

**Opening Statement
Senator Richard G. Lugar
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Business Meeting
September 19, 2012**

S. 3310 -The Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2012

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased that today the Committee will act on the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2012. This legislation would codify important improvements in our aid by requiring monitoring and evaluation in order to measure effectiveness. Next, it would require transparency in foreign assistance with its disclosure on a single internet website, thus bringing greater accountability to the American taxpayer, as well as recipients of our aid.

The bill establishes Presidential leadership in this realm, as several agencies distribute foreign assistance across the globe. In endorsing my bill, earlier this week, the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network wrote to you, Mr. Chairman, that “the time has come for the President to issue and oversee a set of common guidelines on the monitoring and evaluation of these programs across all agencies, as well as for this information to be made publicly available.”

Secretary Clinton and Administrator Shah have committed to moving forward with increased transparency and accountability in U.S. aid by agreeing that the U.S. would join the International Aid Transparency Initiative and establishing our own Foreign Assistance Dashboard on the internet. However, implementation of these efforts has been slow. Our bill establishes a firm deadline of three years for the publication of U.S. foreign assistance on the internet. The State Department had suggested a much longer timeline for implementation; however, I am confident that State and USAID can effectively implement the requirements within this three year time frame. By codifying these commitments and setting firm timelines for implementation, I am hopeful that the U.S. may more fully lead in achieving the objective of aid transparency and effectiveness.

I appreciate the work of Senator Rubio in developing today’s amendment to the bill which I believe has strengthened the legislation. Additionally, I appreciate the Chairman’s interest in this bill and his concerns about the spending offset provision. It is my belief, however, that it is necessary to offset any potential new spending this bill would generate in order to give the bill a chance to pass. The offset is the same as that in the House companion bill, and I believe the State Department can implement the bill effectively within these parameters.

I am optimistic that transparency and accountability of U.S. taxpayer dollars in foreign assistance is a bipartisan issue and that this legislation will therefore receive strong bipartisan support in our Committee today.