



# FRONTLINES



**“Mr. President... you have worked to widen the circle of prosperity and progress**

**in every corner of the world.... I look forward...to pursuing your hopeful and ambitious agenda.”**

CONDOLEEZZA RICE  
National Security Advisor  
Remarks upon nomination to be Secretary of State  
Nov. 16, 2004, at the White House

## Agency FY '05 Budget \$9b

Congress passed Nov. 20 the \$19.7 billion FY 2005 foreign operations appropriations bill (H.R. 4818), which includes about \$9 billion to be spent by USAID as foreign aid and operating expenses.

President Bush was expected to sign the bill which was part of an omnibus package of nine appropriations bills.

In a sign of the new prominence and acceptance foreign aid is getting on Capitol

▼ SEE AGENCY BUDGET ON PAGE 14

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## Branding Credits American People

USAID announced in November a branding campaign to ensure that the American taxpayer receives full credit for funding foreign assistance. This initiative is part of a larger effort to revitalize U.S. public diplomacy and to increase the visibility and value of U.S. aid.

A new landmark with the tagline “From the American People” will be required on all projects around the world funded by the Agency, except for those with security or political concerns such as Iraq.

The new branding makes it clear the assistance is not from a charity, contractor, or NGO, but funded by the U.S. government.

The branding campaign, directed by USAID Senior Advisor Joanne Giordano, also makes the familiar USAID logo, with the clasped hands and Agency title, more readable and easier to reproduce. The new branding appears for the first time above the *FrontLines* banner on this page.

USAID will use the branding on all its

internal and external communications, as well as marking programs, projects, activities, and public communications.

“We are building a global brand,” said Giordano, a communications expert. “To do that we need to create a consistent visual identity.”

“The U.S. government is not getting the credit it deserves for the billions it spends overseas. We are about to change that.”

Ordinary Americans not working in foreign affairs—and even many of those who get U.S. food and other aid overseas—have no idea the assistance comes from the U.S. government.

A proposed regulation that for the first time formally requires NGOs and other recipients of grants and cooperative agreements to mark all overseas assistance as coming from the American taxpayer will be published soon for public comment in the *Federal Register*. Interested parties will be notified and should follow the published instructions for making comments. ★

[www.usaid.gov/branding](http://www.usaid.gov/branding)

▼ SEE AGENCY MARKING ON PAGE 16

### BULGARIAN CULTURAL CRADLE RESTORED

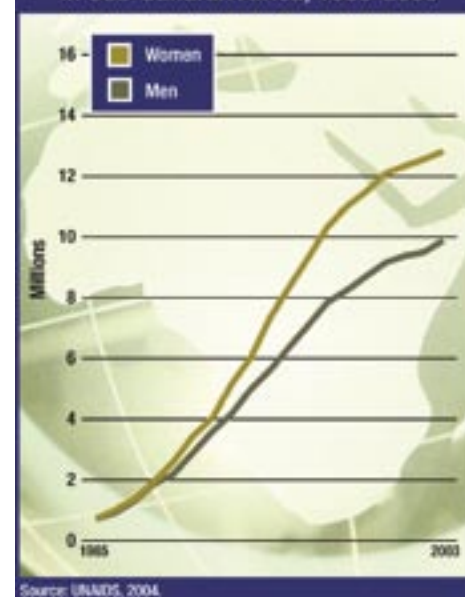


Christopher Frost, USAID

Rila Monastery, located an hour and a half drive from Bulgaria's capital Sofia, is an ancient cradle of this country's culture. The monastery was part of a decade-long \$10 million environmental and ecotourism program funded by USAID. Some 30,000 hectares of land surrounding Rila Monastery, as well as its sacred grounds, are now a nature park owned and managed by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. *FrontLines* Acting Deputy Managing Editor Kristina Stefanova was recently in Bulgaria, researching and writing a series of articles.

▼ SEE SPECIAL SECTION ON PAGES 4-5

Adults (15-49) Living with HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1985-2003



▼ SEE PAGES 3 AND 15

## \$780m to Fight Afghan Opium

A \$780 million U.S. effort to slow Afghanistan's expanding drug trade through eradication of opium poppies and helping farmers develop alternate crops and livelihoods was announced Nov. 17.

The antidrug plan comes as Afghan warlords, who often protect and profit from the drug trade, are in a state of decline, according to experts at a Washington meeting in November.

The success of the government of President Hamid Karzai in persuading warlords to disarm their militias and join the political process is closely linked with the fight against drugs, which also fuel crime and corruption.

The antidrug plan, five months in the

▼ SEE AFGHANISTAN ON PAGE 2

### ★ AWARDS CEREMONY ★

The 2004 Annual Awards Ceremony for USAID took place Nov. 1 in the Ronald Reagan Building, Washington, D.C. See pages 8-9 for a list of top award recipients and interviews with a few of those honored.

[www.usaid.gov/press/frontlines](http://www.usaid.gov/press/frontlines)

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**GENE BANKS ORGANIZED**

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# Haiti Digs Out from Hurricane Jeanne

**PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti**—To cope with flooding and other hurricane damage compounded by political unrest, Haiti signed an agreement November 16 for \$34 million in U.S. assistance, part of an overall \$100 million to help Caribbean countries recover from Hurricane Jeanne in September.

The new aid will help Gonaives, Port-de-Paix, Artibonite, and North-West departments with job creation, cleanup, and the repairs of schools, water systems, drainage canals, and roads. Similar work is badly needed in the countryside, as many farms and country roads were destroyed by the flooding and considerable livestock was lost.

The aid program also calls for environmental stabilization measures, although Haiti's deforestation is so widespread that only a small portion of the work necessary can be envisioned for the present.

Gonaives, third largest city in the country, was where Haiti's 1804 war of independence from France began and where the movement to oust President Jean-Bertrand Aristide began last year.

Hurricane flooding up to 10 feet deep swamped the center of the city, driving more than 100,000 people from their homes and from nearby villages. The city and its people lack tools and resources to dig out their streets and homes.

The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance spent more than \$11 million through NGOs such as CARE, World Vision,

and CRS to provide Gonaives with food, water, and other essentials.

But gang violence—much of it reportedly by pro-Aristide forces—hampered relief efforts. U.N. forces, still at only half the number envisioned months ago, have been unable to cope fully with the challenge.

CARE began a cash-for-work, cleanup program in Gonaives the second week of November. A few days later, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives helped the Ministry of Public Works ship shovels, pick-axes, wheelbarrows, boots, and facemasks to the city.

"There are still mountains and mountains of mud, but I have been very impressed" by cleanup efforts, said Jan Wessel of Food for Peace, who spoke to Frontlines from Gonaives November 18. She said relief workers are finally getting to the worst neighborhoods and seeing exactly what people need, but the lack of trained and equipped policemen remains Gonaives's biggest problem.

The lack of security in Port-au-Prince led USAID to reduce its mission to a skeleton crew at times in the past months and to close its doors occasionally due to violent eruptions in the city. At the same time, the mission budget nearly tripled to \$143 million following the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in late February. ★

*Rick Marshall contributed to this article.*



Jason Girard, USAID

*Haitians struggle with the thick layer of mud left behind by the torrential rains and storm surge of Hurricane Jeanne.*

## Speedy OTI Program Lists Aid Projects

**PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti**—When a USAID official recently was asked by the U.S. ambassador for a list of aid projects in the Cité Soleil slum, he provided the data in minutes, thanks to a rapid computer program developed by the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI).

"I mentioned to the embassy political officer that we had several things going in Cité Soleil, and he said that he and the ambassador just had a meeting with the mayor of Cité Soleil and wished they had a list," recalled Tom Stukel, OTI consultant and a former USAID mission director.

"I went back to my office and was able to email him the Cité Soleil report from the database a couple of minutes later. It is a lifesaver."

The idea for the database came to Stukel during a 1998 riot in Indonesia, then OTI's biggest program. Keeping track of grants, which would top 1,100 by 2001, was not easy.

The new system runs on Microsoft Access, which is already on all Agency computer desktops, and it can "monitor our activities at a very granular level—it allows us to report not only on a country but globally," OTI technical expert Dan Henry said.

Jason Aplon, also with OTI, said: "We use these reports all the time in the field to tell us how much money is going to specific

objectives. We literally have a hundred different ways to look at reports."

When asked how many programs OTI has in Bamiyan Province, Afghanistan, Aplon needed only a few seconds to respond that 13 grants worth \$676,000 are currently open and 23 worth \$603,980 have been completed.

"In terms of public outreach, it's great," said Rick Swanson, an OTI outreach and public affairs officer. "We upload information from the field on a weekly basis."

