless children Discrimination/Inequality IDPs resettlement/IDPs Financial support for disabled & elderly (Zimbabwe only)

Environment = *None*

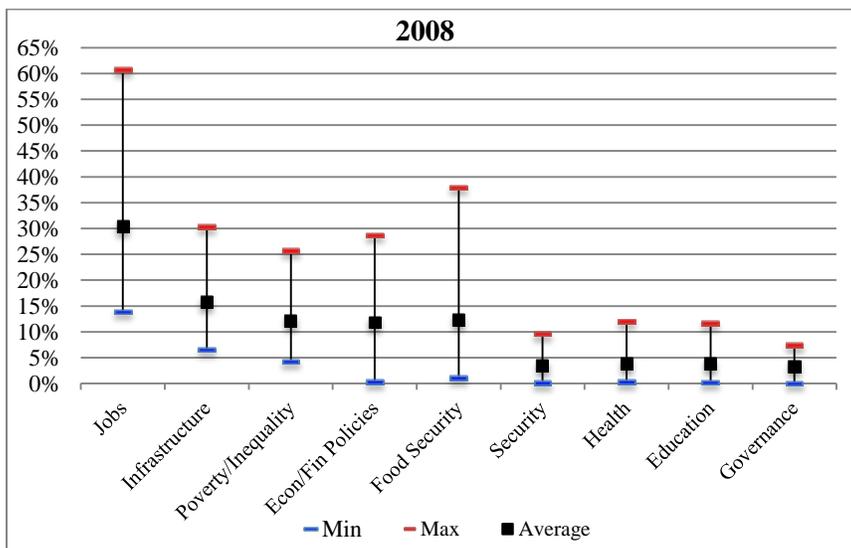
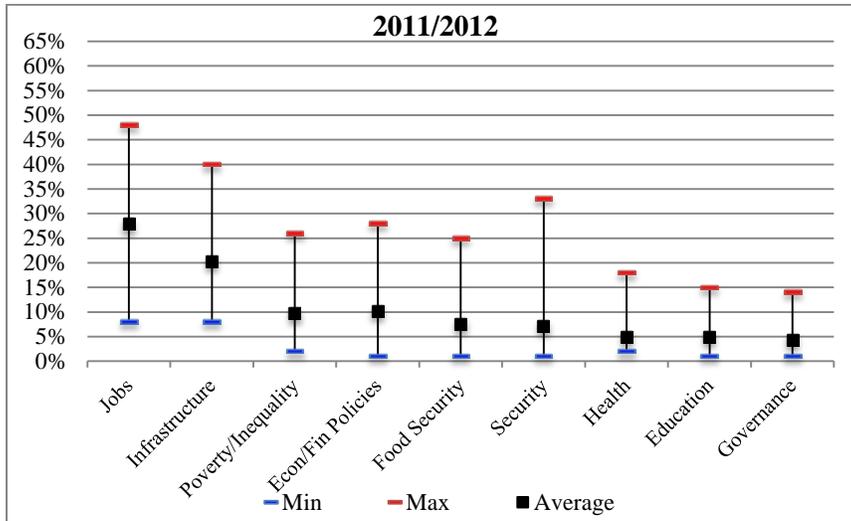
## Latinobarometer: Survey Response Categories

