

Greater Horn of Africa Initiative

1999 Highlights

Seeking African Solutions...

- 1** Strengthening African capacity to enhance regional food security (*Strategic Objective 1*)
- 2** Strengthening African capacity to prevent, mitigate, and respond to conflict (*Strategic Objective 2*)
- 3** Improved access to regional analytical information (*Special Objective 3*)

USAID
Regional Economic Development
Services Office
East and Southern Africa

In a region plagued by drought and crippled by violence, USAID is working to make a difference. The Agency, through the presidential Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI), is tackling the problems of food security and conflict with a regional perspective, looking for African solutions, and linking relief and development. It is coordinating strategies with host governments and other donors to reap the most benefit from its programs. And it is striving to share what it learns, to make vital information available.

Troubling Outlook

The outlook for the Greater Horn is in some ways more troubling today than when the initiative was launched in late 1994. The border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea is still unresolved. Kenya faces the twin dangers of economic and political breakdown. The civil war in Sudan does not appear any closer to resolution and the population suffers from episodic food shortages. Conflicts in the Great Lakes Region have intensified. Recurrent drought means many are going hungry.

Signs of Hope

And yet, there are hopeful signs. Rwanda is picking up after the 1994 genocide and working toward national reconciliation and food security. Uganda and Tanzania are moving toward economic stability. Peace processes in Sudan and Burundi are continuing. Parts of Somalia have achieved relative

stability. Liberalized markets and regional cooperation on natural resource management and development of pest-resistant plant varieties could pave the way to greater regional food security. With effort and commitment, regional intervention could tip the balance toward greater security.

The goal of the initiative—a food-secure, just, and peaceful region—remains elusive and much needed. Toward that goal, the Agency has allocated approximately \$15 million a year for food security and conflict work in the region's 10 countries: Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The initiative's strategic plan was approved in late 1997 outlining its objectives through 2002. These are "strengthened African capacity to enhance regional food security," and "strengthened African capacity to prevent, mitigate, and respond to conflict." A special objective is "increased access to regional analytical information."

This report highlights results observed in the 1998-1999 fiscal year and documents some of the challenges USAID faces as it seeks a new approach in the region. Finally, the report previews coming opportunities.

CONVERGENCE

The initiative cannot effect a dramatic sea change on its own, but it can be a catalyst, if all parts of the Agency with an interest in the region apply the principles and commit their resources to meet the objectives. This process of coalescing around the principles and objectives of the GHAI is referred to as *convergence*. Progress on this front has been uneven.

Most convergence is occurring in the field, where many Missions are applying the operating principles and strengthening African capacity. But, stretched to capacity, they are limited in what they can take on. Diverse USAID units are reaching consensus that food security and conflict management must be priorities here. Consensus is also emerging that regional approaches and strengthening capacity are the best route to making a difference in food security and conflict. However, questions remain about the most

prudent way to achieve convergence, given constrained and diminishing resources and an upcoming change in Administration. It is unclear to what degree units in Washington and other government agencies are working toward the objectives of the initiative.

Gaining Momentum

A year of laying groundwork in 1998 began to bear fruit in 1999. This year, the Institutional Strengthening and Grantmaking (ISGM) program awarded its first grants to African nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In 2000, the program promises to be a key route to strengthening these NGOs and the overall NGO sector. GHAI also launched two funds to support conflict prevention, mitigation, and response: the Conflict Quick Response Fund and the Conflict Pilot Activities Fund. Thanks to them, USAID's Regional Economic Development Services Office for

East and Southern Africa (REDSO/ESA) identified more promising activities for testing or replication than it had planned.

Doing Business Differently

Though not one of the guiding principles of the GHAI, doing business differently has been a commitment since its inception—recognizing that the region's complex operating environment demands flexible policies and procedures. In FY99, the USAID Administrator approved limited competition award procedures for USAID grants and cooperative agreements for conflict activities in the region. This waiver, which extends to activities funded through GHAI and bilateral Missions, gives USAID flexible, expedited procedures to respond to conflict.

The GHAI was also granted approval to use fixed obligation grants under \$100,000 to African NGOs. This allows the GHAI to work with African partners who do not traditionally meet U.S. government financial requirements. Finally, the GHAI received approval through the "notwithstanding" authority of the Horn of Africa Act to provide development assistance funds to support GHAI objectives in Somalia.

Doing business differently also means addressing Agency constraints to linking relief and development. In 1996, an interagency team made more than 40 recommendations to overcome such constraints. While some progress was made in 1998, little can be reported in 1999. Not surprisingly, the remaining recommendations are among the most difficult, requiring multi-Bureau collaboration or negotiation with Congress to change legislation.

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Cassava Restored in Uganda

In Uganda, cassava is a food bank for many because it is drought-resistant and can stay in the ground up to three years. Production peaked at 3.5 million tons in 1989, when mosaic disease struck, reducing crops by 40 percent. From 1992 through 1997, Ugandan farmers lost \$60 million to the disease. Other countries in the region were also affected, so Uganda could not look to them to fill its deficit.

