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Democracy & Anti-Corruption: Backsliding and Opportunity

MISSION DIRECTORS CONFERENCE

October 25, 2022

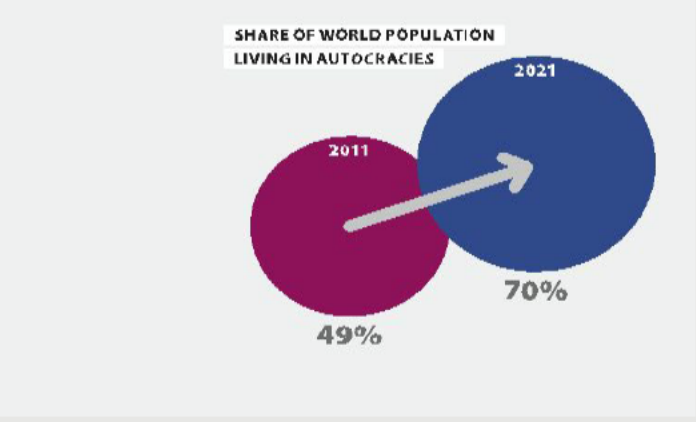
SESSION TOPICS COVERED

- State of Democracy and Global Trends
- Meeting the Moment: USAID's Policy and Programming Shifts
- Q&A & Role of Mission Directors

- Deep Dive Small Groups:
  - Mitigating Disinformation,
  - Combating Corruption,
  - Managing in Dynamic Political Environments

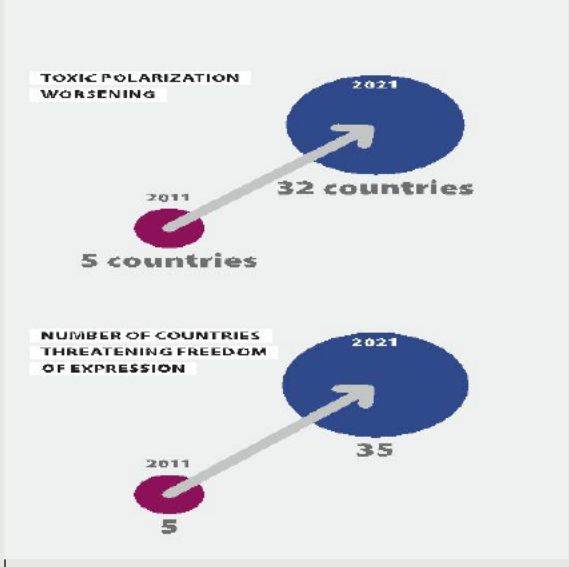
State of Democracy: Global Trends

- Liberal democracies in decline: 34 in 2021, 13% of the world's population
- Dictatorships on the rise: 30 countries, 26% of the world's population
- Backsliding in 33 countries across regions: 36% of the world's population



A Tale of Two Trends: Erosion & Resistance

- Rise in pernicious polarization, media censorship, civil society repression, use of mid/disinformation, and anti-pluralist parties
- Popular protests against autocrats reached highest levels in 2020; many driven by corruption grievances
- Democracy is under attack - but still popular, and delivers more material benefits



21st Century Threats and the New Playbook

- Creeping authoritarianism

- Attacks on media, civil society, pluralism, institutional checks, bureaucracy, economic and political capture

- Public Debt Crisis and Corruption

- Digital authoritarianism, Disinformation, Polarization

- Transnational influencers (Usual Suspects + Brazil, India, El Salvador, Hungary)

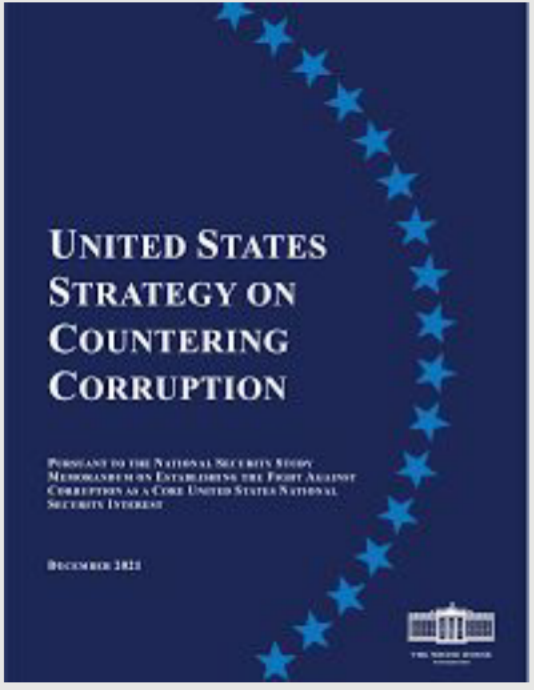
Meeting the Moment: Policy & Programming

- Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal (and Summit for Democracy)
- Anticipated new DRG Bureau
- Information Resilience Council
- Bright Spots initiative
- DRG Policy Framework and forthcoming USAID policies
- Strategic Messaging

