



## INSIDE INDIA

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### Coalition for Sustainable Nutrition Security in India Sets a Leadership Agenda for Action



Professor MS Swaminathan and USAID Deputy Mission Director Beth Hogan listen to coalition recommendations. *Photo/Vistaar*  
into national missions.

On Friday, September 19, the Coalition for Sustainable Nutrition Security in India (CSNSI) announced a new leadership agenda for reducing malnutrition in India. The coalition agreed to a Five Point Charter, which includes creating structures specifically to coordinate actions in nutrition at the village, state and national level; scaling up successful pilots; expanding community level programs; fostering the coordination of various public programs; and integrating nutrition

The Coalition, which is facilitated by USAID, was formed last year in response to growing concern about the increasingly poor nutritional status of a large segment of the population in India. According to the National Family Health Survey 3 (2005-2006), 42.5% of children in India under the age of five are underweight; 48% have low height for their age; and 19.8% have low weight for their height. In poorer states these figures are even more troubling: in Jharkhand, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh 50% or more of children under five are underweight.

The coalition represents a wide range of interested stakeholders, including many political leaders, bureaucrats, representatives from civil society, media, research institutions, the private sector, and development partners, and was formed under the chairmanship of Professor M S Swaminathan, "father of the Green Revolution in India" and a leading voice on food and nutrition security. This is the first time a high level multi-sectoral coalition has been organized with the goal of developing a leadership agenda for improving nutrition in India.

At the meeting, Dr. Victor M. Aguayo, Chief of Child Nutrition and Development with UNICEF/India and Dr. Mahtab S. Bamji, Emeritus Scientist with Dangoria Charitable Trust in Hyderabad, presented the recommendations from two expert task force reports: "Overcoming the Curse of



#### A Leadership Agenda for Action

The Coalition for Sustainable Nutrition Security in India

September 19, 2008

Coalition Report. *Photo/Vistaar*

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Malnutrition in India” and “Essential Interventions for Reducing Malnutrition in Infants and Young Children” respectively.

USAID Acting Mission Director, Beth Hogan was present at the meeting to express USAID’s continued support for the coalition and the remarkable progress that they have already made reaching consensus on the technical interventions that are needed to address malnutrition in India.

Sharing the vision of the Coalition, Professor Swaminathan said, “*Today, India is faced with critical choices. We can continue on the present course, leaving half of our people undernourished, in poverty and suffering - risking the political and economic destabilization that may result from such a divide. Or we can take bold leadership steps, like what the Coalition is aiming at, to eliminate malnutrition and pave the way for an equitable society and sustainable economic growth.*”

## **USAID Pledges Additional \$2.5 Million for Flood Relief**

USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) recently returned from an on-the-ground assessment of the disaster assistance needs of flood victims in Bihar State. Due to the magnitude of the disaster and the more than 3.5 million people affected, USAID announced last week that it will contribute an additional \$2.5 million in assistance to supplement current recovery efforts. USAID initially provided \$100,000 for Bihar relief when the flood occurred last month. Funds have not yet been programmed but OFDA will be accepting proposals from NGOs for specific projects to aid flood victims.

## **USAID Supports Disaster Preparedness Training**

### ***Integrated Emergency Management Training in New Delhi...***

USAID Deputy Mission Director, Beth Hogan, was at the closing ceremony for an Integrated Emergency Management Course at the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) in New Delhi last week. The course was conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Emergency Management Institute (EMI) in Emmitsburg, Maryland. USAID’s support for this course is part of a broader partnership on disaster management, the Disaster Management Support (DMS) Project, an initiative designed to address the challenges of disaster mitigation and response that is bringing the best of U.S. expertise and experience to India. Participants found the training, which featured a table top exercise simulating an earthquake in East Delhi to be an excellent way to hone their disaster response skills and test their preparedness for response in the event of a real disaster.

### ***...and Advanced Search and Rescue Training in Florida***

At another training supported through the USAID Disaster Management Support (DMS) Project, in early September, 24 senior instructors of Collapsed Structure Search and Rescue (CSSR) from India’s National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) took part in a USAID funded Advanced Collapsed Structure Search and Rescue (ASAR) course at the Florida State Fire College in Ocala, Florida.

Following the training, the NDRF instructors are now better able to provide high standard emergency response, organize similar training programs for instructors and end-users in

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India, and adapt/modify the advanced equipment available in India to suit the emergency needs at the time of any disaster. The senior instructors received their original qualifications under a USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) funded Program for the Enhancement of Emergency Response, which has been providing CSSR skills training in the region for more than ten years.



Learning pneumatic lifting of heavy objects. Photo/FSFC

The DMS supports several other initiatives including better response through the adaptation of the Incident Command System, better early warning for floods and cyclones, earthquake safety, and support for community based disaster risk management.

## SARI Clean Coal Workshop a Success in Kolkata

USAID's South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy (SARI/Energy) Program recently held a workshop on Regional Clean Coal Partnership (RCCP) in Kolkata. Designed to encourage regional level collaboration on coal energy programs and strategies to ensure energy security in South Asia, the workshop brought together senior level coal sector professionals from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka as well as representative from the U.S. Department of Energy (USDoE), the U.S. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Coal India Ltd., The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd, Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited, and Calcutta Electricity Supply Corporation Limited (CESC), to share their experience on coal resource development and application. The workshop highlighted the fact that the region has adequate coal resources which will allow countries to increase their reliance on coal based power generation to meet some of the domestic demand for energy. This, in turn, will enhance national energy security by diversifying energy forms and supply sources and lowering the cost of energy supply .

The SARI/Energy program enhances energy security in South Asia through cross border energy trade promotion, energy markets formation, and the establishment of clean energy access partnerships and participants felt the workshop provided a particularly good opportunity for both formal and informal networking to facilitate regional answers to the clean coal energy challenge facing all of South Asia. Following the workshop, participants spent two days visiting coal mine, coal research institutions and coal power generation utility.