



USAID | **MALI**
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STRATEGY STATEMENT

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Additional information on the attached can be obtained from Lisa Chandonnet USAID/AFR/WA.

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Strategy Statement

Program Rationale

Mali is a unique example of democracy in West Africa. Despite the dismal rating of 174 out of 177 on the UN Human Development Index, Mali has demonstrated its commitment to democracy and determination—in spite of enormous economic challenges—to improve the standard of living of its citizens. Many positive trends are evident: democracy and decentralization are taking root; greater public investment is being put towards health and education; and agricultural technologies to reduce production risks are being promoted and adopted. Mali can boast a fully open press and the largest number of private radio stations in any African country. In addition, the Government of the Republic of Mali (GRM) is on track for signing a Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) compact in early 2006. Its eligibility speaks well of this country's emphasis on creating a positive business environment, investing in people and respecting human rights. Positive performance in economic reform has garnered high praise from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international financial institutions.

Mali is a force for stability in the region as a strong democracy and supporter of the United States. Nevertheless, its standing as a model of democracy and stability is threatened by the vast desert area in the North of Mali which hosts religious fundamentalists, some with links to violent extremism. The underlying condition giving rise to this terrorist threat is extreme poverty. Mali, a “Heavily-Indebted Poor Country” (HIPC), has the highest percentage of people living on less than a dollar a day in the world¹. Mali's economy, agriculturally based, remains under-diversified and vulnerable to external shocks such as periodic drops in cotton and gold prices, and increases in oil prices. The destabilizing conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has increased the cost of exporting (goods must be shipped from more remote ports), and produced an influx of refugees. Health conditions remain abysmal: Mali continues having the fourth highest infant mortality rate in the world (and the 13th highest maternal mortality rate); malnutrition, malaria, diarrheal disease, and communicable illnesses significantly contribute to this. The total fertility rate in Mali is a staggering 6.8 children per woman, one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa. The country's alarming education situation is possibly the major impediment to progress in the health arena. Despite recent progress in raising enrollment rates, only half of all school-aged children are enrolled in primary school, and 76% of youth and 81% of adults (mostly women) remain illiterate—dismal statistics even by West African standards. Education is a powerful tool for reducing poverty, improving health and creating a foundation for sustained economic growth. As such, promoting literacy is critical to development across the board in Mali; any reductions in basic education resources run the risk of potentially crippling chances for long-term progress in every sector of our program.

In conformity with the Agency's Strategic Framework for Africa (SFA) guidelines for Transformational Development states (TD), USAID Mali has modified its development hypothesis. However, Mali is part of a geographic region which has become critical to the Global War on Terrorism. The North of Mali, in particular, is an area encompassing religious fundamentalism and, potentially violent extremism, which makes the country vulnerable to conflict and represents a crucial issue in terms of backsliding. For this reason the new Mali development hypothesis of transformational development, in conjunction with other USG programs, includes increased attention to the marginalized and potentially fragile North².

Fostering broad-based economic growth is the ultimate means of improving the quality of life for Malians. However if the population has little control over resources and is not engaged in the delivery of services, investments in their own future will remain low. For people to invest in their lands, schools, and health clinics, they must have ownership and be empowered to manage and control them. Without that, long-term growth would be limited, and Mali would consequently continue to suffer from extreme poverty. Our development hypothesis posits that by strengthening the capacities of, and linkages between local government and civil society, the outcome will be a truly decentralized democracy which will empower Malians who can drive long-term private sector growth. This is a means of ensuring Malian commitment to and investment in their communities. It is a sustainable approach that strengthens an important emerging democracy, fosters economic growth and investment, and over time reduces dependence on foreign aid. It therefore ties directly to the Agency's Strategic Framework for Africa (SFA) vision for TD countries.

While efforts at the national and district levels will continue to ensure an enabling environment for development, the focus of the program is on the commune level³. These linkages will be achieved by placing

¹ Human Development Report, 2005.

² The appendix contains a more detailed strategy for the Northern region of Mali.

³ The term “commune” is used here to express the smallest administrative unit in Mali.

the decentralization component of our program at the center of USAID Mali's strategy, making it a common thread among programs in Accelerated Economic Growth (AEG), Health, and Education. Program effectiveness will be reinforced by a cross-cutting Communications Program Support Objective (PSO) that provides wide access to development-related information on all sectors of the USAID Mali program. This approach uses increasingly scarce resources strategically, and creates mutually-reinforcing impacts across sectors. USAID Mali's integrated approach includes activities specifically designed to bring marginalized groups—particularly women throughout the country and youth in the North—into the national mainstream through increased control over natural resources, improved access to information and services, and closer linkages to local government. This also reduces the threat of backsliding on our TD development trajectory.

USAID Mali's program advances three goals of the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan: Economic Prosperity and Security (focus on agricultural development, trade, financial services, and enhanced food security); Social and Environmental Issues (focus on health, access to quality basic education, and natural resource management (NRM)); and Democracy and Human Rights (focus on good governance). In terms of the SFA's TD guidance, the strategy links the operational goals: "Fostering a healthier, better educated, and more productive population" and "Increasing the effectiveness of African institutions in promoting a vibrant private sector and democratic governance" through a participatory approach and commitment among SO teams to integrate activities, build the capacity of indigenous groups, and address gender issues. Programming in the Northern regions addresses poverty and the root sources of conflict and fragility by creating income-generating activities (with special attention to youth and women), improving access to information (especially in remote areas), advancing inclusive governance, and increasing access to health and education services.