USAID/Uganda and other donors responded quickly to the crisis. USAID supported research, institutional development, and dissemination of disease-resistant planting materials, investing more than \$530,000, half the total required. The return on investment exceeded 700 percent in 1999 alone. Production increased from under 1,000 metric tons in 1997 to 342,000 metric tons in target areas in 1999. Wholesale market value of the crop was more than \$40 million.

and respond to projects' unintended consequences. This concept is now a cornerstone of the CARE approach to emergency and development activities in the region.

Promoting Stability: *Responding to change and helping groups learn to manage conflict through planning and flexible programming.*

The GHAI financed a March 1999 meeting of 300 Dinka and Nuer traditional leaders and church elders in southern Sudan, leading to a historic peace agreement. Dinka and Nuer leaders sacrificed cattle and performed traditional ceremonies to bind their communities.

Their agreement provides for adjudication of disputes over access to pasture and water and establishes courts and police posts run jointly by Dinka and Nuer. Five radio posts have been set up on the frontier—another means to prevent conflict.

The Lou clans of the Nuer underwent a similar process, expanding a peace conference to include multiple clans, factions, and militias, all calling for peace. This could end the most destructive conflict in the area, the primary cause of displacement since 1991.

Regional Perspective: *Finding regional solutions to regional problems.*

Some of REDSO's partners are beginning to tackle regional problems, but this can be difficult because of organizational weaknesses. REDSO/ESA is helping them strengthen their capacity to accomplish longer term goals.

An African advisory council—12 African experts in food security and conflict prevention—reviews all competitive proposals and makes

funding decisions for GHAI's Institutional Strengthening and Grantmaking program. Council members initiated program adjustments that make it more responsive to NGOs in the region. The program identifies opportunities to strengthen African capacity, providing technical assistance to NGOs with promising multi-country proposals but without the capacity to carry them out.

STRENGTHENED AFRICAN CAPACITY TO ENHANCE REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY

In a region plagued by drought and other natural disasters, where smallholders produce most of the region's food through subsistence farming, food insecurity strikes millions. The region has the resources to feed itself, but poverty and low productivity mean most people cannot buy enough food. Further, the agriculture system suffers from adverse economic policies and poor infrastructure for transportation, marketing, and communications.

Increasing Sustainable Agriculture Production

Through GHAI support to agricultural research networks, new pest-resistant bean varieties have been developed. Last year, 120,000 farmers adopted these varieties. In Ethiopia, farmers produced 80,000 tons of white pea beans for the European market. This also created seasonal employment for 2,000 women who packaged the beans.

Reducing Barriers to Regional Trade

Support and technical assistance from the East Africa Transportation

Initiative (EATI), funded by the GHAI, helped Uganda form its first commercial truckers association. The EATI is recognized in the region for its success in lobbying for transportation reform.

EATI organized a workshop that identified problems with Uganda's enforcement of axle-load limits. Independent truckers then formed an association to represent cross-border operators, encourage fair competition, and lobby on legislation.

GHAI helped IGAD member states collaborate on regional and global trade, sponsoring workshops to help delegates prepare for international trade negotiations. At the World Trade Organization negotiations, other African and developing countries found IGAD delegates among the best prepared and most collaborative.

Rural districts are the hub of agricultural production in Tanzania, but roads are in such poor condition that market access is limited. USAID/Tanzania involved the private sector and met or exceeded targets for road rehabilitation in 12 districts. As a result, transportation costs fell 45 percent in 1999, despite a 10 percent increase in fuel costs.

Meeting Food Needs of Targeted Populations

The United States gave more than 82,000 metric tons of food aid to Ethiopia in 1999, valued at \$36 million, from Title II non-emergency resources. The aid went to more than half a million people in food-insecure districts. It also provided 237,000 metric tons of emergency food aid, valued at \$82 million. Field assessments and nutritional surveys showed that timely delivery of emergency food



Broadening Information Dissemination on GHAI

The GHAI was on target for connecting policymakers to the Internet. Working with IGAD, the GHAI provided assistance that resulted in Internet connections for 72 government ministries and 220 people. By September 2001, that figure should rise to 108 ministries and 330 users.

In Tanzania, 24 people completed a training of trainers course to become certified Internet instructors. Sixteen then ran two-day courses for 60 USAID partners, including Tanzania Farmers Association, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, and Disaster Management Department.

Improving Links between Food Security and Conflict Prevention

The Regional Integrated Information System strengthens information dissemination in IGAD's priority areas. GHAI supported development of a design IGAD undertook with the U.S. Geological Survey. Despite initial ambitions, synthesizing information across the region will not be as straightforward as originally thought.

Monitoring and Evaluating Strategic Objectives and Operational Framework

The delay in developing REDSO's strategy postponed development of a monitoring and evaluation plan. Creating such a plan is complicated by the many groups involved—bilateral Missions, USAID/Washington, and REDSO/ESA—working to achieve the objectives of the GHAI.

WHAT IS AHEAD?

As the GHAI looks to 2000 and beyond, the following will demand attention.

