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FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

The overarching goal of U.S. foreign assistance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is a stable, democratic state that is at peace with its neighbors and provides for the basic needs of its citizens. The eastern region of the DRC continues to be a largely ungoverned space that harbors illegal armed groups and experiences instability and violent conflict, often resulting in population displacement. The effects of this political instability on the country's political, social, and economic fabric have been wide-ranging. Conflict in Eastern DRC continues to hinder stabilization and reconstruction efforts and allows grave human rights abuses, including brutal and repressive violence against women and girls, to continue. The United States Government (USG) continues to support the DRC's pressing economic, security, and development challenges. Under the Peace and Security Objective, the United States is an important partner in supporting the Government of the DRC's Stabilization and Recovery Program (STAREC), through community-based reconstruction and infrastructure support programs, as well as support for the military justice and security sector. In the Democracy and Governance sector, U.S. assistance seeks to improve good governance, expand the rule of law, and support the decentralization process through judicial and legislative strengthening at the national and provincial levels. The United States recognizes the importance of sustained investment to improve the Congolese people's access to quality social services in the areas of health and education, with an increased emphasis on preventing and treating HIV/AIDS and malaria. Given the alarming levels of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) reported in Eastern DRC, USG programs provide care and treatment for SGBV survivors and their families and build awareness among communities and local and national authorities on the severe consequences of allowing these abuses. To address growing food insecurity and help the country increase its agricultural productivity, USG assistance focuses on cassava production and processing, support to small and medium enterprises, agricultural livelihoods support in conservation areas, and food-aid development assistance.

HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Peace and Security

The DRC continues to face significant challenges in its efforts to reform its security sector and extend state authority to the eastern region of the country. U.S. assistance in security sector reform and conflict mitigation increased in 2009. In FY 2009, USG programs:

- Provided a Senior Advisor to the Congolese Ministry of Defense to assist in the development of a comprehensive training strategy for the military. Infrastructure improvements at the military officers' training center in Kinshasa were also supported.
- Trained 1,394 members of the military and military justice system on professional leadership, human rights, protection, decision making, and command and control
- Supported the reintegration into civilian life of 1,244 ex-combatants in Ituri District. These reinsertion and durable reintegration activities included preparing communities for the return and resettlement of ex-combatants, as well as sustainable civic and vocational training and reintegration kits. The program also resulted in the construction of 3 bridges, rehabilitation of 118 kilometers of roads, the construction and equipping of a courthouse, and the rehabilitation of a health center's water and waste disposal system.

USG efforts to promote stabilization and post-conflict recovery are aligned with the Government of the DRC's STAREC program, as well as with the United Nations' Security and Stabilization Support Strategy. Components under these programs aim to establish and maintain peace and security along strategic roads, or "axes," re-establish infrastructure needed to create or maintain state authority, and support the disengagement of armed groups that remain a threat to Congolese State authority. In FY 2009, U.S. assistance supported these components through community-based reconciliation and conflict mitigation programs that promote durable peace in Eastern DRC by creating tangible, rapid-impact peace dividends that lay the foundations for peace in the medium and long term.

Governing Justly and Democratically

The United States has maintained its support to the DRC in helping the Government create much-needed reforms in conformity with the 2006 Constitution. USG assistance supports decentralization efforts, local government, and legislative bodies through technical assistance on drafting and debating laws deemed essential to this process. U.S. assistance also seeks to improve justice system functioning, enhance judicial independence and accountability, and increase access to justice – all essential elements of a functioning and legitimate democracy. Through active engagement of Government actors and civil society across a range of legislative strengthening, rule-of-law, and media programs in FY 2009, U.S. assistance:

- Trained 321 National Assembly members and staff of 2 major committees, and reinforced their capacity to draft and debate laws and discuss the budget
- Trained 764 Provincial Assembly members and staff on document preparation, edict preparation techniques, and archiving systems
- Supported the decentralization process through technical assistance on the drafting, debating, and passing of four laws directly related to decentralization

