FRONT LINES

UNITED STATES AGENCY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT — USAID

www.usaid.gov

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SEPTEMBER 2005

New Military Office to Improve Cooperation in Aid Delivery

USAID has created an office to coordinate with the U.S. armed forces on development issues, following close Agency-military cooperation in a series of operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and countries affected by the Asian tsunami.

The Office of Military Affairs, created March 25, lies within the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), and addresses the need for greater understanding and operational interaction between the two sectors.

"The creation of this office reflects the heightened priority of the role of development within the National Security Strategy and the increasing intersect of development and defense," said Gordon West, senior advisor at DCHA.

Foreign aid and the military also interact in "not only traditional areas of natural disaster and humanitarian responses, but also in pre- and post-conflict and fragile states," he said.

The office will develop training, education, and operational programs designed to improve communications between USAID and the U.S. military. It will develop guidance, policy, and military doctrine to improve coordination and cooperation. It will also build planning, operations, and evaluation links that aim to inform and enhance field operations, addressing areas of common interest.

▼ SEE **NEW MILITARY OFFICE** ON PAGE 15

USAID/Tanzania

First Lady Laura Bush sits with orphaned children at a U.S. aid-funded clinic treating HIV/AIDS patients in Dar es Salaam. "These children need help with all the challenges that come with growing up—and with the responsibilities that an adult would usually handle," she said.

First Lady Visits HIV/AIDS Clinic

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania—First Lady Laura Bush and her daughter Jenna visited a clinic here in early July that provides care and treatment to people with HIV and AIDS and orphaned children.

U.S. aid has gone to the clinic since 1995, most recently through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, whose activities are frequently carried out by USAID. The clinic is run by the Pastoral Activities and Services for People with AIDS in Dar es Salaam Archdiocese (PASADA).

The clinic targets the urban poor, who have considerably higher infection rates than rural residents: 11 percent compared to 5 percent. Altogether, 7 percent of Tanzanian adults are HIV positive, with greater prevalence among women than men.

On any given day, PASADA opens early.

▼ SEE **FIRST LADY** ON PAGE 14

IN AFGHANISTAN, DISABLED MEN GET BICYCLES

Lloyd Feinberg

Afghan amputees: *Afghan men learn how to bicycle in a Kabul courtyard. The Afghan Amputee Bicyclists for Rehabilitation and Recreation (AABRAR), a small local NGO that receives USAID support, has focused on physical rehabilitation and socioeconomic integration of disabled people into the community since 1992. In Jalalabad, some 4,450 bikes have been provided to disabled men and boys. AABRAR began operating in Kabul in January 2001. Since then, about 1,128 bikes have been given out. All those involved in AABRAR's month-long bicycle training program also receive literacy, physiotherapy, health education, first aid, and mine awareness training.*

Sudan Mourns Death of Vice President John Garang

The sudden death of Sudanese Vice President John Garang in a helicopter crash July 30, just months after he signed a pact ending a 21-year civil war, has led USAID to advance aid plans and ensure that peace efforts are not derailed.

Administrator Andrew S. Natsios led a presidential delegation to Juba in southern Sudan for the Garang funeral on Aug. 6.

By Aug. 11, Garang's number two, Salva Kiir, went to Khartoum, where he was sworn in to replace Garang as first vice president of the new national unity government.

U.S. aid to Sudan jumped from $464 million in 2004 to $847 million in 2005. Just over half of the aid is marked for displaced people in western Sudan's Darfur provinces, and the rest for development,

▼ SEE **SUDAN MOURNS** ON PAGE 3

Food Rushed to Niger, Other African Countries

After drought and a wave of locusts left parts of Niger and its neighbors short of food, U.S. and other aid agencies moved supplies to the region in August to avert hunger. At the same time, even larger aid shipments were being readied for food crises in the Horn and southern Africa.

USAID sent a Disaster Assistance Response Team to Niger to assess the situation there and in surrounding countries.

About $133.9 million in U.S. food aid has already been provided in 2005 for the 65 million people in the Sahel, which extends from West Africa to Chad and Sudan. Niger alone has already received $18.9 million in aid.

Television news reports showing malnourished children in Niger have led to renewed public attention on the world's second poorest country, which has long faced chronic poverty and poor nutrition. The country's harvest this year was 11 percent below the five-year average.

▼ SEE **FOOD RUSHED TO NIGER** ON PAGE 12

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PANAMA'S HARPY EAGLES GET PROTECTION PAGE 6

Mexico Scholarships Program 2
Mission of the Month: Egypt 3
Cassava Virus in Burundi 4
South Africa Sells Mushrooms 7
SMART Initiative Unveiled 11

MISSION SPOTLIGHT: KOSOVO PAGES 8–9

PRSRT STD
Postage and Fees
Paid USAID
Permit No. G-107

U.S. Agency for International Development
Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20523-6100

Penalty for Private Use $300
Official Business

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Mexico-U.S. University TIES Program Helps Develop Jobs and Skills

GUADALAJARA, Mexico—Rodrigo Zuloaga once made salsa for his relatives and friends in his home kitchen. Today, he runs a business that provides salsa to Wal-Mart and other stores in Puerto Vallarta and Mexico City.

A hot recipe was only one ingredient to his success. Another was USAID's $50-million Training, Internships, Exchanges, and Scholarships (TIES) Program. TIES, which started in 2001, links U.S. and Mexican universities in finding innovative solutions to development challenges.

Zuloaga was pursuing a business degree at Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara when the university—through TIES—linked up with the University of Texas at San Antonio to create a small business development center (SBDC) in Guadalajara.

Zuloaga started a business, Salsas Pita Valle, producing about 500 jars of salsa and dressing per month. Then he got involved with the first business development center, the Centro Mexico Emprende SBDC in Guadalajara, and improved production to 3,000 jars per month. In the process, Zuloaga learned how to fulfill the requirements of the Mexican Food and Drug Administration so his products could be sold in major supermarkets.

"Job creation in Mexico through home-growing local businesses, greater diversification and formalization of the economy, and two-way trade growth through linking small enterprises from both our countries…are some of the key benefits of establishing a network of university-based small business development centers across Mexico," said Robert McKinley, associate vice president for economic development at University of Texas-San Antonio.

The first center in Guadalajara helped 96 business owners draw up business plans. The center's success led to the formation of a national network of 34 SBDCs throughout Mexico and an SBDC association of entrepreneurs who lobby on behalf of their interests.

The collaboration between the University of Texas-San Antonio and Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara is one of dozens of partnerships between U.S. and Mexican higher education institutions.

Irving Llamosas, University of Guadalajara

The University of Notre Dame and the University of Guadalajara are working with farmers to grow their businesses.

TIES partnerships focus on small business support, energy efficiency, environmental conservation, rural development, technology transfer, and workforce training.

For students in the United States and Mexico, TIES also supports degree programs in business and public administration, which are backed by the business development centers network. Also, TIES supports some permanent faculty exchanges between the countries and plans to award scholarships to more than 750 students and professors in Mexico for U.S. study programs in natural resources management, coastal management, and transborder public administration.

Through the community college scholarships component of TIES, more than 100 scholarships went to students from poor, rural regions in southern and central Mexico, such as Chiapas, Oaxaca, Michoacán, and Guerrero.

The first group of scholarship students and teachers who studied in the United States in 2003 is returning to Mexico this summer. They will apply newly acquired skills through community service projects and job placement assistance.

Another 100 scholarships are in the process of being awarded.

Another link, between the University of Connecticut and the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC), is improving education in marine sciences and coastal management at K–12 and postsecondary levels through student and faculty training, exchanges, and joint research projects. The partnership is also promoting collaborative research on problems affecting coastal resources.

UABC is the only institution on the west coast of Mexico with the ability to conduct required water and environmental testing that meets the shellfish sanitation standards agreed to last year between the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Mexico's Health Department.

"I can now use the water analysis equipment with more confidence, and [this] in turn allows me to teach my students with more confidence," said Edgardo Best Guzmán, a participant in the Project Oceanology summer institute for high school teachers. "My participation in this project has [given me an awareness] of the importance of conserving our environment and I am passing on these concerns to my students."

A link between Lamar University and Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi with the Instituto Technológico de Saltillo is training Mexican students in modern technologies of water treatment and helping spur Mexican innovations in the area.

The project has conducted three short courses for 99 technical students on advanced water treatment technologies in the towns of Torreón and Saltillo. It also developed new electrocoagulation technology that resulted in two Mexican patent applications.

Lamar University, in collaboration with Kaselco, a Texas-based water treatment company, took the first mobile electrocoagulation unit into Mexico with the cooperation of Ecolimpio, a Mexican environmental waste management company in Saltillo. Ecolimpio subsequently bought the unit, and Kaselco built a new improved unit for the project. Ecolimpio and Kaselco signed an agreement for Ecolimpio to market the technology in Mexico and Latin America.

The initial goal of TIES was to sponsor 35 competitively awarded university partnerships over seven years. But the program has already exceeded expectations, and, in only its third year, has created 46 partnerships. ★

Alex Mayer, Michigan Technological University

Michigan Technological University and the University of Sonora are training a core of water resource experts to find solutions for Mexico's water issues.

Participating Institutions

Indiana University and
Universidad Nacional Autonoma de México
Michigan Technological University and
Universidad de Sonora
Northern Arizona University and
Universidad de Sonora
San Diego State University and
Universidad Autónoma de Baja California
Southern Oregon University and
Universidad de Guanajuato
Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi and Lamar
University and Instituto Tecnológico de Saltillo
Texas Christian University and
Universidad de las Americas–Puebla
University of Arizona and
Universidad Autónoma Chapingo
University of Connecticut and
Universidad Autónoma de Baja California
University of Illinois and
Universidad Autónoma de Queretaro
University of New Mexico and
Universidad de Quintana Roo
University of Scranton and
Universidad Iberoamericana
University of Texas–Austin and
Benemerita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla
University of Texas–San Antonio and
Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara
University of Wisconsin–Madison and
Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores
de Monterrey–Campus Queretaro
Western Illinois University and
Universidad Autónoma de Queretaro
Texas A&M University–Kingsville and
Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores
de Monterrey

Egypt

MISSION OF THE MONTH

Challenge

Egypt is a major Arab nation whose 77 million people face many challenges that U.S. assistance is addressing, such as education, health, water, sanitation, trade, agriculture, and preservation of historic sites.

But one key to development is communications, and U.S. assistance to the telephone network has played a role in improving links throughout the country.

Telecom Egypt, a national phone company with 11 million lines, had a monopoly on telephone services until recently.

Two new licensed mobile operators and internet-based systems are changing the communications landscape. Both compete directly with Telecom's conventional phone service. And, come the end of this year, World Trade Organization requirements will begin allowing new licensed operators into the market.

With its survival on the line, Telecom began looking at ways to invest in not only the latest infrastructure but also in its staff. In the process, it hoped to transform itself from a government-owned utility to a competitive enterprise.

Innovative Approach

By 2002, Telecom's senior managers and USAID officials agreed that the most critical challenge was to develop mid-level managers who could provide the leadership to modernize the communications company. USAID's partnership with Telecom Egypt stretches back about 28 years and includes $600 million in investments to modernize and expand the telephone system—800,000 new phone lines are among the most visible accomplishments.

The strategy for this collaboration was to replicate the Leadership Development Program (LDP) that USAID had supported at Egypt's Ministry of Electricity and Energy. The LDP combines formal training, internships, and applied research in an intensive 10-month, full-time program.

"Competition means that not only must you compete on cost but also quality of service," said Mike Gould, one of USAID/Egypt's infrastructure managers. "This is a mighty challenge for Telecom Egypt, where a governmental, public-sector mentality still is strong among many of its older employees. It is the LDP that helps to develop the managers who can implement change."

In January 2003, two education groups—World Learning and the Institute of International Education—mobilized. Along with the Center for Adult and Continuing Education at the American University in Cairo, they developed a curriculum for the Telecom staffers with coursework in workplace communications, accounting and budgeting, finance and economics, business report writing, strategic and business planning, change management, marketing and customer service, project management, process and root-cause analysis, team building, leadership and motivation, effective management, and performance appraisal.

About 25 mid-level managers—chosen by Telecom executives based on the same selection process used by many Fortune 500 companies to groom top talent—left their jobs for 10 months for the first training class, unsure if they'd be placed in a better position or at least an equal one when they returned. Only one person has left the program midstream.

Results

The LDP at Telecom Egypt graduated two classes and a third class is currently in training. There is also a training-the-trainers component that prepares select graduates to be future trainers.

Telecom has selected other graduates for training in curriculum development, marketing, and center management. There are also plans to expand the training program on a for-profit basis.

Telecom Egypt Chairman Akil Beshir said, "My objective is to establish a leadership center at Telecom Egypt to not only train my staff, but also to expand it to provide courses to other Egyptian public and private firms."

The midlevel managers have had good reviews for the program. Mohamed Selim, a recent graduate, said: "The LDP changed my life…It made me think positively…It taught me to persevere and succeed in an environment that resists change."

"The LDP forced a change in my behavior—even at my own home, with my wife and kids," added another graduate, Mohamed Hasaballah. "I tend now to consider more the big picture." ★

Joseph Ghanem, Institute of International Education

Workers at Telecom Egypt take part in the Leadership Development Program so they can help the company compete against several new competitors in the country's communications industry.

Sudan Mourns John Garang

▲ FROM PAGE 1

reconstruction, and other needs in the war-torn south and elsewhere in Africa's largest country geographically.