The key to the database is keeping it current and making sure that the quality of the data is properly reviewed and maintained. All OTI contractors are required to update the information on their projects on a regular basis—usually every week. The system indicates where the data are incomplete and will soon give latitude and longitude for each project.

"This is a fantastic example of a knowledge management tool—the kind of Agency-wide capability Knowledge for Development is helping to develop for the many business activities we use to run our Agency and accomplish our mission," said David Adams, head of the Office of Development Evaluation and Information. ★

*Rick Marshall contributed to this article.*

## \$780m to Fight Afghan Opium

▲ FROM PAGE 1

making and coordinated with the Afghans, British, and others, includes highlighting the dangers of drug use to growers and others; building the justice infrastructure to bolster enforcement; providing alternative livelihoods to encourage poppy growers to try new crops; increasing interdiction efforts; and eradicating poppy fields.

USAID's antinarcotics plan for alternate livelihoods was funded at \$10 million as a pilot program, but was expected to rise to \$130 million in the coming months.

Mark Ward, USAID's Deputy Administrator for Asia and the Near East, said Afghans would be offered development projects and aid packages.

"The power of warlords is collapsing—it is just a matter of time," said Olivier Roy, a French expert on Islam back from a visit to Afghanistan. At a Nov. 10 conference at the Woodrow Wilson International Center in Washington he said Afghans support their new central government amid a flourishing economic revival.

He and other experts warned eradication without helping create alternative livelihoods could drive farmers to seek protection from traffickers.

Since the warlords are respected because they defeated both the Soviets and the Taliban, Karzai's government decided not to fight them and initially appointed them as governors and leaders of their districts. But as the central government gained legitimacy through keeping the peace and successful October elections, Karzai has been replacing the warlords or shifting them to regions where they lack a local power base.

Polls by the International Republic Institute recently showed that most Afghans said warlords were their chief concern.

With the Soviet and Taliban threats gone,



Ben Barber, USAID

*Bustling commerce in Kabul has taken root in places that once saw nothing but warlord battles.*

there is little support for warlords said Roy.

In northern Afghanistan, Roy said that he saw hardly any men carrying weapons—a sign that public pressure has turned against the militias.

New York University Afghan expert Barnett Rubin, an advisor to the Bonn Conference that set up Afghanistan's post-Taliban government, called for "alternate livelihoods" programs—such as those planned by USAID—to defeat the drug trade.

These programs promote crops other than poppy as well as provision of credit, security, and market infrastructure.

"This means major state building, law enforcement, and development efforts," he said. ★



## First Person



**“I have gained a lot through this program. We have higher productivity and higher sales.”**

KIRE SOSEV,  
Manager of Dushan Ciric, a company that participated in a modernization program for fruit and vegetable producers in Macedonia.

Kristina Stefanova, USAID

**Dushan Ciric is one of 40 companies in a Land O'Lakes program backed by USAID to modernize the operating techniques and equipment of fruit and vegetable producers in Macedonia. The four-year program helps the industry comply with European export standards and establish Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point food security measures. More than a dozen Macedonian producers attended a food show in Moscow, where Sosev has been selling peaches and apricots through a Greek exporter. He has also sold to Latvia through a contract in Ukraine. Since he joined the program, Sosev's peach orchards increased from 100 to 150 hectares, and he has begun growing grapes. USAID/Macedonia invested \$1.1 million in the program, which aims to increase income and employment in the fruit and vegetable sectors by its end in October 2005.**

## Mission of the Month

### MONGOLIA

#### The Challenge

Mongolia is a country of 2.7 million people spread out over an area the size of Alaska. Over half of that population is concentrated in three cities. Population density is exceptionally low in the rest of the country, and distances between even small population centers are immense.

Mongolia is one of the coldest countries in the world and lacks transportation and communications infrastructure, presenting great obstacles to developing its economy and society.

#### Innovative USAID Response

USAID/Mongolia has been finding ways to overcome these hurdles of distance through new communication strategies such as court automation, web access to government legislative processes, and establishment of written, radio, television, and cell phone linkages to current business and market information.

#### Results

USAID/Mongolia has been able to help establish online services, mobile phone services, radio and TV shows, and a print publication to work with Mongolia's courts, rural entrepreneurs, and the public.

On the economic front, the mission worked with the prime minister's office to promote sound economic policy reforms and was able to upgrade and expand the government's website to list information on pending legislation, the legal process, and legal and parliamentary decisions.

Access to information is particularly difficult for isolated regions such as the Gobi. So the mission's Gobi Regional Economic Growth Initiative, carried out by MercyCorps and Pact International, started the Rural Business News (RBN), a publication that prints articles such as Herder Tips, Farmer Tips, Policy Watch, Market Research, expert opinions, and local "real-life" examples.

The project also developed an RBN radio program containing commodities price information and weekly episodes of the series "Herder from the Future." The show profiles a herder named Terbish, who comes back from the future to the year 2004 to teach herders how to run a modern herding business.

One of the most innovative Gobi communications strategies is the production and dissemination of daily commodity price information via mobile phone messages. Market information is also distributed by radio, where it focuses on raw material



L. Bayar, RBN

*An announcer at Gobi Wave radio in Umnogovi aimag (province) broadcasts programming for RBN radio.*

prices for cashmere, meat, and hides.

Before 2001, the public's access to information about the judicial system was also restricted by socialist-era rules. Court cases were handwritten, and often only one copy of a document existed. To get information, people had to track down the judge responsible for the case and ask him to look through his files.

USAID/Mongolia's Judicial Reform Program (JRP), implemented by the National Center for State Courts, changed this. The program provided hard copies of the basic laws to every judge. And by the summer of 2004, JRP had also installed 780 computers and 160 printers nationwide. Each of Mongolia's 61 courts is now automated and backed up by support equipment such as reporting software and copier machines.

Each court now also has a terminal where the public can access information about pending cases.

Another communications tool is the local award-winning television show called "Legal Hour." The USAID-funded series uses dramatizations to educate the public on their rights under the Mongolian Criminal Procedures Code.

Public opinion surveys indicate that Mongolians now regard their courts as significantly more open, and Mongolian President Bagabandi—on an official visit to the United States in 2004—described JRP as one of the most successful initiatives USAID has ever undertaken in Mongolia "because of the contributions it makes to human rights and freedom." ★

## Notes from Natsios

★★★★★★★★



The world focused on one of the great defining issues of our era—the global HIV/AIDS pandemic—at World AIDS Day December 1. The observance focused on women and girls, given that women now make up more than half of some 38 million people living with HIV/AIDS.

As the \$15 billion President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief continues to build momentum, the American people can be proud that the United States is an innovative leader in the fight against global AIDS. The U.S. government has made the fight against HIV/AIDS a top priority, not only for humanitarian reasons, but because the HIV/AIDS crisis threatens the prosperity, stability, and development of nations around the world.

In particular, women and girls bear the brunt of the impact of the epidemic. Women are especially likely to lose jobs, income, and schooling in order to fulfill family and community obligations. When a woman's health deteriorates or when she's burdened by having to care for other family and community members, basic community needs such as food security come under threat.

At USAID, we understand that a woman's ability to care for herself and her loved ones can be strengthened through access to economic opportunity. More than 800 million women are economically active worldwide—in agriculture, small business and microenterprise, and, increasingly, in the export processing industries that drive globalization. Yet women constitute some 60 percent of the world's rural poor. USAID is taking steps to give women the tools they need to open the door to more opportunity.

Specifically, a woman's inability to own property is a key factor in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In some places in Africa, for example, widows are often denied the right to inherit and access family property. Being dispossessed at the time of a husband's death is life-threatening, particularly when widows are HIV-positive too. Losing their property exacerbates the situation, as they may become homeless and face greater levels of poverty.

USAID funds a project of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights where advocacy efforts are under way to promote Kenyan women's rights to inheritance and family property. This past August, a diverse set of stakeholders met to develop a shared analysis of the situation. In the next few months, a second planning meeting will be held to translate strategy into action.

Americans can be proud that protecting women and girls is a priority of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. America is helping women and girls build lives free from the shadow of HIV/AIDS. ★





**KUSTENDIL, Bulgaria**—Standing in a line at the local *chitalishte*, or community center, women in mismatched clothes carry their children and clutch documents as they wait for help.

One woman might be waiting to have a personal doctor assigned, another to fill out city forms to register as unemployed, and another to apply for unemployment benefits. Some ask what to do about a damaged roof or ask for help with a funeral. Until recently, couples could legally divorce here.

