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DEPARTMENT OF STATE



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## WEST AFRICA REGIONAL U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PERFORMANCE PUBLICATION Fiscal Year 2009

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

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The goal of the U.S. Agency for International Development West Africa Regional Mission, located in Accra, Ghana, is to promote development across the region, as well as provide management support services to USAID missions west Africa. Working in 21 countries (14 of which do not have a bilateral USAID mission), USAID implements both regional and bilateral activities designed to address the key obstacles to development and improve livelihoods. With a population of 325 million, 60 percent of which is under 25 years old, the region faces serious challenges, including poverty, low economic growth, poor health services, conflict, corruption, and poor infrastructure. USAID supports development through programs in the areas of economic growth, investing in people, governing justly and democratically, and peace and security.

In the past year, two coup d'états and one assassination of a head of state occurred, generating greater instability in an already fragile environment. The spread of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and other criminal networks has created new obstacles to development, while presenting very real security concerns. Studies undertaken by USAID have shown that factors such as poverty and poor governance play important roles in fostering extremism. USAID's activities address such factors, either directly by working in conflict-prone environments to delegitimize terrorism, or indirectly by promoting stability and economic growth within the region.

USAID seeks to strengthen regional institutions and support regional development by collaborating with organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), and the West African Health Organization (WAHO). The program's focus on these institutions ultimately enhances sustainability and is consistent with the Agency's commitment to building the capacity of local institutions in order to support transformational development. While USAID's general approach in developing new programs is to identify common objectives of interest to multiple countries in the region, USAID also supports bilateral activities in several individual countries that address country-specific constraints. For example, in Chad, USAID is designing an activity that will train journalists

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to more effectively cover the presidential election taking place in 2011. In Niger, USAID will soon begin implementing an activity designed to improve the food security of vulnerable families by enabling them to raise small livestock and engage in vegetable production and marketing. USAID is also supporting the launch and implementation of the President's Malaria Initiative in Burkina Faso. USAID's rapidly expanding portfolio of bilateral activities is expected to continue growing over the coming years.

## **HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE**

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### **Economic Growth**

#### ***Trade and Investment***

USAID supports activities aimed at fostering a more productive private sector by addressing internal and external constraints that impede the competitiveness of west African firms in the global marketplace. The program is implemented principally by the West Africa Trade Hub, which works with export-ready companies on the practicalities of accessing the United States and other markets (labeling, quality standards, marketing strategies). This year, the program achieved impressive results despite the worldwide economic downturn and the challenges the region faces when competing globally. In FY 2009, USAID-supported businesses produced \$20 million in new exports. The program attracted over \$1 million in new investments, leading to the creation of 755 new jobs, including 306 jobs for women. Additionally, USAID trained 2,154 entrepreneurs and provided technical assistances to 666 firms, of which 325 participated in 17 international trade shows, resulting in 263 trade transactions in specialty foods, home décor, seafood, processed cashews, shea butter (edible oils and cosmetics), and other industries.

In the area of energy infrastructure, for the past three years USAID has worked with the West Africa Power Pool to build its capacity to attract investment in regional energy infrastructure. In FY 2009, USAID financed critical feasibility and income studies required by the Power Pool to secure loans from the World Bank and other multilateral finance institutions. By September 2011, key cross-border transmission lines will have been constructed and major investments in generating capacity will have been attracted.

#### ***Agriculture and Natural Resources***

USAID promotes greater agriculture productivity, as well as the sound management of west Africa's natural resources. It does this by disseminating best practices and technologies regionally and by working with regional organizations and governments to create a policy environment conducive to increased agriculture productivity. In FY 2009, USAID's West Africa Cotton Improvement Project increased the number of farmers using improved technologies by 601,700, and increased the number of hectares under improved technologies or management practices by 367,000 hectares. This resulted in farmer incomes increasing by \$18 million. Also of note, under the USAID Agribusiness Trade Promotion Project, which identifies and addresses transport-related physical and policy barriers to trade, regional trade of farm commodities increased by 5 percent and bribes declined by 14 percent – key accomplishments in promoting economic growth.

In addition to promoting increased agricultural productivity, USAID seeks to improve food security in the region. The instability of food supply and extreme weather conditions increase food insecurity in west Africa, where 17 million people are affected by various levels of food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty. The availability of timely data on weather and rainfall patterns and the distribution of vulnerable populations and their nutritional status is critical information for

governments seeking to identify and develop plans for coping with poor harvests. USAID's Agricultural Hydro Meteorology Project has enabled CILSS to put in place an early warning system that provides information on rainfall, planting conditions, and food availability. In FY 2009, CILSS expanded its regional food security early warning and monitoring system to 17 countries in the region, thereby enabling these national governments, as well as ECOWAS, effectively to plan for and intervene in national food production plans, and prepare for any emerging food crises.

### **Investing in People**

West Africa has some of the poorest health statistics in the world, including among the highest maternal mortality (800 deaths per 100,000 live births) and infant mortality (80 deaths per 1,000 live births) rates. Contributing to these poor health indicators are weak health systems that are overwhelmed and unable to meet the needs of the population.

To address these challenges, USAID strives to assist regional organizations in creating a positive environment to enable countries to plan and implement selected high quality health programs. Regional health activities seek to establish a strategic regional vision for health; harmonize and implement favorable health policies; replicate and promote the expansion of evidence-based best practices, approaches, and programs; strengthen and promote west African institutions and civil society; and leverage new funding from other donors and the private sector for projects in HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, nutrition, family planning, and institutional capacity building.