U.S. aid to the south will be delivered quickly to support the new government of southern Sudan, which is struggling to deliver services, rebuild infrastructure, and establish its authority and credibility, according to Africa Bureau Deputy Assistant Administrator Kate Almquist.

Garang led the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in a conflict that pitted his mostly Christian and traditional religions followers in the south against successive Islamic regimes in the north.

Two former USAID officials were sent to Sudan after Garang's death: Roger Winter, recently named special representative of the deputy secretary of state for Sudan, and former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Constance Newman. Winter was the longtime chief of the U.S. Committee for Refugees before working at USAID as head of the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance. Newman had been an assistant administrator for the Africa Bureau.

"He was special," said Winter of Garang, according to the *New York Times*. "We came to love each other in this manly way that comes when you have mutual respect and common vision.

"To fail in Dr. John's vision is to fail Dr. John."

The United States played a major role negotiating the end of the civil war, and has called on Sudanese officials to end violence in Darfur by government-backed militias known as the Jingaweit.

During the war, USAID provided humanitarian assistance and short-term conflict mitigation in the south. Now, as the south moves toward peace, the Agency is also focusing on implementation of the peace agreement, responsive and participatory government, education, health, and economic recovery. USAID is also providing humanitarian assistance in Darfur and in vulnerable areas in eastern Sudan. ★

Notes from Natsios

★★★★★★★★★★

FSN Expertise Plays Critical Role in Agency's Work

I would like to highlight what I consider to be one of the most valuable and critical elements of our workforce and the backbone of all field missions: our foreign service national (FSN) staff.

FSNs, as a whole, are a remarkably accomplished group and, subsequent to their service at USAID, many have achieved some of the highest offices in their respective countries. For example, Ana Vilma de Escobar worked for nine years as a project manager at the El Salvador mission in the 1980s. In 2004, she was elected as the first female vice president of El Salvador and began her five-year term in office on June 1, 2004.

Bonaventure Nyibizi—a Tutsi who barely survived the genocide—was a senior economist with USAID/Rwanda from the late 1980s to the April 1994 genocide. Three years later, he became the country's minister of industry and commerce.

Nikolay Yarmov, a senior business advisor who has worked with USAID in Bulgaria since 1997, was just selected as the new executive director for the Bulgarian Center for Entrepreneurial and Executive Development.

A primary reason that USAID is recognized as one of the top development agencies in the world is due to the incorporation of FSNs in all of its operations and programs. They are the experts on the ground.

FSNs comprise 79 percent of the overseas mission staff and are involved in all aspects of the Agency's work—from administrative support to program design, management, and monitoring. From the drivers who know the local landscape to the social scientists who understand the nuances of the political environment, they give us tools to successfully carry out our work. FSNs are becoming increasingly similar to American staff in background and qualifications, and they have assumed a prominent role at USAID.

To recognize their importance to the Agency, at the 2005 Worldwide Mission Director's Conference, I designated 2005 as the "Year of the FSN." This designation arose from several factors, one of the most important being the 2004 annual USAID employee survey, which featured nearly 2,000 responses from FSNs.

As a result of survey feedback, the Business Transformation Executive Committee (BTEC)—composed of senior Agency executives who meet monthly to oversee management decisions—made "nurturing FSNs" one of four major priorities for 2005.

With BTEC's endorsement, the Agency's human resources office recently established the first ever FSN Working Group to acknowledge the role of FSNs, improve their status and visibility in the Agency, and serve as an institutionalized forum for FSN concerns (*see related article on page 2, July/August issue*).

▼ SEE **NOTES FROM NATSIOS** PAGE 12

ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE

U.S. Farmers Share Crop Income with a Half Million People in 29 Poor Countries

Foods Resource Bank

Farmers in the Democratic Republic of Congo learn about pest control with test plots of cabbages. The control site and a test site shown here use only organic fertilizers and pesticides. Not shown is a plot treated only with chemicals and another that uses a combination of organic and chemical products. The United Methodist Committee on Relief is implementing this program in the Northern Katanga region with a grant from the Foods Resource Bank.

The Foods Resource Bank (FRB) started out four years ago with commitments from a handful of farmers in the Midwest to reserve a few acres of their harvests for development projects half a world away.

This wasn't a traditional food donation. The farmers sold their crops as usual. But the money from the set-aside acres went to FRB, which pooled the proceeds and awarded the money to NGOs carrying out agricultural development projects in poor countries. That first year, FRB raised about $17,000 from 10 "growing projects."

Now the group is working with 48 projects covering more than 6,000 acres and plans to surpass the $1.3 million it raised in 2004. FRB estimates 500,000 people in 29 countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, and South and Central America benefit from the work.

The effort is building global unity, said Norm Braksick, FRB's founder and retired executive director.

Modeled after a Canadian program, FRB, based in Kalamazoo, Mich., coordinates efforts of farmers, churches, youth groups, civic clubs, and agribusinesses to address world hunger.

Its grantees are faith-based organizations. FRB also gets funding from the Kellogg Foundation. And, since its second year of operation, USAID has matched the money the group makes from selling crops. The Agency's grant to FRB has doubled since the initial $500,000 awarded in 2002.

"U.S. citizens see themselves—and now their government—in a partnership to relieve world hunger," Braksick said. "You go ask a farmer today for $1,000 for world hunger and that is difficult for him to do. But he can harvest a field with a $250,000 combine. And that is his gift. Everyone gives a gift that they can give, and many times it's a non-cash gift."

Here's how it works: churches in farm communities pair with churches in urban neighborhoods. Rural church congregants and others provide the acres and labor, while the urban churchgoers cover some of the costs of land, seed, fertilizer, tractor fuel, and the like. Agribusinesses also donate growing supplies or sell them to participants at reduced rates. In October, everyone is invited to a harvest festival, where farmers, urbanites, businesspeople, and development officials mark the occasion and its significance.

Once the crops are sold, the money raised is awarded as grants to one of 16 Christian organizations that partner with FRB for use on projects that promote sustainable agriculture in developing countries. Grants have been used to dig wells, build silos, buy seeds and animals, train farmers, and boost agribusinesses.

George R. Gardner, a senior agricultural economist with USAID's Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade, said FRB's efforts are aimed squarely at building food security, not providing emergency food aid or disaster assistance.

Gardner, who manages the USAID end of the program, added: "[The projects] bring new people to the table and they're educating people about hunger abroad, while improving village-level food security. And they're truly farm- and faith-based."

The Agency's Global Development Alliance and Bureau for Africa also fund FRB.

Today, the projects are expanding beyond traditional breadbasket states in the United States and into the South, Mid-Atlantic, and Northeast. The projects are also expanding beyond the primary crops of corn and soy. One growing project in New York involves dairy cows.

Almost any marketable commodity is allowed, said Braksick, who is an evangelist for the effort. He has set an ambitious goal of 20,000 acres of growing projects, which would equal over $5 million in aid to combat hunger. ★

DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Spread of Burundi Cassava Virus Spurs Development of Disease-Resistant Varieties

BUJUMBURA, Burundi—The virulent cassava mosaic virus has been on the move in this Central African country since 2002, but its recent arrival in the fertile plains surrounding Burundi's capital city has set a new benchmark.

"What we are having to deal with here is a bit like a crop plant equivalent of the HIV/AIDS crisis: a devastating infection sweeping through cassava crops across a vast geographical area," said James Legg, who is with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Cassava is a versatile root and a staple in many Burundians' diets, but cassava mosaic virus has cut a wide swath through the region. The disease produces yellowing, stunting, and leaf loss, and has played a role in food shortages and localized famines since the 1980s in places like Uganda.

Its impact has been felt by many of Burundi's neighbors—including Rwanda, Congo, and Tanzania—and the disease has spread to much of the prime cassava-growing belt of East and Central Africa, reaching westward as far as Gabon.

The United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that the virus has contributed to a more than 40 percent loss in crop production in Burundi's northern provinces.

As the losses spread south and west, trade has been hit hard. The supply of cassava products—such as fresh roots, dried chips, and flour—has dwindled. And prices have more than tripled for the scarce commodity.

Scientists with IITA are playing catch-up to track the virus, using DNA fingerprinting techniques to forecast where it will land next and find ways to stop it.

A collaboration that includes IITA, the East Africa Root Crops Research Network, the FAO, several NGOs, and USAID's Office for U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has been working toward a more permanent answer.

Simon Bigirimana, program leader of the Burundi Institute of Agronomic Science (ISABU), said, "The impact of the epidemic in our country has been terrible, but we have a solution: resistant cassava varieties."

ISABU is leading the effort to develop varieties of cassava that are resistant to the virus.

OFDA, which is part of the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, has provided grant money to help identify the most mosaic-resistant varieties and multiply them as rapidly as possible.

Resistant varieties developed through IITA's continental breeding program already have been introduced into Burundi. The initial progress has been slow—each cassava plant normally takes a year to mature and is propagated through stem cuttings—but the pace is increasing.

There probably isn't time to help Stany Sabuwanka for this year's cassava crop, yet he is hopeful. Sabuwanka sustains his family of six on a small half-hectare plot in Mutimbuzi, on the outskirts of Bujumbura. In a good year, just under half of what he grows is sufficient to feed the family and the rest is sold to provide a modest income.

His cassava field, like most of those in the fertile zone surrounding Burundi's capital, has been touched by the advancing "front" of the mosaic pandemic.

"We don't really know what is causing the crop to change like this, but it's probably the drought," he said. "Things should improve when the rains come."

While help won't come that soon, the scientists believe that tens of millions of disease-resistant cassava cuttings will have been produced by 2006. ★

Simon Bigirimana, ISABU

Stany Sabuwanka stands in front of his mosaic-affected cassava crop in Mutimbuzi, on the outskirts of Burundi's capital, Bujumbura.

GLOBAL HEALTH

Rejection of Pre-Marriage Tradition Grows, Protecting Women's Health and Lives

Dianne Zemichael, USAID/Ethiopia

A couple that chose for the bride not to undergo female genital cutting (FGC) sits next to another bride who made the same choice. The couples—both of whom wed in the past year—now travel around southern Ethiopia, speaking at community gatherings about their choice and the dangers associated with FGC.

AWASSA, Ethiopia—Ketto Buli has cut many women's genitalia during her 50 years, beginning with her teenage daughter. The procedure is a pre-marriage tradition with long roots here. But as the years ticked away, Ketto saw too many unwilling girls in pain, suffering from heavy blood loss and infection.

Last year a community health volunteer knocked on Ketto's door and told her about the dangers associated with female genital cutting (FGC). Now she too is a health volunteer, speaking against FGC.

"This was a taboo subject five years ago. But now there is an aggressive awareness campaign. At least we can talk about it," said Samuel Tuffa of the African Development Aid Association (ADAA), implementing partner of Pathfinder International, through which USAID is fighting genital cutting here.

Some 135 million of the world's women have undergone genital cutting, mainly in Africa and some Middle East countries. In Ethiopia, about 80 percent of all married women are circumcised, meaning that they have had their clitorises and/or all surrounding tissue cut off. The age when genital cutting is performed varies between ethnic groups: it can be done to infants less than eight days old or as late as a month before marriage.

Knives and scalpels used for the procedure are often unclean, causing infection. Heavy bleeding occurs. Women are left with lifelong health problems and often have difficulties during childbirth.

In the south of Ethiopia, where women are cut shortly before marriage, Pathfinder has trained some 7,000 volunteers as community reproductive health agents who tell villagers of the health risks associated with FGC. They also advise about family planning and maternal and child health. The project will train another 3,000 volunteers in the next year.

ADAA had held workshops for religious leaders in the region, describing the dangers of FGC and disavowing any connection to religious theology. Many of those religious leaders have gone on to tell their communities that FGC is not safe or required, and that it can lead to psychological trauma.

Workshops specifically target men, who are seen as the first step in changing the attitude toward FGC, said Samuel. Men have long thought that girls who have undergone the procedure are "pure" and will make faithful wives.

When classmates Abdella Gebi and Medina Berisso decided to marry, Adbella, who had heard ADAA's messages, suggested that his bride not undergo FGC. Medina thought this unusual, but says she was very happy because she had seen a friend nearly bleed to death after being cut.

They were going to marry quietly. But then another couple in their area announced that they would wed without the girl being cut, so Abdella and Medina stepped out with them.

"In our culture, when you announce something on your wedding day or at a funeral, it's accepted by the public," said Samuel.

In one southern district, awareness campaigns have worked so well that now nearly all couples getting married are doing so without the woman being cut, Samuel said.

FGC is condemned by Ethiopia's penal code, after heavy lobbying by the National Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices of Ethiopia and NGOs like Pathfinder. ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Chocolate Companies Help West African Farmers Improve Harvest

ACCRA, Ghana—Chocolate corporations are helping West African farmers continue to harvest the seeds that are building blocks of instant cocoa, decadent truffles, and most every chocolate confection.

The Sustainable Tree Crop Program (STCP) is a public-private alliance working to improve the economic and social wellbeing of cocoa farmers and the environmental sustainability of tree crops in West Africa. Following the Global Development Alliance approach, the partnership fosters linkages between industry buyers and rural producers.

The region produces about 70 percent of the global supply of cocoa and other chocolate-related products. However, the livelihood of producers and their supply of cocoa to the chocolate industry are increasingly threatened by the diminishing number of fertile forests and the dangers of disease and insect pests.

