



*Office of Inspector General*

May 4, 2020

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Minority Leader Schumer:

I write in response to your February 10, 2020 letter underscoring the importance of whistleblower protections and requesting several actions on the part of my office, the USAID Office of Inspector General (OIG). As Inspector General, I can attest to the critical role agency employees, along with contractors and grantees, can play in identifying and reporting fraud, waste, and abuse. My office takes all allegations of misconduct seriously, including any claims of retaliation against anyone who has made protected disclosures of wrongdoing. We also diligently maintain the confidentiality of those who make disclosures to our office and take steps to ensure they receive the appropriate protections to which they are entitled under the law.

As requested in your letter, I have sought and received responsive letters from each of the agencies we oversee—USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF), the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC). In their responses, each agency's general counsel provided the requested certification that they have not and will not permit retaliation against anyone who has made, or in the future makes, protected disclosures of presidential misconduct. I am forwarding each agency's response as an enclosure to this letter.

With respect to agencies' recent efforts to notify personnel of their legal rights to make protected disclosures anonymously and free from reprisals, the agencies provided the following information:

- USAID last notified staff of their rights on January 16, 2020;
- MCC last notified staff of their rights on April 3, 2020;
- USADF last notified staff of their rights on March 5, 2020;
- IAF last notified staff of their rights on March 27, 2020; and
- DFC last notified staff of their rights in May 2019 (prior to the transition of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to the DFC), and expects to provide a similar notification in May 2020.

On this note, I also want to underscore the role that OIG plays in making sure that agency employees and contractors are fully apprised of their right to safely make protected disclosures without fear of retaliation. OIG has had a designated whistleblower protection coordinator since the position was first mandated in 2012 by amendment to the Inspector General Act of 1978, and we continue to increase our outreach on whistleblower protection. For example, OIG attorneys and investigators have teamed up to provide in-person training to all new USAID employees and contract employees as part of the onboarding process, on their right and responsibility to disclose fraud, waste, and abuse. This training focuses on the legal protections against whistleblower retaliation afforded to them, should they choose to report. We also have increased our training—in forums across the world—to employees of USAID contractors and grantees, educating them on their legal right to disclose fraud or misconduct in relation to their USAID awards, free from reprisal. These employees are also provided with information on how to contact OIG’s hotline to report allegations of retaliation.

Thank you for your support of whistleblower protections, and of the work of inspectors general across the Federal government. Should you or your staff wish to discuss my office’s role in protecting the vital role whistleblowers play, or any other aspect of our oversight of U.S. foreign assistance programs, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 712-1150.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ann Calvaresi Barr  
Inspector General

Enclosure