

The Diplomacy-Development Nexus

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American Academy of Diplomacy
2024 Annual Awards Luncheon
The Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room
U.S. Department of State
November 7, 2024

Good afternoon, everyone. It's always good to come back to Washington even if it's been a tough week here. It allows me to see, as Tony talked about, the generational change from those of you who I consider mentors to the next generation, like my daughter, Rachel Grand, who finished her PMF last year and is now ensconced here at State. I won't lie, this also gave me the opportunity to not be the one to go down to Plains and tell President Carter what the final election results were yesterday.

It truly is an honor to stand before you today in this beautiful space and accept this meaningful award on behalf of President Carter.

After more than a year and a half in hospice care at his home in Plains, Georgia, he continues to amaze us all with his **tenacity** and **endurance** and his ongoing engagement with the world. President Carter has been widely admired for his decades of highly effective humanitarian work. Between a daily dose of peanut butter ice cream and hearing that well-earned praise from important groups such as the Academy, it has made this final chapter of his life quite meaningful.

For his both his 99th and 100th birthdays on October 1, we invited the public to send in photos and videos that we combined into a mosaic depicting President Carter at different stages of his life. As a testament to how broadly beloved he is, we received over 20,000 submissions from well-wishers in 81 countries.

So, I am grateful to receive, on President Carter's behalf, the Henrietta Fore Award for Excellence in Development. This award is distinctive because it recognizes the **essential connection** between diplomacy and development, a connection that President Carter has emphasized throughout his remarkable life and career. And as someone like myself, who spent nearly two decades at USAID, it led us to have some fascinating conversations about this exact topic.

Diplomats and foreign service officers like you are well aware of President Carter's many diplomatic achievements, both while he was in office and later as founder and leader of The Carter Center: **normalizing** relations with China, **negotiating** the Panama Canal Treaties, **shepherding** the Camp David Accords, **hammering** out the SALT II treaty, **averting** an invasion of Haiti, **establishing** the DRL Bureau and many more. One of his early like-minded diplomatic and development successes after, as he always said, his "involuntary retirement from the White House" and his subsequent founding of TCC in 1982 was brokering the Guinea Worm Cease-fire during Sudan's first civil war.

He was the first sitting U.S. president to pay a state visit to sub-Saharan Africa; after his presidency, he visited Africa more than 20 times to promote peace and development.

Many of his diplomatic accomplishments – especially those achieved through The Carter Center – have had the **essential ingredient** of development baked into them. President Carter has always understood that peaceful and just societies require **political and economic** stability, which can only be created from the bottom up.

Following President Carter’s example, we at The Carter Center believe in treating all people with fundamental respect and empowering them to take care of their own needs.

This concept is distilled in what President Carter told a gathering of the House of Lords in London in 2016. He was talking about defeating Guinea worm disease, but in every context, he has always applied the same principle as the one stated here.

He said, quote:

“People in resource-poor countries have the same hopes, work ethic, and dreams for their children as you and I; they are just as decent and intelligent. When they receive the right tools and training, they will implement the solutions themselves, become empowered, and be ready to address other health challenges in their villages. The reality is that these people want to improve their own lives; they just need some help.”

So when we come to a small community in some less developed area, we don’t see a place of hopelessness, we see a place of possibilities. We see **hard-working, caring, resourceful people**, and **that** approach opens the door to finding solutions. The Carter Center introduces people to concepts and techniques that they can use to help themselves without any more intervention from us than necessary.

For example, in the global battle to eradicate Guinea worm, we have relatively few employees on our payroll. For 38 years, the bulk of the work on the ground has been carried out by tens of thousands of Carter Center-trained village volunteers – regular folks who show their families and neighbors how to **filter their water** and take other precautions to avoid the parasite that causes the disease. When the global pandemic hit, we were fortunate because those boots on the ground continued to do the work in their villages. The result is that we’ve seen human cases plummet from 3.5 million every year

across 21 countries in 1986 to just **seven** provisional cases this year. When we eradicate this disease, it will be only the second human disease ever eradicated from the face of the Earth and the first one done without a vaccine. The bonus is that after the Guinea worm has been purged from a village, a functioning health care infrastructure remains. That, to us, is **sustainable development**.

Another example on the health side is the Carter Center's work in Liberia. At the end of that country's brutal civil war, untold thousands of people were left traumatized — with no mental health care system in place to offer help. When President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf told us they had 3 mental health practitioners in the country, and two were retiring, we were asked for our help. In partnership with the government of Liberia, President Sirleaf, and each of her successors, we have helped to train over 300 credentialed mental health clinicians who work in all 15 counties in the country. More clinicians continue to be trained as Liberia builds its mental health care infrastructure from the ground up.

In Mali, another country riven with internal insecurity, under my predecessor AMAP, the Carter Center piloted a Peace through Health initiative. The principle here is that people may be less likely to take up arms if their basic needs are being met. It relies on health services as an **entry point** to long-term peacebuilding. This community-based, bottom-up approach focuses on organizing dialogues between local communities and government officials, to plan packages of public health activities while building participants' conflict resolution skills. That, too, is a form of sustainable development.

As we all consider interventions we were tasked with making at the national and federal levels in our jobs representing the USG, we also need to consider whether working at sub-national levels can have

equal diplomatic and development success. Along those lines, and something I imagine TCC will likely double down on in the near future, is this different entry point to our development efforts because we have seen great success. We run an initiative called **Inform Women, Transform Lives**. In the last 4 years, we have helped 35 cities on 5 different continents **set up, expand, or promote** programs that City governments had established but that were not being tapped into by local citizens. These programs were created to empower women, and those in need, to obtain from their city government the information they need to thrive in their daily lives.

example from Chicago citykey cards, Guatemala women health centers or Nairobi billboards in the market place with domestic violence number

For all this, we have no desire to become a permanent fixture in the places where we work. As President Carter said, our goal is to **equip and empower people to solve their own problems**, and then get out of the way. There is a certain bittersweet pride that comes with closing down a Carter Center country office once the country has established its own thriving systems and programs. In the same way, we would like for countries where we observe elections to build such strong democracies that there is no need to invite us back.

From time to time, I'm asked why President Carter cares so much about **powerless people** who live in **isolated little villages** beyond the end of the road. I think a clue can be found in where he comes from: When he was growing up in the 1920s and '30s, Plains, Georgia, was (and still is, in many ways) an isolated little village of just a few hundred people, many of whom were **powerless, marginalized, and seemingly forgotten**.

For 100 years, he has known what it feels like to live in such a place; **his empathy comes from lived experience.** And his ability to see possibility in these places, is born from that empathy. This inspires us to carry on the work and build the world he and Mrs. Carter imagined when they founded The Carter Center.

In conclusion, let me state that it is gratifying to me, as someone who spent a large part of her career at USAID, as it surely is to President Carter, to know that the American Academy of Diplomacy believes so strongly in development as to create an award to recognize and encourage it. On behalf of President Carter, and all the millions who have benefited from his lifetime of service, I sincerely thank you.