This is a common scene in the *chitalishte* in the Roma (Gypsy) neighborhood, a shantytown that is home to one-fifth of Kustendil's population. Most people here are unemployed, and the majority cannot read or write, says Sasho Krastev, a Roma who heads the *chitalishte*, a traditional neighborhood reading house that recently evolved into a center for administrative services through a USAID project.

About 100–150 people a day come through the center, mostly seeking the services of Antoaneta Nikolova, the only other *chitalishte* employee. She fills out forms, checks



Kristina Stefanova, USAID

*Roma women wait in line at a chitalishte in Kustendil for help with filling out municipal forms. Some 100–150 people come by daily, asking for help with everything from filling out unemployment forms to finding out information about funeral homes or how to get divorced.*

regulations, and makes calls on behalf of people.

“These people can’t fill out basic forms,” says Krastev. “They don’t know that they have the right to a personal doctor, so we tell them. We even make appointments and send them to the doctor.”

The *chitalishte* has taken on such an active

role in serving the community that recently Kustendil’s police department asked Krastev to organize a massive check of cars and carts to ensure that they meet safety regulations. Municipal officials also seek Krastev’s advice on whether to extend social services to people with roof damage or other special needs.

Founded in 1964, this *chitalishte* once had thousands of books. But over the years the library was pilfered, and today all that is left are two bookshelves lined with old volumes. People now come to read newspapers whose subscriptions are paid for by USAID funds. The project also bought the *chitalishte* a phone line, a computer, a large television set, and a video to show films on Roma rights under new Bulgarian laws or on immunizations and other healthcare topics.

The *chitalishte* in Kustendil’s Roma neighborhood was one of 300 participants in a project that ran August 2001 to July 2004. Of \$2.5 million in funding from various partners, USAID invested \$1 million.

Each *chitalishte* got a year-long grant. The one in the Roma section of Kustendil, for instance, got \$8,000 to provide administrative services from August 2002 to July 2003. Due to the demand, the *chitalishte* continues to provide this service, but now relies on municipal funding.

*Chitalishtas* first appeared in the 1850s as “reading houses” and were Bulgaria’s first secular community centers. Their role

gradually evolved and they assumed additional responsibilities, such as education and charity.

After communism took hold of Bulgaria in 1944, *chitalishtas* became seen mainly as cultural houses, which is how they remain seen today.

Since the early 1990s, state subsidies for *chitalishtas*, which are registered as non-profit groups, have plummeted. The funds barely cover the costs of building maintenance, let alone two or three staff members.

Under the USAID-funded project, participating *chitalishtas* ran special projects that local leaders felt the community needed most. Many *chitalishtas* have tackled the challenge of working with disabled or orphaned children by offering after-school drawing or dancing classes and more specialized care.

*Chitalishtas* in some small villages have opened business centers, offering copying and printing services. Some *chitalishtas* run internet centers that offer training courses that range from basic computer skills to Cisco System certifications and other networking programs.

Traditional arts and crafts is the specialization of other *chitalishtas*, which offer classes in glass staining techniques, ethnography, weaving, knitting, or pottery making. A *chitalishte* in a grape-growing region specializes in viticulture and teaches people about winemaking.

*Chitalishtas* typically earn income by offering dance and music lessons for a small fee, organizing amateur dance and theater performances, and renting their auditoriums or larger rooms. Physically, a *chitalishte* can be a tiny room in a building, a few rooms, a house, or a large building.

As USAID/Bulgaria gears up to close in 2007, the mission staff reflects on completed programs and ponders the mark they have made on Bulgarian society. The *chitalishte* project often comes up as a model project.

“The existence of a strong, flourishing, and well-informed civil society has been a key objective of the mission for a number of years,” said Mission Director Debra McFarland. “The *chitalishte* project gives us an ideal opportunity to support various community-based initiatives aimed at promoting the involvement of ordinary citizens in public decisionmaking and improving their lives.” ★



Kristina Stefanova, USAID

*Ilenia 'Leni' Zlatkova, 3, spends 30 minutes a day with Rumiana Petrova, a teacher who specializes in working with deaf children.*

A two-story *chitalishte* in Sofia offers dance and music lessons to 500 children and rents its auditorium to a television company as a studio. The *chitalishte* participated in the USAID-funded project for deaf children between June 2003 and June 2004.

“We have created a nice environment for these little kids,” says Rumiana Petrova, a teacher who specializes in working with deaf children. “It’s the first time many of them are hearing a sound, and it’s important to work with them so that they learn to identify sounds.”

Ilenia ‘Leni’ Zlatkova, 3, spends 30 minutes a day on exercises with Petrova. Leni had surgery at the start of 2004 and can now hear for the first time.

Physicians said she required specialized care to learn how to hear and speak and pointed the parents to the Sofia *chitalishte* as the only place offering such care.

The family is from a city two hours away from Sofia, but for months Leni’s mother drove her to the *chitalishte* every day. In September, the family moved to Sofia, and they plan to stay until Leni can hear and speak.

“There simply aren’t many places in Bulgaria for people with disabilities or for specialized care like what we do here,” says Nina Antova, head of the *chitalishte*.

## Aid Helps Ancient Rila Monastery to Manage Lands

**RILA MONASTERY, Bulgaria**—This ancient monastery, a cradle of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, with its painted icons, carved doors, manuscripts, and church plates, is now a nature park and mostly owned by the church, which had lost control under the former communist regime.

USAID invested \$10 million over the past decade to help create a self-sufficient, protected park system in Bulgaria, and Rila

Monastery is a major accomplishment.

“Religious leaders, government ministries, the local municipality, businesses, and NGOs—literally every sector of the community—worked together for the management of the park,” said Mission Director Debra McFarland. “This collaboration reflects the very special place that Rila Monastery and the surrounding area have in the hearts of Bulgarians.”

Today, 30,000 hectares of mountains and meadows surrounding the monastery are protected from poachers and construction. The park also protects one of Bulgaria’s most significant watersheds, which supplies Sofia, the capital, with most of its water.

Early this year, USAID helped complete a management plan for Rila Monastery, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The previous year, the Sofia mission helped

complete a national ecotourism strategy.

Rila Monastery was founded in the 10th century by the Bulgarian monk St. John of Rila and was rebuilt 300 years later. When Bulgaria fell to the Ottoman Turks in the 15th century, the monastery was temporarily abandoned, plundered, and ravaged. A thorough renovation began in the early 19th century, adding residential wings and a church of the Holy Virgin. ★



## Reform Beefs Up Bulgarian Pensions

**SOFIA, Bulgaria**—When the collapse of communism left millions of Bulgarians with a failing pension system, USAID helped create two new retirement security systems: one of them allowed workers to contribute voluntarily to old age funds, and another required them to chip in to a separate fund.

Confidence in the new system has led to a major increase in contributions by Bulgarian workers.

“Only a combination of various elements could ensure a retirement standard that would be at least 80 percent of what the person received while working,” said Nikola Abadjiev, chairman of the Bulgarian Association of Supplementary Pension Security Companies.

Starting in 1998, the association worked with the country’s pension agency, the National Social Security Institute (NSSI) to reform the pension sector. USAID invested more than \$10 million in a seven-year reform project that ends next year.

Bulgaria’s old system was government administered, with pensions depending on the length and type of employment. After the collapse of communism, the government could no longer support the system.

Reforms to the traditional system increased the retirement age for both men and women and created the two additional private pillars to the pension system.

A 1999 law made it mandatory for people born after 1959 to contribute monthly into pillar two, which invests contributions into one of eight private pension insurance companies. A second law created pillar three, which is structured like pillar two but is voluntary.

Today, 2 million people make private contributions into the pension system, with half a million of them contributing to the voluntary scheme.

USAID help for the Bulgarian reforms was based on its experience with pension reforms in Latin America. As a result, Bulgaria has one of the most advanced pension systems in Europe, said Abadjiev.

When pillars two and three came into existence, USAID supported a massive public awareness campaign that included print, television, and radio advertisements; town hall meetings; and the creation of the

country’s first government call center.

In the 16 months of its operation, the center took 39,000 calls, making it one of the most massive educational efforts in Bulgaria last year.

The Bulgarian Public Relations Society awarded its annual PR prize to USAID’s project in April 2004 for its efforts to provide information such as employment programs, social assistance, and benefits for people with disabilities.

“The attitude of people was very skeptical, which is why we invested a lot in the public education campaign,” said Rayna Dimitrova of USAID/Bulgaria.

In Bulgaria, less than one worker supports one pensioner while, for a pension system to be effective, that ratio should be at least 4-to-1, said Hristina Mitreva, general director at NSSI.

