



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE



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## MAURITANIA

# U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PERFORMANCE PUBLICATION Fiscal Year 2009

### **FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS**

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The consequences of the 2008 coup posed a primary challenge to Mauritania's progress in 2009, especially given the fragile state of its democratic institutions. Other challenges included debilitating food insecurity and development deficits, and the destabilizing threats of terrorism and radicalization.

Given these challenges, the United States Government (USG)'s goals were to focus on the return to constitutional order through consensual, free, and transparent elections as recommended by the Dakar Agreements, and to resume its efforts to assist the Government of Mauritania in tackling the pressing needs of the moment: to reestablish a working government and restart bilateral cooperation. These goals were largely met.

### **HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE**

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#### **Governing Justly and Democratically:**

- Supported Mauritania's National Electoral Commission to conduct a voter education program similar to the "Get Out the Vote" campaigns conducted in the United States. The program worked with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the National Electoral Commission to educate voters on how to register to vote, how properly to mark a ballot, the ethics of voting, the importance of voting, and how it determines their future government and lives as Mauritians. The program impacted over 1.5 million Mauritians through the use of multimedia and the Caravan of Hope, an educational traveling concert caravan, for the dissemination of key themes and messages to educate voters. The purpose of this program was not only to educate voters, but also to help ensure a more fair, transparent, and legitimate election in Mauritania during a time of political crisis. As a result, voter turnout exceeded 60 percent.

#### **Investing in People**

The prospects for food insecurity and malnutrition are still serious in Mauritania. The southern, southeastern, and central regions showed above-emergency malnutrition rates, as evidenced by the

latest World Food Program vulnerability studies and UNICEF malnutrition surveys. The USG has continued support to the government and international and local NGOs to implement food security and nutrition programs to assist vulnerable populations in areas worst hit by food insecurity and malnutrition. In FY 2009, USG programs:

- Trained more than 20 government nurses on primary care, more than 160 community health workers on community health management, and 14 traditional birthing attendants
- Provided food rations to over 8,800 chronically malnourished children, and over 5,400 pregnant and breastfeeding women. Provided vitamin-A supplementation and de-worming treatment to more than 16,793 children.
- Improved food production by creating 31 agricultural infrastructures such as fencing in agricultural fields and agro-hydro-pastoral projects, including an expansion of 26 hectares of existing agricultural production lands for 3 rural communities through the construction of a dam
- Supported the safe repatriation of Mauritians from Senegal. To date, more than 17,130 people have returned and are being supported by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to re-start their lives in dignity. Repatriation is helping Mauritians close a sad chapter of their recent political history, which resulted in the expulsion of thousands of Afro-Mauritians to Senegal and Mali after civil strife of the late 1980s.
- Provided assistance to four International Organizations (IOs) to design and implement food security and nutrition-related activities benefitting these returning communities. This resulted in many of them restarting vegetable growing projects as well as animal husbandry activities along the Senegal River Valley.
- Assisted an IO to build resilience in communities severely affected by the crisis of high food prices, with activities supporting 62 health posts and centers as well as community-based feeding centers, screening 369 children under 5, and orienting those malnourished into rehabilitation, in the area of acute malnutrition management. In the area of information systems, that IO was able to implement a SMART survey that provided critical information to base proper choice of intervention areas and programming direction.
- Assisted one organization to start the first program of local enrichment of staple food with micronutrients. This innovative approach will ensure that Mauritians will have access to by-products of enriched flour milled in Nouakchott and disseminated nationwide.
- Funded 7 cooperatives to provide services to more than 5,090 people with access to potable water and agriculture activities in 7 regions
- Assisted 22 Girls Mentoring Centers to continue the provision of private academic tutoring, computer lessons, art classes, and health and life skills seminars to more than 6,500 girls in 2009
- Provided resources to seven IOs to continue health, water, and agriculture-related activities to improve food security conditions, access to primary health care and potable water

## **Economic Growth**

Mauritania had a difficult year in 2009. The coup d'état forced many countries and institutions to halt cooperation. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund ceased economic cooperation, resulting in the freezing of major projects impacting infrastructure (roads and ports). However, the USG was able to continue some limited engagement under the umbrella of Food for Peace humanitarian assistance to the people of Mauritania.

- Funded one NGO to provide small business loans to beneficiaries, in order to increase individual and household capacity to avert food security shocks by increasing income to purchase food products. Because of this strategy, over 200 income-generating activities were financed, benefiting over 3,000 people, including 2,623 women increasing their purchasing power ability to improving food security for their households.
- Supported 10 organizations to start income-generating activities in rural communities in the areas of weaving, vegetable production, and animal husbandry, including one program that will provide refrigerating capacity for dozens of small cooperatives to store their goods before transporting them to Nouakchott and other towns for sale