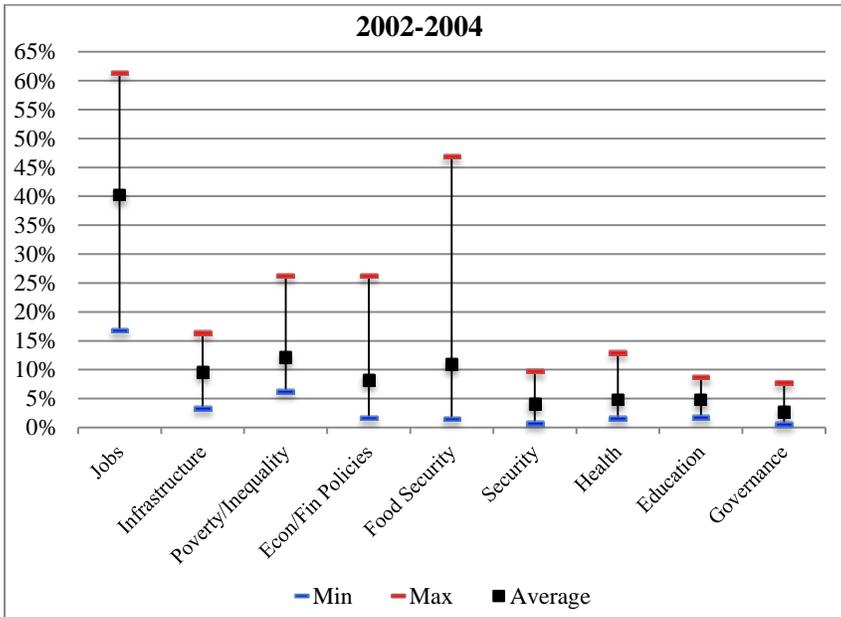
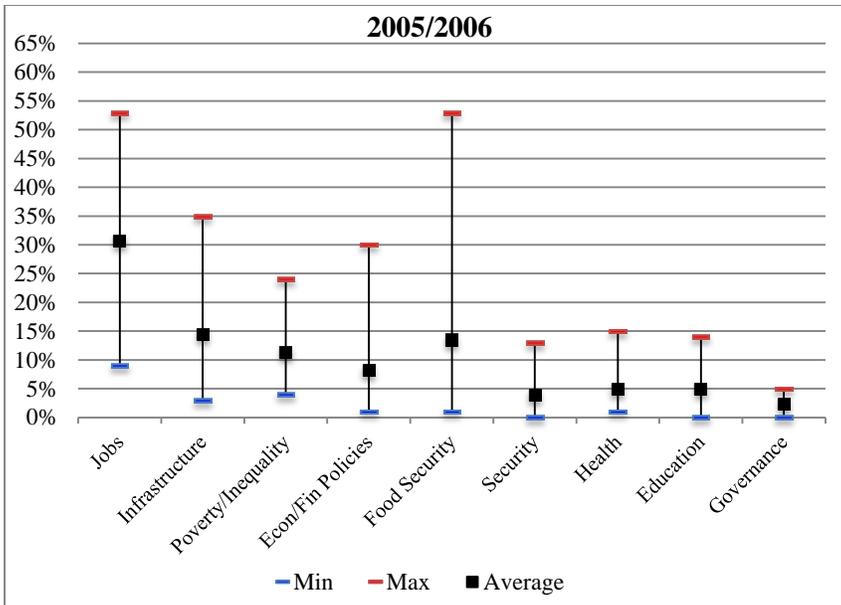
Jobs/Income	Economic/Financial Policies	Poverty and Inequality
Low salaries Instability in employment / Immigration Unemployment Lack of opportunities for youth	Inflation/ price rises / Economic Crisis Economy/economical problems/financial	Poverty / Social Inequality Distribution of income, social injustice Social problems
Health	Security	Governance
Health Problems Drugs consumption /addiction	Terrorism/political violence/guerrilla Drug trafficking Crime /Public Security Border conflicts Problems with neighbor countries Violence, bands	Violation of Human rights Corruption Racial Discrimination Political Crisis
Infrastructure	Education	Environment
Transport Housing Problems Deficient basic services (water, electricity, ...)	Education problems	Environment problems Global heating

Food security = *None*

## Appendix II

### Sub-Saharan Africa: Descriptive Statistics of Most Pressing Problem Response Rates, by Issue Category





## Appendix III

### Categorization Methodology: ODA and Other Official Flows (by Purpose Code) and Thematic Issues

DAC CODE	CRS PURPOSE CODE	DESCRIPTION	THEMATIC ISSUE CODE
110		<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>
120		<b>HEALTH</b>	<b>HEALTH</b>
130		<b>POPULATION POLICIES/PROGRAMMES &amp; REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH</b>	<b>HEALTH</b>
140		<b>WATER &amp; SANITATION</b>	<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
150		<b>GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY</b>	-
151		<b>GOVERNMENT &amp; CIVIL SOCIETY, GENERAL</b>	-
	151.10	Public sector policy and administrative management	Economic & Financial Policies
	151.11	Public finance management	Economic & Financial Policies
	151.12	Decentralisation and support to subnational governments	Governance
	151.13	Anti-corruption organisations and institutions	Governance
	151.30	Legal and judicial development	Security and Crime
	151.50	Democratic participation and civil society	Governance
	151.51	Elections	Governance
	151.52	Legislatures and political parties	Governance
	151.53	Media and free flow of information	Governance
	151.60	Human rights	Governance
	151.70	Women's equality organisations and institutions	Governance
152		<b>CONFLICT PREVENTION &amp; RESOLUTION, PEACE AND SECURITY</b>	<b>SECURITY &amp; CRIME</b>
160		<b>OTHER SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE &amp; SERVICES</b>	-
	160.10	Social/ welfare services	Safety Nets/Humanitarian
	160.20	Employment policy and administrative management	Jobs/Income
	160.30	Housing policy and administrative management	Jobs/Income
	160.40	Low-cost housing	Safety Nets/Humanitarian
	160.50	Multisector aid for basic social services	Safety Nets/Humanitarian
	160.61	Culture and recreation	Education
	160.62	Statistical capacity building	Economic & Financial Policies
	160.63	Narcotics control	Security & Crime
	160.64	Social mitigation of HIV/AIDS	Health
210		<b>TRANSPORT &amp; STORAGE</b>	<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
220		<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	-
	220.10	Communications policy and administrative management	Infrastructure
	220.20	Telecommunications	Infrastructure
	220.30	Radio/television/print media	Governance
	220.40	Information and communication technology (ICT)	Infrastructure
230		<b>ENERGY GENERATION &amp; SUPPLY</b>	<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
240		<b>BANKING &amp; FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>	<b>JOBS/INCOME</b>
250		<b>BUSINESS &amp; OTHER SERVICES</b>	<b>JOBS/INCOME</b>
311		<b>AGRICULTURE</b>	-
	311.10	Agricultural policy and administrative management	Economic & Financial Policies
	311.20	Agricultural development	Jobs/Income
	311.30	Agricultural land resources	Environment
	311.40	Agricultural water resources	Jobs/Income
	311.50	Agricultural inputs	Jobs/Income
	311.61	Food crop production	Jobs/Income
	311.62	Industrial crops/export crops	Jobs/Income
	311.63	Livestock	Jobs/Income
	311.64	Agrarian reform	Economic & Financial Policies
	311.65	Agricultural alternative development	Security & Crime
	311.66	Agricultural extension	Jobs/Income
	311.81	Agricultural education/training	Jobs/Income
	311.82	Agricultural research	Jobs/Income
	311.91	Agricultural services	Jobs/Income
	311.92	Plant and post-harvest protection and pest control	Jobs/Income
	311.93	Agricultural financial services	Jobs/Income
	311.94	Agricultural co-operatives	Jobs/Income
	311.95	Livestock/veterinary services	Jobs/Income
312		<b>FORESTRY</b>	-
	312.10	Forestry policy and administrative management	Economic & Financial Policies
	312.20	Forestry development	Environment
	312.61	Fuelwood/charcoal	Jobs/Income
	312.81	Forestry education/training	Jobs/Income
	312.82	Forestry research	Jobs/Income
	312.91	Forestry services	Jobs/Income
313		<b>FISHING</b>	-
	313.10	Fishing policy and administrative management	Economic & Financial Policies
	313.20	Fishery development	Jobs/Income
	313.81	Fishery education/training	Jobs/Income
	313.82	Fishery research	Jobs/Income
	313.91	Fishery services	Jobs/Income

