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BURKINA FASO

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FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

The United States Government (USG) and the Government of Burkina Faso (GOBF) enjoy a close diplomatic relationship. These close bilateral relations and the GOBF's good development performance record have contributed to increased U.S. assistance in recent years. The Millennium Challenge Corporation's \$481 million, five-year compact program makes the USG the largest bilateral donor in Burkina Faso. This program will build roads, improve rural land tenure, and aid farmers with agricultural and irrigation projects. The U.S. Agency for International Development received nearly \$30 million of this compact amount to implement the second phase of a girls' education program that works for 132 communities in 10 provinces.

Keeping Burkina Faso on its progressive development track will require continued USG support over the longer term. Providing support to Burkina Faso's democratic process will be critical for Burkina Faso's continued stability and economic progress. In this regard, Burkina Faso's presidential elections, scheduled for November 21, 2010, will be important.

In addition to democracy and governance, U.S. assistance also focuses on the following goals: increasing the production capacity of high potential agricultural zones, creating conditions that result in more girls completing primary school, reducing the number of malaria cases, improving food security, strengthening reproductive health and child nutrition services, and addressing key health threats. The support and promotion of increased trade opportunities for Burkina Faso's agricultural and handicraft products are also a high priority. In particular, providing support to the production and marketing of cotton, Burkina Faso's largest earner of foreign exchange, is of high importance. USG assistance is also working to contribute to regional stability and security by enhancing the professionalism and technical proficiency of Burkina Faso's military and law enforcement forces.

HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Peace and Security

The United States aims to increase the level of professionalism and technical competency among GOBF military and security forces in Burkina Faso in a way that also encourages respect for civilian leaders and democratic institutions and practices. The United States is working with the GOBF to enhance its contribution to regional peace and security, and to deter extremists and traffickers from operating in Burkina Faso. U.S. assistance supports the training of GOBF military and police units so that they can participate in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations.

In FY 2009, 11 military leaders were trained in technical skills, and 800 military personnel were trained in peacekeeping operations, which enabled the GOBF to contribute 1 battalion to the African Union/UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur.

Investing in People

Burkina Faso is one of the world's poorest countries. The high level of poverty that most of Burkina Faso's 15 million people struggle with on a daily basis presents huge development challenges. Malnutrition persists at a crisis level for a high percentage of children, resulting in an overall stunting rate of almost 40 percent. In FY 2009, U.S. assistance supported the growth and well-being of over 19,000 children, and ensured that malnourished children were provided appropriate care. U.S. assistance also supported the training of over 840 Village Nutrition Educators and Community Health Workers, and over 150 mothers in improved childcare and feeding practices. Other training sessions covered behavior communication change, exclusive breast-feeding, and better hygiene and sanitation practices. As a result of U.S. assistance, 1,250 metric tons of food aid was distributed to nearly 15,000 vulnerable individuals.

Adult literacy rates are among the lowest in the world (less than 27 percent average overall and 14 percent for women). The USG has helped to improve basic education by increasing the retention rate of students attending primary schools. The USG's vast school lunch program has helped raise the retention rate to 87 percent, and increased enrollment rates by 5 percent. Over the past year, school lunches were provided to 245,868 primary school students, and "Take Home Rations" for 10,728 girls were given to encourage regular attendance at school, which helped achieve a high attendance rate for girls of 96 percent. In addition, food was provided to 4,029 preschool children. These school feeding programs were supported by 3,937 metric tons of food during FY 2009.

A lack of basic health care and potable water contribute heavily to a general poor state of health for most Burkina Faso citizens. U.S. assistance in FY 2009 supported the construction of 21 community wells, which provide potable water to 6,900 people.

Burkina Faso is making progress with improving the health status of its people, but its health and nutrition status indicators are still among the worst in the world. The average life expectancy is about 53 years, and nearly 19 percent of children die before the age of 5. While the HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate is relatively low at 1.6 percent, HIV/AIDS remains a concern in Burkina Faso. U.S. assistance in FY 2009 supported messages about HIV/AIDS prevention, reaching over 28,000 people through various communications techniques. As a result, the USG was able to facilitate the counseling and testing of over 3,000 individuals. Technical assistance was also provided to 6 local organizations working to support people affected by HIV/AIDS, and 78 of these people were assisted in gaining access to credit. In addition, the USG provided 522 metric tons of food

commodities to 554 HIV/AIDS-affected households. This supply of food enabled many people to re-establish their health and begin working again.

Economic Growth

Burkina Faso has been ranked near the bottom of the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) since the inception of this index in 1990. In the most recent HDI ranking in 2009, Burkina Faso ranked 177th out of 182 countries. The low level of job creation and slow economic growth limit opportunities for people to participate in the market place. Moreover, 85 percent of the population resides in rural areas, and is mostly dependent on subsistence agriculture.

In FY 2009, U.S. assistance supported women in increasing their income from market gardening activities. Among the results achieved with the application of improved cultivation techniques is the example of 249 women who increased the average income earned per year from gardening from \$4.44 in 2005 to \$83.70 in 2009. In addition, 302 men saw the income earned per year from market gardening increase from an average of \$51.85 to \$103.70 over the same period.

The land-locked geographic position of Burkina Faso makes it harder to be competitive in international markets with its main agricultural exports (cotton and shea butternut), and raises the cost of doing business. In addition, the high cost of electricity contributes to making Burkina Faso one of the most expensive countries in the world in which to do business. Despite all of these obstacles, the GOBF has improved the investment environment, and Burkina Faso's ranking in the World Bank's "Doing Business" report has been on an upward trend in recent years. U.S. assistance in FY 2009 supported the introduction of technologies and techniques that increased millet and sorghum yields by 152 percent. Altogether, 720 farmers were trained in improved production, post-harvest, and marketing techniques. These same farmers also received training in soil and water conservation techniques.

The USG is also working in microfinance. A study conducted showed that 18,502 clients benefited from loans, and that 61 percent of these clients were able to increase their incomes. Throughout the year, the United States provided nearly 30,000 individuals with credit services. Efforts also led nearly 600 clients to increase their savings. U.S. assistance also provided over 4,000 small loans to support income-generating activities.

When the annual harvest is good, Burkina Faso enjoys positive economic growth and produces enough food to feed its people. Since agriculture in Burkina Faso is mostly dependent on rainfall, Burkina Faso has suffered historically from frequent food shortages and consequent lower annual economic growth. In this regard, Burkina Faso has been fortunate to have relatively good annual harvests for the past five years.

In FY 2009, the United States educated more than 58,000 farmers in new technologies and management practices, which were employed on over 6,500 hectares of land. The United States also strengthened the management capacity of 19 farmer organizations, and provided training to 2,339 farmers on how to increase crop yields.