



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF STATE



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

CAMEROON

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FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

The United States Mission to Cameroon is committed to helping Cameroon become more democratic and better governed, and boosting its ability to provide more effectively for the needs of its people and the protection of its borders and maritime domain. Cameroon is as unique for its domestic diversity (with more than 200 ethnic groups) as for its international affiliations; formerly ruled by the Germans, French, and British, it is the only country belonging to the Commonwealth, the International Organization of the Francophonie, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Over the course of 50 years of United States-Cameroon relations, the United States has been a partner in Cameroon's development. This relationship currently includes a large Peace Corps program, assistance from the Centers for Disease Control, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) support, and Department of Defense cooperation.

Perched at the intersection of West and Central Africa, Cameroon is a keystone state on the increasingly strategic Gulf of Guinea. Cameroon offers the only overland access to the Central African Republic and to Chad, supplies most of the refined petroleum for these neighbors, serves as the breadbasket for the region, and hosts over 60,000 refugees. This makes Cameroon's stability crucial to international efforts to keep the peace and develop Central Africa. Cameroon faces internal threats from highway bandits, rising crime levels, and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

While Cameroon has largely escaped the internal conflicts that have characterized many of its neighbors, the country faces considerable challenges in preparing for scheduled 2011 presidential and 2012 parliamentary elections. The country also faces a host of economic challenges, including a difficult business climate. The United States is Cameroon's largest source of direct foreign investment, with major investments in the energy, power, and mining sectors.

Cameroon encompasses substantial portions of the Congo River Basin ecosystem, known as the "world's second lung" because it supplies more oxygen than all but the Amazon forests and boasts an unparalleled array of flora and fauna, including three species of apes and other endangered primates. About 40 percent of Cameroonians live below the poverty line, and many social indicators, including infant and maternal mortality, have been worsening. An estimated 5.5 percent

of Cameroonian adults are infected with HIV/AIDS, the highest incidence rate in West and Central Africa. Upwards of 40,000 Cameroonians die of the disease each year, leaving hundreds of thousands of children and family members affected by the disease. In the last few years, there have been reported cases of diseases as diverse as Avian Influenza and H1N1. As a transport corridor between West and Central Africa, Cameroon's disease prevalence takes on regional and global significance.

HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Investing in People

U.S. assistance in 2009 focused on combating HIV/AIDS, complementing the health activities of the Peace Corps; the Centers for Disease Control; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria; and other U.S.-supported programs. The regional HIV/AIDS program Action for West Africa Region (AWARE I), coordinated by USAID West Africa, ended in FY 2008, and a follow-on phase is just starting. AWARE I included support to the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Board's regional training center. This center trains healthcare workers on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT). In FY 2009, it helped support 423 PMTCT sites in Cameroon – 70 percent of the total. USAID's regional program funded HIV testing for youth, and provided technical assistance to enhance coordination and planning of the Global Fund Country Coordination Mechanism. A USAID needs assessment in 2009 concluded that AWARE II should focus on HIV/AIDS prevention and advocacy for policy change.

Peace and Security

Through the Office of the Defense Attaché, the United States cooperates with the Cameroonian Government on maritime and border security, and in building overall military professionalism. While Cameroon has not received International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding since FY 2008 due to congressional restrictions, Post has received funding through Extended-IMET and Counter-Narcotics and Terrorism for programming with the Cameroonian security services in seminars on civil-military relations and oversight of defense budgets. Because of these programs and other military-to-military engagement, security incidents have been reduced.