"We are committed to fostering sustainable cocoa farms in West Africa, as it not only secures the supply chain for the long term but also protects the livelihood of more than 1.5 million cocoa farmers in the region," says John Lunde, director of international programs at Mars Inc. The candy maker is a supporter of STCP.

Inaction in the past has proved devastating for farmers and the chocolate industry.

A plague in the 1980s turned Brazil—at the time the second largest cocoa-producing country in the world—into a net importer. The impact on Brazil's rural producers was far more devastating than was the price spike for industry buyers, who nonetheless resolved to work together to prevent the recurrence of preventable diseases that had proved so destructive.

By 2000, the chocolate industry had formed the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) to build partnerships with other stakeholders. WCF members such as Mars, Hershey's, Nestlé, and Kraft support regional initiatives to maintain cocoa cultivation and production with cash and technical expertise.

Industry contributions combined with USAID funding currently amount to about $10 million—consisting of equal parts of cash from the Bureau for Africa's Office of Sustainable Development and cash and in-kind technical assistance from the chocolate industry.

STCP covers Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Guinea, and is implemented by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture. The core activity of STCP and the other regional initiatives is to provide farmers with organizational support, marketing information, policy reform, research, and technical training.

Through farmer field schools set up to deliver these services, farmers learn how to boost their incomes through increased yields and quality and how to protect the natural resource base of the cocoa commodity. As with coffee, cocoa is often cultivated with other plant and animal life, requiring more care in cultivating the crop to avoid disrupting the ecosystem in which it is produced.

Farmer field schools also teach farmers about shade management, tree husbandry, and postharvest handling, and will soon include crop diversification, natural fertilization, and other best practices. The result has been dramatic: incomes have increased between 20 and 50 percent. And, in some cases producers doubled their income.

To date, over 10,000 farmers have graduated from STCP schools. Each trainer works with about 20 facilitators, who then conduct workshops and training on cocoa farms. In many cases, new facilitators are recruited from among the most avid field school participants.

"An important achievement of STCP is its success in building an industry coalition committed to improving the circumstances of cocoa producers," said Jeff Hill, senior agricultural advisor for the Bureau for Africa's Office of Sustainable Development. "Clearly, a consensus exists that the future of the chocolate business depends on the future of rural families growing the cocoa."

A byproduct of STCP has been the ability to deliver secondary messages to farmers on social issues such as HIV/AIDS, child labor, and education. This is also part of an industry-wide commitment to develop voluntary certification standards combating the worst forms of child and forced labor on cocoa farms in West Africa. ★

STCP Cameroon

Graduates of a farmer field school in Ekabita, south Cameroon, show their certificates.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Harpy Eagles of Panama Get Protection

PANAMA CITY—Panama's national bird is the harpy eagle, a 20-pound bird with a seven-foot wingspan and talons as large as grizzly bear claws. It is quickly becoming extinct.

To help protect the earth's most powerful bird of prey, USAID works with the Peregrine Fund, an American NGO focused on bird conservation. The group runs a center in Panama City where chicks are bred in captivity and then released in the forest when they become adults. Most of the birds are fitted with transmitters so they can be tracked.

The Agency also is funding research on the behavioral and breeding patterns of the harpy eagle, as well as its habitat requirements.

"Restoration efforts are focused on Central America, where the population has significantly declined because the rates of deforestation there are higher than in South America," said Cameroon Ellis, assistant director for international programs with the Peregrine Fund, which is receiving $2.5 million from USAID over six years.

"A few years ago there used to be some harpy eagles in El Salvador, but it's unlikely that there are any left now. In Mexico there might be a few, but no more than two or four," he said.

Today, Panama's pristine rainforests are home to several thousand harpy eagles. But the number is shrinking as forests are ravaged by development, logging, and agriculture. Poaching is also a problem.

Indian communities have long attributed mythical powers and meaning to the bird, whose deadly talons can exert several hundred pounds of pressure, crushing the bones of sloths, monkeys, and other arboreal prey the eagle snatches from the rainforest canopy. Its victims are often killed instantly.

"Curiosity leads people to capture these birds," Ellis said. "They are very striking, so a lot of people see them near their villages and want a closer look. They shoot them because they think they can get monetary gain out of killing the bird or selling it."

A key part of the USAID-funded project is community education. The Peregrine Fund works with schools and offers tours, presentations, games, videos, and educational materials about the harpy eagle.

One factor contributing to the disappearance of harpy eagles is the slow rate at which it reproduces. In the wild, an eagle couple produces two chicks per year. But only one will survive. Once hatched, the stronger chick usually kills the weaker so it can get all the food.

The breeding project in Panama City works with six eagle couples. When eggs are laid, they are immediately removed. "If we can remove the chick before it's killed, we double the production of harpy eagles," Ellis said. "Or by removing the eggs from the nest, you encourage the couple to produce more eggs."

He added: "In the wild, only one chick survives every two to three years, but we can double or triple that number in a controlled environment."

The Peregrine Fund is currently raising 30 harpy eagle chicks. ★

Angel Muela, Peregrine Fund

A harpy eagle in the wild in Panama. Its movements are being tracked by a leg band and radio transmitter attached to its foot. This bird has been tracked since 2004.

EUROPE AND EURASIA

Bosnia's New One-Stop Shops Speed Delivery of Permits, Documents

ZENICA, Bosnia-Herzegovina—Since the city opened a new, efficient, "one-stop shop" to deal with requests for permits and documents, it takes citizens and businesses half the time to receive construction or building permits.

Documents such as birth certificates are now provided in minutes.

The system is much clearer for citizens, said Alma Jeftic, head of general administration for the one-stop shop.

"The physical structure is nicer for citizens, and the working conditions are better for our employees," she said. "We have air conditioning, better working space, and we're using modern equipment."

Zenica's one-stop shop is one of 25 built with USAID support in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Forty more will be built by next year under a joint contract by the Agency and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

The project equips municipalities with modern technology to improve efficiency. It also cuts the number of steps to carry out tasks. Customer service training is provided for municipal staff to make interactions more pleasant and productive. And, Jeftic said, new technology allows managers to see how many cases each municipal employee is working on and whether any of them are late.

"Before, to get a birth certificate you had to wait anywhere from two hours to a day," she said. "And especially at this time of year, when school is starting, it would be full of people here."

Now getting a copy of a birth certificate takes no longer than 20 minutes, she said. Obtaining business registrations and other similar documents has also been streamlined, cutting waiting time by half.

Possibilities for corruption are diminished through the use of modern, transparent approval systems.

In July, the Zenica municipality processed a record 9,000 documents—3,000 more than usual. This was possible due to the new computerized records system, Jeftic said.

"People who have been away are surprised when they come here how easy it is to get documents," she said.

In addition to the one-stop shops, USAID supports NGOs who work with municipalities, helping them raise funds or carry out community projects.

In Livno, for instance, the USAID-supported Center for Civic Cooperation helped a local community organize and present plans for the construction of a water distribution system to the local government. Each house was willing to pitch in $350, so when the municipal government saw how well the project was organized, it invested several thousand dollars.

The community, Lopatice, built its distribution system last year. Now children are not getting ill from hepatitis, a common disease that develops from drinking contaminated water, local citizens said. ★

Kristina Stefanova, USAID

A usual day at the municipal "one-stop shop" in Zenica, where an average of 6,000 documents—such as business permits and personal vital record documents—are issued per month. USAID, through the creation of one-stop shops, has helped Bosnian municipalities increase efficiency.

ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

Afghan Fighters Exchange Guns for Family Life

KABUL, Afghanistan—Miles away from the capital, in Esarak village in Balkh province, a man who once was a fighter now leads a simple family life running a small business.

Nik Mohammad fought for years against the Soviet Union. But when the United Nations started a Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program in Afghanistan, he joined it, trading his guns and ammunition for 400 eggs, an incubator and other equipment, and a day of training on running a poultry business.

"It takes 21 days to hatch the eggs. The chickens then lay eggs in five months time, so that I can look after my family," he said.

"Before I spent my time in the mountain, hungry, thirsty, but now I peacefully spend my time with my family and children," added Mohammad, who has been telling his former fighter friends and relatives to give up their guns and join the DDR process. "Now I can see my children all the time and direct them to school and the mullah to be educated. My children are happy in having me at home, too."

Disarmament and demobilization ended in July 2005, with approximately 63,000 former officers and soldiers enrolled in the process. Reintegration efforts through the U.N. program will continue through June 2006.

The DDR program was conducted under the U.N.'s Afghanistan's New Beginnings Program (ANBP), in conjunction with various partners, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

USAID/Afghanistan, through its Looking Beyond the "R" Initiative, is providing additional support through programs designed to complement and sustain the ANBP assistance.

For example, the DDR process offered six-month courses in literacy and trades such as agriculture, carpentry, welding, tailoring, carpet weaving, metal work, and poultry farming. The USAID initiative is designed to follow up on the ANBP training by helping former combatants to find jobs so they can apply their training and reintegrate back into civil society with sustainable livelihoods.

The Agency also began a $4 million loan guarantee program that aims to employ a former combatant for every $10,000 distributed through loans. Employment Assistance Centers are being created in eight provinces to hold job fairs, linking potential employers with those involved in the DDR program.

In Panjshir Valley, the Looking Beyond the "R" Initiative provided former combatants with training as mountaineer tour guides.

Ex-fighters get a $700 package from the U.N. program to sustain their families, and some receive bicycles to travel to training centers from their homes, depending on the options they choose.

Geeta Raj, USAID/Afghanistan

Shamaga (last name unknown), right, and his son, Shagha, center, both fought in the war. They are now happy to have disarmed under the DDR program and report that the culture of guns is no longer valid.

As disarmament efforts wound down in August 2005, Mirwis, 30, stepped outside his literacy class in Mazar-i-Sharif, conducted by IOM, to explain why he is among the 7,800 fighters in Mazar who have turned in their weapons.

"I am done with fighting," said Mirwis, who only uses one name and hopes to learn carpentry. "I personally could not find any benefit from the fighting except looting and destruction. I fought for 12 years. Most of my friends disappeared."

IOM, using U.S., Japanese, Italian, and other donor funding, showed former fighters a video thanking them for serving their country by defending it against communists and then against the Taliban. It said that, in peace time, they must lay aside their weapons and join the effort to rebuild their country.

More information on the DDR program and the "Looking Beyond the R Initiative" is available online. ★
www.ddrafg.com.

Geeta Raj contributed to this article.

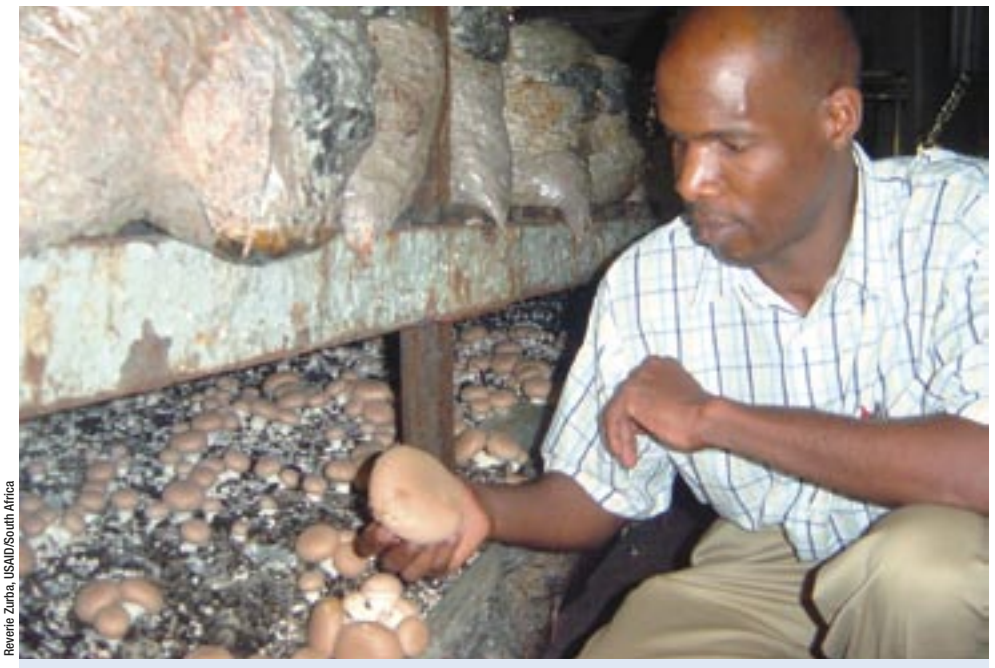
AFRICA

Top South African Mushroom Farm Extends Ownership to Blacks, Women

PRETORIA, South Africa—Peter Nyathi symbolizes the new face of this country's commercial farming.

He won Africa's top award for the best small and medium-sized agricultural enterprise in 2003 and South Africa's May 2005 Sanlam3Talk (small or medium enterprise) Business Owner of the Year Award. The awards recognize Nyathi's Tropical Mushrooms, a growing business that sells organic brown and white mushrooms to local markets and neighboring countries. A third of the farm's equity is held by black South Africans, including women, who have typically been left out of such opportunities.

Nyathi has a history with USAID assistance. The Zimbabwean university where he earned his agricultural economics degree in 1989 received funding from USAID. And when he got a loan to start a business some years later, Nyathi received help from USAID to design a computerized control system.



Reverie Zurba, USAID/South Africa

Peter Nyathi inspects his mushroom crops.