- Engaged civil society through 58 community events that fostered discussion of key governance issues, including taxation, public financial oversight, decentralization, women's political participation, anticorruption, combating SGBV, and security and peace negotiations
- Supported the passage of seven laws and procedures related to judicial independence. Support was provided to the National Assembly to draft and debate judicial laws, including a law on the organization of judicial jurisdictions, and laws establishing the Court of Appeals, Constitutional Court, and the Administrative Oversight Body. Technical assistance was also provided to the new High Judicial Council to pass internal rules and procedures and develop selection criteria for magistrates.
- Trained nearly 300 justice sector personnel, including judges, prosecutors, advocates, inspectors, and court staff, on topics such as the new judicial laws and judicial reform efforts, court administration, management practices, budgeting and accounting procedures, and the effects of decentralization on provincial authorities
- Provided access to justice for 5,334 vulnerable individuals, through support for legal service centers in low-income and marginalized communities. These individuals, nearly 25 percent of which are women, sought and received legal aid as a result of advertising on community radio stations and support to local bar associations.
- Supported 55 national human rights organizations through technical assistance on effective community awareness-raising of human rights, including of the 2006 National Law Against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, and on project development and management
- Engaged nearly 10,000 members of civil society through civic education activities, such as public hearings and youth-centered events
- Trained 556 journalists in community-based radio stations to improve their capacity to receive, produce, and broadcast information. Training topics focused on responsible journalistic principles and practices, citizen rights and the law, and technical production.

Investing in People

Health

The DRC is ranked among the bottom 10 countries in the world on a range of basic social and quality of life indicators. Health indicators in particular are among the worst in the world and reflect the hardships resulting from many years of conflict, continuing conflict in some regions, and the significant deterioration of health services throughout the country. According to the 2007 Demographic and Health Survey, about one child in seven dies before reaching age five. Excessive morbidity and premature mortality reduce productivity while increasing expenditure of scarce resources on health care. Support for health services is a major component of U.S. foreign assistance, and continues to represent an important area of cooperation between the United States and the DRC. U.S. assistance seeks to increase the availability of, demand for, and access to low-cost, high-impact Primary Health Care, with a focus on improving quality maternal, newborn, and child health services; provision of potable water; and prevention, care, and treatment services to pregnant women and children under five, as well as to populations at high risk for malaria, tuberculosis (TB), and HIV/AIDS. The health program also provides technical and financial assistance to strengthen the fragile health system while improving access to integrated, quality care to

more than 11 million Congolese in 80 of the country's 515 health zones. Through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s flagship Primary Health Care program and a range of other health activities in FY 2009, U.S. assistance in Health:

- Provided antenatal care to more than 400,000 pregnant women in Maternal and Newborn Health – a significant increase over the previous year, and enabled 317,910 deliveries with a skilled birth attendant, with active management of the third stage of labor. Appropriate care was provided to 260,636 newborns within 3 days of birth.
- Provided nearly 3 million children under the age of 5 with Vitamin A supplements critical to combat malnutrition through national campaigns, routine growth monitoring, and post-natal consultations – almost doubling the number of children served in FY 2008. Overall, 1,880 community relays were trained in nutritional messages, assisting nurses during antenatal clinics, growth monitoring, and immunization activities. Community-based nutrition activities use the positive deviance Hearth model in high chronic malnutrition health zones.
- Provided treatment to 483,324 children with diarrheal illnesses and to 689,618 children with pneumonia, as well as DPT3 immunization to 331,561 children to reduce childhood morbidity and mortality
- Expanded contraceptive access through more than 2,000 service delivery points and enrolled 305,885 new Family Planning (FP) acceptors into USAID-supported FP clinics. A recently completed project survey in 4 USG-supported provinces showed that 22.3 percent of women in intervention zones are using a modern contraceptive method, compared to a national average of 6.7 percent.
- Supported the development, printing, and dissemination of a new Family Planning Strategic Plan and Roadmap countrywide, and catalyzed national planning to reposition Family Planning with the goal of engaging the DRC Government and other key donors and stakeholders to expand support and activities in this area
- Purchased and distributed 562,908 long-lasting insecticide treated nets (LLINs) to prevent malaria in USG-supported health zones. In those health zones, preventative treatment for pregnant women increased from 58 percent in FY 2008 to 65 percent in FY 2009. This increase is attributable to improved availability of treatments and the free distribution of LLINs during antenatal clinics.
- Provided more than 65,000 individuals with improved access to safe drinking water through the construction or rehabilitation of 269 water sources in 9 health zones in an effort to reduce illness and death from water-borne diseases. These activities are complemented with promotion of key hygiene behaviors that aim to reduce diarrhea illness.
- Supported 918 fistula repairs with a first operation success rate of 90 percent, as well as training for 45 doctors in extensive fistula repair. These activities targeted North and South Kivu, where violent and brutal rape has contributed to the incidence of fistula.
- Trained 1,150 physicians, supervisors, healthcare staff, and community members on the proper diagnosis and treatment of TB, and supported the development and dissemination of the Multi-Drug Resistant TB guidelines and a national Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

- Supported the Ministry of Health’s 2006 Health System Strengthening Strategy with a focus on the development of human resources for health and of integrated leadership at the health zone level, improving the coverage and quality of care in the health zone, and increasing community participation. Trained 1,013 community-health development committee members and 5,910 community relays were trained in an effort to build community capacity and increase demand for and use of health services.

