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WEBINAR

HOW TRANSPARENT IS GLOBAL AID NOW, AND
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. INGRAM: Good morning. Good afternoon. Good evening. Depending on what time zone you're in. I'm George Ingram. I'm a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, which is co-hosting this event today. I also serve as Chair of Friends who Publish What You Fund. Welcome to the launch of the 2020 Publish What You Fund Index IATI, The International Aid Transparency Initiative.

What is IATI? Using a common standards to which all donors and other organizations can report their data, IATI provides a framework through which data and other information is publicly available on a how and where organizations spend foreign aid money, the goal of which is to advance standards of living worldwide and reduce global poverty. The Index is a system for measuring how organizations are doing in meeting their commitment to transparency through IATI. The process is a consult of one, engages donors to help them improve the quality of their published data. Aid Transparency has come a long way in a decade. Publish What You Fund was established in 2009 to advocate for aid transparency primarily through robust publication. IATI was formerly launched 2 years later in 2011, as an initiative of civil society, DFID, the UNDP, and others. The U.S. committed to IATI in 2012. Today we are launching the 7th Index that covers 47 organizations. You might say we are in the 3rd phase of aid transparency. Phase 1 was about quantity, convincing donors, and other organizations to publish their aid data. Phase 2 was about quality, make the data more accurate, more rigorous. Phase 3, which Gary Forster will introduce, is about engagement, using the data to engage stakeholders, especially for donors to use their data to engage with local government officials and civil society, so the data is used to inform better decisions and programs. We will begin today with a presentation by Gary on the findings of this year's index which will be followed by a panel discussion.

Gary Forester is CEO of Publish What Your Fund. He brings to aid transparency several decades of working in assistance programs in the field, especially in the area of health in Africa. Gary, over to you.

MR. FORESTER: Thank you, George. As George said, I'm Gary Forester, and I'm proud to be the chief executive here at Publish What You Fund. Let me also take the opportunity to welcome all

of our viewers from around the world. We're delighted that you could join us here today for the launch of the 2020 Aid Transparency Index. For those of you who are new to the Index, let me offer a brief explanation of how it works.

The Aid Transparency Index is the only independent measure of aid transparency among the world's major aids donors. It is the result of a 6 month process where we check the aid data being shared by aid organizations, using a combination of software and manual checks to test the agencies that meet our criteria against 35 indicators, including things like financial and budget information, project location, impact and project performance. We do the data checks at 2 separate points, which means we can provide feedback in between so that agencies can improve their transparencies. We use these results to produce a score and rank the donors according to their levels of aid transparency. This year, we included 47 agencies.

So, I'm going to be speaking for around 10 minutes before I hand back to George and our panelists for the discussion. I want to cover 3 areas.

First, context. This is no general preamble. There are some very specific developments, COVID included, which present some very real risks and aid transparency globally. Secondly, we are going to dig into the results. Where we made progress; where the gaps, who has done well, who hasn't. Thirdly and finally and what George is alluding to there, we're going to talk about where we go from here. What does the future of aid transparency look like?

So, first of all, the context. We produced the 2020 Aid Transparency Index in the midst of the most serious and devastating pandemic in living memory. As of this more, we have more than 9,000,000 cases of Covid-19 globally, and we've seen more than 470,000 deaths as a result. The implications of the Covid virus pandemic for the aid sector include major impacts in both donor and partner countries. Bilateral, multilateral, and philanthropic donors and the private sector are pledging and committing and disbursing billions of dollars. As countries and international organizations quickly reallocate large quantities of aid to deal with the Sinus of the coronavirus pandemic, the decisions, and actions they take should be open to public scrutiny. Meanwhile, the impending economic recession is

going to result in a budget cuts for tens of millions of dollars. Major donors are already reconsidering their budget and planed activities, freezing, and cutting substantial programs.

Finally, we're seeing a resurgence of nationalistic aid policy. We've seen national development financial institutions authorized to make investments on their own soil and we've seen world leading aid agencies merge with much less transparent foreign ministries whose impact is unknown. Globally, ODA budgets are being spent by more and more government departments, some with limited development experience. To ensure there is a bigger need than every before, less money available to address that need and increasing calls to spend it home, rather than when it's needed most.

With resources stretched like this, governments must target and spend aid as effectively as possibly. Aid transparency facilitates information sharing among donors and with partner governments. It is key to improve the efficiency of resource allocation, coordination of the response, and for donors to learn from one another's interventions. Pro-active, timely and comprehensive and open data on aid flow is also critical for public oversight and accountability. Before we move on to the results, I just want to reflect quickly on our launch in 2018.