Nyathi bought 19 hectares of land in the Magaliesburg region in 2000. He erected the buildings and infrastructure necessary to farm on a commercial scale and began operating as an independent, privately owned mushroom producer.

Tropical Mushrooms today employs 60 people and supplies more than five tons of mushrooms per week to southern African markets. Harvesting inside climate-controlled units allows mushrooms to grow fast enough to double their size in a day.

Nyathi arranges health education about preventable diseases and deadly illnesses like HIV/AIDS for his staff. He also offers training opportunities and a chance to buy shares in Tropical Mushrooms. Says Nyathi: "This is the first time they have been able to own land as well as gain equity in a profitable business venture."

USAID further assists Nyathi and his workforce through the South African Agricultural Financial Restructuring and Privatization Program (SARPP), which was designed to handle transactions for groups of workers wanting to become shareholders in firms. A high degree of proficiency is required to maneuver through the related legal systems and paperwork, and the Agency has been able to help Nyathi's employees through the process.

Helping workers buy into commercial farms includes obtaining local government grants and private sector loans to purchase equity in the operation as a group. Enterprises that want to enter into such transactions with their workers provide detailed financial and management information. USAID's project develops a business plan that evaluates the viability and sustainability for all parties to the transaction.

At Tropical Mushrooms, USAID helped employers and employees purchase shareholdings in the venture with business strategies, shareholder trust documents necessary to get land rights grants, and bank loans.

The project supports South Africa's Black Economic Empowerment in Agriculture program, which aims to increase ownership of agricultural lands and enterprises by historically disadvantaged individuals, such as black South Africans, people of mixed race, and women. ★

Reverie Zurba contributed to this article.

MISSION SPOTLIGHT:

Kosovo Gets Help After War's Trauma

PRISTINA, Kosovo—The summer finds this U.N.-run territory in the former Yugoslavia in expectation of a U.N. report that could launch talks on Kosovo's future status as either part of Serbia, as an independent country, or other options.

Serbia insists Kosovo—which holds ancient historic monasteries—not become independent. But the overwhelmingly ethnic Albanian population, traumatized by repression under Serbian domination, wants independence.

The United Nations—with aid from organizations such as USAID—has administered the region since 1999, when a NATO bombing campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ended Belgrade's campaign to crush separatists and expel hundreds of thousands of Albanian Kosovars.

Since then, Kosovo has been a U.N. protectorate, with its ministries run by a mix of local officials and international experts, among them U.S. government and private personnel.

U.S. assistance goes to develop the economy, promote democracy and civil society, strengthen individual and institutional capacities, and improve healthcare. USAID staffers serving as advisors to ministries such as finance or justice have powerful roles in government.

"Because we have the respect of the leaders, we can get a lot done," said Ken Yamashita, USAID/Kosovo's mission director. "We are literally helping create what Kosovo is today, in terms of fiscal issues, banking, justice."

Officials from U.N.-member countries have taken on particular ministries with which to work. USAID has focused on the ministries of finance and justice. The finance ministry was transferred in early 2005 to Kosovars who received extensive training and material support. The justice ministry is in the process of being transferred as well.

"Our budget is $30 million—that's a lot for a country of 2 million people," Yamashita said. "It allows us to accomplish a lot."

The largest Kosovar cities are Pristina, the capital, with 500,000 inhabitants, and Prizren, in the southwest, with 120,000 residents. The landlocked territory borders Serbia and Montenegro, Albania, and Macedonia. Some 90 percent of Kosovars are ethnic Albanians, with Serbs the main minority.

Because Kosovo is not a country, it does not have an official flag—residents often use that of Albania—or an official language. English is used for official business, and all traffic signs are in both Albanian and Serbian.

During the 1998–99 war, 58 percent of the homes were severely damaged or destroyed, and several thousand people died in the conflict. After the war, somewhere between 100,000 and 250,000 Serbian and Roma Kosovars fled the region. Many mosques and kullas (traditional Albanian homes) were destroyed during the war, and Serbian Orthodox churches were burnt following the war.

Since the war, serious unrest broke out only once, in March 2004, after the shooting of an 18-year-old Serbian Kosovar and the drowning of three Albanian boys the following day. The incidents led to two days of unrest, leaving 19 people dead and more than 900 injured, including 61 peacekeepers and 55 police officers. Many Serbian Kosovar homes and 16 churches were destroyed. Some 3,600 people were left homeless.

"Today Kosovo is peaceful, but it is politically fractured, the institutions are weak, and local governments are even weaker, especially on the multiethnic issue," said the head of the U.S. diplomatic mission in Kosovo, Phil Goldberg.

As Kosovars gear up to run their own affairs, U.S. assistance will continue to stress reconciliation and ethnic tolerance on both sides, Goldberg said. "It has to be a two-way street."

"Programs now must support the new justice ministry and improving the economy," he said. "Stronger businesses and more jobs benefit all ethnicities, all Kosovars, and Kosovo's future." ★

Largest city: Pristina
Population: 1.9 million, with another 350,000–400,00 living abroad
Size: Slightly smaller than Connecticut
Population below poverty line: 47%
GDP: about $2 million U.S.
GDP per capita: about $1,035
GDP growth: 4.5% (2003 est.)
Ethnic groups: 88% Albanian; 7% Serbian; and 5% others, including Bosniac, Roma, Turk, Ashkali, Egyptian, and Gorani
Religions: Islam, Serbian Orthodox, and Roman Catholic
Languages: English is language of governance; all documents are produced in local languages, including Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian, and Turkish.

Sources: *UNDP Human Development Report*, USAID.

FrontLines *Acting Deputy Managing Editor Kristina Stefanova visited Kosovo recently and edited and wrote this series of articles.*

Women Rebuild War-Shattered Lives Through Literacy Classes

KRUSHE E MADHE/VELIKA KRUSA, Kosovo—Vaxhide Dina, 30, lost her father and three brothers to the war here six years ago. The family's home of 50 years was destroyed.

Dina now cares for her elderly mother, two of her widowed sisters-in-law, and six nieces and nephews. She spends her days working in the field. Until the past few months, she was illiterate.

Dina is among two dozen women learning to read and write through a women's literacy course funded by U.S. assistance. "In the future, I hope to have children of my own, and I want to be able to help them with their schoolwork," she said.

Half the women in Krushe e Madhe/Velika Krusa are illiterate.

Just over 200—or 70 percent—were made widows by the war. Some 500 children here have one or no parents.

Traditionally low literacy among girls and women was made worse during Slobodan Milosevic's dictatorship. Albanian language courses were abolished in Kosovo in the 1980s, when Yugoslavia tightened its grip on the previously autonomous region. Teachers were dismissed and students pushed out of schools. Private lessons were held informally, but these efforts were repressed and ended completely with the war.

Also, local families traditionally revolve around their sons, said Ola Syla, regional coordinator for an NGO that teaches women to read and write. "In a family with four children, there may be resources to educate only one. And the priority is the son, because he can support the parents, while girls go to the family in which they marry."

This was the case of Hydajete Selmani, whose father died before she was old enough to attend school. By tradition, the widowed mother was returned to her family and the children were kept with their father's parents. Selmani had to work in the field and help raise her younger brother. At 16, she was married to a man of the family's choice, and she never learned to read or write until a few months ago. She is now 43.

"It's very hard not to be able to write your own name. Everyone jokes around," said Selmani. "If I had to go to the clinic, I had to take someone with me to help me."

Now she can read enough to catch the first line of subtitles in foreign soap operas.

Literacy classes are held Saturdays and Sundays at noon. Each of the 12 lessons introduces letters by focusing on a subject relevant to rural women—for instance, one lesson discusses the role of women in the home; another covers childcare.

Patricia Orlowitz, USAID/Kosovo

Women in Krushe e Vogel/Mala Krusa, sister village to Krushe e Madhe/Velika Krusa, earn money selling milk from their cows at a local milk-collecting center, founded with support from USAID. About 70 percent of the women in the area were made widows by the war.

The women all smile and respond happily when asked if they enjoy their class. They say they don't mind homework. But come harvest time, they ask for classes to be held at a different time or—better yet—to be suspended for a month. "There are so few men here, and the women have the burden of raising the children and working the land," said Syla.

This year, USAID is spending $150,000 on literacy programs for 700 women in 10 municipalities.

The Agency also funds a project by a local NGO that conducted a survey looking into why girls drop out before completing primary school. The study found that most girls either lived too far from secondary schools—and their parents would not let them travel alone—or they were needed to work in the fields.

The NGO is now trying to work with the municipal government to start additional women's literacy classes. ★

Entrepreneurs Invigorate Kosovo Businesses

KACANIK, Kosovo—Two years ago, concrete block maker Silcapor was just another of a few hundred defunct socially owned enterprises (SOEs) dating back to former socialist Yugoslavia. The factory—where many local residents once worked—was home to pigeons and spiderwebs.

But after some pushing from USAID to get the United Nations—which administers the economic sector in Kosovo—to sell Silcapor, the concrete block maker is once again the largest employer in Kacanik.

Patricia Orlowitz, USAID/Kosovo

Employee pulls out a stack of newly made blocks at Silcapor. USAID helped the factory get going after years of being shut down.

Through another project, Kosovo Cluster and Business Support (KCBS), the Agency helped two brothers buy the business and get it going. Today, Silcapor is as busy as a beehive, employing 220 workers who earn 60 percent more than they did before the factory shut down.

The factory produces 42,000 cubic meters of blocks per year, but its capacity can grow to 120,000 cubic meters, said Martin Wood, chief of party for KCBS. USAID will invest $19 million in KCBS over four years to work with several industries, or clusters, in the areas of construction materials, fruits and vegetables, and dairy and poultry.

"There is a huge potential market in Kosovo because 75 percent of the blocks are imported. If this place gets going, we could reduce imports, which is the goal of KCBS," said Wood.

The project linked the Berisha brothers to a bank that gave them a loan to buy Silcapor. They then received help to get additional capital to reopen the factory, fix machinery, and get the place running.

Now sales are expanding. The brothers recently met with USAID and the Kosovo Ministry of Education about setting up a contract for Silcapor to provide all the blocks for school building and renovation. Silcapor has also signed a year-long contract for 2 million euros with a Greek buyer. It is also negotiating with clients in Bulgaria and Macedonia. Exports are currently 30 percent of the business.

"We used to work with [Silcapor] before, selling cement, so we knew how the business works and what it's all about," said new co-owner Saqip Berisha. "And we feel like this is the only place in the municipality that can help people."

Kosovo is home to about 500 socially owned and publicly owned enterprises, including a massive flour mill, a publishing company, and numerous wineries. An SOE is managed in part by the workers, who make decisions about the SOE's future and share part of its profits, in addition to their salaries. Publicly owned enterprises (POEs) include Kosovo's railroad, numerous utilities, and a telecommunications company.

After the United Nations began governing Kosovo in 1999, it set up a department to handle the SOEs, and, in 2002, established the Kosovo Trust Agency (KTA) to administer and ultimately sell SOEs.

▼ SEE **ENTREPRENEURS** ON PAGE 14

Ethnic Albanian, Serb, and Roma Kosovars Build Road Together

RUBOFC/RUBOVC, Kosovo—An old man stands in the middle of a road that he and his neighbors—ethnic Albanian, Serb, and Roma Kosovars—built together.

In nearby municipalities, mixed communities have paved other roads, constructed water and sewage systems, and renovated schools.

Providing such services will bring people who left during the war back to their homes, said Xhelil Munati, a municipal official near the village of Rubovc.

"They say there are no conditions for life here. But they return if there is water, sewage systems, and things that they need," Munati said.

USAID's Municipal Infrastructure and Support Initiative (MISI) helps municipalities implement about eight projects per year that they could not have afforded without the Agency's support. Under the initiative, the projects must benefit and engage mixed communities. So whether a road is paved or a school gets a facelift, a MISI project brings together Roma, Serbian, Bosniac, and Albanian Kosovars.

Patricia Orlowitz, USAID/Kosovo

This man stands on a road that he and his Albanian Serbian, and Roma Kosovar neighbors built.

"It seems that people finally understand that without cooperation they cannot implement what they want," Munati said.

"This project has been very important for us because we face big obstacles at the municipality. We don't have sufficient funds to follow through on major requests made by the communities. We need to assist them, but we can't," he said. "Through MISI, we've been able to provide drinking water and sewage [system], and bring roads to villages that didn't have any roads before." ★

NGOs Help Kosovar Cities to Clean Up War Rubble

DECAN/DECANI, Kosovo—The war six years ago left this city in the western part of Kosovo littered with burned vehicles and debris from homes, schools, and sports centers.

For years the rubble lay around. But now—in what is Kosovo's first scrap metal recycling project regulated and administered by a local government—the garbage is being collected. And property owners who do not set aside metal items from their regular trash for recycling can be fined.

"Over 90 percent of the city was destroyed. Businesses were ruined…and it got us thinking, in Indira Gandhi's words, 'Poorness is the beginning of pollution,'" said Adem Lushaj of the NGO Association of Independent Intellectuals, which drafted environmental regulations for scrap metal that were passed by the local government in April 2004.

Today, the NGO monitors enforcement of the recycling process through a grant

▼ SEE **NGOS HELP CITIES** ON PAGE 14

Training Judges Builds Public Trust

MITROVICA/MITROVICE, Kosovo—The municipal court lies in the north portion of this city, across a bridge guarded by U.N. peacekeepers. Ethnic Albanians do not cross the bridge from the south, and ethnic Serbs do not cross from the north.