Unemployment is a challenge. But an aging population (the average age in Bulgaria is 40.7 years, compared to 32.3 years in the rest of Europe), a historically low birthrate, and foreign immigration of working-age people have compounded the problem.

The persistence of a gray economy—where employers pay workers off the books to avoid transferring contributions like healthcare or pension benefits to the government—is also crippling the pension system.

That is the greatest challenge the new system faces, Mitreva said. NSSI is addressing this by increasing coordination between agencies to track the number of workers in the country and ensuring firms are paying their obligations. Employers are further pressured by a requirement to register all employment contracts and negotiated salaries.

USAID helped this effort by funding the design of a software information system that keeps track of all benefit contributions that employers pay to the government on behalf of their workers. It also supported the establishment of a pension regulator, which supervises the second and third pillars of the pension system.

The reforms do not alleviate the situation for people who are already retired. But for those retiring in the coming years, the three-pillar system will ensure higher pensions and a sustainable system, Abadjiev said. ★

## Loans Help Textile Firm Grow

**SOFIA, Bulgaria**—A small textile company started in 1999 with a microloan has grown into a business with a wide list of clients and three stores.

Rositsa Nikolova and Jasmina Tarpomanova, two of the owners of the textile manufacturing and trading company named RMD, have taken out seven loans totaling more than \$20,000 through Nachala Cooperative, an NGO backed by USAID that lends to small businesses.

The women used the funds to purchase new sewing and printing machinery and open new stores.

Through Nachala, which means “beginnings” in Bulgarian, borrowers can also receive loans at lower interest rates and faster than at a bank. Since it was started in 1997, the group has lent some \$20.3 million to nearly 10,000 small businesses. About half the loans are taken out by women.

“It seemed the best option for us because we were able to borrow a smaller amount than at the bank and we can pay it back more easily,” said Tarpomanova.

She took out her fifth and largest loan of about \$6,200 this summer and used the money to buy a pattern plotter, a machine that reprints shapes automatically. Before, the shapes had to be spraypainted by hand.

At the company, Rositsa Nikolova designs, sews, and sells pants, shirts, sportswear, and sleepwear. A fast-growing line is the production of corporate uniforms for Coca-Cola, Ford, and Volvo.



Kristina Stefanova, USAID

*In the sewing room at RMD, Rositsa Nikolova hums along, designing and sewing clothes.*

RMD operates in rented space in the outskirts of Sofia and employs 37 people. It also owns a growing number of specialized knitting, sewing, embroidering, and printing machines.

“We lend to the kinds of businesses that cannot get loans through the banks because they are too small and don’t have the kind of collateral required,” said Tzvetomira Beshkova, a Nachala loan officer.

USAID invested \$4 million in Nachala; today the group is self-sustaining. ★

## Students from Minsk Move to American University in Bulgaria

**BLAGOEVGRAD, Bulgaria**—Alexandra Stsefanovich, Dzianis Bykhankou, and Natallia Medleva never thought they would study in Bulgaria some day, let alone at the USAID-funded American University (AUBG) here.

But they were left with few options when President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus unexpectedly shut down the European Humanities University (EHU), a private liberal arts college in Minsk where the three would have started their junior year in September.

“They took the building away and the professors found out in the morning,” said Stsefanovich.

The Belarussian government asked university officials in July to vacate the premises in a few weeks. Shortly after, the government revoked EHU’s operating license, saying that the school did not have adequate facilities.

USAID’s Regional Mission in Ukraine, which has invested about half a million dollars in EHU since its inception in 1996, sought to help some 1,500 students who, at the last minute, were left without a school.

No mission responded as quickly as USAID/Bulgaria, which referred some of the students to AUBG, an institution in which the Agency will have invested more than \$60 million by 2006. The university



Kristina Stefanova, USAID

*Alexandra Stsefanovich and Dzianis Bykhankou at the AUBG library.*

offered scholarships to five students. Three of them accepted the offer and began classes this fall. ★

**USAID/Bulgaria**  
Budget FY’ 04: \$27 million  
Staff: 34

**Capital:** Sofia

**Population:** 7.5 million

**Size:** Slightly larger than Tennessee

**Population below national poverty line:** 13.4% (2002 est.)

**GDP per capita (purchasing power parity):** \$7,600 (2003 est.)

**GDP growth:** 4.3% (2003 est.)

**Literacy rate:** 98.6%

**Ethnic groups:** Bulgarian 83.9%, Turk 9.4%, Roma 4.7%, and others

**Religions:** Bulgarian Orthodox 82.6%, Muslim 12.2%, and others



## ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE

## Global Trust Fund Backs Seed Banks



Cutberto Garcia Ramos, USAID

Lab workers at a gene bank at one of the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research centers in Mexico, sorting through seeds and selecting high-protein corn kernels for preservation in cold storage units.

Eight years in the making, a global seed bank trust to conserve crop varieties from around the world became an independent international organization October 21, 2004.

To demonstrate its commitment and to encourage other countries to donate, USAID put \$5 million of “earnest money” into a World Bank account in the Global Crop Diversity Trust’s name last year.

Once fully endowed, the Trust will provide about \$12 million annually to seed banks around the world, ensuring a stable source of funding so that they can better store and catalogue seed and plant samples. To date, the Trust has raised about \$51 million for a hoped-for \$260 million endowment.

Preserving seeds of wild plants from which today’s modern crops originate is crucial to protecting the world agricultural heritage and richness, said Emmy Simmons, Assistant Administrator for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade.

“Today we have the capability of analyzing life at the level of the gene,” she said. “We need seeds characterized and stored under good conditions so that they will be available to future scientists.”

Seed banks, also called gene banks, help scientists track existing seeds and create new varieties.

While working at the West African Rice Development Authority (WARDA), scientist Monty Jones, for instance, combined African rice seeds with Asian rice to make a variety that tastes better and gives higher yields—“new rice for Africa”—which won him the 2004 World Food Prize.

The traditional African rice varieties that Jones used had been passed on mainly by women farmers, who liked their aroma and taste. The heads were so big and

fragile, though, that the plants would tip over before farmers could harvest the rice. Analyzing varieties stored and catalogued by International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) rice gene bank in the Philippines, Jones looked for characteristics that African rice lacked.

The new rice varieties have higher yields, less fragile heads, and compete better against weeds. And, unlike the hybrids of the past, this variety formed from two species produces seeds that can be replanted. So farmers need not purchase new seed each season.

IRRI and WARDA are part of the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) centers, which have a rich trove of seeds and plant material. The CGIAR’s gene banks, which have more than 666,000 plant or seed samples, will receive funds from the Trust. (See *FrontLines* June 2004, Mexico gene bank story).

“The CGIAR has the largest and most organized system in the world,” said Simmons, adding that within the CGIAR network of donors, “We’ve been strong advocates [for the Trust]. We funded initial activities and a feasibility study.”

To help set up the trust, EGAT also gave a grant to the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, which hosted the new organization until it became independent.

Agency staff also gave technical and policy advice. EGAT agricultural expert Rob Bertram served as USAID’s negotiator, alongside other U.S. government negotiators, helping to shape the treaty that paved the way for the new international organization. ★

## GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

## Local Firms Helped to Protect Environment

When the growing number of small industries in Mexico and other developing countries expand production, they often need help in meeting international or even local standards for environmental protection, which can be costly or beyond their technical capacities.

Many of these firms supply parts and materials to multinational corporations, which prefer to purchase from contractors that meet these standards.

In Mexico, for instance, U.S. assistance helped a company printing aluminum foil to find ways to treat wastewater from chemical processes and to increase air circulation in solvent-rich environments.

One company developed an internal process for treating wastewater and recovering metals from copper and chrome electrolytic baths; another found ways to reduce levels of enamel and varnish needed to coat the interior surface of aluminum containers.

In Mexico, the 100 largest multinational corporations—together with their first-, second-, and third-tier suppliers—account for more than 70 percent of all Mexican industrial production for export.

Through USAID support, American corporations are encouraging supplier firms in Brazil and Mexico to improve productivity, reduce waste, and meet local and international environmental standards in production.

The Greening the Supply Chain Initiative—a public-private alliance with USAID and the World Environmental Center that brings together companies like Johnson & Johnson, Alcoa Fujikura Ltd (a subsidiary of Alcoa), and Dow Chemical—is working with 13 suppliers in Brazil.

The project comes after completion of a pilot project with 25 small and medium supplier firms in Mexico.