The program complements the Malian Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), addressing its three pillars: Development of Infrastructure and Productive Sectors (emphasis on agricultural development, NRM and trade); Human Development (emphasis on health, education and communications); and Institutional Development (emphasis on the decentralization process and transparent management of public affairs). The strategy includes opportunities for synergies with two mega projects in the pipeline (each exceeding \$250 million) in the water-rich Office du Niger (ON), the largest rice-producing area in the Sahel. These proposed MCA activities plan on expanding rice production as well as the country's cold storage and processing facilities, complementing USAID Mali's investment in promotion and export marketing efforts. Together with the equally large Global Development Alliance (GDA) Shaffer Group sugar project, due to start in 2008, these two projects—pumping huge amounts of money into a relatively small area—could have a ripple effect on the economy and boost the impact of the Mission's health and education programs in the area. USAID Mali will explore opportunities for broadening the economic and social impacts of these major initiatives.

The Mission participates in a multitude of global and special concerns, Agency Initiatives, and earmarks:

- Health: Roll Back Malaria, the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, GAVI, Three Ones, Family Planning Repositioning;
- Economic Growth: Biodiversity earmarks, Initiative to End Hunger in Africa (IEHA), directive for capacity building in biotechnologies, West African Water Initiative (WAWI), Global Climate Change initiative, AGOA;
- Education: Africa Education Initiative promoting teacher training and girls' scholarships in the North;
- Democratic Governance: Peace Building in the North (ESF), Trans-Sahara, Counter-Terrorism Initiative;
- Communications for Development: Last Mile Initiative promoting access to communication technologies in rural areas, Conflict Mitigation and Management Initiative promoting peace building activities through community radio, Trafficking in Persons.

Collaborations with other USG agencies will continue, such as the Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program, which collaborates with the State Department and Peace Corps to assist over 5,000 at-risk girls in the North. Significant collaborative opportunities with the Department of Defense (DoD) in the North will be explored to link the "hardware" of DoD humanitarian assistance efforts (the building of wells, schools, health clinics, and radio stations) with USAID Mali's development assistance "software". Mali's repeated vulnerability to natural crises has led to chronic food insecurity, particularly in the Northern region. The Mission provides food security and strategic planning support to increase the country's capacity to respond to and manage these crises.

Violent Extremism and Counterterrorism Efforts in Mali

Islamic fundamentalists who support violent extremism are permeating the essentially borderless expanse of the Sahara. Mali's historically marginalized northern region is vulnerable to the spread of such extremism. Violent extremist groups could exploit the acute poverty and weak institutional capacity of the North to appeal to disenfranchised populations and youth.⁴ The highest priority cited in the Mission Performance Plan (MPP) is attacking the roots of violent extremism and reinforcing Malian capacity to address this security threat. Mali is one of the leading countries for the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) and numerous opportunities exist for collaboration with other USG agencies and indigenous groups to attack poverty and marginalization, the root causes of terrorism. Although Mali has a strong tradition of moderation in its interpretation of Islam, groups linked with radical Islamic elements, such as Dawa al Tabligh, appear to be growing in strength in the North. The goals of these Islamic groups are far-reaching and could include the introduction of an Islamic state, the imposition of Sharia law, a significant reduction of women's rights, a call for *jihad* (holy war), intolerance of other religious beliefs, repression of a free and open press, and terrorist acts. The most alarming concern is with the Salafist Group for Salvation and Combat (GSPC), which in February of 2003 took a group of western tourists hostage in southern Algeria. The GSPC now sees Mali as an ideal safe haven from which to recruit youth. With reported links between the Dawa and the GSPC, and between the GSPC and Al Qaeda, the influx of extremist interpretations of Islam lays the groundwork for indoctrination and recruitment of extremist sympathizers. A 2005 International Crisis Group study found that while Mali is a "star pupil" of democratization, it "runs the greatest risk of any West African country other than Nigeria of violent Islamist activity."

An integrated USG program is in place to help counter terrorist threats in the Sahel. USAID Mali's role in the North will be to address the *underlying causes* of terrorism. However, the North is not monolithic. Our program along the Niger River will be substantially the same as elsewhere in the country, and constitute the bulk of our efforts in the region. In the more remote areas further north in the Kidal region, where terrorists can operate more freely, the focus will be on addressing the needs and well-being of youth who might otherwise be attracted to terrorism. In particular, training in life skills – including leadership and social responsibility, teamwork, and conflict resolution – while providing opportunities for economic activities, is fundamental to turning youth from dangerous alternatives, while building pride, solidarity and allegiance to their communities. In the most remote areas we will make maximum use of radio to support conflict prevention and provide information to isolated and vulnerable nomadic populations. Because implementation in the Kidal region and other areas encompassing nomadic groups can frequently be rendered impossible because of security concerns, we will make use of existing organizations in the area. The Mission's strategy in this area will be flexible and opportunistic, ready to seize opportunities as they arise including engaging religious leaders. It will engage local participation to expand health services where feasible, provide culturally appropriate and gender-sensitive basic education (including by radio), and develop economic opportunities, especially for marginalized groups such as youth and women. Training will enable leaders and the population of new communes in the North (especially those having history of conflict) to develop suitable mechanisms for conflict resolution and build constituencies for peace. Supporting the GRM's Presidential Youth Initiative, a potentially effective means to positively reach youth through vocational education and apprenticeship programs, will be explored.