At that time, we were rightly challenged by a number of panelists to think about the broader development context. At that time, as if the case now, we were seeing substantial increases in spending by development finance institutions. We have since started a whole piece of work looking into how to improve the transparency of these multi-billion-dollar organizations, the activities they understand and the impact they have. We were challenged to think about how transparency works at the local level. Our recent humanitarian transparency series launched just last week looks into precisely that. We were challenged to think more broadly about how cross cutting issues such as gender work can add value to the current aid data landscape. We've accepted these challenges and we look forward to reporting back on our progress in due course.

So, on to the results. Before we get into the detail, let's be very clear on the headline. The 2020 Aids Transparency Index reveals an improvement in overall transparency among the world's major aid agencies, but a worrying lack of transparency on the impact of aid projects. The donors are

publishing increasingly more, better quality data in the international aid transparency initiative standard, also known as the AIC standard. All of the donors, except those in the very poor category, are publishing AIC data about their activities and policies, meaning their information is open, timely, comparable, and centralized. Eleven donors are now in the very good category, fifteen in the good category. This means that over half of the 47 donors we assessed are now ranked as good or very good.

A wide variety of aid donors are included in the 2020 Index. Development finance institutions perform very well, taking 4 of the top 5 spots. However, several of these, including the Asian Development Bank, which topped the Index ranking were only assessed for their Sovereign landing portfolio, to they did not publish data about their private sector lending. The remainder of the very good category includes leading by natural agencies, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, DVID and Global Affairs, Canada, the U.N. agencies, UNDP and UNICEF, and the Vertical Funds Gabby and the Global Funds. At the other end of the spectrum, the (inaudible) performers include the U.K.'s Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs for Japan, Norway, Denmark, China, Ireland, and the UAE, the development agencies of Turkey and Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Department of Defense. The donors in the Index have continued to publish data on a more regular basis. Sixty-two percent of the donors assessed in the 2020 Index published AIDE data on a monthly basis, compared to only 51 percent in 2018. This shows an increasing systemization of publication among aid donors. It means that amore up to date, forward looking data is available for stakeholders to enable better decision making and want to train on utilities. If we don't attack all record of organ challenges such as Covid, it's essential we have the most up to date information.

Particularly noteworthy has been the performance of the 6 donors that were categorized as poor in 2018 but have been able to increase their publication quality and frequency significantly, a considerable achievement and an example of what is possible when donors apply attention to transparency. There is a great case study of New Zealand's experience within the full Index report. However, there do remain challenges. There is persistent gas in publication of performance data. While more donors are now publishing objectives, only a minority are publishing results of their projects. Fewer

still are publishing project reviews and evaluations. It is not clear to us whether it's because that

information is not being shared or whether it is simply not being collected in the first place. Without impact

information, stakeholders monitoring donor projects have no way to gauge the effectiveness and value of

aid spending, nor can donors extract learning from successful and unsuccessful projects.

Among the bilateral donors we assessed are both development agencies and foreign

trade or defense ministries that include aid delivery in their mandate. The development agencies

generally perform better in the Index than non-specialized ministries. This graph shows a comparison

between the scores of aid agencies and foreign ministries of the countries which we assessed for both

titles. Another finding is that the Index itself continues to drive behavior towards greater transparency and

openness among aid donors. After we share initial results from data at the start of the process, donors

work to improve their data in time for the final round of data collection. The average score, based on the

first set of data this time round, was 54.4 across all of the donors. This average increased by 9 points to

63.4 when we assessed the final set of data 4 months later. The way scores improved during data

collection is evidence of the value of the Index process itself.

So, finally, where do we go from here? We talked about the current context. Aid is going

to be more stretched than ever and as such has to be targeted as precisely and implemented as

effectively as possible. We've explored the results of the 2020 Aid Transparency Index. The overall

message is positive, more, and better data, but the lack of impact data is a serious concern, as is the

performance of some of the major aid agencies who simply aren't pulling their weight. So, given what we

know, what does the future of aid transparency look like? Beyond the Index, the Publish What You Fund

team engage on a broad range of transparency research and advocacy efforts. Increasingly our work is

highlighting the extent to which aid transparency has become to talk down, based on publication of large

data sets at headquarters' level, and not much else. We recognize that we have arguably been part of the

problem. The Index rewards the publication of large volumes of timely, comparable, and good quality

data. It doesn't reward efforts by donors to ensure that this data is used at a country level by agency staff,

either to support their own decision-making processes or to engage with stake holders, including partner

governments and CSA's. As a result, we have donor countries that are unaware of the wealth of data and information that exists and stakeholders on the ground who perceive certain actors as untransparent, despite their commendable publishing practices at the headquarters level. In such a situation, with no one reviewing the numbers, there are no feedback loops. So, quality issues in the data can remain for long periods without being identified and addressed. We need to transition from a concept of data use to one of data engagement. To date, there has been an underlying assumption of if you build it, they will come. If you publish it, they will use.