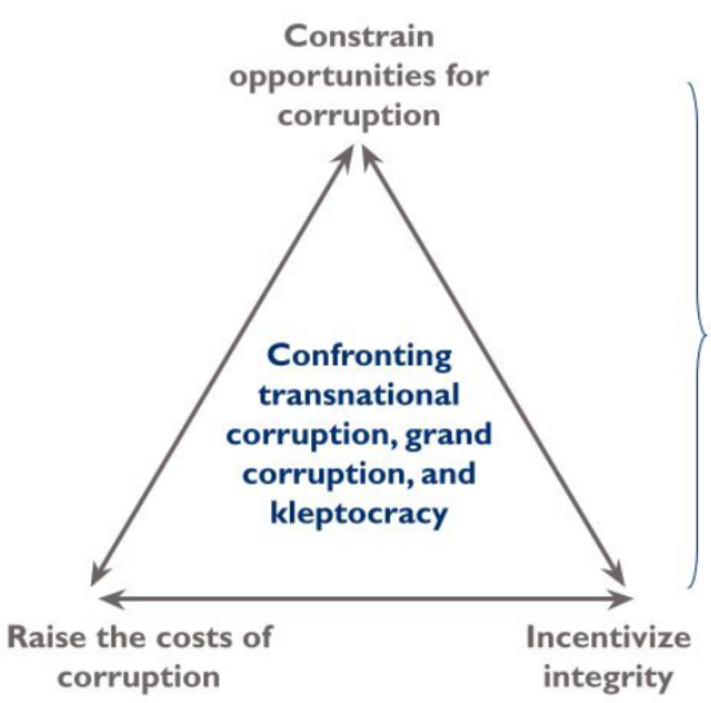


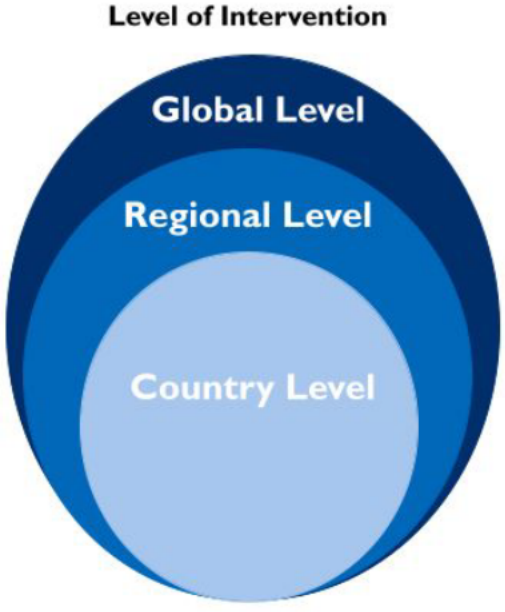
Corruption as a Growing Threat

- Transnational corruption – increasing scale of the problem
- Kleptocracy, transnational and grand corruption pose existential risks to development and democracy
- Addressing corruption directly rather than working around it



Meeting the Anti-Corruption Moment: USAID's Approach





Throughout: A Strategic Safeguarding Mindset

New DRG and Anti-Corruption Resources

Summit for Democracy and Funding/Deliverables

DRG Center Teams and Field Guides

Disinformation Primer

Democratic Resilience Approaches

USAID Dekleptification Guide

USAID's Anti-Corruption Policy (Draft)

USAID's Guide to Countering Corruption Across Sectors

USAID's Anti-Corruption Program Cycle Guide (forthcoming)

Safeguarding Reference Guide (forthcoming)



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https://pages.usaid.gov/DDI/DRG
https://www.usaid.gov/anti-corruption

Q&A & Discussion

The Critical Role of Mission Directors for Democratic Development

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Key Approaches for Consideration

- Support political will for reform and reformers
  - Build relationships with reformers and insiders alike, enabling (and identifying) openings
  - Develop a diplomatic plan with the CDCS and IP workplans
- Support Doing Development Democratically
  - Democracy Dividends for Development and Vice Versa
  - Integrated programming is an investment (not a tax)
  - Hire politically aware staffing, not just programs

Questions for Discussion

- What approaches have you tried to support democratic development and combat backsliding?

- What trade offs do you face supporting democratic governance? How do we balance DRG goals with other USG/USAID interests?

- What advice/asks do you have for Washington?

Deep Dive

Breakout Groups

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BREAKOUT GROUP INSTRUCTIONS

- Purpose: Deep dive discussions on key DRG challenges
- Choose One break out Session:
  - Mitigating Mis/Dis/Malinformation,
  - Combating Corruption, or
  - Working in Politically Dynamic Contexts
- Product from session: Plenary shareout
- Length of Time - 30 minutes

Group 1: Mis/Dis/Malinformation and USAID

Questions for Discussion:

- Has MDM affected USAID in your country; what has been the your Mission's approach to address it?
- Does your mission have an operational approach or Mission plan to mitigate it (ie. DOCS, cybersecurity, social media analytics)? What would that look like or require?
- How can your Mission better prepare staff and IPs for MDM?

Contact: Vera Zakem, DDI/DRG, vzakem@usaid.gov

Group 2: Combating Corruption

- What does this new direction mean for you, as you engage with country counterparts, develop new strategies, programs, staffing decisions, etc?
- What new flexibilities or other support from Washington would you need to execute on these new directions?
- What questions are you grappling with and where would it be useful to learn from others?

Contact: Melissa Brown, Anticorruption Task Force, mebrown@usaid.gov

Group 3: Working in Politically Dynamic Contexts

- What diplomatic efforts or strategies have you used to address democratic backsliding (or democratic openings)? What holds you back?
- What operational issues do you face in addressing these challenges and what would help you manage them? (i.e. local political economy advisers, cybersecurity, media analytics, crisis communications)
- Democratic openings are crucial but they can close quickly. What should USAID do to prepare for them and keep them open?

Contact: Laura Pavlovic, DDI/DRG, lpavlovic@usaid.gov