A U.N. convoy transports judges, court staff, and citizens dealing with the law to the court in the morning and back in the afternoon.

"We work limited hours; it's quite difficult," said Kaplan Baruti, a judge who is one of the few ethnic Albanians to live on the north side of town, where everything is written in Serbia's Cyrillic alphabet.

The physical aspect of administering justice in a split town is just one challenge faced by Kosovo's justice system, which, since 1999, has been administered by the United Nations but is slowly coming more into the hands of Kosovars.

As that transition takes place, USAID is playing a major role in strengthening the judiciary. The Agency helped create and support a judges' association that Baruti headed until recently. The group of 340 judges advises the legislative body, the Kosovo Assembly. The association also trains judges to increase their professionalism and win public trust and respect. It also runs an internship program for law students so they can get the experience required to qualify for the bar exam.

Working with judges is the key to building a strong justice system in Kosovo, said Tom Monaghan, a Nebraska judge who heads Kosovo's Justice Department, a

▼ SEE **TRAINING JUDGES** ON PAGE 14

WHERE IN THE WORLD...

June 12 to July 23, 2005

REASSIGNED

Reed J. Aeschliman
Afghanistan/OEG to Cambodia

Timothy G. Alexander
E&E/EA to E&E/PO/SPA

Grover T. Atwood
Zimbabwe/GD to Afghanistan/OA

Ravinder Aulakh
ANE/IR to EGAT/AG/AM

Alexander V. Bond
RSC/EXO to COMP/FSLT

Donald J. Brady
Afghanistan/OM to Iraq/EXO

John P. Brady
Ukraine/ODG to Ukraine/PCS

Kathleen C. Bridges
Ghana/OD to Egypt/PROC

Sylvester M. Broderick
Benin/D to GUINEA/OD

Arthur W. Brown
Nigeria to COMP/LWOP

Candace H. Buzzard
Zimbabwe/GD to REDSO/ESA/PDPS

Christine Marie Byrne
RIG/Baghdad to OIG/A/HL&C

Jatinder K. Cheema
Eritrea/D to WARP

Rachel Herr Cintron
COMP/NE/OJT to Namibia

E. Lewis Conner
DCHA/PPM to Kosovo

Thaddeus S. Corley
RIG/Cairo to RIG/San Salvador

Fernando Cossich
Iraq/EXO to Caucasus

Timothy E. Cox
OIG/A/HL&C to RIG/San Salvador

Ronnie G. Daniel
Egypt/PSD to AFR/WA

Aimee M. David
M/PMO/BEA to EGAT/I&E/ICT

Carleene H. Dei
WARP to RS/Africa/OD

H. Peter Delp
Ethiopia/PROG to AA/PPC

Polly C. Dunford Zahar
Haiti/PHN to Nigeria

Margot Biegelson Ellis
WB/Gaza to Uganda/D

Bruce Etling
COMP/NE/OJT to Cambodia

Tadeusz Findeisen
Iraq/OAA to Nigeria

Patrick C. Fleuret
AFR/SA to Nigeria

Kurt Fuller
COMP/FS to ANE/SPO/SPPM

Loretta D. Garden
COMP/NE/OJT to Indonesia/EDU

Jose M. Garzon
DCHA/DG/ROL to Guatemala/ODDT

Megan A. Gerson
COMP/DRI to ANE/MEA

Ronald J. Greenberg
EL SALV/S01 to AFR/SD/EGEA

Abdoulaye Gueye
OIG/A/IT&SA to RIG/Dakar

Beverly A. Hadley
REDSO/ESA/LEG to RS/Africa/OD

Nancy Carmichael Hardy
REDSO/ESA/PDPS to COMP/FSLT

Margaret M. Harritt
CA/EW to COMP/FS

Julia Henn
COMP/NE/OJT to Uganda/GD

Charles W. Howell
Croatia/SLOV to Ukraine/D

Karen R. Hunter
Egypt/DIR to GC/Africa

David L. Jessee
E&E/EG/MT to LAC/CAM

Thomas J. Johnstone Jr.
Kosovo to COMP/FSLT

Mosina H. Jordan
AA/LAC to A/AID

Karen L. Kasan
COMP/NE/OJT to Nigeria

Mary Alice Kleinjan
GC/Africa to GC/ANE

Rebecca LaTorraca
Egypt/PO to Croatia/SLOV

Nancy J. Lawton
RIG/Budapest to RIG/Baghdad

Jeffrey A. Lehrer
Caucasus to COMP/FSLT

Jeffrey R. Levine
Uganda/GD to EGAT/EG/EDFM

Catherine C. Lott
Madagascar/PDA to O/S LANG TRNG

John A. May
DOM REP/DIR to Egypt/PROC

Bernard Mazer
M/PMO/BTIP to EGAT/I&E/ICT

Teresa Lynn McGhie
REDSO/ESA/LEG to USAID RDM/Asia

Marie F. McLeod
COMP/NE/OJT to RS Africa/SO3 HEA

Monica Medrek
COMP/NE/OJT to Russia/SSR

Taraneh Milani Roohi
COMP/NE/OJT to Egypt/HRH

Timothy J. Miller
EGAT/AG/ATGO to EGAT/NRM/W

Catherine M. Moore
Pakistan/OD to Iraq/OAA

Thomas R. Morris
Armenia/ERE to Indonesia/BHS

Charles E. Mosby
Iraq/OAA to Jordan/D

Kevin James Mullally
Mali/D to RWANDA

Alexander D. Newton
Ghana/OD to Mali/D

John R. Niemeyer
GC/LE to GC/Africa

Deborah J. Niewijk
COMP/NE/OJT to Afghanistan/OPPD

Alexandria L. Panehal
EGAT/PR/UP to Ecuador/D

Sangita Patel
COMP/NE/OJT to Namibia

Kendra Phillips
COMP/NE/OJT to RS Africa/SO3 HEA

John R. Power
Phil/D to Egypt/DIR

Ricky A. Pritchett
M/PMO/BTIP to M/PMO/BEA

Gerald C. Render
M/OMS to Afghanistan/OM

Timothy Reuter
COMP/DRI to ANE/IR

John Riordan
COMP/NE/OJT to Romania

Mitro Darren Roman
OIG/A/HL&C to RIG/San Salvador

Fenton B. Sands
AFR/SD/EGEA to Guyana

Mike E. Sarhan
Guyana to Eritrea

William K. Slater
COMP/NE/OJT to RDM/Asia

Kevin C. Smith
COMP/NE/OJT to Nigeria

Sandra Anna Stajka
COMP/NE/OJT to Pakistan/PDO

Littleton Tazewell
Guatemala/D to CA/DO

John R. Thomas
EGAT/AG/AM to EGAT/AG/ARPG

Tanya S. Urquieta
Nicaragua/DI to Colombia

Doanh Q. Van
USAID RDM/Asia to Iraq/OAA

Lynn N. Vega
Jamaica-Car/OPDM to Colombia

Dennis J. Weller
DCHA/FFP/EP to Ghana

Pamela A. White
Mali/D to Tanzania/D

Patrick Joseph Wilson
COMP/NE/OJT to Bangladesh/RAA

John E. Winn IV
DCHA/PPM to COMP/FSLT

Minnie S. Wright
Nigeria to Iraq/HEO

RETIRED

LaVerne I. Drummond

Timm A. Harris

Elouise L. Hood

Joan D. King

Lawrence J. Klassen

Sonny Low

Ursula Nadolny

Barbara N. Turner

PROMOTED

Richard B. Aaron
Contract Specialist

Taniece L. Baldwin
Auditor

Charity Conrad Benson
Supervisory Contract Specialist

Sandra M. Byrnes
Contract Specialist

Donald B. Clark
Mission Director

Patrice L. Cunningham
Contract Specialist

James N. Davis II
Lead Contract Specialist

Katie Donohoe
International Coop Specialist

Donald Douglass
Supervisory Accountant

Erika S. Eam
Contract Specialist

Vanessa Garza
Special Assistant

Osvaldo L. Gratacos
Attorney Advisor

Alicia R. Harris
Contract Specialist

Bao Quyen T. Hoang
Auditor

Michael F. Hoebel
Supervisory Operating Accountant

Richard L. Ingram
Supervisory IT Specialist

Cynita V. Knight
Security Specialist

Tameka J. Laws
Contract Specialist

Maria G. Marigliano
Administrative Officer

Monica L. McQueary
Program Analyst

Charis M. Nastoff
Lead Contract Specialist

Michael T. Peddicord
Contract Specialist

John W. Pica
Auditor

Courtney Y. Potter
Auditor

Darren W. Shanks
Human Resources Specialist

Steven A. Tashjian
Supervisory Contract Specialist

James Francis Thompson
Lead Management and Program Analyst

MOVED ON

Todd D. Anderson

David A. Bilker

Jeffrey E. Carr

Colette Claude Cowey

Kimberly Ann Finan

John S. Gardner

John Gunning

Deborah M. Hickey

Mary Frances Likar

Barry James MacDonald

Margaret Alter Miller

Aisha M. Mooney

Dahlia I. Neiss

Bruce J. Odell

Jane E. Stanley

Matthew Stephenson

David Studdert

Celeste Tarricone

Todd S. Thompson

John E. Wagner

Ernest Wilson

IN MEMORIAM

Donald Everett Anderson, 74, died May 30 in McLean, Va. He worked with USAID as a foreign service officer, serving in Brazil, Vietnam, Honduras, and Zambia. Anderson was among the last Americans to leave Vietnam when Saigon fell in 1975. He managed a camp in Pennsylvania for 25,000 Vietnamese refugees during the summer after his return from Vietnam. Anderson later served as a senior advisor for disaster relief and assistance during earthquakes in Italy and Guatemala, and was a senior member of a joint State Department/USAID task force working on the Sinai peacekeeping mission. Upon retirement in 1987, Anderson returned to international development as a contractor and worked on agricultural development and food security projects in sub-Saharan African countries, including Ethiopia and the Sudan. Skilled in piano tuning and carpentry, he was known to tune friends' pianos while on visits to Africa, and he rebuilt more than 100 instruments during his assignments and visits to the continent.

Cristin Springet, 54, died Aug. 2 in Bethesda, Md. Since 2002, Springet worked in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade, and made significant contributions to the Agency's participant training and education programs. She started as a placement officer with a Washington-based contractor, continued in the West Bank/Gaza mission, and then moved on to the Africa ATLAS program. Most recently, she led the development of Agency efforts to reengage in long-term degree training in agriculture-related areas. Her ideas for performance-based training are now being piloted in several African countries. She was also a consultant on several USAID projects in the 1980s and 1990s. ★

NOTICES AND REMINDERS for "Where in the World…" should be submitted by email to frontlines@usaid.gov or by mail to USAID, Ronald Reagan Building, Suite 6.10.20, Washington, D.C. 20523-6100, or by fax to 202-216-3035.

SMART Plan Tracks Mortality, Nutrition Status in Emergencies

NEW YORK—A new computer-based system known as "SMART Methodology Version 1" will provide more reliable data to relief organizations and donors during complex humanitarian emergencies and help them mount a better response, according to backers of the plan.

SMART stands for Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions. The new system was launched here June 23 at an interagency conference hosted by UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman.

SMART includes a computer software program that can be run on Windows-based systems. Field workers and others input data covering death rates and nutrition status of children under age 5, and the software analyzes the information to create a report. That report, in turn, is used by development and humanitarian groups to determine if interventions are needed and how best to respond.

William J. Garvelink, USAID's senior deputy assistant administrator for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, said the two indicators are "useful for policy and decisionmakers, as it provides an overall gauge of the wellbeing of a population….We need a few critical pieces of information that are reliable, rather than an overabundance of information that is not."

The initiative is made up of donors, policymakers, and technical experts. The effort addresses concerns that some relief responses have lacked standardized and reliable data and that they need more information about emerging issues, such as population movements during complex humanitarian emergencies.

At the launch, Ambassador Sichan Siv, U.S. Representative to the U.N. Economic and Social Council, said, "In humanitarian emergencies, correct and timely data can make the difference between death and life for thousands of people." He also noted that G8 leaders had committed themselves to support the SMART initiative during their 2004 summit at Sea Island, Ga.

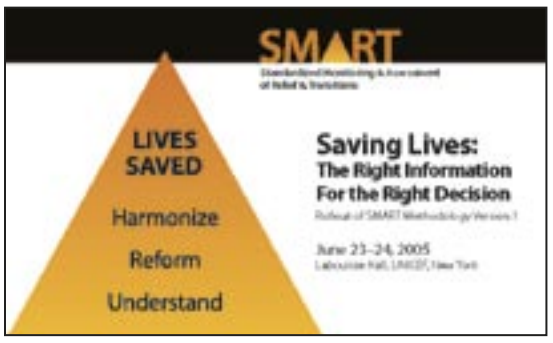
USAID helped get SMART off the ground in 2002 by organizing an interagency meeting with 45 humanitarian institutions and has played a prominent role in leading the development of the SMART methodology.

In addition to USAID, the State Department and the Canadian International Development Agency provided seed money for SMART.

The new system was tested by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization and Action Against Hunger. UNICEF, USAID, and other partners are in the process of identifying priority famine-prone countries—Ethiopia is the first—and all USAID partners are being encouraged to try SMART.