Our own publication report called "With Publication Comes Responsibility", identified the need for aid agencies to use their own data in strategic planning and local engagement. In working with our partners, we have seen firsthand the variety of stakeholders that seek a data, ranging from CSO's and their elected representatives to think tanks and central banks. But let us separate our data use from data engagement. Date use issues the existence of usable data sets that meets the need of every type of user and implies individuals or organizations with the agency ability and incentives to use data. The use also suggests a distant hands-off relationship between the data producer and the end user. When we talk about data engagement, we're talking about reducing that distance. We're talking about donor agencies meeting with their counterparts, using the data as a basis for discussion, talking about planned activities and ongoing successes and failures. That's how we identify data needs. That's how we find gaps in the data. That's how we build trust between partners, and that's how we make sure that our development decisions are informed by evidence.

So, in the coming months, we will be looking into how donors can do data engagement. We'll be speaking with donors and partner country governments and CSO's, and we'll also be looking at how we can incorporate data engagement into the Aid Transparency Index methodology for future generations. As we embark on this, we'd love to hear about ideas and approaches and experiences where this has been done well. Ultimately, we all want local partners and implementers to own their own development. That includes their response to Covid. We believe that data engagement is an important way to enable that.

So, as I conclude, I'd just like to say a couple of quick thank you' s. Firstly, thank you to all of the agencies who engaged us throughout the Index process. Secondly, I want to thank the 34 independent pair reviewers who help scrutinize the process and scoring. Their input is invaluable for insuring our rigorous and fair process. I want to thank the Publish What You Fund team. Alex Tilly, who lead the research, with the support of Elmer Jenkins and everyone else who has at some point chipped in over the last 6 months to make this report a reality. For those of you who are new to the Index, it really does take 6 months to produce. It involves all reviews of all donors' data and requires the manual sampling of tens of thousands of documents. On that note, I'd like to pass back to George.

MR. INGRAM: Gary, thanks very much for that review of the findings of the 2020 Index. Before moving on to the panel, let me pick up on one point you made. You made the point that their funders, donors are increasing funding in the response to Covid, but reducing funding for traditional programs. I also know that IATI has adopted recently a Covid marker. How quickly can we see this shift in funding and IATI? Is it a matter of months or longer?

MR. FORSTER: Thank you, George. So, we are already seeing the data, as you rightly point out. IATI, as well as not just the UN financial tracking service and as well as the OECD doc. They have all provided guidance in how aid agencies and implements should report their information and how they can use Covid markers and activity tax to highlight when activity is Covid related. We are already seeing the data produced. We're seeing it visualized through platforms such as bee portal which visualizes UDIC data. During the aid agencies own portals, which run off of their anti-data. The last time I checked, which was this morning, we had more 900 activities on those portals that are active at those markers. So, we definitely are seeing, as organizations produce a report on the Covid activities. We are definitely seeing that coming back trough as in time with those organizations regular frequency at publication.

MR. INGRAM: Thank you, Gary. Gary is going to stay on the panel and we're now going to move to the other 3 members. Nora O'Connell is vice president for public policy and advocacy in Save The Children USA, and co-Chair saves global campaign on empowering rules. This is an issue she

knows very well, so when she joined Save, she had already become a leader in advocating for the

advancement of Friends Who Publish What You Fund. Secondly, Henry Asor brings direct engagement.

Remember that term engagement that Gary emphasized with today's topic. He manages the assistance

database at the Nigerian Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning, to which position he brings

over a decade of experience on aid data transparency and development cooperation. He also serves as

alternate vice chair of the governing board of IATI. Thirdly, Scott Hocklander is the mission director for the

USAID in Moldova. His career in USAID has spanned the world. Besides his current position in Moldova,

he has served in Africa, Asia, in the Caribbean. So, Scott, let me pose the first question to you. How do

you engage with stakeholders, generally? How do you share data and information? Specifically, what

types of organizations are your principal stakeholders? What information and data do you need to

engage with them? What is the form of that engagement? Obviously, engagement prior to Covid-19

because we all know what engagement is like right now. Scott?

                MR. HOCKLANDER: Yes. First of all, I just want to thank The Brookings Institution for

hosting event, to pull What You Fund For, the Aid Transparency Index, just congratulations on that. I

particularly, I think it's fantastic in terms of the mood, the evaluation, George, you talked about, and Gary,

what you talked about in terms of the focus of engagement and how important that is, compared to just

focusing on data equality or quantity. USA is very committed to transparency. I'm very please, very

pleased to see USAID has moved up that list a little bit by 8 points where the top of a good part of that

which is exciting to see. I think it reflects terms of quality, side as well as frequency of the publication and

USA is definitely focused on trying to make sure this data reaches the local level and it's used at the local

level, and has done things already in terms of translating some of the machine data. I had the data into

French, Spanish and Portuguese as well as launching the development landscape tool which I'll talk

about in a bit. As far as, as I was thinking through, who do you talk to and who do you share information

with, and it was more like who don't I share information with? Who are we not talking to? In fact, it

seems more like the more I get into my career, the people we don't talk to becomes less and less as we

realize that everyone really needs to be involved in development. With resources being as finite as they

are, to leave any part of society somehow untouched from that conversation is to basically miss out on something extremely important, an important leverage, important connection, et cetera.