Multinational corporations are required to

meet international standards and generally have the capacity to do so, but their suppliers in developing countries are neither bound by international standards nor have the ability to meet them if they were willing. But non-compliance means a firm is less competitive on the international market, which is why suppliers are now voluntarily “greening the supply chain.”

“This activity is unique in that supplier companies work largely on their own, and they don’t need arm-twisting to recognize what is in their own interests,” said Dr. Gilbert Jackson, environmental protection specialist with the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade. “They put in their own investments and their own resources.”

Suppliers are also participating because foreign investors and multinational companies increasingly deal only with local supplies that meet international standards.

Under cleaner production concepts, processes with excess time, material, and energy are identified and then altered to reduce environmental impact and overall production costs.

Training workshops introduce cleaner production concepts and techniques such as recycling, while follow-up visits bring additional support and technical assistance.

The program was first field tested by Johnson & Johnson.

USAID’s investment of \$150,000 was doubled by partner contributions.

Small and medium-sized firms “probably have greater environmental impact than major multinationals, but their production processes are largely unregulated,” said Mark Jackson, director of Alcoa’s Environmental Health and Safety unit. “This initiative is a solution that will demonstrate increasing results over time.” ★



Miguel Franco, PA Consulting Group

A fishmeal production company in Pisco, Peru, one of the many sites that have developed clean production audits. These audits are used as know-how for small and medium enterprises to use in the supply chain project. This picture shows part of the prime fishmeal process: rotary dryers, mill, and countercurrent dryer.



## DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

## Eye Surgeons Cure Nepalis' Cataracts



Michael Amendolia

Dr. Geoff Tabin examines a postoperative cataract patient who had been blind for many years prior to surgery. Moments after the eye patch is removed, the patient is able to count the number of fingers that Tabin holds up.

**KATHMANDU, Nepal**—Ten years ago, Dr. Geoff Tabin and Dr. Sanduk Ruit set out to eradicate treatable blindness in the Himalaya Mountains. They have introduced new technologies, performed surgeries, and trained doctors. Finally, they established Nepal's first outpatient cataract surgery facility, the Tilganga Eye Center, which is now expanding through USAID funding.

Nepal is now the first Asian country where more cases of cataract are cured through surgery each year than the number of new cases of the disease. This has helped tackle the nation's enormous backlog of 200,000 treatable cases.

"This is a tremendous achievement," Dr. Tabin was quoted as saying in the publication *EuroTimes*. "But it's not because Dr. Ruit and I go off into remote areas and do 50 operations each, but because we've always kept the emphasis on teaching—the training of new surgeons and the retraining" of surgeons.

In September 2003, the doctors' Himalayan Cataract Project was featured in an hour-long National Geographic documentary, *Miracle Doctors*. The film follows the doctors to the small village of Kagbeni—in the remote Mustang region of Nepal—as they perform cataract surgery and restore sight to scores of blind people.

A similar feature ran in *People* magazine.

By winter of 2003, the Himalayan Cataract Project opened two new surgery facilities in outlying regions: one in Hetauda, Nepal, and one in Kalimpong, Sikkim. Another is

in the works in Xining, China.

At that time, USAID awarded the doctors a grant through the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (PVC/ASHA) office, part of the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance.

ASHA helps schools, libraries, and medical centers overseas through exchanges with U.S. professionals, grants for building or renovation of facilities, and purchases of scientific, medical, and educational equipment.

The grant helped expand the Tilganga Eye Center, where demand outpaces physical capacity. The center is now adding an outpatient clinic, subspecialty clinics, and educational space for a new residency program. There are also plans for three additional floors to house an operating theatre, recovery beds, research space, and a microbiology lab.

There is now a complete set of American-standard ophthalmic specialists on the faculty at Tilganga. The Himalayan Cataract Project has supported fellowships for the specialists in the United States and Australia.

The ophthalmologists will now train a new generation of specialists. Tilganga's first three-year residency program in ophthalmology began this summer.

The project is self-sustaining, said Dr. Tabin.

"Lots of people we've taught are teaching others, and even some of their students are now teaching as well," he was quoted as saying. ★

## GLOBAL HEALTH

## Volunteers Spread Better Health Ideas, Techniques in Guinea

**BAGUI CENTER, Guinea**—This village is one the poorest and most remote in Upper Guinea, but local volunteer healthcare networks have been able to improve nutrition levels of mothers and children.

In 1999, Guinea ranked as the fifth worst country in the world—out of 193 countries studied—in terms of the mortality of children under age 5, according to a UNICEF report. But by last year Guinea had improved by 17 positions on the list to number 171, in part due to U.S. aid projects.

In the prefecture of Dinguiraye, for example, which includes Bagui Center, the network of healthcare volunteers helped cut malnutrition levels from 44 percent in 1996 to 17 percent this year.

Volunteers deliver vitamin A supplements to all mothers within a week of delivery and train local government officials, community leaders, clerics, and agricultural groups—all of whom then go back to their villages and talk about what they learned.

"I have learned a lot...over the past few years, and I have noticed a difference in people's health," said Mariam Diop, a village birthing attendant from Bagui Center.

"During the dry season, there were many cases of measles, and it killed many children in our community. Now we hardly have any cases, and when it appears it doesn't have a devastating effect because children are in better health."

Volunteers are teaching 50 women's groups about mango drying, other ways to process food, literacy, marketing, business, agricultural production, and vegetable gardening. Another 50 male-dominated groups get similar on-the-ground support.

Sixty percent of the women's groups are officially recognized by the Guinean government, and as such can use their status to solicit additional financial support from NGOs or other governmental organizations.

"The first advice I give to women is to breastfeed right from the beginning to make sure the baby gets colostrum, and to keep breastfeeding exclusively for the first six months," said Binta Gack, a community health volunteer who also talks to villagers about family planning.

In terms of overall health in Guinea, the numbers are still grim, but their change is a significant improvement, given the difficult living conditions, said Sandra Jordan, the Bureau for Global Health country coordinator for Guinea.

"Guinea's health statistics are among the worst in the world, with infant, child, and maternal mortality at very high levels," Jordan said. "The country has weak health systems, poor infrastructure, and the mission has had to cope with the health issues in post-conflict Sierra Leone and the Forest Region of Guinea, as well as with a burgeoning HIV/AIDS rate."

Conflicts in neighboring Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, and now Ivory Coast have spilled over into Guinea, which, over the past ten years, has hosted up to a million refugees from those countries.

USAID/Guinea is investing \$6.2 million this year in NGOs like Africare, Helen Keller, and PRISM in Guinea so that these groups can continue to support the volunteer healthcare networks. ★



Laura Lartigue, USAID

Nursing women in Bagui Center village gather for a presentation on the importance of vitamin A for mothers and young children.





Some of the USAID employees were recognized for a year of hard work at the 2004 Annual Awards Ceremony held November 1 in Washington, D.C.

#### ★ Global Development Alliance Excellence ★

The award for an outstanding example of the Global Development Alliance model, which brings together the complementary strengths of the public, private, and non-profit sectors for the benefit of the people of developing countries, recognizes an outstanding alliance that works to bring stability and development to the citizens of Angola.

**ChevronTexaco and Non-Profit Partners, Angola Alliance**

#### ★ Award for Heroism ★

For bravery, leadership, innovation, and endless hours of hard work under dangerous and unpredictable war-like conditions in Kuwait and Iraq while putting together the USAID/Iraq program and mission, one of the most successful and largest postwar reconstruction programs in the history of the United States.

**Earl Gast**, Deputy Mission Director, USAID/Iraq

**Lewis Lucke**, Mission Director, USAID/Iraq

#### ★ Administrator's Distinguished Career Service Award ★

This is the Agency's highest award. It recognizes exceptionally distinguished careers, and is only presented upon retirement.

**Donald W. Boyd Jr.**, Deputy Assistant Administrator, LAC

**Keith E. Brown**, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator, AFR

**Letitia K. Butler**, Director, Office of Policy Planning, PPC

**Bette R. Cook**, Congressional Liaison Officer, LPA

**Rose Marie Depp**, Director, Office for Human Resources

**Corbett Michael Flannery**, Director, Office of Security

**Robert M. Lester**, Assistant General Counsel

**Everett Mosley**, Inspector General

**Carole S. Palma**, USAID Chair, Industrial College of the Armed Forces

#### ★ Outstanding Career Achievement Award ★

The award recognizes outstanding service in the federal government. It is the second highest award presented upon retirement.

