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MALAWI

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FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

The United States' overall foreign policy objective in Malawi is to help build and sustain a democratic and well-governed state that responds to the needs of its people and conducts itself responsibly in the international system. The Government of Malawi (GOM) is receptive to U.S. Government (USG) diplomatic and development efforts, and has proven to be a cooperative partner. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) is a comprehensive development plan that articulates GOM priorities and objectives, and provides a basis on which to plan and implement mutually agreed upon development efforts. Malawi has made demonstrable progress on development issues over the last several years—as evidenced by, for example, strong economic growth, credible Presidential and Parliamentary elections, control of corruption, and a decreasing child mortality rate. At the same time, weak human and institutional capacity at most levels of the GOM, and within the private and public sectors, threatens the long-term sustainability of these gains. These capacity constraints also hurt USG development activities. To help accomplish USG foreign policy objectives and support the MGDS, foreign assistance resources deepen democracy and good governance by supporting election management and legislative strengthening; promote economic growth by improving agricultural productivity, financial services, and natural resource management; and improve health and education by increasing quality and access to services.

HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Peace and Security

The Malawi Defense Force (MDF) is a relatively well-trained, professional military with a long history of respect for civilian control. In addition to their responsibilities for securing Malawi's borders at home, the MDF is also engaged in peacekeeping abroad, with over 100 soldiers taking part in the United Nations mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo. The MDF is eager to increase its participation in peacekeeping operations and continues to prepare for a possible troop

contribution to the United Nations Mission in Chad. USG efforts in peace and security supported training of MDF officers in the United States to maintain their high level of professionalism, reinforce civilian control of the military, and assist the MDF's greater involvement in international peacekeeping. These efforts continued a long relationship between the two militaries, under which the USG has trained almost every senior officer in the MDF, including the current commander and deputy commander.

In FY 2009, 13 soldiers participated in intensive training in the United States. The training covered a range of military topics. This year's training cadre included two officers who attended the year-long Command and General Staff College.

Resources from the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program funded extensive training and some equipment for the MDF's peacekeeping battalion

Governing Justly and Democratically

After more than 30 years of dictatorship ended in the mid-1990s, Malawi has demonstrated a commitment to holding free and credible elections, and fighting corruption. Supporting this transition bolsters democracy in this part of Africa and strengthens regional stability and peace. The GOM encountered some financial, human, and technical constraints in preparation for the May 2009 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, and there were charges of government media bias in the pre-election period. In the end, however, Malawi's national elections were perceived by Malawians and the international community alike to be free, credible, and representative of the will of the people.

With support from USAID, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) trained 150 Malawi Electoral Commission officials on the voter registration process as well as election day poll management, while the National Democratic Institute (NDI) trained approximately 800 poll monitors associated with the Malawi Electoral Support Network (MESN) on appropriate electoral observation techniques

UNDP outreach activities reached approximately 7 million people through television programs, commercials, and radio jingles; 60 drama groups that performed around the country; and over 3 million posters. In addition, 35 civil society organizations carried out voter- and election-related sensitization meetings all in the 193 parliamentary constituencies in the country.

USAID support established a statistically based monitoring exercise to which all MESN poll monitors contributed. The monitoring exercise provided comprehensive information about election-day activities that was used to produce several reports corroborating official electoral results. These independent reports provided additional credibility to the official results and served to deflate unfounded charges by opposition candidates that the election was rigged, thus helping to avert election-related violence and demonstrations.

Through a public-private partnership with the Financial Services Volunteer Corps, 40 bank and non-bank institutions benefited from training on bank supervision, small and medium enterprise lending, interest rate risk, and stress testing

Investing in People

Education, health, and social services in Malawi have improved over the last 20 years. These sectors have historically received a majority of development funding from international donors. Immense challenges remain to ensure that rural, vulnerable, and poor populations have consistent access to

high-quality services. USG efforts in these sectors aim to further strengthen service delivery across the country and broaden access for the most underserved. An educated and healthy population is more able and likely to contribute to the nation's economic development, participate in democratic processes, and promote stability.

Health

USAID efforts were aligned with and supported the Sector-Wide Approach program of work, which culminated in USAID signing a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Health as a discrete partner. In FY 2009:

- Malawi was the first country in the world to sign a new President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief Partnership Framework with the USG. The United States-Malawi Partnership Framework is being used by other countries as a model of excellence and successful interagency cooperation.
- More than 42,000 households benefitted from the indoor residual spraying program this year, a program designed to kill mosquitoes that spread malaria. Survey results from participating households from past spray rounds illustrate a substantial decrease in anemia in children under the age of five, a proxy indicator for malaria prevalence.
- The U.S. Ambassador to Malawi led engagement efforts with high-level political and religious leaders, as well as the heads of other diplomatic and development missions, to discuss the negative impact that continued rapid population growth will have in Malawi. These advocacy efforts resulted in a strong commitment by these interested parties to prioritize family planning as a keystone development issue in the coming years.
- USAID partners trained 10,000 people in maternal, neonatal, and child health, while skilled clinicians attended over 140,000 births at USAID-supported sites. Mother care units were established in 10 health facilities and 47 service providers were trained in essential newborn care.
- USAID, in collaboration with other partners, successfully refurbished four tuberculosis microscopy centers. The Central Reference Lab in Malawi was renovated, staffed, and equipped by USAID in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.
- USAID participated in a multi-donor effort to initiate the Malawi Demographic and Health Survey, which will provide reliable data on Malawi's health sectors, and be used to shape future programming

Education

Since the announcement of free universal primary education in the 1990s, Malawi's education system has struggled to meet increased demand for education and maintain a high standard of instruction. USAID efforts in this sector during FY 2009 supported the GOM in improving quality, equitable access, governance, and management of basic education. In FY 2009:

- USAID supported the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology in completing the Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP). The \$90-million, three-year ESIP is a critical planning document and a pre-cursor to Malawi's application for World Bank Fast-Track Initiative Catalytic Funding.