## Categorization Methodology: ODA and Other Official Flows (by Purpose Code) and Thematic Issues

(continued)

DAC CODE	CRS PURPOSE CODE	DESCRIPTION	THEMATIC ISSUE CODE
321		<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>JOBS/INCOME</b>
322		<b>MINERAL RESOURCES &amp; MINING</b>	-
	322.10	Mineral/mining policy and administrative management	Economic & Financial Policies
	322.20	Mineral prospection and exploration	Jobs/Income
	322.61	Coal	Jobs/Income
	322.62	Oil and gas	Jobs/Income
	322.63	Ferrous metals	Jobs/Income
	322.64	Nonferrous metals	Jobs/Income
	322.65	Precious metals/materials	Jobs/Income
	322.66	Industrial minerals	Jobs/Income
	322.67	Fertilizer minerals	Jobs/Income
	322.68	Offshore minerals	Jobs/Income
323		<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>	<b>ECONOMIC &amp; FINANCIAL POLICIES</b>
331		<b>TRADE POLICY &amp; REGULATIONS &amp; TRADE-RELATED ADJUSTMENT</b>	<b>ECONOMIC &amp; FINANCIAL POLICIES</b>
332		<b>TOURISM</b>	<b>ECONOMIC &amp; FINANCIAL POLICIES</b>
400		<b>MULTISECTOR/CROSS-CUTTING</b>	-
410		<b>GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>
430		<b>OTHER MULTISECTOR</b>	-
	430.10	Multisector aid	Other
	430.30	Urban development and management	Infrastructure
	430.40	Rural development	Economic & Financial Policies
	430.50	Non-agricultural alternative development	Security & Crime
	430.81	Multisector education/training	Education
	430.82	Research/scientific institutions	Education
510		<b>GENERAL BUDGET SUPPORT</b>	<b>ECONOMIC &amp; FINANCIAL POLICIES</b>
520		<b>DEVELOPMENTAL FOOD AID/FOOD SECURITY ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>
530		<b>OTHER COMMODITY ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
600		<b>ACTION RELATING TO DEBT</b>	<b>ECONOMIC &amp; FINANCIAL POLICIES</b>
700		<b>HUMANITARIAN AID</b>	<b>SAFETY NETS/HUMANITARIAN</b>
720		<b>EMERGENCY RESPONSE</b>	-
	720.10	Material relief assistance and services	Safety Nets/Humanitarian
	720.40	Emergency food aid	Food Security
	720.50	Relief co-ordination; protection and support services	Safety Nets/Humanitarian
730		<b>RECONSTRUCTION, RELIEF, &amp; REHABILITATION</b>	<b>SAFETY NETS/HUMANITARIAN</b>
910		<b>ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF DONORS</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
930		<b>REFUGEES IN DONOR COUNTRIES</b>	<b>SAFETY NETS/HUMANITARIAN</b>
998		<b>UNALLOCATED/ UNSPECIFIED</b>	<b>OTHER</b>

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