**Mary A. Ackourey**, Information Technology Senior Advisor, Office of Security

**E. Cecile Adams**, Regional Controller USAID/Budapest

**Gerald Christensen**, Physical Security Programs Team Leader, Office of Security

**Lawrence Garber**, Mission Director, USAID/West Bank and Gaza

**Peter F. Kranstover**, LAC

**Peter B. Lapera**, Supervisory Regional Development Officer, ANE

**Kenneth P. Luephang**, Contracting Officer, USAID/Nigeria

**Hugo Osorio**, General Services Specialist, USAID/Peru

#### ★ Distinguished Honor Award ★

For his outstanding contribution to improving the Office of Procurement's operations and his tireless efforts, professionalism, and leadership in meeting an unprecedented number of complex, highly visible requirements for Iraq, Afghanistan, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and Global Development Alliance.

**Timothy T. Beans**, Director, Office of Acquisition and Assistance, M

#### ★ Administrator's Implementation Award ★

In recognition of his extraordinary management, implementation, and monitoring of highly creative small business and agribusiness job-creation programs in South Africa.

**Joel Kolker**, Team Leader, AFR

#### ★ Michael K. White Memorial Award ★

In recognition of her contributions—through advocacy, dedication, and innovation—to the health and welfare of women and children in Egypt.

**Nahed G. Matta**, Program Management Specialist, ANE

#### ★ Science and Technology Award ★

In recognition of his extraordinary leadership in advancing key U.S. foreign policy interest in developing energy markets throughout the Europe and Eurasia region.

**Robert F. Ichord**, Supervisory Physical Scientist, E&E

#### ★ Administrator's Management Improvement Award ★

In recognition of his successful efforts to design, improve, and manage the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia's Data Resource Center and prepare it for Agency-wide replication.

**Andrew Kim**, Program Activity Database Manager, E&E

#### ★ C. Herbert Rees Memorial Award ★

For exceptional dedication and creativity in supporting the Presidential Initiatives and U.S. policy objectives in Indonesia and the Middle East.

**Theresa G. Tuano**, Natural Resources Officer, ANE

#### ★ George C. Marshall Award ★

For his dedication, leadership, and hard work, which have improved operations at missions and USAID headquarters.

**Gregory C. Gottlieb**, Deputy Director, DCHA

#### ★ Molly Kux Environmental Award ★

In recognition for her exceptional and outstanding contributions to environmentally sound development of the Red Sea Governorate, Egypt.

**Holly Ferrette**, Natural Resources Officer, ANE

#### ★ Award for Ethics ★

In recognition for her outstanding work in providing the new Iraqi government with the tools needed to create a strong, effective, and transparent government ethics program.

**Sharon E. Isralow**, Chief, Conflict Prevention, Democracy, and Governance Division, AFR

#### ★ Outstanding Support Staff Award ★

In recognition of her invaluable work in support of USAID/Afghanistan and for training foreign service national support staff under dangerous conditions.

**Barbara K. Smither**, Secretary, USAID/Cairo

#### ★ The Global Development Alliance Leaders Award ★

For pioneering USAID's first efforts to build public-private alliances into mainstream solicitations documents, resulting in more than \$75 million of additional funding for USAID/Mali programs.

**Marcus A. Johnson**, Contracting Officer, USAID/Mali, AFR

#### ★ Foreign Service Nationals of the Year ★

**Henry R. Alexis**, Motor Pool Supervisor, USAID/Haiti

**Elena Gurvich**, Project Management Specialist, USAID/Russia

**Lidija Hajko**, Executive Officer Assistant, USAID/Croatia

**Hailu Kebede**, Supply Supervisor, USAID/Ethiopia

**Anil Liyanage**, Computer Systems Manager, USAID/Sri Lanka

**Victor Mangidula**, Senior Program Specialist, USAID/Democratic Republic of Congo

**Rosa Maura Mayorga**, Director, Earthquake Reconstruction Office, USAID/El Salvador

**Bernadette P. Ricardo**, Administrative Assistance, USAID/Philippines

#### ★ Certificate of Appreciation ★

In recognition of her outstanding legal advice and review of program documentation.

**Karen J. Doswell**, Private Enterprise Officer, Office of the General Counsel

#### ★ Administrator's Management Assessment Team ★

For their precedent-setting efforts in improving LAC Bureau and regional missions' internal operations and management and serving as a model implementor of the Administrator's management reform principles.

**LAC Mission Management Assessment Team**, LAC

#### ★ Distinguished Unit Award ★

For outstanding teamwork and cooperation between the Office of the Inspector General and USAID in completing the 2003 Government Management Reform Act Audit on an accelerated schedule.

**Government Management Reform Act Team**, Office of Audit, OIG



### ★ **OIG Achievement Award** ★

For outstanding initiative, commitment, and leadership in promoting integrity in USAID programs by clarifying and strengthening the role of the Cognizant Technical Officers who administer multi-million dollar contracts in furtherance of the implementation of USAID programs in Ukraine.

**Karen Hillard, Joakim Parker, Donella Russell**, Cognizant Technical Officers, USAID/Ukraine

### ★ **Minority Service Institutions Extra Mile Award** ★

In recognition of the cross-office Afro-Colombian Working Group for enabling a successful Howard University/University of Choco linkage that will strengthen efforts to support and assist long-neglected Afro-Colombians in the region.

**Cristina Barrera, Thomas E. Johnson, Andrew Krefft**, USAID/Colombia

### ★ **Group Certificate of Certification** ★

For the outstanding support provided during the visit of the USAID Deputy Administrator and Special Assistant in Bangladesh.

**Deputy Administrator Bangladesh Team**, USAID/Bangladesh

For outstanding commitment in carrying out U.S. government policy by assisting the people of Afghanistan to reconstruct Phase I of the Kabul-Kandahar Highway

**Kabul to Kandahar Highway Team**, LPA

For outstanding development analysis and policy leadership in articulating a new vision for aid effectiveness and policy coherence in the White Paper on Strategic Reform.

**Strategic Reform Policy Team (White Paper)**, PPC

**39 Superior Honor Awards** given to employees throughout the Agency in recognition of significant acts and services materially affect the successful accomplishments of USAID projects.

**201 Meritorious Honor Awards** given to employees for outstanding service. Workers get these awards based on recommendation from assistant administrators, directors of independent offices, or mission directors.

**52 Superior Unit Citations and Meritorious Unit Citations** recognize missions, offices, teams, and programs for performing their duties in a manner far and beyond what is expected.

## Red Sea Protection Recognized

Natural Resources Officer Holly Ferrette took on environmental protection of the Red Sea as a challenge four years ago, and this year received the Molly Kux Environmental Award for her work.

The Red Sea, with its cold, blue waters edged by dun-colored deserts, is a popular tourist destination. But its coral reefs are being damaged by unsound environmental policies.

“The biggest threat is tourism,” said Ferrette. But tourism “also presents the biggest opportunity for sustainable economic growth in the region,” she added.

Ferrette persuaded Egyptian ministers to declare a large portion of the southern Red Sea coast an ecotourism development zone, to engage local Bedouin communities, and to charge a small fee at Egypt’s park system.

The ministers feared that tourism would be hurt if there was a fee. But Ferrette eased their fears by citing economic studies to show that the environment can improve while embracing tourism.

Ferrette also produced a plan to attract fewer tourists, but ones who typically spend more while on vacation. Egypt is inundated with tourists, but they tend to be from less



Holly Ferrette

wealthy nations and spend little, barely contributing to the local economy.

Though her work in Egypt has been satisfying, Ferrette said her most memorable moments are of her daughter.

“My daughter was born just months before we moved to Cairo, so Egypt’s monuments and deserts will always bring to mind memories of the various development milestones for my daughter—toddling around pyramids, changing diapers on desert camping trips, and splashing in the Red Sea.”

Ferrette soon will leave Egypt to direct USAID environmental programs in Bolivia.★

## Komich’s Work in Mali Lauded

Carla Komich was with the Bureau for Africa two years ago when she inherited by default a position managing the Africa Anticorruption Initiative. Now she has received one of the Agency’s Meritorious Honor Awards in 2004 for that work.

“When I moved into that division, I was managing the initiative on an interim basis while we were looking for an anticorruption specialist,” she said.

Eventually, Komich said, “I was deemed the anticorruption specialist, even though I didn’t have the background. So I had to do a lot of learning and very quickly.”

Working with DCHA/DG and missions in Africa on various programs successes and lessons helped Komich gain familiarity with anticorruption work and manage the bureau’s Anticorruption Initiative.

Komich, who has been with USAID since 2001, also received the award in recognition for co-authoring an assessment of northern Mali, which brought together representatives from the Agency and the departments of State and Defense.