Extractive Industries. Mining activities have constituted the main extractive industries in Mali for the past twenty years, and at times have been a source of instability. To date, five internationally known companies have established gold mining operations at five sites within two regions. Government and local community authorities both face revenue management challenges in this sector. Social tensions (strikes, demonstrations, etc.) have emerged over the past three years between mining companies and local workers. USAID Mali will attempt to initiate an alliance among the mining companies to address community development issues and avert conflict, and will use GDA funds to conduct a needs assessment and identify joint interventions.

Program Structure

As previously stated, The Mission's programs support both SFA TD operational goals: "Fostering a healthier, better educated, and more productive population" and "Increasing the effectiveness of African institutions in promoting a vibrant private sector and democratic governance." Our program structure consists of four Strategic Objectives (SO) and one Program Support Objective (PSO) that will achieve significant cross-sectoral and equitable results in the next five years (2006-2010).

SO 6: High Impact Health Services: Increase use of High Impact Health Services and Improved Health Practices

⁴ USAID/DCHA/CMM Assessment: Northern Mali, 2004.

As indicated in the program rationale, Mali faces great health challenges, particularly in terms of capacity building and primary health care services. The development hypothesis of the USAID Mali Health SO is to prioritize critical health issues among vulnerable populations in order to decrease morbidity and mortality and improve the quality of life for the Malian population as a whole. In line with the SFA's TD framework operational goal #1, our strategic approach increases the use of high impact health services and improves health practices in order to decrease the morbidity and mortality of children under five and women of reproductive age. USAID Mali's ability to achieve progress is potentially limited by its inability to provide all necessary forms of assistance and thus this strategy relies on the continued availability of complementary donor funding to ensure that critical health commodities (ITNs, vaccines, oral rehydration salts, etc) are adequately covered.

Beginning in 2006 and lasting five years, the approach will focus on: 1) Linking communities and health services; 2) Delivering cultural and gender-sensitive community-based interventions; and 3) Promoting key household level health behaviors and practices. Activities are prioritized in line with the SFA TD States Annex and support the TD goal of creating a healthier, better educated and more productive population. Activities support the following Agency program components: Improve Child Survival, Health & Nutrition, Prevent & Control Infectious Diseases of Major Importance, Improve Maternal Health & Nutrition, and Support Family Planning and Reduce Transmission & Impact of HIV/AIDS. To prevent and control infectious diseases of major importance the program promotes key malaria prevention strategies like the distribution of insecticide treated bednets (ITNs). To reduce child mortality, the Mission will focus on expanding and strengthening routine and outreach immunization services and advancing polio eradication through support to Ministry of Health (MOH) and WHO; vitamin A supplementation and exclusive breast feeding will also be promoted. To improve reproductive health and family planning, the Mission plans to provide gender-sensitive training and supervision to health care providers and community-based health volunteers on contraceptive technology. Additional provision of key technical support includes strategies for the reduction of maternal mortality through the prevention of postpartum hemorrhage, and the reduction of the transmission and impact of HIV/AIDS through technical support to indigenous-led prevention programs among most at-risk groups and through National AIDS Control Program behavioral and sero-surveillance efforts.

USAID Mali health programs will support the development of policies and procedures such as the national HIV/AIDS strategic plan and will raise awareness of and commitment to healthy policies and practices by key private and public sector actors and traditional and religious leaders. Public-private partnerships will be promoted to increase access to quality health services and expand private provision of family planning services. Youth access to high impact health services will be improved through the expansion of services in urban centers where youth are in particular need of reproductive health, STI and HIV/AIDS services. Institutional, technical and financial support is planned for the central divisions of the MOH and select districts. Emphasis will be placed on expanding health service access for traditionally underserved populations in the North of Mali and on improving the availability of qualified human resources in the North through indigenous nurse training. USAID Mali will launch an initiative to increase commune level capacity to appropriately plan and manage health sector activities to strengthen decentralized health planning and implementation and reinforce the link between elected local administrations and the health line ministry. Gender-sensitivity will be integrated into Mission programming through trainings on gender dynamics for USAID Mali staff and implementing partners; the participation of the health team on the Mission's gender committee; and gender analysis as part of the annual reporting process. On a regional level, USAID Mali will collaborate with the WARP health program and implementing partners to ensure Malian participation in and capacity building of local and regional health initiatives.

SO 7: Improving Quality of Basic Education

Mali relies on human capital to fuel its economic and social development, yet it has an education system incapable of producing a viable workforce for future growth. Half of school-aged children are not even enrolled in primary school (the Primary Net Enrollment Rate in 2004/2005 was only 50%, 43% for girls). Access to education is limited primarily to urban settings: 87% of out-of-school children live in rural areas. For those children who attend school, the poor quality of education does not prepare them to earn a living, or provide them with the basic literacy skills necessary to drive Mali's national development. The most recent DHS survey (2001) found that of the school-aged population, only 23% of boys and 10% of girls had learned to read a simple sentence by the end of Grade 4. While access to public education is increasing, access remains below demand. As a result, over half of the new students entering the education system in the last ten years attend private, community, or Islamic schools (*madradas*). Projections show that if these trends continue, Mali will not achieve universal primary school completion until well after 2075.