So, in that sense, it's everyone really, and as far as like how we share data, I think both Gary and George both talked about the differences, like difference between use and any engagement. I think that's really important. When I think about information and I think about the availability of it, there is almost like this hierarchy of real utilization and engagement. You can just get it for info purposes. You can use it to deconflict in terms of what another partner is doing versus what you are doing. You can actually use it to coordinate with. We'll do this. You do this, very intentionally, to partner, to actually partner with someone and say, okay, let's both do this, and then to me, sort of like towards the last part, which gets to the engagement point, it's really about collaboration and that is to have that information basically upfront in the process, so you begin to look at activities. You basically work on the problem set from the beginning and everything from that is done in collaboration, in tandem, with your stakeholders. So, having that information available, having the same language, that everybody understands is incredibly important to get to that higher level of collaboration.

In terms of Moldova, I think that we have done a pretty good job at the technical level, by and large, amongst ourselves, other bilaterals, our host nation of course, and the beneficiaries. They've done a good job of coordinating through meetings, both before and now. The challenge, sometimes I think we could do better in terms of the strategic level coordination where sometimes it ends up being a little ad hoc. Information is shared through meetings. Information is shared through meetings, through the coordination meetings when they happen and of course, when we go in and have our engagement with a host nation. So, anything that can bring, I think, further organization, further structure to that, as I was thinking of the data and the little bit to tool that I'll talk about in a bit, a lot of just basically information of what your partners are doing allows you have a conversation, allows you to know who to talk to. It gives you like a starting point. I would also just say one other thing that's really important data is again, with finite resources, we can't know one donor, no one organization can cover everything. It's really responsible that we all work together to try and have a broad and comprehensive impact across the

development challenge. I think with USAD we are really focusing on countries during this self-reliance . It's really making sure that all the parts of development challenge are being addressed, at one time, and having a broad base of information to help us determine what really is our comparative advantage versus another donor partner, et cetera, is great. So, I think I'll stop there, pending further questions.

MR. INGRAM: Scott, thanks. You mentioned this new portal that AID has put up, requested by aid missions to make IATI data more widely available. Tell us about this new tool, how it's being used, and how it's being used to share data, and deepen relationships with stakeholders.

MR. HOCKLANDER: I think this story probably started a few years ago, as USAID got more involved in terms of providing the machine-readable added data. For those of us who don't like to see x's and o's, actually being able to engage with that data, understand that data is really critical. So, I think a lot of mission directors, like myself, were asking, hey, is there an interface or is there something that can be developed in which this data can then go in and we can then engage with it in different ways, visually lists download basically across the board. I think it's really from that request USAID said, okay, I think we need to do something here. Obviously, the positives in terms of having a tool like that are endless, going just beyond alignment, reducing duplication, helping with the development of strategies, et cetera. So, that's really sort of the genesis of the tool. I think maybe I'll just go to the slide. David, if you want to pop up the first one.

Just in terms of finding this, it's on the foreign aid explorer website, which is something that everyone has access to. If you go down, if you see on the left, it has beyond U.S.G., you hit that, and basically that takes you to the development cooperation landscape tool. The first slide that basically you come to allows you to input the country that you want to, are looking at. In this case, the slide shows that Moldova already has been entered into and it's popped up. It's got a few screens, I think, showing the map itself, I think, is really nice, gives you a visual of where development activities, I think, retaking place in a country. You have the ability to choose from different sectors, different organization types, to really describe what exactly view that you want to see separated out. Then if you actually click on the dots itself, it then pops up, further information about what's actually happening, including the dates, more specific

information, as well. There is also some third-party data that I think is also helpful, as far as providing the general context of what's happening. There are trends, in terms of showing the different levels of assistance has been provided by Moldavia donors, et cetera.

Then, further down if you continue to scroll down, you can get actually in more detail. This is really where it gives more activities themselves. Again, you search by the particular area that you're listed in. You are able to go and see all the different activities that are being implemented in the country, who is implementing them. Click on them and find really an amazing amount of information about what is happening.