“It was a fantastic opportunity to work with other agencies and think strategically about how each of our skill sets and pro-



Carla Komich

grams could be coordinated in an effort to promote peace, stability, and democracy,” she said.

The assessment, a two-week trip to Northern Mali, allowed Komich to work alongside the USAID mission director and U.S. ambassador, both of whom are women.

“I was really impressed and thankful to have the opportunity to work with these very successful women who are working in northern Mali, which is a conservative Muslim area, and seeing them navigate through and succeed in the culture.”★

## El Salvador FSN Honored

Foreign Service National (FSN) Rosa Maura Mayorga was named one of USAID’s eight FSNs of the year after working for three and a half years as head of a \$135 million reconstruction program to repair damage caused by a powerful earthquake in El Salvador.

“It was a lot of money over a very short period of time,” she said.

The program, which ends this year, has built 26,000 new homes for people left without shelter by the earthquake.

“The team that Rosa heads is really fantastic,” said Mark Carrato, desk officer for El Salvador. “They found lots of creative solutions to the various challenges they faced.”

A major obstacle to reconstruction was that people often did not have land titles to the sites where their homes had been. So Mayorga’s program—before engaging in any physical work—worked with the El Salvadoran government on securing land



Rosa Maura Mayorga

titles for thousands of families.

Mayorga has worked on disaster and emergency programs at USAID/El Salvador for 16 years, including reconstruction after another earthquake in 1986, after the country’s civil war, and the clean-up after 1998’s destructive hurricane Mitch. But the 2001 earthquake reconstruction program was “my biggest challenge,” she said.★

## GDA Angola Alliance a Model

A public-private partnership in Angola, spearheaded by USAID and oil giant ChevronTexaco, won this year’s Global Development Alliance Excellence Award. For two years, the alliance has been rebuilding agricultural production and rehabilitating roads so that farmers could more easily access markets.

The program distributed food, seeds, tools, and technical help to nearly 800,000 farmers—about 7 percent of the country’s population—in the Planalto region, where thousands of displaced people have lived since a ravaging civil war ended in early 2002.

Farmers got help developing business plans and access to tools, fertilizers, and trade networks. The program’s biggest accomplishment of 2004 was the opening of Angola’s first microcredit bank, which makes loans valued from \$100 to \$15,000.



G.L. Kirkland

ChevronTexaco and USAID each invested \$25 million in the program.

“It’s the first time we’ve ever reached so far away from our operating area,” said G.L. Kirkland, president of ChevronTexaco Overseas Petroleum. “Between ChevronTexaco, USAID, and all the NGOs, the impact is just incredible.”★



## AFRICA

# Goats Up Income for Tanzanians with AIDS

**ARUSHA, Tanzania**—In the last days of her life, Salome Kombe did not have to worry about providing food for her three grandchildren because she had a goat—this meant fresh milk every day, and income earned from the sale of young goats.

At 50, Kombe, who was HIV-positive, was unemployed and lived in a one-room house. Her neighbors helped as best as they could, but she was not able to make ends meet until she participated in a USAID-funded livestock training course. At graduation, she was given a goat.

The program trained some 500 HIV-positive people in the region to care for goats and then distributed among participants some 146 goats and 417 bucks and does.

The program was carried out by Heifer International, a Tanzanian civil society organization that, like many others, is working to scale up their responses to HIV/AIDS.

Nine percent of Tanzania's 34.4 million people are HIV-positive. Some 160,000 people died of AIDS in 2003, while another 1.6 million were living with the disease, according to the Tanzania Census.

The needs are dire, yet often receiving funds for projects is a slow process.

To overcome these barriers, two years ago USAID and other donors set up the Rapid Funding Envelope (RFE), a grant mechanism enabling civil society to implement

urgent HIV/AIDS projects. Heifer is one of 23 organizations that have received more than \$3.5 million for emergency HIV/AIDS projects lasting 6 to 12 months.

One organization got a grant to create a community theater program working with at-risk youth. Another opened voluntary counseling and testing sites, provided laboratory equipment to increase preparedness for treatment, and offered vocational training for orphan heads of households.

What distinguishes the RFE from other funding mechanisms is its donor pooling: it works with USAID, the Tanzanian AIDS Commission, the U.S. NGO Management Sciences for Health, and a local branch of the consulting firm Deloitte & Touche. The RFE is supported by eight donors.

Also, information and application forms for RFE are posted on the internet, and all reports and correspondence are done online, simplifying the process. With other funding mechanisms, the process can take up to three months.

"Donor funds are usually not rapid. By the time donor funds arrive, the situation may have changed and the needs may be different," said Mary Ash, executive director of PASADA, an NGO that received a grant through RFE. "The RFE was much more rapid."

AIDS funding has spiked in Tanzania since the country began receiving funds



Salome Kombe with her goat.

USAID/Tanzania

from President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Last year, total funding for HIV/AIDS was \$49 million, of which more than \$27 million was programmed by USAID. Funding this year is expected to be significantly higher.

Previously, \$12 million a year had gone to Agency HIV/AIDS programs in the country.★

*Kombe died of AIDS-related complications since the writing of this article.*

## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

# Support to Firms Yields Jobs in Paraguay

**CIUDAD DEL ESTE, Paraguay**—The wood molding company Xtreme built a new plant, increased production and exports, and hired

50 workers in the past six months after it joined a U.S.-funded economic growth project.

USAID is investing \$3.95 million over three years in the project, Paraguay Vende, to open three service centers that help firms become more competitive and enter new markets by adapting their products and services to the requirements of those markets. It also helps with tasks like writing business plans.

The 30 participating firms are involved with sesame seeds, tea, recycled monitors, fiber glass products and ecotourism. In its first year of operation, Paraguay Vende helped some of these firms grow their sales and exports by as much as \$850,000.

Xtreme, for example, now has new clients in the United States and gets help from Paraguay Vende in new purchase management.

As it grew, the company enlarged its staff. At nearly 40, Eleuterio Ferreira is a typical new hire and, in many ways, represents the type of person that USAID aims to empower and increase income for through the project.

"Finding this job has meant so much to me," said Ferreira in Guaraní, Paraguay's native language. "It gave me a job security that takes care of me and my family and makes me feel secure and more confident."

Ferreira spent two years looking for work—all along trying to provide for a wife and four children. Now he works fulltime and has healthcare and access to a pension fund. He can send his children to school and afford medicine and school uniforms.

"I'm really grateful [to have] a favorable prospect for the future after such a long time of uncertainty," Ferreira said.

Paraguay Vende is the central building block of USAID/Paraguay's economic growth program, said Alex Uriarte, USAID's manager for the project. He added that the aim of the project is to create legal jobs. For instance, many people in Ciudad del Este, site of one of the centers, were unemployed and involved in illegal commerce selling perfumes and other products.

"Facilitating access to the intangible assets of information and trust helps individual firms increase their sales and generate employment," said Uriarte. "With strengthened capacity to compete, we expect the private sector to lead the way to market oriented policy reform."

Paraguay Vende is set to end in September 2006. The mission is now considering expanding the project. ★



Francisco Latourrette, USAID

*A worker at Xtreme aligns a wood mold so that it is straight. The company has built a new plant, increased production, and hired 50 workers since it joined a U.S.-funded economic growth project.*



## ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

# Solar Lights Help Bangladeshis to Work

**DHALAPARA VILLAGE, Bangladesh**—Two hours after the sun has set, Chunnu Mia's two children are still doing their homework at the kitchen table with the help of an electric light—unusual in rural Bangladesh, where only 30 percent of people have electricity.

Mia's small agricultural machinery parts shop is one of 31,000 small to medium-sized rural businesses throughout Bangladesh that, since 1996, have received loans to buy solar power systems through the local NGO Grameen Shakti.

In Mia's case, electricity has visibly helped: his business is open later in the evening, increasing sales. Meanwhile, his children can do homework at night, and food stays fresh in the refrigerator.

He bought his solar system in 1998. It powered two lamps, one of which he rents to a neighboring tailor. Two years later, Mia bought a second system to light his home.

Grameen Shakti gives entrepreneurs loans for 75 or 85 percent of the power system's cost, which ranges from \$250 to \$500. Grameen, which is in part funded by USAID, encourages people to use electricity to generate more income by lighting shops, bazaars, restaurants, clinics, farms, rice-mills, sawmills, and schools.

For years, USAID has worked to bring

electricity to rural Bangladesh by expanding the country's power grid. But cost and distance limit the extension of the power grid to remote or isolated areas.

The Agency invested the equivalent of \$4 million in local currency in the Grameen Shakti project, which provides solar systems of various sizes that can be customized according to energy demand.