Continued Conflict

Strife in the region continues. The Eritrea-Ethiopia border war is not fully resolved and civil war in Sudan drags on. Political chaos continues in much of Somalia. Rwanda and Uganda are enmeshed in war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The peace process in Burundi, although energized by Mandela's involvement, is in no way ensured.

Political turmoil in Tanzania over Zanzibar appears to be on the rise. Kenya, stable compared with its neighbors, faces instability from increasing poverty and resource scarcity, stalled constitutional reform, corruption, and arms proliferation.

Responding to these conflicts will continue to be a priority for the GHAI. If it is to make a significant contribution to strengthening African capacity in the conflict sector, however, resources commensurate with need will have to be allocated. Bilateral Missions also need to commit to supporting conflict activities. Meaningful progress toward conflict prevention, mitigation, and response requires all USAID units in the region—not just the GHAI—to devote energy and resources to the region's conflicts.

Drought and Food Scarcity

Planned food security activities will likely be cut back significantly to accommodate reduced GHAI funding. If the funding trend continues, constraints will be acute

and successful on-going activities may be cut. Given the failure of rains in the region, food scarcity will be of increasing concern in 2000.

As this report was being written, millions of people in Ethiopia, and smaller numbers in Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda were at risk of hunger. In the short term, the GHAI can share lessons learned to improve delivery of food aid and non-food assistance so that it strengthens African capacity, is targeted properly, and links relief and development. In the longer term, the needs of the coming year require redoubled efforts to help African groups identify and implement long-term solutions. Finally, the initiative should assess how previous years' assistance affected the regional response to the 1999-2000 drought.

Strengthened Cooperation

The GHAI has formed relatively independent partnerships with regional organizations, including COMESA (the Common Market for East and Southern Africa), the East Africa Cooperation, and IGAD. Those partnerships are now becoming integrated.

For example, COMESA, East Africa Cooperation, IGAD, and Southern Africa Development Community representatives met for the first time at COMESA's fifth summit in May 2000 to discuss areas of mutual interest. This cooperation will likely grow in coming years as all partners seek the benefits of working together—avoiding duplication, identifying niches, and supporting compatible goals.

Adopting Worthy Elements of the Initiative

The November 2000 presidential election puts the future of the GHAI

in question. A significant challenge will be to identify those elements that are valuable, independent of the initiative, and make them part of Agency operations. In the next 12 to 18 months, the Agency will need to agree on those elements and take steps to incorporate them in policy and practice. Experience suggests the following are worth keeping: regional approaches, emphasis on conflict management, linking relief and development, and strengthening African capacity.

Convergence

Convergence will continue to be both the heart of GHAI and one of its greatest challenges. One regional and three bilateral Missions in the area will submit new strategies for approval in 2000. These should converge with GHAI principles and objectives through the integrated strategic planning process. Next year’s report will assess the degree to which this occurred.

LEARNING LESSONS

1. **Strategic coordination** and working in partnership with African institutions requires a slower, more deliberate process. It involves first defining common objectives and establishing collaborative methods of operation.

Strengthening the capacity of African organizations is a long-term proposition, but it must, of

necessity, be USAID’s first step in developing partnerships that can address the region’s problems.

- 2. **Conflict prevention, mitigation, and response** grants can have a significant impact even if they are not large. For example, the GHAI provided less than \$100,000 to the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in Rwanda, which enabled it to undertake groundbreaking work in promoting reconciliation post-genocide.
- 3. **Peace conferences** can be valuable even if they don’t lead directly to a cessation of hostilities because they can strengthen an organization’s capacity to resolve conflict in the future.
- 4. **Ready availability of funds** can be exactly what is needed to resolve implementation problems. A dispute over jurisdiction in an amnesty program in Uganda, for example, was quickly resolved by ready funds, allowing the program to move forward.
- 5. **Community consensus** is essential for local government success. That means, however, that citizens must have information. In Somalia, for example, where literacy is low, local radio stations may be the answer.

CONTACTS

Lynne Cripe
GHAI Field Coordinator,
Nairobi
E-mail: Lcripe@usaid.gov

Charles Ward
Horn of Africa Project Manager,
Nairobi
E-mail: Cward@usaid.gov

Yves Koré
ISGM Program Manager,
Nairobi
E-mail: Ykore@usaid.gov

Jeff Allen
GHAI Bilateral Coordinator, Eritrea
E-mail: Jallen@usaid.gov

Janet Paz-Castillo
GHAI Bilateral Coordinator,
Ethiopia
E-mail: Jpaz-castillo@usaid.gov

Mia Beers
GHAI Bilateral Coordinator,
Somalia
E-mail: Mbeers@usaid.gov

Paul McDermott
GHAI Bilateral Coordinator, Sudan
E-mail: Pmcdermott@usaid.gov

Randy Harris
GHAI Bilateral Coordinator,
Uganda
Email: Rharris@usaid.gov

Anne Osterwind
GHAI Bilateral Coordinator,
Rwanda
Email: Aosterwind@usaid.gov

Kim Lucas
GHAI Desk Officer,
Washington, DC
Email: Klucas@usaid.gov