- Approximately 1,904,200 students were enrolled in USAID-supported classrooms last year. A majority was female.
- USAID partners trained nearly 15,000 teachers and educators, and distributed more than 1,000 textbooks and other teaching and learning materials to educational institutions around the country.
- More than 1.5 million pupils in primary schools nationwide participated in the Tikwere Interactive Radio Instruction activity, an innovative and successful radio education program that reaches a large majority of all kindergarten and first-grade students. Efforts under the Tikwere program have contributed to improved academic performance in English and mathematics.
- The Education Decentralization Support Activity is making progress on strengthening the education decentralization process. Guidelines for school improvement plans are being drafted, and computers and training were provided to support the use of the GOM's Education Management and Information System for policy and programming purposes.

Social and Economic Services and Protection for Vulnerable Populations

While there have been several years of good harvests in Malawi, pockets of food insecurity still exist, and significant numbers of people remain vulnerable to economic or environmental shocks. HIV/AIDS and a number of other diseases, coupled with limited economic opportunities, complicate many Malawians' hopes of transitioning from poverty to a more stable and secure position. Specific results from USAID-supported activities include:

- Working closely with the Food Security Task Force and the Department of Nutrition, USAID partners provided nutrition and health services to 77,545 people, a large majority of them women.
- With support from USAID, a new Nutrition Policy and Strategic Plan was launched in December 2009 to guide government and development partner nutrition activities over the next several years.
- USAID-supported efforts provided 39,860 orphans and vulnerable children with essential care, support, and protection services, and 8,533 people affected by HIV with home-based care.
- USAID's agricultural and health partners continued to facilitate greater integration of HIV awareness through multi-sectoral programs aimed at increasing food security, and improving livelihoods and resilience of rural people living with HIV/AIDS.

Economic Growth

Malawi has experienced strong economic growth over the last several years coupled with progress in the overall economic environment, including trade policy, land rights, inflation, and interest rates. Agriculture is the backbone of the economy, and the GOM's Agricultural Input Subsidy Program, coupled with four good years of rains, has been credited with achieving widespread food security. Malawi is also one of southern Africa's most biodiverse countries. Forests, wildlife, fish, and other natural resources play major roles in rural households' economic activities and food security. Despite the economic growth over the last several years, many challenges still face the economic

sector, including overdependence on rain-fed agriculture, decreasing plot sizes, low agricultural productivity, limited access to credit, an unpredictable policy environment, increasing environmental degradation, and low market penetration of financial products and services. USAID efforts in FY 2009 targeted these constraints and achieved the following:

- More than 73,000 households benefited from crop diversification, irrigation efforts, seed multiplication, village savings and loans, and agribusiness and agricultural production technologies.
- USAID supported both long- and short-term training for farmers and agricultural professionals. The long-term training program sponsored six students to study for degrees in food science and technology at U.S. institutions. Other USAID-funded efforts introduced 32 new agricultural productivity technologies to approximately 74,000 people in the dairy, aquaculture, crop and animal husbandry, and irrigation sectors through training, field-testing, and demonstrations.
- USAID partners supported the establishment of community-based institutions to manage natural resources through co-management agreements, carbon sequestration projects, seminars, and sound stewardship of the wildlife reserves, national parks, and forests. As a result, 125,288 hectares saw improved natural resource management and 418,704 hectares saw better biodiversity conservation.
- An estimate 77,360 people—54,017 men and 23,343 women—benefited from participating in new natural resource-based enterprises. Total revenue earned by households participating in community-based natural resource enterprises was \$1,861,168.
- Through training and technical assistance, five private sector microfinance institutions expanded their outreach through new product development and improved operations. The number of clients at these institutions rose to over 555,000, of which 30 percent were women. The total savings deposits increased to \$63,841,451.
- More than two dozen loans valued at \$1,440,000 were disbursed to small and medium-sized enterprises operating in agriculturally linked sectors under Malawi's first Development Credit Authority facility.

Humanitarian Assistance

Although the GOM has made gains recently in disaster readiness, staff shortages and lack of capacity are ongoing challenges. Malawi remains vulnerable to localized drought, heavy rains and flooding, and other widespread shocks such as pandemic flu. Strengthening the capacity of the public and private sectors in Malawi to manage economic and environmental shocks is crucial to mitigating large-scale loss of life or livelihoods when disaster strikes. USAID achieved the following results during FY 2009:

- A USAID partner provided livelihoods baseline assessment training to 51 new members of the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC). The training increased the pool of trained staff competent to carry out thorough and accurate assessment of food security in the country.
- USAID funding was also used to supervise crop estimates, led by MVAC, and provide on-the-spot advice to help ensure reliability of the estimates. Issues and deficiencies raised by

the crop estimates were addressed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, which provided 6,678 tons of food to 147,492 people affected by localized droughts in certain areas of Chikwawa, Balaka, and Nsanje.

- USAID also provided monthly food security updates that kept the GOM, donors, and partners abreast of the prevailing situation. These updates included topics such as food marketing and informal cross-border trade, which significantly affects food availability in Malawi. This information provides a basis for traders, government, donors, and nongovernmental organizations to make crucial decisions on food security issues.