Just to give you a sense of how we use the tool, we are always asking ourselves what are the other day, it's easier before, versus what we're doing. This Is Moldova p in the process of developing a new five-year strategy. One of the key parts of developing that strategy in terms of the work leading up to it, is basically dealing with consumer is not basically doing donor mapping. We use the tool early on to help us deal with initial concepts behind the strategy, to figure out who we needed to talk to, for example, we put together a list of organizations that we wanted to send out our survey to, to really make sure which sure we knew which factors we wanted to send our survey to, to really make we knew which survey we wanted to follow to.

So, I think there is also, not only a present importance but jo you can go back in time, there is historical data that you can really be informed by. Then to actually use the information to develop the more formal donor mapping part that informs our strategy. I think that's just one example we've been using it for, but also, as I mentioned earlier, it really helps in preparation for a meeting, to know who to talk to, to be able to go in and get really specific, ask questions about something and it really starts a conversation going in a way that is quite effective. So, I'll stop there, pending more questions.

MR. INGRAM: Thanks very much, Scott. Let's move from Moldova to Nigeria. Henry, what do you do? You're in the field; you're responsible for data. What are your responsibilities? What information and data do you need in order to fulfill your responsibilities, and how does that process work in Nigeria?

MR. NKANG: Thank you very much for having me. My responsibility in the main history is to manage the official information money made system of the government. In that role, I walk closely with relevant departments and units with the minister of finance for national planning, specifically the international cooperation departments, including, the monitoring of the validating department and the IT unit on the respective rules and responsibilities with respect of the utilization of the aid information money management aid platform.

I also liaise with all the diplomat departments in the country, including relevant government stakeholders, both at the national and sub-national levels to ensure effective utilization of the aid platform, particularly with respect to the regular and reliable debt into the system. I also in short timely generation and destination as to respective reports into the system of the industry and all the stakeholders, including the Central Bank of Nigeria, the project phase of Nigerian finance intelligence unit, Nigerian parliament, diplomat partners, civil society organization, media organizations and so on. I also carry out periodic training of business with the diplomat partners, as well as relevant government MDA's are now to upload to the system, as well as other activities that will strengthen and improve the performance of the system as a repository of aid data in the country. So, in a nutshell, those are my responsibilities and what I do.

In terms of the kind of data that I need, I need data that is segregated by donor, the donor category. That is multi-lateral donors, bilateral donors, international non-governmental organizations, diplomat advanced finance institutions and segregate that into sectors, geographic locations, transaction systems, whether they are grants, whether they are loans, whether the assistance is technical or whether it is materials that are bought. Essentially, information that provides complete picture of donor intervention in the country. Now, the things I use to determine the external influence for different sectors, to different port of call zones in the country. This also helps us to prevent duplication of activities and promote a credible distribution of the edge. The Central Bank (inaudible) for the completion of a balloon payment. The data is also used to gauge projects. If, in fact, implemented efficiently and what is intended when goods are delivered. It also shows if the activities product results, it moves to a nationality

that loves me. So the data information also assists our policy makers and planners. In fact the management of the ministry protects the positions on future activities as well as support their budget from coalition process. We are the clear history that does the budget for the country.

MR. INGRAM: Henry, thank you very much for that. Before I go to a second question, let me note for everybody that the hash tag for submitting questions are #2020index. So, Henry, what are the main issues that you have with donor data? How do any problems affect the ability for you? How do you implement programs and how can donors address those issues?

MR. NKANG: The main issues that we have with donor data i untimely entry of data by some donors. Some more of the donors are up to date with the party, but some are not up to date. That leads to having incomplete data. Then some donors use in-house reporting systems and therefore, regardless of the use of the government as a platform, as a kind of multiple taxing. Another issue we have is the frequent turnover of our business from the donor site. You know, some donors engage the staff on contract business. When do the conditions of the contract elapse? Then, they have –- there woo be a gap on the day of the new stuff and they will start the operation afresh. Then also, the issue of low organizational commitment. Some of the donors have not really committed to transparency and accountability. The implication of not having a great, complete, and timely data is that we cannot rely on the data for planning and decision making. In fact, we cannot account for the donor assistance if we don't have evidence by way of data. So, with regards to what the donors who do to deal with these issues, first, I will say that the donors who follow the standard of correct procedures, as the issue to them, and report data on a regular basis. The donors who also assign a full-time person to report data in line with our policy, our official development assistance policy. The (inaudible) should now provide basic information on their projects, including the project location, the amount committee, the amount is posted. Then they should also attend our refresher trainings, our meetings and provide us with feedback on what we can do to improve the system so that we can call great solutions together.

MR. INGRAM: Thank you very much, Henry. So, Nora, much of the emphasis of your work at Save is to build local ownership and empower local actors. So, development is done with full

participation in civil society and partner countries. Please say a bit more about why this is such a critical step.

MS. O'CONNELL: Absolutely. Thank you, Georgia, and thank you for Publish What You Fund for convening this panel. I'm very excited to actually be on this panel with a mix of government leaders, donors, and of course, being able to represent civil society because those are really the key actors to come together in order for data to be used in ways that really have an impact on people's lives.

