

Remarks by Sheri-Nouane Duncan-Jones

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The United States Agency for International Development is the US government's development agency. This Agency is a catalyst with partners in over 100 countries around the world, local organizations, private sector and through other partnerships to build communities and lift economic growth and prosperity. USAID's field presence and longstanding relationships with country governments and other local development partners serve as a foundation for the Agency's leadership role in development. This work strengthens open markets for goods, services and commerce and supports partners to become self-reliant. We promote prosperity through investments that expand markets for trade in services and goods and create a level playing field to participate in global trade.

Through USAID programs, we focus in particular on developing and least developed countries to create opportunities to raise living standards, providing countries with the resources to expand basic services and most important of all – enabling citizens to chart their own prosperous futures.

To overcome the many challenges developing and least developed countries face and advance rapid, sustained and broad-based growth, we dedicate resources to help countries participate more effectively in global trade, including a focus on services-related outcomes. These types of interventions fall into four categories:

1. Mobilizing new investors and private capital to underserved sectors and geographies, to create productive jobs, new economic opportunities, and enhance access to and quality of services

with the help of foreign partners – has begun to increase and modernize its port capacity. Due to the presence of the port industry, there are a number of opportunities for employment in that sector, as well as in related (i.e., transportation, logistics, etc.) areas. However, due to lack of workforce readiness, many of the jobs are either filled by foreigners or remain unfilled, and as such, the projects links back to assist the country to meet this need.

With 70 percent of employers in the Lower Mekong sub-region looking to hire, but only 16 percent finding recent graduates who have the skills they need, a regional USAID project in the Peoples Democratic Republic of Lao better prepares youth for employment by bridging the gap between educational institutions and employers. Through annual labor market assessments, the project identifies the priorities, challenges and opportunities in the region as voiced by employers, education institutions and job-seekers. These needs are translated to universities and vocational schools that then adapt their curriculum and teaching approach to better meet private-sector demands, and to engage enterprises to strengthen work-based (hands-on) learning opportunities, such as internships. With collaboration with leading multinational technology companies such as Cisco, Intel and Amazon Web Services technology and innovative instruction is introduced and leveraged in classrooms. The number of local industry partners is growing through learning hubs.

These are a few examples, and no one country example is exactly the same. With in-country offices in over 80 countries, USAID builds and develops relationships with partner governments (a)7 (r) b.4 (g)