In order to “Promote Equitable Access to Quality Basic Education,” USAID Mali will support the GRM in accomplishing the objectives of its Ten-Year Education Plan (PRODEC; 1999-2009). The Mission will foster a better educated population by focusing on improving the *quality* of instruction through a cost-efficient, school-based model of teacher training. Teachers in public, community, and Islamic schools will benefit from a “cluster” approach that organizes them on a regular basis for locally-relevant professional development workshops. Through the Africa Education Initiative (AEI), virtual training centers will be installed in teacher training colleges to introduce computer skills and provide access to state-of-the-art education resources. USAID Mali will also support teacher training through radio programming which will promote child-centered and competency-based instructional methods to ensure lessons are relevant to Malian children. In order to strengthen decentralization and improve accountability within Mali’s education system, the Mission will build partnerships with governmental, non-governmental, and community actors. USAID Mali will work with School Management Committees and Parent Associations to develop and implement annual school improvement plans. Adult literacy will be provided for community members—especially women—to promote their increased participation in education and contribution to Mali’s economic growth. USAID Mali’s Education program will collaborate with the health team, civil society and government partners in education to support the development and implementation of an education sector plan focused on HIV prevention.

Mali’s current educational opportunities are severely limited and inequitably skewed toward an urban minority. To increase *access* to basic education in rural communities and for nomadic populations in the North of Mali, the Mission will increasingly make use of radio networks to provide interactive radio instruction to these remote communities. Basic literacy and girls’ education are designated as priority intervention areas. Even though the difference between the percentage of girls and boys entering primary school has narrowed substantially in recent years, girls remain at greater risk for dropping out and thus never achieving sustainable literacy. Through the AEI Ambassador’s Girls’ Scholarship Program, USAID Mali will continue to provide incentives to at-risk girl students from the Northern regions of Mali to continue and succeed in school.

USAID contributes to the GRM’s multi-donor PRODEC plan along with the World Bank, Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden, France, and other multi-lateral and bilateral donor organizations. USAID participates in Thematic Working Groups on Access, Education Quality, Management, and Non-Formal Education. SO7 activities will support the following USAID Agency program component: Achieve Equitable Access to Quality Basic Education.

SO 8: Shared Governance through Decentralization: Consolidate Democracy and Mitigate Conflict through Shared Governance

USAID Mali’s program to “Consolidate Democracy and Mitigate Conflict through Shared Governance” (2006-2010) engages Malian citizens in democratic governance locally, bringing together all actors—state, civil society and the private sector—as partners to find solutions to local development problems. The DG program is the lynchpin of USAID Mali Transformational Development programming. The DG SO posits that development begins with community ownership and aims to encourage civil society participation in transparent management of health and education services, natural resources and economic growth activities in USAID/Mali’s target communes, shared by other SOs. For example, citizen participation in improving local services resolved an inter-community conflict which had previously forced children to walk an extra 14 km to school. The resolution of this conflict increased the number of students attending school thereby proving that local ownership and participation enhances development efforts. In the North, radio programming supports local governance and mitigates conflict, countering Northern frustration, disenfranchisement and the sense of abandonment by the central government through participatory decision-making and community responsibility for improved local service delivery. Nationwide this program promotes the participation of various groups in the democratic process; it works to provide locally elected leaders with the skills to administer transparent financial management systems and to develop policies that support decentralized government, while increasing women’s roles in local decision making.

Mali’s fragile democracy must be strengthened through support for the constitution and decentralization principally achieved through transparent, local management of health, education, environment and economic growth. The central premise of this SO is that good local governance and transparent budget management will improve social services and resource distribution- key objectives to achieving development. This five-year strategy focuses on local participatory decision-making to ensure transparent delivery of social services, community management of natural resources, and transparent management of economic growth activities and economic infrastructure all of which contributes to job creation at the commune level. Transparent budget management gives citizens confidence to pay their taxes, resulting in a 25% increase in local revenues. Sound natural resource management and local taxation provided additional resources for social services. In the North,

however, weaknesses in the governing authority of the central state have created a security vacuum, currently being filled by extremist elements. Effective local governance will help counter this problem, laying the foundation for consolidation of Mali's democracy and the coordination and integration of USAID Mali programs at the local level. After many years of development efforts with no significant impact on the human development indicators, this approach is key to bringing about real change through citizen ownership of Mali's development initiatives.

The USAID Mali DG program directly supports key U.S. foreign policy goals for Africa: improved human rights and good governance, counter-terrorism, conflict prevention and mitigation and the SFA TD goals for the evolution of transparent, effective and participatory African institutions. The DG program supports the following Agency program components: Support Democratic Local Governance & Decentralization, Strengthen Civil Society, Mitigate Conflict & Support Peace and Support Populations at Risk. Our vision is to consolidate Mali's fledgling democracy through citizen participation in democratic local governance, building on Malian commitment to democratic principles. USAID Mali partnerships with national NGOs and reliance on indigenous expertise enhance civil society's effectiveness and ensure Malians have access to the full range of civic advocacy options to implement their vision of a better future based on democratic principles. Democratic Governance and Rule of Law are strengthened through a focus on national institutions which support decentralized local government. The DG program supports women's participation in decision-making through political and economic empowerment. Finally, women, youth, ex-combatants, and the marginalized populations of Mali's North are assisted through ESF funding and the Mission's conflict mitigation activities, building consensus for local solutions, providing information and peace-building activities through community radio, improving early warning and response mechanisms and helping youth resist fundamentalist messages and the spread of extremism and its consequence, terrorism.

Vulnerabilities and threats to this program include the GRM's weak political will to transfer financial resources to local governments under decentralization, increased economic problems in critical areas; especially the North. There must be a long-term USG commitment to improving good governance in Mali and especially living conditions in the North. DG's coordinating role in peace-building and counter-terrorism combined with the consolidation of advances in decentralization nation-wide is predicated on strengthening local government for improved delivery of all USAID Mali development programs: health, education, natural resource management and economic growth.