The reason that local ownership is so critical and civil society, in particular, is that the key to countries making progress is actually when you have effective accountable government and informed and engaged people. So, that's really the focus of where change happens. If you have 8 projects or 8 data that aren't actually in that ecosystem between the people in a country and their government, then the aid actually isn't going to be as effective as it could be. So, we really see that engagement piece as foundational and data as sort of an element in that conversation. Data, in particular, I think, is really critical because it provides a place where a common understanding around both problems and solutions. Data takes all kinds of forms in terms of not only what kind of funding is going, where that funding is going, who that funding is benefiting, what are the outcomes being achieved through that funding. That whole continuum is really critical. The reason local ownership is so vital to that is that sitting in a place like Washington, D.C., where I usually work, when we look at aid data, we very often start from the U.S. government. Right? What is our government doing? What are those projects achieving? Members of Congress are talking about is that aid being accountable to U.S. taxpayers who are funding that at their expense. But when the Congress initiative is actually centered in communities, the conversation is actually focused on what are the changes that people want in their own lives? How are they defining the problems and solutions? What are their governments doing to drive change? What are donors doing to drive change? So, it flips the paradigm and puts the U.S. government as one of many actors with a focus on change and accountability to those communities versus it being about community accountability to, for example, U.S. taxpayers. So, just to give an example of where we sometimes run into problems, right now we're actually doing some research in Niger (phonetic) around the issue of child marriage. The

government has actually stepped up its leadership on this issue in recent years and is developing a

costed national action plan and how to address this issue. To understand what is at stake for the country,

76 percent of girls in Niger are married before the age of 18. Twenty-eight percent of girls are married

before the age of 15. So, this is something that has massive implications for the population. Also, it is

important to note that the leading cause of death for girls around the world in ages 15 to 19 is maternal

mortality. So, when you take an issue like early marriage, it's a human rights and gender-based violence

issue. It is a survival issue, literally, for those girls, and it's also a massive economic issue for a country.

Niger is also a country that is very aid dependent. Aid plays a big role in that country in that budgeting.

So, the ministry of planning in Niger has its costed action plan and is trying to look at what is aid funding

and what are they funding through their domestic programs. Civil society coalition are at national

organizations like ours, but mostly local civil society are at the table, really trying to advocate and get a

clear picture, so that both urge their governments to invest in this and hold them accountable for it. One of

the things that they're finding is that picture that the Ministry of Planning has of aid data is very

inadequate. It's actually undercounting of modern resources, according to a lot of those partners were

arguing that their resources aren't reflected there. So, because of a lack of quality aid data, you have this

increased political will by the government to address this. The ministry of Planning is taking it on. You're

ending up with sort of this fight over what donors are doing, instead of being able to actually get an

accurate picture of their resources and create a shared understanding across civil society, government

and across those donors to really drive progress on an issue where people's lives are at stake and they

are critical to the growth of the economy. So, that's an example of how aid data, if it were stronger, would

actually unlock collaboration and where aid data isn't working, actually it's in the way of progress.

MR. INGRAM: Nora, you've given us a very powerful

example of how data can make a difference in trying to address the issue of identifying the problem of

early marriage in Niger, and how it addressed that. Do you have other examples of how the data can be

used for engagement, for this sort of new phase of engagement that helps strengthen local ownership

and leads to better development outcomes.

MS. O'CONNELL: I think that's a great question and I

Think your focus on engagement is the right thing, because, of course, sometimes people sort of mistake

data for the answer. The data will tell us the answer. What data needs to do is actually inform a

conversation, because we know there are huge gaps in data. If you take data for the answer, then

basically you're imposing the limitations of the data on the solutions and on your understanding of a

problem. So, it's a really critical foundation, but it's not a be all and end all.

Another research project that actually we're

undertaking is one that is in the eastern southern Africa region where we're looking at 6 countries and

trying to understand what is actually the ODA investment in children's rights issues. So, we're doing that

end partnership again with a number of regional or national organizations with 6 countries in the region

and engaging with stakeholders in both the government and at the donor level to try and get an

understanding of this picture. One of the things we're learning is it is hard to get exact data on what the

investments are. So, that's a challenge. On the positive side, t is actually opening up a conversation

about a blind spot in the data around child rights. Again, to go back to the example, why it is important to

be able to pull out this aggregated data on who an aid project is benefiting. We talked about this example,

maternal mortality, and the leading cause of death for girls 15 to 19 around the world. Well, sexual

reproductive health programs could actually address that issue. If you don't know what leads to sexual

reproductive health programs are reaching, you don't actually know those adolescents who too often

have harder time reaching health services are benefiting from these investments in sexual reproductive

health. You don't know if its impacting mortality rates in this most vulnerable group of population. So,

what's good about the aid data that we do have and the research that we're undertaking with partners is

that process of actually doing the research and asking the questions is actually building partnerships

across civil society and with government, and with donors to have a conversation about what those

investments are and what do people see about the needs; what are countries themselves investing and

where are the gaps? So, even where the aid data is imperfect, you can actually drive a conversation and

build partnerships where people who are seeking answers and who are seeking this drive change.

