



USAID | DJIBOUTI

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

OVERVIEW

PROFILE

Date of Independence: 1977
Population: 818,159 (2009)
Languages: French, Arabic
(Widely used: Somali, Afar)
GDP per capita: \$450 (2008)
Source: U.S. State Department

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BACKGROUND

Djibouti's location in a volatile region, its commitment to peaceful, tolerant Muslim views, and its long strides to combat global terrorism have created a strategic partnership that exemplifies the principles of President Obama's Global Engagement Initiative of partnership with Muslim countries based on mutual interest and respect. The United States and Djibouti share bilateral, regional and international interests, including the promotion of peace and security in the Horn of Africa and shared priorities in health and education. Djibouti is home to many U.S. Government initiatives, including the only off-shore USAID warehouse that prepositions emergency food aid for Africa and Asia, thereby reducing delivery time of much needed assistance by 75 percent.



Since 2005, the Government of Djibouti has made great advances, including the development of the only deep-sea port in the region, private sector investment, and significant gains in access to health care and primary education. The Government of Djibouti dedicates an impressive 40 percent of its national budget to health and education, highlighting its commitment to invest in its citizens. Despite these advances, Djibouti's future is threatened by a lack of arable land, successive droughts, high rates of livestock mortality, chronic food insecurity, urban migration, a severe lack of a skilled workforce, high unemployment, disease, an influx of refugees, and nascent government and political systems.

PROGRAMS

Despite its often turbulent post-colonial history, Djibouti has made progress toward developing a stable and potentially democratic political system. However, nascent governmental systems and lack of human capacity have resulted in calls for great transparency. For the democratization process to move forward, the Government of Djibouti must build confidence in the electoral process by strengthening election management and procedures, encouraging voter participation, improving oversight and engaging political parties in constructive dialogue. Opposition groups must also demonstrate a willingness to engage in constructive dialogue in order to find solutions to longstanding grievances.

POLITICAL COMPETITION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

During the 2008 legislative elections, USAID provided the first-ever training for polling agents on electoral oversight, trained the Election Commission in best practices on election administration, and worked with civil society organizations to promote political participation and voter education.

Upcoming elections will serve as a major milestone for Djibouti as it gradually begins to share power with non-ruling coalition actors. In an effort to foster this progress, USAID assistance will focus on opening avenues for increasing political participation and competitive balance by working with the Government of



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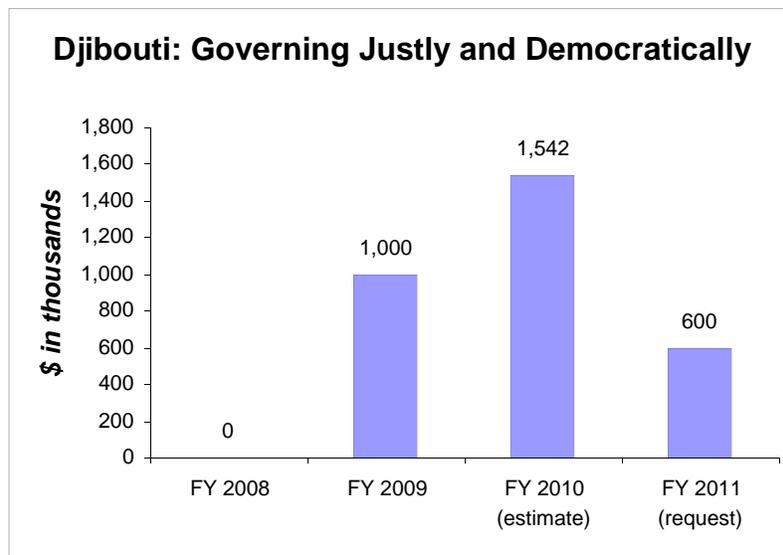
Djibouti, political parties and the Electoral Commission to help ensure a free and fair electoral environment. Technical assistance and training will support credible election management, voter education, effective oversight of electoral processes, including the first ever U.S. international election observation mission, and increased participation of political parties. Support for political competition and consensus-building is critical to advancing good governance in Djibouti, and aims to combat increasing levels of political apathy, cynicism, and tendencies to disengage from formal political processes.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

One of the most important government institutions in Djibouti is the Ministry of Health, which handles 15.5 percent of the national budget, numerous donor funds, and oversees construction contractors that are building hospitals and clinics all over the country. Political engagement of the Government of Djibouti in the health sector is high but the capacity of service delivery is extremely limited. Despite significant investments in the health sector, many recent gains have begun to slip due to weak governance structures, mismanagement of donor funds, and weak service delivery within the Ministry.

In 2009 USAID's anti-corruption programming trained 90 percent of the staff of the Office of the Inspector General and 60 percent of Parliamentarians in performance audits and procedures to request inquiries. The program strengthened the capacity of organs of government oversight, while simultaneously increasing public awareness provided through public service announcements on Radio Djibouti. USAID assistance is helping to improve systems and procedures to guide performance, build financial management and service delivery capacity, and strengthen the health information management system for planning and budgeting.

FUNDING



On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.