SO 9: Accelerated Economic Growth: Agricultural Productivity, Incomes and Employment Increased in Targeted Zones

The Accelerated Economic Growth (AEG) program fosters economic growth, reduces poverty, and improves the standard of living in selected areas of Mali. Participatory governance will anchor the program. The underlying hypothesis of this program is that if productivity and incomes are increased in the agricultural sector, then close to 80 percent of the population dependent on this sector will have better opportunities to access food and basic social services. Three goals must be met in order to achieve results under this SO in the next five years. First, productivity must be increased by focusing on reducing production risks associated with erratic rainfall and insufficient access to agricultural technologies and techniques, including environmentally-sound practices. Secondly, incomes must be increased through expanded market and trade opportunities and trade capacity of agribusinesses. The third component—the adoption of agricultural technologies and access to new markets—must be facilitated by expanding access to rural finance to a broad based population. Anticipated results include: a) increased availability and accessibility to food, b) increased productivity of land and water, c) increased participation of communities in the management of their natural resources, d) increased farmers' income, and e) increased employment for rural and urban youth in targeted areas. A final component integrates food security planning into the sectors mentioned above. Structural planning mitigates the impact of crop losses and other food shortages. USAID Mali's integrated relief programming will leverage the work of other donors to reduce vulnerability, especially to the more fragile areas in Mali. A focus on poverty reduction, improved nutrition (food quality and nutrition education), and market integration is critical to lessening the fragility of these vulnerabilities. The Mission will seek Title II, PL 480 funds to reduce food insecurity among vulnerable populations in the North. (See Annex B)

This SO incorporates the following TD objectives in order of priority: agriculture (productivity, policy, and trade), economic growth, and natural resources/environment; and Agency program components: Increase Agricultural Sector Productivity, Improve Sustainable Management Of Natural Resources & Biodiversity, Increase Trade and Investment, and Strengthen The Financial Services Sector & Increase Access to Capital. The program seeks to enhance agriculture productivity in accordance with the Agency's Agricultural Strategy, the presidential "Initiative to End Hunger in Africa (IEHA)", the NEPAD "Comprehensive Africa Agriculture

Development Program (CAADP)” and Mali’s agricultural and rural development strategy. The program will ensure a flow of new and adapted technologies including biotechnology, and support to institutions delivering inputs such as improved seed varieties. Higher education institutions will be strengthened in agricultural production and marketing disciplines. Efforts under agricultural trade seek to provide technical and managerial training to agro-entrepreneurs (including women) and selected government units to open new market opportunities at all levels. Activities linking Malian products to regional and global markets are underpinned by the GRM/MCC proposal for export infrastructure development. The AEG program links with three SFA’s E/NRM objectives: conservation, governance, and productivity. The Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) approach, shaped by the Nature, Wealth and Power (NWP) framework, will be central to the activities while strengthening indigenous expertise and also addressing objectives for initiatives such as Global Climate Change, Clean Energy. Policy and Institutions are key themes that cut across all objectives of the AEG sectors. The AEG program actively supports the GRM’s PRSP and the Integrated Framework (IF) for trade. Policy work will focus on bio-safety, investment promotion, trade barriers, enforcement of trade regulations, and national policies that promote equitable access to and management of natural resources among all citizens.

The AEG SO will continue its programs in high production regions but will realign and intensify efforts aimed the North, which represents a threat to stability and peace. To both reduce youth unemployment and expand access to economic opportunities for urban residents, USAID Mali will improve equitable access to productivity-increasing job skills. The Mission will target ongoing business development services (BDS) through micro-finance networks and will fortify credit financing to nascent enterprises, particularly in the northern target regions, particularly for women. Indigenous institutions and expertise will be increased through practical training at selected institutions in collaboration with the Education and DG SOs. Seasonal migration of workers and their trade movements in the sub-region are real risks to the spread of HIV/AIDS. To mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS, the AEG team will collaborate with the Health team to help support the HIV sectoral plan of the Ministry of Agriculture, focusing on prevention efforts aimed at agricultural workers, migrants and traders in market places. Addressing gender issues remains integral to achieving results and includes efforts geared towards literacy programs for rural women and the development of training modules in local languages within the education sector. Opportunities for the creation and management of enterprises in addition to training in marketing, accounting, and credit management will be increased. Marginalized groups of women, men and youth will be empowered through participation in decision-making and CBNRM activities designed to increase the income and access to resources (land, credit, water, etc.) at the local levels.

PSO 10: Communications for Development

Access to reliable and timely information is essential for democracy and growth at all levels of society. Informed citizens make better decisions on health, educational, economic and social matters, and are aware of their rights and responsibilities and those duties of governments. The Mission’s unique Communications for Development (CD) PSO will ensure that information is broadly available and used efficiently. Mali enjoys a strong political will and commitment to freedom of expression, as demonstrated by a free press guaranteed by the Constitution, an ever-growing number of private radio stations (currently 185), a national strategy for integrating information and communication technologies in development programs, and a national initiative to provide Internet access in all of Mali’s 703 communes.

The CD PSO directly supports the SFA’s goals for TD: it helps Malians to be healthier, better educated and more productive by producing and disseminating information via radio based programs and high-tech multi-media based systems (e.g., Internet) on a wide range of topics directly related to the USAID Mali’s strategic objectives. It also increases the effectiveness of African institutions in promoting a vibrant private sector and democratic governance by bolstering media organizations and involving local institutions, NGOs and companies in the implementation of its activities. An important role of this PSO is support to address aspects of Mali’s fragility to reduce instability and conflict in the North, as well as youth unemployment and unrest. Radio remains the best instrument for reaching people in the remote, increasingly fundamentalist and sometimes insecure North. Expected results include increased access to development information for strategic groups. Other results include increased positive reproductive health behavior change and increased youth and women’s participation in civil society and socio-economic sectors. Special attention will be paid to women who usually lack more information than men, but are recognized as the primary agents of positive behavior change. Our PSO supports the following Agency program components: Expand & Improve Access to Economic & Social Infrastructure, Mitigate Conflict & Support Peace, and Reduce Transmission and Impact of HIV/AIDS.