MR. INGRAM: Nora, just an aside. I think your collective answers there give a really strong explanation as to why Save is supporting Public What Your Fund in its new project on how to get better gender data. So, thanks for that. So, let's move on to questions that were submitted with the registration and have come in this morning on Twitter. We have just over 10 minutes to address a couple of questions. Not surprising, the questions that came in tend to be focused on current events. The question that was repeated multiple times has to do with the merger of DVID into FOCI, and what the panelists, how they asses that impact. I'm going to take the prerogative with the Chair to opine on this because it's something I feel very strongly about. I think I speak for many of my colleagues in development in the United States.

We have viewed DVID as a thought leader and a preeminent actor in development, using its independence to put development and poverty reduction at the forefront of British foreign aid. This position is now put in jeopardy by being subordinated to short term transactional foreign policy interest. Let me turn first to Gary because the Index rates both FCO and DVID and then move to Henry for a view from the field and to Nora to see how civil society in the U.S. sees this. Gary?

MR. FORSTER: Thank, George. I'll try and stay objective. So, in terms of the most common question we've had in the last week is what is going to be the impact on the transparency of U.K. that these 2 organizations merge and we were to review this single organization coming out of this through the index methodology. The simple answer is we took all of the data and the publication practices that we currently only see from both organizations and we put it together. The score would be lower than difference currently is. There is a lot of devil in the detail. It would be somewhere partway between DFID and NCO's. So, the headline is we're expecting less. We're expecting less transparency as a result. I mean the major concerns are around zeros impact data, so if you go through the report, you will see that it publishes almost no performance data objectives, evaluation results, and so on, that are impacted by these. There is a little bit of a bright side to FCO. They have increased the frequency of their publication. They are now publishing on a quarterly basis, so every 3 months, but there is a question tossed around whether that is enough in a Covid world where we have to respond quickly. So, in a nutshell, as the global

campaign for aid and development, transparency, the merger makes us extremely nervous, not only because it comes at a time when the U.K. government's own aid transparency target is about to expire, but also because no confidence has been provided that either the parliamentary and national development committee nor the U.K.'s independent commission on aid impact will continue in their current form. So, there is a big question mark on how scrutiny is going to work. As it stands right now in the U.K., we are potentially facing a transparency black hole. All is not lost. We think there are specific things that need to be done to address this ahead of a merger thing. Firstly, on target, the U.K. needs, as a matter of urgency, to recommit the targets that were in its 2015 transparency, whereby all government departments spending initial development assistance were good or very good, using the Index methodology. Of course, those targets were about more than just dipping in the FCO and the new entity. They're also about more than 10 other government partners in the U.K. that are spending UDA.

Secondly, we want this institution to continue global leadership around transparency. This had not only led the Index for many years, but also led the push for greater transparency globally and was central to the formation of the international aid transparency initiative. So, the U.K. government should resume and confirm its commitment to continuing support for IATI as an initiative and commit to membership for the foreseeable future.

Thirdly, and finally, we need to get into the detail. The U.K. government needs to recognize the important that its aid management and reporting systems, you don't become a world leader without world leading infrastructure and yes, we're talking about the technical software and processes, but this stuff matters. If the government is serious about insuring that U.K. aid maintains its world leader position, then they need to confirm that these systems, these approaches that DEFIC has honed over the years and led it to this position, in terms of how it reports on its activities in terms of how it ensures its transparent, we need to make sure that those systems take precedence for all ODA managed by the new office. So, hopefully that provides some detail on the kinds of things that we're thinking about here.

MR. INGRAM: Thanks, Gary. Henry, I assume that Save is one of your partners and aid donors and you deal with them regularly. What are your thoughts?

MR. NKANG: Well, for us, I would say that it is still early to say what the impact will be, but while we engage with the donors here, usually they compress on our agreement that is signed by the government and the diplomat and by us. There is also a collaboration of the work plans. The work plan is usually jointly prepared. In terms of detail, GJID is one of the organization that is often dedicated for vessels that reports the organizational data. They are usually up to date with their data. So, like I said, it is still too early to determine what the impact of the merger will be.

MR. INGRAM: Nora, I assume Save and Save International has a lot of dealings with DVID.