During FY 2009, USAID launched AWARE II, the flagship regional health project that will support the WAHO and ministries of health in the region in creating a policy environment that will promote improved health and the adoption of best practices that will reduce maternal mortality, increase access to family planning, mitigate HIV/AIDS, and improve maternal and child health and nutrition.

USAID efforts to strengthen WAHO over the past six years have paid dividends. The number of WAHO staff has increased from seven to 31 with the help of USAID, and more importantly, FY 2009 saw the launch of a strategy to regionalize reproductive health commodity forecasting, procurement, and distribution. This is an ambitious agenda that, on top of government commitment, requires a great deal of coordination, collaboration, and effort on the part of donors, country governments, and other stakeholders. USAID provided financial resources and technical assistance to enable WAHO to strengthen in-country information systems that will feed into their coordinated informed buying network for essential reproductive health and family planning commodities.

To combat maternal and child health and nutrition deficiencies, USAID collaborated with Helen Keller International and private sector organizations through a Global Development Alliance aimed at promoting vitamin A fortification of cooking oil. Seven out of eight target countries have now enacted import regulations for fortified oil. This alliance has provided over 12.4 million women and children with access to vitamin-A-fortified cooking oil and is potentially averting an estimated 105,000 child deaths per year and improving the nutritional status of millions of women and children at risk of micronutrient deficiency. USAID's modest investment has leveraged nearly triple the amount in funding from private sector partners.

Activities under USAID's West Africa Water Initiative contributed to the better health of 37,500 people (17,500 more than anticipated) through improved access to potable water and improved sanitation. Furthermore, the transboundary community water management activity in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana helped 3,467 school children benefit from improved sanitation services, and 12,612

people benefit from improved water supply. This was accomplished through the provision of hand pumps and boreholes.

### **Governing Justly and Democratically and Peace and Security**

Recent political trends in west Africa, particularly in Guinea and Niger, demonstrate the acute instability and vulnerability to conflict that continue to plague many of the countries in the region. USAID's targeted activities in peace and security and democracy and governance are designed to address some of the roots of conflict in the region, including lack of good governance and public accountability transparency, and lack of participation in politics, society, and the economy. In addition, USAID supports activities in conflict prevention, mitigation, and conflict early warning.

USAID works to reduce corruption along the Abidjan-Lagos Coastal Corridor in order to decrease the price of key commodities and increase profits and economic growth in the region.

Achievements include the presentation of two conference papers on road harassment to the ECOWAS Ministers of Security Meeting in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and a meeting organized by African Security Watch International in Sogakope, Ghana. Recommendations from the presentations were adopted as ECOWAS-wide policies on road governance and national policies for road governance in respective countries.

In São Tomé and Príncipe, USAID is fostering a better understanding of the principles and operations for the oil industry, which in turn promotes better governance and a more transparent management of national resources. USAID supports the government's efforts to improve public transparency and accountability, and spread oil revenues and social benefits more broadly in society through the training of senior officials of the national petroleum company, as well as civil society organizations and media professionals, in public oversight and reporting.

In Burkina Faso, the decentralization process is creating new opportunities for political parties to reach out to citizens by increasing the number of locally elected officials. USAID is strengthening the capacity of political parties in terms of internal communication, strategic planning, and outreach to local government officials. This includes training focusing on women and youth. As part of this training, USAID has successfully developed memoranda of understanding with relevant political parties, including the ruling party. This assistance will help level the playing field for political parties, increase political competition for national elections, and increase participation, especially by women and youth, in local government.

As part of the U.S. Government's Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, USAID supports a multi-country program, including youth training, radio programming, and improved local governance, designed to delegitimize terrorist ideology and deter marginalized populations from embracing ideologies that advocate terrorism in Niger and Chad.

Since the USAID-supported launch of country-specific radio activities in Niger and Chad that are focused on youth and good governance, the radio programs have quickly become important platforms for discussing key issues, such as youth and national unity. The radio programs, which include themes of peace, nonviolence, and tolerance, are currently being broadcast by 32 partner radio stations in Niger and 11 in Chad. In both Niger and Chad, USAID radio programs have resulted in creative responses, ranging from radio call-in shows based on programs to the formation of local listening clubs where programs are discussed. Overall, audience responses indicate that the locally produced programs resonate with local populations, and are well received by the public.

Increasing the capacity of early warning systems in west Africa is crucial for preventing conflict in the region. To support partners such as ECOWAS and the West Africa Network for Peace Building, USAID is supplementing the efforts of the current early warning system, ECOWARN. While ECOWARN has succeeded in providing daily, weekly, and monthly snapshots of sub-regional events, USAID support focuses on integrating political, social, economic, and security data into ECOWARN. This will complement event-based data, providing decision-makers with more contextualized information on, and analysis of, sub-regional conflicts. Activities are also designed to strengthen the link between early warning and various types of governmental and civil society responses.

The security and economic environment in west Africa requires sustained attention and support to address a wide range of vulnerabilities and capacity deficiencies. The delicate balance of peace and economic progress in some countries, contrasted with the crisis in others, presents both challenges and opportunities for USAID assistance. Compounding this political fragility are the growing negative impacts of food insecurity and climate change, especially on the poor. While there is much that remains to be done, the magnitude of the challenges should not diminish the concrete results achieved through USAID programs. USAID will continue to press forward with a development agenda that builds the capacity of regional organizations to implement regional programs, while addressing country specific challenges through targeted programs.