Education

The education system in the DRC is characterized by limited access to schools, poor quality, a lack of trained and qualified teachers, and low pass and completion rates. U.S. foreign assistance in Education in the DRC seeks to improve access to quality basic education at all levels of schooling, focusing primarily on improving educational quality through teacher training, improved curriculum and pedagogy, strengthening management capacity, rehabilitating and equipping schools, and mobilizing communities around education issues. The United States is committed to helping improve the quality of and access to basic education, a need outlined by the Government of the DRC in its Priority Action Plan. In FY 2009, U.S. assistance programs:

- Trained 2,843 teachers and educators, including 704 women. Training focused on learner-centered pedagogy, using the national curriculum and a catch-up syllabus for formerly displaced individuals returning to their home communities. Trainers were selected from the pool of Ministry of Education experts to ensure the sustainability of new methods. Topics were chosen to improve teachers’ professional skills, and included sessions on HIV/AIDS, gender equality, peace education, and citizenship.
- Trained 98 community members on school management, constructed or rehabilitated 75 classrooms, and designed specific programs targeting adolescents, including radio programs focused on life skills, peace building, and HIV/AIDS prevention. USG assistance continued to provide opportunities for school dropouts and returnee students and included interventions such as awareness campaigns for enrollment, school rehabilitation, and safety in war-affected areas.
- Provided scholarships through the Ambassador’s Girls Scholarship Program to 12,612 girls and 1,667 boys. Scholarships included school fees, exam fees, uniforms, and school supplies.

Social Services

The protection of vulnerable populations in the DRC continues to be a priority for the USG. Social Services programming is focused on addressing the problem of brutal SGBV in Eastern DRC, as well as the needs of separated and abandoned children in three urban areas of the country. Reducing vulnerability and helping the Government improve its commitment and capacity to deliver basic social services is key to lasting stability in the DRC and moving the country along the development continuum. The USG’s Social Protection programs aim to improve access to care and treatment services for vulnerable populations, including abandoned children, disabled children, and SGBV survivors, and to promote community awareness of and response to SGBV. In FY 2009, USG programming under Social Services:

- Assisted 48,745 vulnerable individuals through provision of basic social, medical, economic, educational, legal, and counseling services

- Reunited 1,543 abandoned children, most of who were living in the streets, with their families in 3 urban areas with high rates of separated children
- Provided more than 12,000 SGBV survivors with access to specialized care and treatment services, including psychosocial support, medical care, access to justice, and economic assistance
- Trained nearly 5,000 local service providers to deliver quality and appropriate specialized services (psychological, economic, judicial, and medical referral) to SGBV survivors, abandoned children, and their family members
- Strengthened the capacity of 186 Congolese service delivery organizations that focus on child protection and abused women. These local organizations in turn provided basic health, social, and economic support services to vulnerable individuals.

Economic Growth

Growing food insecurity and the global economic crisis have had adverse impacts on the DRC's ability to increase food production and generate revenue. In FY 2009, the United States continued its investment in agricultural assistance to the DRC and focused on three major activities: investing in cassava productivity, distribution and processing, and supporting small and medium enterprise (SME) development for the agriculture sector; agricultural livelihoods support in three important conservation areas; and food assistance targeting the Eastern DRC corridor. USG assistance:

- Supported the release of six new varieties of cassava and provided new equipment to Congolese producers and processors to increase cassava productivity
- Assisted 33,220 households and 722 producers' organizations and associations through improved agricultural technologies and management practices
- Provided improved seed, maize, cassava cuttings, soil improvement, small-scale irrigation, and reforestation through food monetization and food-for-work programming through food-aid development assistance. This program trained 8,000 people in sustainable and improved agricultural techniques to increase agricultural productivity.
- Provided economic opportunities to Congolese farmers and cooperatives by supporting SMEs engaged in increasing cassava productivity and value-added processing
- Implemented agriculture-based livelihoods activities in three important target areas reaching tens of thousands of target households in Ituri, Maringa-Lopori Wamba, and Salonga landscapes, in partnership with the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment
- Initiated support for the development of a long-term agriculture strategy and support for the DRC's participation in the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program