

May 10, 2011

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to seek your counsel on an ambitious initiative: the creation of the nation's first facility dedicated to the development and deployment of technologies for conflict management and peacebuilding, the **PeaceTech Lab**.

This vision, and its implementation, will be the focus of a special meeting we are convening on the morning of July 17, 2011 in Washington, DC at USIP headquarters. The session will be facilitated by IDEO, the award-winning global design firm and innovation specialists and we hope you will join us. It will be a select group of your peers – leaders who can grasp both the opportunity and the urgency for a Lab like this.

The last few years have made apparent how the development and diffusion of new technologies can mitigate sources of violent conflict around the globe. Whether it is mobile phones or social media, satellites or sensors, technology is presenting virtually unlimited opportunities to try new approaches to age-old problems of corruption, ethnic tension, boundary disputes, water and food shortages, election fraud, gender violence – the list goes on.

And yet we see an opportunity to do much more. We can *accelerate* the development of these solutions. We can *distribute* them faster from one conflict zone to another. We can enlist *more* people in crowdsourcing data and ideas.

We believe the answer lies in moving beyond *ad hoc* innovation towards a more deliberate model, where engineers and scientists from industry and academia work each day alongside experts in peacebuilding from government, NGOs and the conflict zones themselves. The **PeaceTech Lab** will be an opportunity to do just this – the first facility of its kind, located in USIP's new headquarters at the northwest corner of the National Mall, and in close proximity to the National Academies.

The **PeaceTech Lab** concept draws on the experience of other innovation laboratories and incubators, in that it will seek to bridge the world of ideas with practical problems faced in the field. At the same time, it must be agile, given the dynamic nature of conflict itself, and a connector for networks of technologists and peacebuilders worldwide.

This is the vision that will be discussed at the meeting on July 17, 2011 which will be attended by a small but influential group of leaders from industry, government, and academia. A preliminary agenda is attached for your consideration. We sincerely hope you can participate.

Thank you in advance. If you have any questions, please contact Sheldon Himelfarb at USIP ([shimelfarb@usip.org](mailto:shimelfarb@usip.org)) or Proctor Reid at the National Academy of Engineering ([preid@nae.edu](mailto:preid@nae.edu)). Please RSVP to Anand Varghese ([avarghese1@usip.org](mailto:avarghese1@usip.org)).

Sincerely,



Richard Solomon  
President, U.S. Institute of Peace



Irwin Mark Jacobs  
Founding Chairman and CEO Emeritus,  
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Charles Vest  
President, National Academy of Engineering



Vinton Cerf  
Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist,  
Google



Pat Mitchell  
President and CEO, Paley Center for Media