The Information Technology sector offers new employment opportunities. In synergy with the AEG sector and in response to the new SFA’s focus on youth and urbanization, our PSO activities will include training programs

for vulnerable youth in targeted geographic areas, especially urban settings. To provide information to the Malian population and increase the capacity of local indigenous institutions and expertise, USAID Mali will use Mali's network of 185 FM radio stations to produce culturally appropriate and gender sensitive radio programs, and will provide equitable opportunities to train radio producers in radio programming. Linkages between the Internet, radio stations and community telecenters have been set up throughout Mali, including the North, that extend the information available on the Web to historically disadvantaged groups, including potentially over 750,000 Malians in rural communities. The CD PSO will be implemented using local organizations that will produce and broadcast radio messages on HIV/AIDS, malaria, and education, produce and disseminate computer-based materials (web sites, DVDs, CD-ROMs, etc.), and design and provide training sessions for youth in information technology. The program will promote GDA and public-private partnerships by brokering partnerships with US firms having equipment (e.g. used computers) to be used to support development activities. This PSO will help address gender issues by promoting messages that support girls' education, male adoption of safe and responsible sexual behavior, (especially targeting migratory populations and economic growth corridors). It also seeks to empower women by making them more aware of their rights and important roles in a modern democracy and in conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building.

USAID Mali is the only donor in Mali with a significant communications program and regional impact. Without these interventions, very little development-related information would be available via community radio stations, and a great majority of Mali's illiterate population would be left uninformed. Our programs have had a major impact, and continued work in this sector is critical to an emerging democracy and for maintaining peace and stability. Partners of PSO activities include the association of private radio stations in Mali (URTEL), a regional radio for development NGO (Panos), the Mali Chapter of the Internet Society, small local IT firms and NGOs, and a strong partnership will be established with civil society groups. Close collaboration with DoD will continue in supporting radio stations. GDAs will be strongly encouraged and youth will be trained to provide rural IT services.

Cross-cutting Themes

Gender: USAID Mali and the GRM are both committed to reducing gender-based barriers and inequities to development, particularly those which promote significant and sustained poverty. Gender issues in Mali have been identified and prioritized for each SO through the mission Gender Assessment in 2001 and the Mali Gender Assessment conducted by the World Bank in 2005. The Mission's revised Gender Action Plan builds capacity for local gender expertise and analytic work, lends critical support to NGOs and women's organizations, and emphasizes resolving gender issues in the North to reduce poverty, provide stability, empower marginalized groups, and strengthen women's role in conflict prevention and peace-building. All Mission activities require a gender analysis in the design phase. Illustrative activities across sectors during the next five years include: supporting entrepreneurship by increasing women's access to land, credit and other financial resources, training and technologies; increasing women's and men's participation in local level decision-making through leadership training and increased access to information through radio; improving the use of high impact health services by increasing women's access to these services, introducing men's participation in family planning, and mitigating the spread of HIV/AIDS through technical assistance that promotes gender sensitive strategic HIV/AIDS programming. USAID Mali will narrow the education gap between girls and boys by increasing access to quality education and cross-sectoral literacy programs with high levels of female participation. The Mission will increase gender mainstreaming and integration capacity among Mission staff, partners and civil society organizations through training and technical assistance. Internally, USAID Mali's gender committee will work across sectors to identify opportunities, ways to address gender issues, and training and resource needs. The Mission will promote women's advancement by collaborating with government, NGOs, universities, and other donors at local, national and international levels. Development of a mission order on gender will be completed to provide a stronger mandate and outline organizational responsibility for gender mainstreaming throughout our programs. Risks to achieving the expected results include insufficient action by the GRM to promote gender quality, and the low technical and organizational capacity among key actors.

HIV/AIDS Prevention: Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in Mali is associated with cultural factors including male dominance over women, the early onset of sexual activity among women, and gender inequity with regard to access to financial resources. In addition, pervasive poverty, poor access to health services, and low literacy levels create an environment conducive to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Mali has relatively low levels of prevalence and an opportunity to prevent the spread of the epidemic. As rates in neighboring countries climb with alarming momentum, Mali needs to pursue an aggressive campaign through the use of multi-sectoral interventions and implement systems to monitor the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS in the country's many

different sub-populations. USAID Mali will provide technical and financial assistance for a nationally coordinated response to reduce the spread of the AIDS virus, targeting at-risk groups and bridging populations in particular. In collaboration with the Executive Secretariat of the National High Council against AIDS (SE/HCNLS), USAID Mali will provide technical assistance in the design and implementation of national strategies, and build the capacity of the SE/HCNLS and the MOH in HIV/AIDS monitoring and surveillance. USAID Mali will work with local NGOs to raise HIV/AIDS prevention awareness among at-risk populations. Coordinated efforts will be sustained to engage civil society, traditional and religious leaders, women groups and youth. Particular efforts will be directed towards elected communal leaders for the coordination and mobilization of resources devoted to HIV prevention.