MS. O'CONNELL: George, I would say our colleagues in the U.K. are really concerned about this move and sort of losing that focus on address poverty and inequality that DVID has been a real leader in the aid world on. In the U.S. we are concerned about it as well, because as you said, DFID has been a thought leader and the U.S. among other donors has kind of looked to DFID as a model and what can we learn from their successes. As you know, when USAS was originally created, it was an independent agency, but for the past 30 years or so, it has actually been reporting through the Secretary of State. There has been this tension and level of independence of USAGI, and if it should be just a tool of our diplomacy or if it really needs to be recognized with its own voice, its own expertise, and its own mission. So, I think not only are we concerned with not only the impact of DFID's work on the ground, but we're also concerned that U.S. policymakers may look and see what's happened in Britain and use it as a model, which we think would have fairly negative effects to our children and families around the world who really need the U.S. and DVID to be strong partners in development.

MR. INGRAM: Thanks, Nora. A second which is not surprising is on people's mind, is that the impact of COVID-19. How is it impacting on your work? Henry, how have you seen Covid 19 impact your data needs and your work?

MR. NKANG: Well, for the most time of this period, we have been on lock down and I've been working at home. The government has gradually eased the lockdown, so we are back to our offices. It has had a good impact really, but from a better perspective. I will say that it is very crucial now

at this time in Covid-19 for us to have no data reported because it will be difficult to account for the

associates that have been subsided on the Pandemic interventions. They also did reach some of the

sources ending up in the pockets of corrupt individuals. I said, my God, policy in transparency. It is

imperative that we have uploaded at this time.

        MR. INGRAM: Thank you/ Scott, how is this affecting Aid's work in Moldova?

        MR. HOCKLANDER: Thanks, George. You mean when it comes to an emergency

situation, the stakes rise very quickly in terms of the need to do things quickly, the resources involved.

Adam demands through data, just go through the roof, right off the bat. There is a process, I think, that

ends up taking place where everyone needs to get together, decide who has ability to do different things,

start the set-up systems. There is a bit of not necessarily reinventing the wheel but developing the

structure that is going to basically take the community forward in terms of responding.   I guess I'll get

back to engagement a little bit on this and how important engagement is, you know, when you're in a

situation where you are not required to engage remotely all the time, there is like on the margins, I think, a

very important opportunities for people to talk about the information. Really, we don't have that

opportunity anymore. It's really required, I guess, folks be really much more intentional in terms of going

out and talking about intervention. You can't see somebody in the evening after a long day's work and in

a more of a social setting and really be able to talk through things and come up with solutions. You have

to work a lot harder, I guess, to create those kinds of spaces to really get at what you need. So, I think

that's a major challenge. Maybe just going back to the tool a little bit and maybe to another point, and

that is, it really requires all of the partners to have the mentality of we need to engage; we need to share;

we need to think through these things together at all levels. If you haven't figured that out, if you haven't

developed that memory, that approach, et cetera, before an emergency, it makes it really hard, even

more hard to try and do that during an emergency. I've sort of found that to be true with any real practice.

If you're not good before the stakes are high, then you're going to really struggle when the stakes are

high. I think when you can, obviously, continuing to develop interfaces like the development cooperation

landscape or other things like that. I think we just need to continue to work together to develop that, not

only as professionals now but to make sure that kind of information is also in the education system as people who enter the field, they bring that approach with them, the ability to look and analyze data, I think is also a really important aspect.

MR. INGRAM: Thank you. Nora, we're at the witching hour. So, you get the final word.

MS. O'CONNELL: I'll be very quick. In terms of how Covid-19 has affected our use of data, on the positive side it has actually pushed us to use technology in ways to gather data from people about their needs and experiences that we could have done before, but we weren't taking advantage of it. So, it pushed us to innovate and to use the tools that we have in new ways that was really useful. It also though has limitations because, for example, a lot of people heard about the shadow pandemic of gender-based violence that's impacting women and girls who are trapped in their homes. It is actually not safe to ask for data about what they're experiencing right now. So, we're having to rely on data from previous crisis like the Ebola epidemic, just to be able to take those lessons from before and to make assumptions about what is happening now because it's not safe to collect that data. So, inflexibility about finding new ways to learn what we can, but also applying lessons to the past are really critical and I think Scott's point on engagement is key. We are seeing a lot of closing of civic space. So, that active commitment from close country governments, from donor partners, from civil society, to create that space for that dialogue right now is really critical because we are seeing that huge talent and ultimately, we need that partnership to be able to make the change we want to happen and to help families be resilient during this time and to be able to come back.

MR. INGRAM: Thanks, Nora. Let me close this event, noting that the conversation is going to stay open on Twitter for a couple of days. So, go to #2020index and let me thank the panelists, Nora, Scott, Henry, Gary, for giving us these insights for the 2020 Index and to what it's implications are and urge everybody to go to the Publish What You Fund website to access the report and have a good day, everyone. Bye, bye.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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