Those interested can access "SMART Methodology Version 1" and read more about the New York conference online. ★

www.smartindicators.org



Homan Appointed New ACVFA Chair

Benjamin Homan has been appointed chairman of the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA), following the July 31 resignation of William Reese.

Reese, who is stepping down to concentrate on his duties as the recently appointed president and CEO of the Baltimore-based International Youth Foundation, displayed confidence in Homan's appointment, saying, "Ben is a stunning choice and a committed leader."

Food for the Hungry

Benjamin Homan, left, shares high-fives with a group of young Ugandans.

As president of the faith-based organization Food for the Hungry, Homan is integrally involved in humanitarian assistance and development work. Four months out of the year, he works at Food for the Hungry missions in 47 countries worldwide. In addition, Homan also serves as president of the Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations.

"The ACVFA provides a great venue for the policymakers at USAID to communicate the depth of their knowledge and sophisticated analysis of complex issues," said Homan.

As the new chairman, one of Homan's objectives will be to develop greater public awareness of the ACVFA. The committee, he said, is "a valuable mechanism for private citizens to draw policymakers into public discussion."

The key result, according to Homan, is to make policymakers better at what they do. Shedding light on issues through discussion "helps great people get better," he said.

"We have an excellent foundation with the wonderful service of Bill Reese," Homan added. "We'll build on that."

Reese, who served as chairman for nine years, will remain a member of the committee.

In addition to the change in chairman, the ACVFA has gained several new members: Spencer King, president and CEO of International Executive Service Corps; Lorne Craner, president of the International Republican Institute; Timothy Flanigan, professor of medicine at Brown University; Richard Stearns, president of World Vision; and, the most recent addition, Mohammad N. Akhter, president and CEO of InterAction.

The ACVFA's first public meeting under the new leadership is scheduled for Oct. 19 in Washington, D.C. ★

www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/acvfa.

Alberto DeSoria

Suchin Pak, host of the MTV series My Life Translated, *spoke during Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.*

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Observed

At a ceremony for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, keynote speaker Suchin Pak, a news correspondent with MTV, told about 200 people May 10 how she struggled with her identity.

Her MTV series, My Life Translated, tells of young people like herself who are straddling the line between two cultures: "They are Americans with families that are not. They are stories that we all know very well—that many of us live everyday—but they are the stories that are rarely told."

Noting that minorities find it hard to get into the media, she said: "It is not enough to just get in the door—you have to kick that door open and make sure it stays open for everyone else!"

Administrator Andrew S. Natsios thanked Pak for raising awareness about the tsunami and raising $100,000 for relief.

The event included performances by South Asian classical dancer Ranjani Vedanthan and the Hawaiian group, Halau Ho'Omau I Ka Wai Ola O Hawai'i.

A sampling of Asian Pacific American cuisine followed the event. ★

Dosanjh Sukhminder contributed to this article.

Council Tackles Diversity Issues at Agency

An Executive Diversity Council recently established by Administrator Andrew S. Natsios will spearhead USAID's efforts to develop and implement diversity-enhancing initiatives.

AMONG RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE DIVERSITY COUNCIL

- Integrate diversity in management practices.
- Create a diversity scorecard to measure performance.
- Employ a full-time professional recruiter.
- Establish career development and upward mobility programs and conduct management skills, leadership, supervisory, and other relevant training.
- Implement senior executive service and senior foreign service development and mentoring programs for mid-level employees.
- Reexamine promotion policies and practices.

Source: Executive Diversity Council

Creation of the council was recommended in a series of reports commissioned by the Agency to identify critical diversity issues and challenges facing the Agency and to formulate strategies for addressing them.

The Agency's Business Transformation Executive Committee hired an outside firm to conduct the three-part study. The reports have been published, and a comprehensive action plan is expected soon.

Mosina Jordan, who chairs the council and is the recently appointed counselor to the Agency, explains: "USAID's success as an organization depends on having a multicultural workforce that works effectively with diverse global customers and stakeholders and partners. To achieve our development goals abroad, our employees must work in an environment where diversity, experiences, and contributions of others are valued, and where every employee has the opportunity to contribute to the fullest extent of his or her ability."

The reports identified a number of areas needing immediate improvement, including increased female and African-American representation in the foreign service, increased Hispanic representation in both the foreign and civil services, and upward mobility for women and minorities.

The reports also depict the Agency as "an organization significantly more supportive and embracing of a diverse workforce, and a workplace conducive to fostering such a workforce, than it is recognized for."

Jordan sees the current diversity challenge as mainly one of "implementation and communications—transforming the Agency's historic diversity vision into tangible results."

The comprehensive action plan will "detail far-reaching, well-defined, actionable interventions that will advance the diversity agenda," Jordan said. The workforce will be very much involved in defining the action plan, she stressed.

The council will meet monthly to implement selected recommendations. Quarterly meetings will be open to all employees, who will also have access to meeting minutes.

A listing of council members and more information is provided online. ★

http://inside.usaid.gov/A/DC/.

Orange, Rose, Cedar Revolutions Signal Democratic Advance

A new wave of democratic change has been sweeping former Soviet republics and parts of the Muslim world in the past two years, much of it supported by USAID programs that have trained journalists, judges, and political leaders.

In September, the Agency plans to publish *Democracy Rising*, a magazine that chronicles some of these changes. It tells the stories of people who accepted help and advice from established democracies and seized the chance to reform and improve their own societies.

Stories in the magazine include Georgia's Rose Revolution, Ukraine's Orange Revolution, Lebanon's Cedar Revolution, and Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution, where hundreds of thousands took to the streets demanding democracy. In those former Soviet republics, people accused the repressive postcommunist regimes of running fraudulent elections.

For a decade, U.S. assistance had supported independent polls, civil society NGOs, and the training of people on how local and national governments should operate on behalf of citizens. Now that aid was coming to the fore.

In the Middle East and West Asia, millions more defied threats by terrorists and lined up to cast their democratic votes in Kabul, Baghdad, and Ramallah. In all three, new elections were scheduled in the coming months.

One picture summed it up: in the cold dark night of Tblisi, Georgia, as people marched toward the seat of government to protest a fraudulent election, one person in the crowd held up a miniature Statue of Liberty. He and millions of others marching for democracy asked for the rights that the statue represents: a free vote, free press, free speech, and freedom to worship as they choose.

The newly elected governments face an enormous burden. They must respond to the needs of the people and provide the services of the modern nation, such as roads, electricity, healthcare, education, and security. Governments must eliminate the corruption and nepotism that drain economies. They must be accountable to the public for the money they spend and the things they do. In a word, governments must learn to govern justly.

USAID's assistance to these countries continues, helping smooth and guide their democratic reforms.

U.S. aid for democracy grew from $100 million a year in 1990 to $1.2 billion in 2005, distributed among more than 110 countries.

Democracy Rising is scheduled to be available online in September. ★

www.usaid.gov.

USAID/Ukraine

Peaceful protest in Kiev, Ukraine, during the November 2004 Orange Revolution.

Food Rushed to Niger, Other African Countries ▲ FROM PAGE 1

As early as Jan. 21, the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) sounded the alarm on Niger, warning that food stocks were running out. After additional warnings in February and March, FEWS NET declared an emergency June 15, noting deteriorating conditions and "extreme food insecurity." It concluded that 2.5 million people in Niger would need emergency assistance.

The food emergency was in part heightened after a BBC report in which the word "famine" was used. The fear of famine, coupled with regional trade restrictions, led neighboring countries to sharply curtail exports of food and prompted merchants to increase prices.

At the same time, the hunger season set in earlier than usual, forcing Niger's rural residents to head for the towns after their crops failed and their livestock died. There they found shops flush with food, but at prices beyond their means.

Emergency food shipments soon began to pour into Niger. On Aug. 5, USAID airlifted 206 metric tons of special, high-nutrient food supplement to Niger to treat 34,000 children through UNICEF.

Another 16,000 tons of food had already been sent. In 2004, to fight locusts, USAID provided $10 million to the region.

The food shortages in the Sahel region are likely to be dwarfed by larger crises in other parts of Africa in the months ahead.

USAID announced in August it would send an additional 73,500 tons of food to southern Africa through the U.N. World Food Program (WFP). The bulgur wheat, cornmeal, sorghum, vegetable oil, peas, and beans will sustain approximately 5 million to 6 million people for one month, and is valued at $51.8 million.

"The United States is leading the world effort to prevent a widespread humanitarian crisis from developing in southern Africa," Administrator Andrew S. Natsios said.

This recent donation brings U.S. food assistance to southern Africa this year to 143,000 tons.

Poor rainfall in 2004 and 2005 reduced harvests throughout the region, leaving over 10 million people in need of food over the coming months. Up to a million tons of food aid may be needed between now and next year's harvest in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The United States has delivered more than 1 million tons of food since 2002, including this contribution, and is the biggest donor to WFP's operations in southern Africa. WFP is currently appealing to the international community for $410 million to feed 8 million people until the spring harvest in March 2006. ★

Alexandra Riboul, USAID

Alain Balandi (left), UNICEF's operations manager in Niger, and John Scicchitano, the regional advisor for West and North Africa for USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, talk to reporters Aug. 5 inside a cargo plane at the airport in Niamey, Niger. USAID chartered two jumbo planes to airlift 206 metric tons of high-energy food to feed thousands of the country's malnourished children.

Notes from Natsios ▲ FROM PAGE 3

Over the next few months, the Agency will continue to explore ways it can support FSNs, both through the Office of Human Resources in Washington and directly through our overseas missions.

Current initiatives include:

- establishing a virtual FSN network and regional FSN mailing lists to facilitate communication with USAID/Washington and among the FSN community
- working to broaden FSN access to USAID/Washington
- establishing and expanding online English-language training programs for FSNs, which currently allow over 1,000 FSNs to develop an essential skill for moving up at USAID
- supporting more FSN exchange opportunities with other missions and at USAID/Washington
- enhancing FSN professional development and mobility and identifying how the Agency can use a fuller range of FSN abilities and potential

In addition, mission directors will devote some of their management time to focus on FSN issues in local missions. This includes maximizing FSN training and professional development, incorporating incentives to broaden the role of FSNs, and ensuring that deserving staff are nominated for more of the awards for which they are eligible. ★

Burkina Faso Gets 'Threshold' Aid for Girls' Education

Burkina Faso signed the first "threshold country plan" with USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in July for aid worth $12.9 million over two years to help girls in 10 provinces complete their primary education.

"Increasing girls' education improves the ability of women to contribute to a developing economy and is a critical component of fighting poverty," Paul Applegarth, the MCC's former CEO, said in a statement when the threshold plan was announced.

USAID is administering the program out of the Ghana-based West Africa Regional Program (WARP), which worked with Burkina Faso's Ministry of Basic Education, MCC, the U.S. Embassy, NGOs, and other donor groups to design the program, said Bryan Kurtz, USAID's threshold program coordinator under the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination's Millennium Challenge Account Secretariat.

The threshold program is part of the MCC, a year-and-a-half-old entity created by the Bush administration that awards grants to developing countries that rule justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom.

The MCC has signed compacts with Cape Verde, Honduras, Madagascar, and Nicaragua.

Countries such as Burkina Faso that need help to meet all the qualifications for MCC compacts—16 policy indicators linked to poverty reduction and development—are eligible for the threshold agreements funded by MCC.

USAID and other U.S. government agencies will implement the threshold plans proposed by the countries themselves.

Twelve other countries have also applied for assistance through the threshold program. Each had to submit a five-page paper saying "what policy, regulatory, or institutional reforms would they commit to undertake for which we could provide assistance," Kurtz said.

Burkina Faso scored well on 15 of the 16 policy indicators. "The goal is to help them improve significantly on their relative score on one of the 16 MCC indicators that they had scored quite poorly on. That fits in nicely with this concept of threshold countries," Kurtz said.

"They had already made some commitments of their own (to basic education for girls) within the past few years, so this was not a brand new commitment," he added, "but there was a tremendous shortage of resources to devote to it, so this was just an ideal fit."

Burkina Faso, a landlocked country, has a population of just under 14 million. Some 36.9 percent of men but just 16.6 percent of women are literate.

Close to 70 percent of the threshold award will be used to build 132 new, "girl-friendly" schools. They will include onsite canteens, daycare centers, and separate bathrooms for boys and girls—amenities designed to address some of the reasons girls drop out of school. For example, girls who must care for younger children will be able to drop them at daycare while attending class. Take-home rations will go to girls who maintain a 90 percent attendance rate, an incentive to parents to continue sending their daughters to school.

The threshold grant will also be used to pay for teacher education, literacy training for mothers, mentoring services, and management costs.

MCC says it hopes to enroll 1,650 new girls within the first year of the program. These kinds of programs will be expanded countrywide if they prove effective in the 10 test locations. ★

Aid to Strengthen African Trade Unveiled at Senegal Conference

By Charles W. Corey
Washington File staff writer

DAKAR, Senegal—At the outset of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) conference here July 18–20, President Bush announced a new initiative that will provide as much as $200 million over the next five years to help Africa participate more fully in trade. The African Global Competitiveness Initiative will include USAID help to open a fourth trade hub office—in Dakar—to help businesses connect.

To close the conference, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced another new initiative—the African Growth and Opportunity Act Diversification Fund.

The diversification fund will enable several U.S. agencies to help African governments diversify their economies, Rice said.

Both announcements are expected to build on the trade ties between the United States and the continent. AGOA exports to the United States hit $26.6 billion in 2004, an increase of 88 percent from 2003.