Youth/Urbanization: The Mission's approach to youth and urbanization will provide support to USAID/Mali SOs to reinforce the impact of their activities in health, education, agriculture, the environment, and governance. The Mission's strategy will primarily confront youth and urban issues through specialized approaches for youth in the Northern urban centers of the country and projects to discourage rural youth migration to urban settings. They will be served through USAID's conflict mitigation activities, building consensus for local solutions, improving early warning and response mechanisms, and helping youth resist fundamentalist messages. Radio will be the primary tool for reaching youth, and specialized programs addressing youth issues will be produced and broadcast. Radio and the information technology sector can also be used to provide employment opportunities for youth, who are naturally attracted to new technology and tools, and who are quick learners.

Indigenous Expertise/Donor Harmonization and Public-Private Partnerships

USAID Mali is active in many donor groups. The Mission participates as a member of the Aid Reform Initiative, the Donor Technical Committee, the Donor Gender Committee, and of the Ministry of Economy and Finance led Aid Coordination Commission. These committees are an effective means of coordinating donor assistance to the Malian government, where information is shared, joint decisions are made, and harmonization potentials are explored. Sectoral committees for Health, Basic Education, Decentralization, and North Development have been formed that include major donors and Ministries. Discussions between Mission teams and other USG agencies on strategic foci have identified synergies under each sector. These synergies reflect the highly integrated approach of this new strategy, and relations with partners such as the Peace Corps and DoD will be expanded. The Mission will continue working with all partners to identify linkages that increase impacts. Public-private partnerships leveraged by the Mission in the past few years will continue to expand. Collaborations for increased results in the North and the Office du Niger will be aggressively pursued with partners such as the MCC, the Schaffer Global Group, and various universities. Funds leveraged will also help with information dissemination and use of communications technology, improved health practices, economic growth and income generation, and horticulture production.

The Mission intends to dedicate special attention to higher education in agriculture and participant training where feasible. This focus will enhance Mali's university, especially its agricultural college, through innovative technology, distance education programs, and the expansion of consortiums. Long-term training for Malian agronomists and teachers, supporting the Mission's long-term efforts in agriculture, will be the focus. An additional partnership includes one with the African Liaison Program Initiative (ALPI), a tripartite effort involving U.S. PVOs, African NGOs, and USAID Mali to support a more focused, country-level approach to strengthening development partnerships and indigenous expertise. An action plan has been developed to support our priority of building local NGO capacity to implement Mission programs. This will further support the crux of our strategy in creating local-level linkages between civil society and government. The use and strengthening of indigenous expertise is critical to the success of the Mission's approach, and these programs work closely with networks of NGOs to strengthen institutional capacity. For example, USAID Mali increases the capacity of communities in developing proposals for (and implementation of) the World Bank Multi-sectoral AIDS Project (MAP). The Mission gender working group will collaborate with donors to sponsor events that advance gender integration, develop partnerships with the University to build indigenous gender expertise, and facilitate national and local discussions on key gender issues, best practices, and lessons learned. USAID Mali will use GDA funds to develop extractive industry joint interventions with the private and public sectors, and broker partnerships with U.S. firms having computer equipment needed for CD activities.

Regional Aspects

USAID Mali will continue to play a positive role in the region to reduce broad-based poverty and consolidate democracy and peace. West African governments are focused on regional integration in several areas including: social dialogue at local, national and regional levels; technical and human productivity; market growth through

rational policies, liberalization, and privatization of commercial activities, and effective economic integration; good governance founded on respect of the rules of transparency and equity, and optimal conditions to attract capital to increase investments and improve basic infrastructure. A legal framework to facilitate security of business transactions is also a focus area of governments in West Africa.

The USAID West Africa Regional Program (WARP) provides funding to a number of public and private sector regional organizations addressing issues of economic integration, population, health, and nutrition, food security, the environment and NRM, and conflict prevention. USAID Mali has consulted with WARP in each of its sectoral areas of programming. It has shared its strategic statement with WARP mission for input and further consultation. Some of the agreed areas that the regional mission will handle either independently or with the Mali Mission's support include: monitoring and dissemination of agriculture and trade information, harmonization of policies and standards, responding to cross-border issues associated with HIV/AIDs mitigation among mobile populations, displaced persons, regional institutional strengthening, and gender based constraints to local and regional development. The Mission will also continue to require the regional service of a Legal Advisor and Contracts Officer.

Strategy Statement Annex A

USAID Mali's Vision for Expanding Efforts in the North

USAID Mali's TD development hypothesis posits that by strengthening the capacities of and linkages between local government and civil society (including the nomadic population in the North), the outcome will be a truly decentralized democracy with empowered Malians who can drive long-term economic growth. Due to the special circumstances of the North, USAID Mali's vision for expanding efforts in the North is to *counter the underlying conditions for terrorism within targeted geographical areas*. Our vision will be achieved by addressing basic needs, including water, and by engaging youth to be more productive members of their communities. Activities will be reinforced through innovative approaches that utilize radio and strategic collaborations, implemented within three geographic focus areas based on population density (see map).

Objective 1: Increase access to basic services and water: Development efforts in the North must address the priorities of the population by focusing on their most basic needs. Expansion of basic services in education and health are essential, particularly for nomadic and distant populations. The Mission proposes to introduce radio programming to promote functional literacy for youth and adults, and use this programming as a means to simultaneously convey health and other important development messages to the public. Access to water also ranks as a top priority, particularly in the remote Kidal region, which is most vulnerable to extremist messages. Expansion of irrigated perimeters along the Niger River, where farming predominates, will provide improved and less risky agricultural production, which is highly vulnerable to drought and erratic rain patterns. Wells in the far North, where traditional nomadic populations predominate, are a key means of providing drinking water while simultaneously providing economic opportunities through irrigation and water for herds. However, wells are extremely complicated in terms of sustainability, particularly in remote regions, and much more expensive in the Kidal region. Any well drilling that USAID Mali may do will be done in collaboration with the DoD.

