



COUNTRY PROFILE



Children are often the unintended victims of conflict, as parents are unable to insure they are well-fed and healthy. USAID helps return malnourished children to health.

OVERVIEW

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been plagued by dictators and civil war for 45 years. Given its size and central location in the continent, DRC's instability has threatened regional stability as well. The USAID program in the DRC is fully integrated into the U.S. government's diplomatic efforts to broker peace within the DRC and in the region, and complements the \$200 million annual USG contribution to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in the Congo. The goal of the USAID program in the DRC is to assist the DRC in its transition to a sound democracy with a healthier, better educated population benefiting from improved livelihoods.



PROGRAMS

PROMOTING DEMOCRACY & GOOD GOVERNANCE

The DRC's first general elections are scheduled to take place in 2006. USAID/DRC has supported the Independent Election Commission (IEC) to meet key benchmarks in the transition process including voter registration. In 2005 the IEC registered 25 million voters nationwide, an achievement that many observers thought was impossible. USAID/DRC trained 50 of the DRC's registered political parties to be more representative and competitive. A series of Open Forums have been conducted nationwide in which these parties present clear platforms and respond directly to citizens' concerns. A political parties' Code of Conduct was signed in 2005.

PROTECTION

USAID provides holistic support to survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), ensuring medical, psychosocial, advocacy, sensitization, and socio-reintegration services, while promoting judicial support and referral. To date, USAID has assisted over 39,000 survivors of GBV. In addition, USAID aims to prevent child separation and abandonment through ongoing research, public outreach, and support to communities at risk to prevent further separations and abuse. It also supports family mediation, reunification, and follow-up mechanisms as alternatives to institutionalization. These child protection activities have resulted in the reunification of approximately 4,000 children with their families.

DRC SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1960
Population: 54.8 million (2004)
Income per person: \$120 (yr)

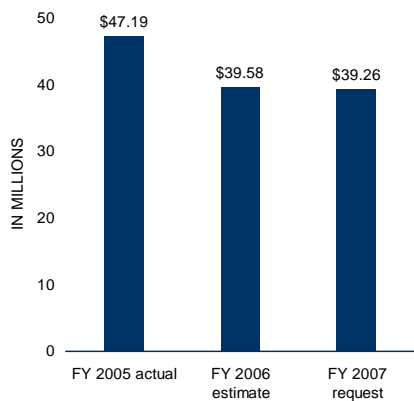
Source: World Bank Development Indicators

USAID IN THE DRC

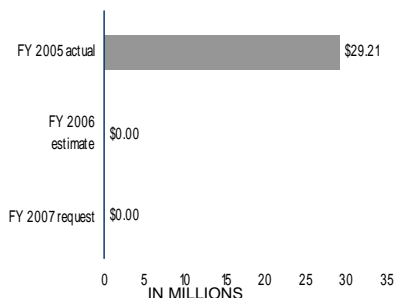
www.usaid.gov/cg

COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

USAID ASSISTANCE TO THE DRC



USAID FOOD AID TO THE DRC



For more information, see the
FY2007 Congressional Budget Justification
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/>

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mission Director
Robert Hellyer
USAID/Kinshasa
Unit 31550
APO AE 09828
Tel: 243 81-700-5701

Karen O'Donnell
DRC Desk Officer
Tel: (202) 712-1649
Email: ko'donnell@usaid.gov

REINTEGRATION

Conflict has affected millions of Congolese citizens, particularly in the east. USAID has helped ex-combatants peacefully return to their communities by employing them in labor-intensive road reconstruction and other community infrastructure rehabilitation projects. In addition USAID supports programs to help farmers increase productivity and improve access to the market. USAID has also organized village-level micro credit activities in Katanga and Equateur provinces, primarily benefiting women.

INCREASING ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Improved access to essential services is a primary means by which citizens will realize tangible benefits of peace. In the health sector, USAID's program improves health services with an emphasis on malaria treatment and prevention, routine vaccinations, HIV/AIDS prevention and care, and improving health care provider performance and drug supply systems. In addition USAID seeks to improve access to and quality of basic education—especially for girls—through innovative teacher training, distribution and proper use of educational materials, scholarships for girls, and encouraging community participation in education.

PROTECTING FOREST RESOURCES

Millions of people depend on the Central African rainforest for their livelihoods, but this is under threat from conflict and illegal logging. Through the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), USAID seeks to reduce the rate of forest degradation and loss of biodiversity through protected area management, improved logging policies, sustainable forest use by local inhabitants, and improved environmental governance. Following collaboration with USAID, several major logging companies have committed to improving management practices through activities such as halting the bush meat trade.

PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE & FOOD AID

USAID humanitarian programs target the areas that have been severely affected by the conflict and that have the highest mortality and malnutrition rates. USAID targets reducing food insecurity of vulnerable population of internally displaced people, refugees and those persons affected by the crisis who now want to reintegrate. Humanitarian programs focus on water and sanitation, food security, settlement and shelter, and the transportation of humanitarian personnel and materials. Through these programs, USAID assists more than 3.7 million war victims every year.