Africa, Rice said, is "a continent of overwhelming promise. All human beings possess the dignity and the capacity to flourish in freedom. And AGOA is helping talented men and women of Africa to realize their natural potential for prosperity."

One project, run by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, will provide grants to help West African nations improve air safety and plan a new railway to better integrate the region.

"Without trade, there can be no sustained economic growth," said Administrator Andrew S. Natsios at the forum. "Unless foreign aid contributes to economic growth, it is failing to achieve its primary mission.

"We at USAID do not believe that sustainable growth can simply be built on handouts from benevolent donors, no matter how large the amount or how well they coordinate their efforts. On the contrary, we have come to see that achieving sustainable growth is fundamentally a matter of governance. It requires, first and foremost, the building of democratic institutions responsive to the people and capable of helping them effectively meet their needs."

The competitiveness initiative announced by Bush will expand the three U.S.-Africa trade hubs that are currently operational: Gaborone, Botswana; Nairobi, Kenya; and Accra, Ghana, said Lloyd O. Pierson, USAID's assistant administrator for Africa.

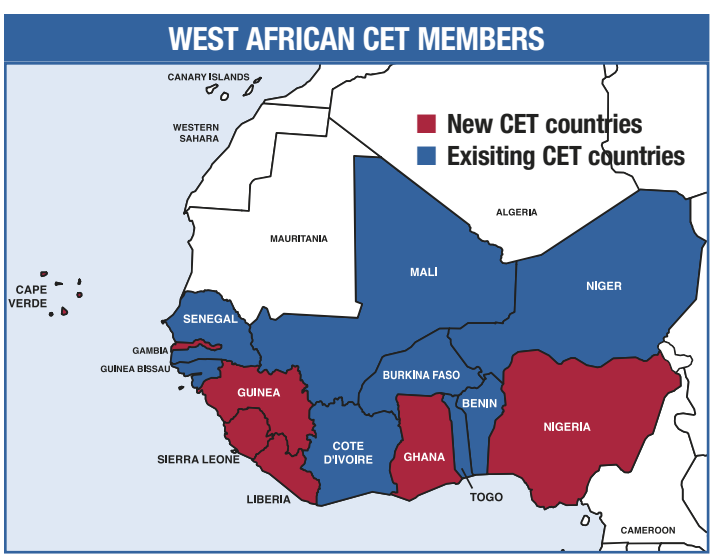
As part of the initiative, information technology will be enhanced and expanded so that all of the trade hubs will be more closely linked and "individuals can find out a lot more about economic development, investment opportunities, export opportunities in Africa," he said.

The initiative will begin in 2006 and run for five years. Discussing the significance of the initiative, Pierson said, "The program announced by the president today is one of the most important that we have and reflects the president's commitment, the administration's commitment, USAID's commitment to economic development in Africa." He reminded the press that President Bush has a number of initiatives underway in Africa in the fields of education, health, and malaria. ★

Washington File *is a product of the U.S. Department of State.* FrontLines *staff also contributed to this report.*

7 More West African Countries Cut Tariffs, Boost Trade Pact

Many countries in West Africa used to levy more than 100 different levels of tariffs on imports, a holdover from the colonial era. The levy could be miniscule, double the value of the product, or some amount in between. But now the number of tariffs and their value are declining under new policies supported by USAID trade advisors.



In late May, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) approved a plan to progressively implement a common external tariff (CET). The agreement will increase the number of West African countries in the CET from eight to 15. The plan will lower tariffs and reduce costs for importers.

The Agency helped ECOWAS adopt the CET through the ECOTrade Project, which boosts the business climate. Along with freer intraregional trade, the CET is laying the foundation for a 15-country West African customs union and places ECOWAS among only a dozen customs unions in the world.

"The implementation of the CET for West Africa will increase economic regional integration and is a critical step for establishing a free trade area in the region," said Jeremy Strauss, the trade and investment advisor with USAID's West Africa Regional Program (WARP).

"While the benefits of free trade areas are the subject of continued debate, the work has resulted in unprecedented cooperation in trade, fiscal, and customs policy by ECOWAS members. Such collaboration is critical to removing obstacles to doing business in the region."

Implementation of the ECOWAS treaty had been stalled for years. Beginning in 2000, however, the competitive global economy spurred country leaders to act.

The European Union had also announced that it would negotiate future aid and trade agreements only with customs unions, not individual developing countries. The ECOWAS heads of state moved to expand the CET.

The CET simplifies the structure of tariffs, with a top bracket of 20 percent on finished goods, 10 percent on intermediate inputs, 5 percent on basic necessities and raw materials, and no tariff on social goods such as medicines and publications.

The CET should also provide cost certainty for traders, speed customs clearance, reduce fraud and bribery, and promote greater transparency. Bridging the French-English divide in West Africa will be another tangible benefit of the ECOWAS CET.

"The result of our efforts will be that enterprises will take advantage of increased opportunities in the region and beyond," Strauss said. "It will also strengthen the ECOWAS member states' negotiation skills for agreements among themselves and with third parties such as the European Union and WTO [World Trade Organization]."

The tariffs should be fully harmonized by the end of 2007 so that goods entering any of the 15 ECOWAS countries will be assessed at the same rate.

ECOTrade is implemented through a cooperative agreement with USAID partners IBI-International Business Initiatives and the Associates for International Resources and Development (AIRD). ★

FrontLines is published by the U.S. Agency for International Development, through the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs.

J. Edward Fox, Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs

Jeffrey Grieco, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs

Steve Tupper, Chief of Publications

FRONTLINES EDITORIAL BOARD

Ben Barber Editorial Director

Kristina Stefanova Acting Deputy Managing Editor

Angela Rucker Writer-Editor

Claire McIntyre Production Editor

Rebecca Gustafson Online Editor

Pat Adams Photo Librarian

Mary Jane Cotter Human Resources Coordinator and Employee Liaison

Contributing writers, editors, and staff include
Rick Marshall, John Waggoner

FrontLines correspondents and reporters include
AFGE—Jeremiah Perry; **AFR**—Christine Chumbler, Ranta Russell; **AFSA**—William Carter; **ANE**—Lori Severens; **DCHA**—Jenny Marion; **EGAT**—Veda Lamar; **E&E**—Sarah Berry, Brock Bierman; **EOP**—Gloria Blackwell; **GC**—Stephen Kaplitt; **GDA**—Daniel Harter, Dan Killian; **GH**—Chris Thomas; **IG**—Donna Rosa; **LAC**—James Carey; **LPA**—Barbara Bennett; **OSDBU**—LaVerne Drummond; **PPC**—Joseph Duggan; **SEC**—Randy Streufert.

Readers are encouraged to send in stories, feature articles, photos, nominations for "First Person" or "Mission of the Month" columns, and other ideas.

Letters to the editor, opinion pieces, obituaries, and requests to be added to the mailing list should be submitted by email to frontlines@usaid.gov; by fax to 202-216-3035, and by mail to Editor, *FrontLines*, USAID, Ronald Reagan Building, Suite 6.10, Washington, D.C. 20523-6100; tel. 202-712-4330.

Production assistance for *FrontLines* is provided by IBI–International Business Initiatives, Arlington, Va.

NGOs Help Kosovar Cities to Clean Up

▲ FROM PAGE 9

from Foundation for Democratic Initiatives (FDI), Kosovo's only grantmaking foundation. FDI was created with U.S. support, and is based in Gjakova/Dakovica, a city about 50 miles from Pristina.

FDI Director Bashkim Rrahmani says local governments act on suggestions made by NGOs because the groups—only in existence since 1999, after the war—have become strong and respected.

When new civil society groups flooded Kosovo six years ago, few had skills in management or advocacy or knew how to sustain themselves. To help them develop, USAID launched the Kosovo NGO Advocacy Project (KNAP), which in three years trained hundreds of NGOs.

More than 3,000 NGOs are registered in Kosovo now, but Rrahmani estimates that only about 500 are active and will last. "The biggest problem is sustainability," he said.

KNAP set up an NGO training and resource center in Pristina that will continue training after the project ends.

FDI has awarded 182 grants totaling $1.5 million to local NGOs for projects related to human rights, environmental protection, ethnic reconciliation, anticorruption advocacy, and other subjects.

"Finally, we have NGOs with a clear vision and clear structures [that] are very responsible and…capable of facing the challenges that Kosovo faces," Rrahmani said.

Lushaj's group is just one example of an NGO that has drafted regulations or made suggestions to local governments in areas that authorities had overlooked.

"We see a strong willingness for NGOs to collaborate with municipalities or other NGOs," Rrahmani said. ★

USAID/Kosovo

Bashkim Rrahmani (right), director of the Foundation for Democratic Initiatives, Kosovo's only grantmaking foundation, talks earlier this year to Luiz Jimenez, a staffer for an Illinois congressman. The meeting was arranged by the Balkans Trust for Democracy, a grantmaking initiative supported by USAID, the German Marshall Fund, and others.

Patricia Orlowitz, USAID/Kosovo

Trilingual: A traffic sign in Kosovo indicates directions to three cities in three languages. Albanian and Serbian are the two main languages spoken, but Kosovo has a sizable Turkish minority in certain areas, as reflected in the use of Turkish in the sign above.

Entrepreneurs

▲ FROM PAGE 9

USAID has been helping make these sales happen, while at the same time working with entrepreneurs on business development and access to credit through KCBS.

"Most [SOEs] are defunct, bankrupt, and not operating. Few were maintained in the last 10 years, and for the last five years since the war they have deteriorated even more," said Sharon Hester of USAID/Kosovo, who works on the KTA. "Basically, we are taking the assets of SOEs and monetizing them."

The sale of Silcapor took nearly two years. When the United Nations began administering the region, it decided that it was best to privatize SOEs and put earnings from those sales in a trust under the KTA, where the money is held to satisfy any future claims.

Before selling a SOE, the KTA—under USAID's leadership—prepares companies and their documents for investors to perform due diligence. The KTA contacts known claimants and invites potential owners and creditors to file claims with the agency. Twenty percent of the sale proceeds from an SOE go to the former employees; the rest goes in a special account, which can be tapped into as owners and creditors are identified.

"What we have through KCBS and working with the KTA is two projects that really work hand-in-hand," Hester said. "With Silcapor, for instance, we helped make the sale happen, and KCBS provided support to the new owners so that they could make the best of their business." ★

First Lady Visits HIV/AIDS Center

▲ FROM PAGE 1

Women, many carrying children, line up wearing colorful "kanga" wraparound skirts made of locally designed cloth. Both men and women wait to meet with clinic staff.

PASADA, thanks in part to support from the Emergency Plan, consists of several buildings. There are three new counseling rooms, three offices for counseling orphans, a training room, a store room for medical supplies, and offices for staff. The recently inaugurated buildings surround an open-air courtyard and tropical garden that create an illusion of a quiet park setting rather than a clinic in a capital city.

The First Lady visited the clinic with Tanzanian First Lady Anna Mkapa. The tour included a stop at the main clinic, where individuals are tested for HIV or treated for infections brought on by HIV/AIDS.

Bush sat with a group of HIV/AIDS orphans and listened to how they try to overcome the difficulties of losing their families. She also spoke with adults who are coping with their illness and learned of their experiences with the clinic.

"Here, people with HIV/AIDS can get the treatment they need to fight the disease," she said. "And they can also get the love and support they need to live a happy and full life." ★

Training Judges Builds Public Trust

▲ FROM PAGE 9

body that is being turned over to Kosovo for self-rule in coming months.

"The judges are the first step. They have to be able and competent," Monaghan said. "You can have a great police and good prosecutors, but it doesn't mean as much if the judges aren't good.

"We need to have judges who are independent, and who feel that they can render an independent judgment and not have to answer to families or communities."

This is accomplished through training, mentoring, and evaluation projects, all of which USAID is supporting.

The Agency "is playing a fundamental role" in creating a strong, independent judiciary in Kosovo, Monaghan said. But there is still much work ahead. "We need the laws to be effective to accomplish what we're trying to do here," he said.

On July 19, the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo presented to Kosovo's prime minister a proposal for the transfer of police and justice administration to Kosovars. The United Nations is set to review in late fall the progress of executive power transfer, which, if it is going well, will be completed by 2006. ★

Reflections: Former Official and Others Tell Tales of 1950s Afghanistan

James Cudney, who was a program officer with one of USAID's forerunners—the International Cooperation Administration (ICA)—collected a bundle of photographs during his years in Afghanistan and shared them at a meeting in the Ronald Reagan Building.

His wife, Margaret Cudney, was a young mother and wife when she landed in Afghanistan in the 1950s with her husband and began teaching English. "Everyone's own country is cashmere to him," she said, reciting one of the Afghan proverbs she learned during her years in the country.

James Richie, who spent part of his youth in Afghanistan in the late 1950s and early 1960s, found a hospitable, tribal society where elders were well respected and one of the worst things in the culture was to be a bad host.

The Cudneys and Richie talked about their half-century-old memories of the country at USAID's Washington headquarters April 21. This was the Agency's first Reflections Seminar, linking USAID's past and present missions by bringing back retired officers to share their experiences.

The Cudneys displayed dozens of photographs and rugs from Afghanistan. James Cudney, who retired from USAID in 1975, went to the country to teach electrical engineering at a university, but later joined ICA. He spoke about the dune-like Kandahar International Airport and the Helmand Valley Development.