Objective 2: Engage at-risk youth in economic opportunities and local development: For youth, employment remains a primary concern. A good number of these youth are demobilized ex-fighters who have been displaced from their original communities and take instructions from their own organizations. For these vulnerable young people who are an easy target for extremist Islamic groups, hope comes primarily in the form of economic opportunity. Opportunities for self-reliance, leadership and participation in local decision-making will be supplemented by activities that engage youth in the development of their communities, which will build a sense of local ownership and national loyalty. These strategies will combine to make youth more productive members of their communities, and empower them with civic skills that will serve to reduce the potential for future conflict in the North.

Geographic focus: USAID Mali has identified target geographical areas with high population densities in order to have the greatest impact. By focusing on these population pockets, the Mission will build upon areas that already possess economic growth potential, and prevent youth in the far North from moving to Kidal and creating an urban center that is vulnerable to extremist messages. The principle geographic focus areas include (map):

- Population centers in proximity to Kidal, including the transport route towards Algeria,
- Communities along the Niger River from the Niger border, through Gao, up to Bourem,
- Three communities (Goundam, Dire, and Niafounke) west of Timbuktu.

Innovative Approaches

Radio as a means of reaching distant and nomadic groups: In the North, development programming must be extraordinarily innovative so that resources reach the widest audience possible. Mali has a network of national and community radio stations that can increase access to reliable and timely information, enabling citizens to make better decisions for themselves and their family in all development sectors. Radio is a means of achieving our goals at low cost to reach wide audiences, including nomadic groups. Developing a radio education program to promote basic literacy will be a major goal but also a great challenge. In addition, managers of local radio stations and surrounding communities are currently being trained to play a critical role in preventing and mitigating conflict in the North. Community telecenters in Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal (with two more to be installed in Diré and Goundam) offer opportunities to access information and communicate with distant power centers and other parts of the country. These are valuable resources that are the foundation for building a communication strategy to link isolated populations in this region.

Collaboration with other USG agencies: USAID Mali encourages collaboration in the North with other USG agencies, particularly the DoD, in order to pinpoint specific communities and leverage resources. This

leveraging of humanitarian assistance across agencies can have greater, more sustainable impacts on the region. The “hardware” of newly constructed resources, such as wells, schools, health centers and radio stations, can be designed to have integrated USAID “software programming” that bundles expertise between DG and other sectoral programs. These linkages ensure that our health, education and economic growth activities incorporate best practices with our democracy/civil society programming which bolsters local management of these resources. “Software” without “hardware” is less effective and visa versa. Moreover, wells, schools, ect., without training, capacity building and other linkages can inadvertently create conflict.

Illustrative Activities

Programming in all three target regions will be expanded in accordance with our vision highlighted above. Economic Growth activities will facilitate the expansion of water (potable and agricultural) sources, and promote youth micro-enterprises in various fields: wells and pump maintenance, water service provider enterprises for irrigated perimeters and local processing of animal products, town sanitation, and construction of public works. The Education program will provide children with social and life skills as a means of preventing youth disenfranchisement and recruitment into potential terrorist organizations. New education supply models will use Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) to meet the needs of nomadic and small rural settlements. Activities will build upon our highly successful Communications program and broadcast education programs as an alternative to the traditional three-classroom schools, which are not practical for many distant and nomadic groups. The Health program will strengthen expertise in the North by increasing the annual student cohort at the nursing school in Gao. This will create jobs for youth while supporting the delivery of essential health services, especially in the more remote regions to which graduates return. Democracy and Governance activities will increase the involvement of marginalized populations by forging inter- and intra-community solidarity around local governance, peace building, and youth engagement. Male and female youth will be equipped for citizenship and engaged in local development through small grants for community programs that would provide employment and build skills while addressing basic community needs. The Communications program will continue helping increase the number of radio stations in the North. It will also expand radio programming on peace-building and conflict prevention, and provide training for youth in radio programming, computer and radio maintenance and repair, solar energy, and other IT related topics that can lead to economic opportunities.

Implementation Challenges

USAID Mali is committed to supporting the stabilization of the North by addressing the flashpoints of fragility in order to prevent the very real potential for backsliding. USAID Mali programming will therefore be sensitive to conflict-related issues. At the same time, the southern two-thirds of Mali is solidly a Transitional Development country. USAID Mali must support both our long-standing TD activities in the south while simultaneously addressing fragility, conflict, and the underlying causes of terrorism in the North. The Mission’s objective is to keep Mali on track towards a stable, decentralized democracy, supporting the momentum achieved over the past decade. The implementation of activities in the North is much more challenging and costly than for other parts of Mali. As a result, the Mali Mission is hampered in its ability to fully implement its vision for the North, due to resource constraints, and will diligently search out additional pots of money and leveraging opportunities to realize this vision.



Target Expansion Areas in the North

Darker gray means higher population. Estimates based on 1998/2001 census data projected to the year 2005 using scenario II from the DNSI / BCR (taking into account projected fertility, mortality and migration numbers)

Note: for the northern area unknown village population was treated as zero

Estimated 2005 village population

- Locality with a population of more than 5000
- Locality with a population between 1000 & 5000

— Main road
— Secondary road
— Dirt road
— Waterways
○ Targeted areas for expansion