After her overseas experience, Margaret Cudney founded Women to the World, a small, nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives of poor women and children in developing countries. The group has had resettlement programs in Peru, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. "We connect women of resource with women in need," she said.

Richie, who was profiled on *60 Minutes II* shortly after U.S. forces overthrew the Taliban, heads International Foundation of Hope, which receives USAID support for its agricultural rehabilitation programs in Afghanistan. He talked about the barriers to development in Afghanistan, including corruption, inflation, and the high-cash rewards of poppy cultivation. Alternative crops such as almonds, pomegranates, and grapes, can take five to 10 years to turn a profit.

Barney Popkin, USAID

USAID retiree James Cudney (left), his wife Margaret Cudney, and businessman James Richie spoke at the Agency's first Reflections Seminar about living in Afghanistan in the 1950s and 1960s.

Afghan shura, or councils, can apply pressure to poppy growers to plant alternative crops, he said. Though no one can ever replace poppies in Afghanistan, Richie said much can be done to produce alternative agricultural livelihoods if there is follow-through and support for the long haul. ★

Barney Popkin contributed to this article.

Disaster Information Center Funnels Private Aid to Victims

During the height of the world response to the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami, the Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) was in demand. Its staff received requests for more than 100 print, radio, and television interviews, and its name was passed out by organizations such as CNN and *People* magazine.

BY THE NUMBERS, AFTER THE DEC. 26, 2004, TSUNAMI

- The Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) website received more than 150,000 hits in January 2005, up from its average 5,000 hits per month.
- Staffers responded to more than 6,200 inquiries on the CIDI hotline.
- More than 4,500 individuals registered to offer technical assistance through the CIDI database.

Source: Center for International Disaster Information

But this was not the first time CIDI, a USAID-funded program that responds to public questions on international emergencies, was on the public's radar.

"The crisis in Rwanda, Hurricane Mitch, Kosovo, and others have generated a greater volume of calls and for a longer duration," said Suzanne H. Brooks, director of the Virginia-based contractor.

Since 1988, CIDI has handled tens of thousands of inquiries from the public and it has guided individuals, groups, and corporations eager to send humanitarian aid to devastated regions.

In the last decade, large-scale emergencies have brought out large-scale—but sometimes inappropriate—responses. Unaffiliated volunteers who head for devastated regions almost always find barriers to their attempts to lend a hand. And people sometimes ship inappropriate donations—boxes that included winter jackets, stiletto shoes, and embroidered curtains landed in Sri Lanka after the tsunami.

CIDI educates people about the realities of disasters and how they can respond in useful ways. The primary message: Cash is the best donation, because it allows relief agencies to buy exactly what is needed and—unlike donations of food or clothing—involves no transportation costs to get to those in need.

"We want to capture the energy and emotion of their charity and channel that into activities that will provide real benefit to disaster victims," Brooks said.

Once a disaster is declared, CIDI and USAID put their post-disaster outreach program into action. Communities in the United States with cultural, social, professional, or educational ties to the affected areas are contacted. Members of Congress who represent these communities are also alerted. CIDI sends out information packets with guidelines on how to respond and other contacts to assist people who want to help.

CIDI also keeps a database of offers of commodities and volunteer services. This information helps match up the goods and services with organizations that can use them. ★

www.cidi.org.

REPAIRS STARTED ON ROAD DAMAGED BY TSUNAMI

USAID

Dump trucks begin work on a USAID project repairing the road between Banda Aceh and Meulaboh in Sumatra, which was badly damaged in the December 2004 tsunami.

New Military Office

▲ FROM PAGE 1

In upcoming months, the Agency will hire additional personnel. Requests for USAID liaison officers in the Pentagon, the European Command, and the Special Operations Command have already been approved.

"This reflects the fact that many units in USAID have had longstanding links to the U.S. military, but the Agency has not had any formal link for quite some time," West said.

Keen interest by the military in developing a strong relationship with USAID was reported by two top Agency officials: new DCHA chief Michael Hess, a retired Army colonel with more than 30 years of active and reserve service in the military, and Douglas Menarchik, the assistant administrator for Policy and Program Coordination and a retired Air Force colonel. Both met with Department of Defense officials about the new office.

The office was created on the heels of the successful joint tsunami response, which may prove a model for future cooperation.

The office also may help develop common civil-military structures proposed under the State Department Office of the Coordinator for Stabilization and Reconstruction. ★

Peace Deal Likely to Aid Tsunami Relief

HELSINKI—The Indonesian government and rebels from the Free Aceh Movement signed a historic peace deal Aug. 15 to officially end a nearly three-decade old conflict.

Peace should help ensure the long-term viability of U.S. foreign assistance and USAID Aceh reconstruction projects, including the rebuilding of the Banda Aceh-Meulaboh Road. Groundbreaking for the road was held Aug. 25.

The peace deal followed seven months of talks between the two factions.

Earlier truces ended in renewed conflict. But the December tsunami that ravaged Indonesia's Aceh province brought the two sides back to the negotiating table. With large areas in the oil- and gas-rich province destroyed and more than 160,000 people killed in the tsunami, both sides said they want to concentrate on helping in the reconstruction of Aceh.

Liberia Elections Next Month

MONROVIA, Liberia—Voters will be electing a president and vice president, senators, and representatives on Oct. 11. Candidate nominations closed Aug. 6, with 27 nominees for president, 25 for vice president, 206 for the Senate and 521 for the House of Representatives.

With no official mechanism to lodge complaints, some youths threatened to hold violent street demonstrations if their candidates' nominations failed to be accepted. Such intimidation has raised concerns about security during the electoral period, especially as other National Election Commission members have received threatening letters.

USAID/Liberia is supporting the election process through its democracy and governance projects.

$16 Million for Tsunami Warning System

WASHINGTON—A $17 million U.S. program for an Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS), which will help Indian Ocean region countries detect and prepare for tsunamis and related coastal hazards, was announced Aug. 17.

USAID's Regional Development Mission for Asia in Bangkok will lead the U.S. effort, with technical support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and other U.S. agencies.

"This is one of our top priorities in Asia, and an important part of the U.S. post-tsunami reconstruction effort," said Tim Beans, head of USAID's Bangkok office.

The U.S. program will address all levels of early warning capabilities, from community-level disaster readiness to national- and regional-level tsunami and earthquake detection and warning communications systems. The U.S. approach also will prepare a response not only to tsunamis, but to other serious coastal hazards such as cyclones, sea swells, floods, and earthquakes.

Regional cooperation, real-time sharing of data, transparency, and harmonization will be underlying themes in the U.S. program.

NOAA will support the deployment of detection buoys and related technologies in the Indian Ocean. USGS will support seismic technology transfer to the region, data analysis, and earthquake hazard mapping and modeling related to tsunami hazards.

The U.N.'s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) has the lead responsibility for developing regional warning capabilities. U.S. technical assistance will support efforts in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, and the Maldives—the countries most severely affected by the December 2004 disaster, where over 220,000 people perished.

Internews Criminal Convictions Dismissed

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan—A court here overturned the convictions of two Internews Network employees who had been found guilty of meddling in Uzbekistan's politics. Internews trains journalists in developing countries. Much of its work is funded by USAID.

Internews and its employees had been accused of becoming improperly involved in the country's politics. On Aug. 4, a lower court convicted the two employees—a director and an accountant—of a conspiracy to engage in unlicensed production of TV programming and illegal publishing. Internews and its employees denied the charges.

Catherine Eldridge, Internews Network's country director, told reporters that judges at the Yakkasaray criminal court ruled that prosecutors should have filed their case in civil instead of criminal court. "So I suppose we can just expect the case to go to a civil court; we can only wait and see what will happen with the future of the organization in Uzbekistan," Eldridge said.

Internews began operating in Uzbekistan in 1995, where it has helped develop the country's independent, private television stations through training, technical assistance, and support of local news and information programming.

A news report from Internews said that Uzbek officials have been cracking down on NGOs—especially those supporting the development of democracy—during the last 18 months. The news service speculated that the Uzbek authorities may fear a repeat of the popular uprisings that recently brought down governments in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan.

Massive Polio Vaccinations for Indonesia

JAKARTA—A massive campaign to vaccinate 24 million children began in late August to halt the spread of polio in Indonesia. It was launched by the Ministry of Health, with World Health Organization (WHO) and USAID support.

"Indonesia is very concerned, not only because of the fact (polio) is paralyzing children here, but it could spread internationally," said David Heymann of WHO. Officials feared that after the wet season starts in September the disease would spread rapidly.

USAID is contributing to the new vaccination campaign, as well as to surveillance activities that identified new cases of the disease.

The Agency's Global Polio Eradication Coordinator Ellyn Ogden met personally with many of the affected children during May. She said about 225 cases had been reported as of late August.

Polio returned in May to Indonesia, which had been free of the waterborne disease since 1995. The new outbreak began in northern Nigeria after religious leaders halted inoculations, fearing they spread HIV/AIDS or caused sterility. Polio spread to neighboring countries, the Middle East, and Indonesia, where rumors on television that the vaccine is dangerous led some parents to refuse the inoculations.

"The vaccine used here in Indonesia is the same vaccine that's been used throughout the world to vaccinate over 2 billion children, and this vaccine is one of the safest that is available," Heymann said.

Firm Pays $41.9M to Settle Claims

WASHINGTON—The Agency's Inspector General's office said July 22 that PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP (PWC) has agreed to pay the U.S. government $42 million to resolve allegations that it made false claims in connection with travel reimbursements it collected for several federal agencies.

USAID will get back $3.36 million. An investigation concluded that PWC received rebates for its federally financed travel expenses from travel and credit card companies, airlines, hotels, rental car agencies, and travel service providers. Despite a duty to do so, PWC did not consistently disclose these travel rebates to the United States, nor did it reduce the travel reimbursement claims it submitted to the government by the amounts of the rebates.

Other agencies involved included the General Services Administration; U.S. Postal Service; Environmental Protection Agency; NASA; and the departments of Energy, Transportation, and Treasury.

USAID's Acting Inspector General Bruce N. Crandlemire said "This multi-agency investigative effort and the ensuing result should serve notice to those who would attempt to defraud the government on a large scale and across jurisdictional lines, that government investigative resources can and will be pooled and coordinated in order to ensure full accountability of taxpayer dollars."

Harvard, Two Advisors Found Liable

WASHINGTON—Harvard University, a Harvard University professor, and a former staff member have agreed to pay more than $31 million to resolve civil claims from false billings to USAID.

Economics professor Andrei Shleifer and Jonathan Hay, who is no longer with Harvard, were paid under a USAID grant to lead a project and provide advice to the nascent Russian economy on privatization, following the fall of communism and the creation of fair and open markets. Instead, U.S. prosecutors say, the two used their positions and influence over Russian officials to advance their own and their spouses' private financial interests.

Shleifer and Hay made prohibited investments in Russia in the areas in which they were providing advice and used their positions to inappropriately influence the Russian Securities Commission, to which they were key advisors. The terms of the USAID grant strictly prohibited these activities, and neither Harvard nor its advisors disclosed these prohibited personal business activities and investments to USAID.

Under the settlement announced Aug. 3, Harvard will pay $26.5 million; Shleifer will pay $2 million; and Hay will pay between $1 million and $2 million (depending on his earnings over the next 10 years). In addition, the settlement includes $1.5 million already paid to the United States by FFIA, formerly known as Farallon Fixed Income Associates, LP, a company owned by Shleifer's wife, Nancy Zimmerman.

Healthcare Training to Get Boost in Ghana

TEMA, Ghana—USAID has donated $170,000 in medical supplies and other material to Ghana's Ministry of Health. The equipment, anatomical models, textbooks, midwife bags, and other materials will be distributed to 42 preservice training institutions for nurses, midwives, and community health officers in all 10 regions of the country. The donation will help the health ministry train more healthcare workers.

From 2002 to 2004, enrollment increased by 64 percent—from 2,944 to 4,829—among 33 preservice nursing and midwifery schools for which data is available. The increase is placing severe pressure on the institutions to maintain or increase the quality of training provided and to ensure that teaching aids, supplies, and equipment are sufficient for the growing number of students. This donation is targeted to help meet those needs.

USAID currently provides $18.2 million a year to Ghana's health sector. A ceremony to mark the donation was held here Aug. 10.

Grant in Bolivia Focuses on Health

WASHINGTON—USAID awarded $13 million to the Bolivian private health network Program for Coordination in Integral Health, an NGO umbrella program that for the next five years will focus on improving health services for Bolivians in poor and rural areas.

Conditions in rural areas, compared to those in the urban population, have worsened in the last 15 years. The NGO umbrella network will try to close the gap in medical service delivery.

The award is part of USAID/Bolivia's ongoing cooperation with Bolivia, which amounts to $100 million per year. Other objectives in Bolivia include increasing incomes of the poor; managing forest, water, and biodiversity resources; promoting economic growth in coca-growing and associated areas; and increasing confidence in democratic institutions and processes.

Public, Private Sectors Advance M2M

WASHINGTON—Seventy industry experts in methane and other emissions convened here June 9 for a workshop to advance Methane to Markets (M2M), a presidential initiative to recover and use methane gas as a clean, sustainable energy source. M2M targets three major methane sources: landfills, underground coal mines, and natural gas and oil systems.

The M2M workshop was hosted by the Global Development Alliance; Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade; Environmental Protection Agency; and the State Department.

President Bush announced the interagency partnership in July 2004, and the United States is committing $53 million over the next five years to the effort. ★