Aside from selling and helping install solar power systems, Grameen Shakti is researching the use of wind energy in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. It installed four hybrid power stations—which combine wind turbine with a diesel generator—in four cyclone shelters run by Grameen Bank, the pioneering microcredit institution that has loaned \$4 billion in South Asia since 1976. Grameen Shakti is part of the larger Grameen Bank project.

Grameen Shakti is also looking at marketing alternative power sources and making solar accessories such as lamps and converters.

"Renewable energy offers those in remote areas the opportunity to cash in on the benefits of having a reliable cost effective energy source," said USAID/Bangladesh Mission Director Gene George. "It is rewarding to be a part of an effort that supplies energy needs from environmentally friendly sources." ★



Grameen Shakti

*A Bangladeshi woman sews in the evening by a solar-powered lighting system to earn extra money.*

## EUROPE AND EURASIA

# Macedonia Trains First Insurance Actuaries

**SKOPJE, Macedonia**—Actuaries—statisticians who compute insurance risks and premiums—practice one of the newest professions in Macedonia, which is taking root thanks to U.S.-backed training programs.

There are only three certified actuaries in Macedonia today, but the demand for their specialization is poised to grow because the first private pension systems are expected to

be put in place in the coming year and they will require certified actuaries.

As foreign companies open local branches and new companies spring up, the demand for private automobile, life, and health insurance grows.

Most of the new actuaries are women, such as Biljana Petroska and Jazminka Durovich.

"Women were the majority of my graduating class of mathematics," said Durovich, one of two actuaries at QBE, Macedonia's largest insurance company. "Most of the actuarial students were women."

"Without [actuaries], the insurance sector and, by extension, certain investment operations would not be able to move forward," said Steve Gonyea, a USAID economic growth officer.

Training private insurance personnel to help this country of 2.2 million people to adopt the standards of a modern European economy is one task of U.S. aid programs.

Certification requires passing 16 rigorous examinations, and each training session lasts a week. The lecturer begins a topic with a formula, discusses it with the students, and then has them raise examples or problems in the application of the formula.

Petroska, an electrical engineer who has now worked as an actuary for nine years, said the training was helpful and much needed.

"The applied mathematics department of the university teaches only one actuarial course," she said. "The new insurance company law requires actuaries to sign their financial statements, but the companies are not really familiar with actuaries yet."

Petroska was recently promoted to manager of the research sector in the Agency for Supervision of Fully Funded Pension Insurance. She was the second person to

meet the requirements as a certified actuary after completing the USAID-funded training course.

Durovich will be the fourth Macedonian to be certified by the Ministry of Finance once she has completed three years of work in the field.

"The training made great parallels between the practical work and theoretical," she said. "It opened my eyes about what to look for and where ... the training for non-life insurance was most useful because I'm the actuary for motor vehicle insurance."

She found the life insurance training to be the most difficult.

The first 15 students in the actuarial training were representatives of the insurance industry and government regulatory agencies. The course proved difficult for those lacking adequate mathematical preparation, so in the end only nine students graduated.

Actuaries in Macedonia, which has an unemployment rate of about 30 percent, are employed by the government public pension system, the Agency for Pension Insurance Supervision, the Ministry of Finance, and insurance companies.

The USAID training was carried out by Financial Services Volunteer Corps and with support by World Learning. ★



Lynn Abbott, USAID

*Jazminka Durovich receiving her actuarial training certificate, August 26, 2004.*

*Lynn Abbott contributed to this article.*



## October 3, 2004–October 30, 2004

## PROMOTED

**Freddy A. Blunt Jr.**  
**Paul L. Freedman**  
**Phyllis A. Johnson Miller**  
**Frederick G. Jones**  
**Todd K. Lofgren**  
**Yoma A. Moody Briscoe**  
**Melody Owen Woolford**  
**Marianne Perciaccante**  
**Deborah A. Price**  
**Vann D. Rolfson**  
**Gwendolyn Ruffin**  
**Gwendolyn Denine Savoy**  
**Kathryn D. Stratos**  
**Kathleen J. Wu**

## MOVED ON

**Kala K. Bokelman**  
**Sharon C. Cooke**  
**Christopher Johnson**  
**Linda A. Leonard**  
**Sandra Phoenix**  
**Arnisher M. Savoy**

## RETIRED

**Abdel M. Moustafa**

## REASSIGNED

**Bruce N. Abrams**  
 Colombia to Egypt/HDD  
**Timothy Thomas Beans**  
 M/OAA/OD to USAID RDM/ASIA  
**Samuel Carter**  
 COMP/NE/OJT to DOM REP/EXO

## REASSIGNED

**Holly Ferrette**  
 Egypt/EI/EE to COMP/LT TRNG  
**Natalie J. Freeman**  
 GC/CCM to Nigeria  
**Donnie E. Harrington**  
 DOM REP/GDO to FRY  
**Robert G. Hellyer**  
 Angola to DROC  
**Vicki R. Johnson**  
 COMP/NE/OJT to Jamaica-CAR/OEG  
**Timothy Lavelle**  
 AA/AFR to AFR/DP  
**Joseph P. Lessard**  
 COMP/NE/OJT to Nigeria  
**Darren A. Manning**  
 COMP/NE/OJT to El Salv/EXO

**Pamela J. Morris**  
 Egypt/PROC to REDSO/ESA/CON  
**Paul F. Mulligan**  
 Russia/BDI to ANE/TS  
**Maria Rendon Labadan**  
 Bulgaria to COMP/LWOP  
**Glenn R. Rogers**  
 Egypt/EG/SP to EGAT/PAICO/PAMS  
**Sheila R. Roquette**  
 COMP/NE/OJT to RS/AFRICA/PPD  
**Diana L. Swain**  
 Namibia to Angola  
**Tracy C. Thoman**  
 Armenia/P to COMP/LWOP  
**John M. Tincoff, Jr.**  
 COMP/FS/Reassign to Pakistan/EXO  
**Michael F. Walsh**  
 DCHA/FFP to M/OAA/OD

## IN MEMORIAM

**Alton George Adams**, 86, died September 17, 2004, in St. Petersburg, Fla. He served with the Navy in the 1940s. He then attended college, earning a degree in government and foreign affairs at George Washington University in 1951 and moving on to complete specialized training in African affairs at Oxford University. Adams served in the foreign service through the Department of State and USAID in 1957, living in Ethiopia, Paraguay, Sudan, Liberia, Somalia, Ecuador, Sierra Leone, and Kenya. He also traveled extensively in Europe. After retiring in 1973 as an executive officer, Adams worked as an international contractor and negotiator with USAID in Africa, Panama, and the Philippines from 1984 to 1989.

**Robert Span Browne**, 79, died August 5, 2004, in West Haverstraw, N.Y. Browne, an economist, was steeped in the radical politics of the 1960s. He later founded three black self-help organizations and became an expert on African economic development. He was a foreign service officer with USAID stationed in Cambodia and Vietnam in the 1950s and 1960s. After semiretirement in 1993, Browne became a consultant for Washington-based organizations such as Africare, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Institute for Policy Studies.

**Millard L. Gallop**, 90, died June 23, 2004, in Arlington, Va. Gallop joined the State Department in 1946 after working at the War Production Board. He served as an economist in Thailand in the late 1950s and as a commercial officer in Japan in the early 1960s. Gallop also

served as deputy regional coordinator for the Near East and South Asia at USAID. He retired from the Agency in 1973.

**Roy Gordon Haftorson Jr.**, 66, died August 11, 2004, in Hillsboro, Ore. He worked for the East Bay Municipal Urban Development Authority before joining USAID. During his more than 20 years as a civil engineer with the Agency, he lived and worked in Vietnam, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Chad, Mali, and Pakistan. Haftorson also undertook shorter assignments in several other Asian and African countries and Washington, D.C. His work involved supervising and monitoring the construction of roads, schools, irrigation systems, helping to select contractors, and designing development projects.

**William J. Mazzocco**, 89, died August 4, 2004, in Lake Oswego, Ore. Mazzocco's 35-year government career spanned four continents and more than a dozen federal agencies, including USAID. He began his government career at the U.S. Tariff Commission in the 1940s. Mazzocco served as a Navy intelligence officer during World War II, and was a senior staff officer on the Marshall Plan. In 1957 he was named deputy mission director to USAID/Brazil, where he stayed for two years. Then he served in the same position for the same amount of time with USAID/Ivory Coast. From 1965 to 1971, Mazzocco was based in Washington, D.C., with frequent travel to South Vietnam as director of commodity control and surveillance of USAID programs in that country. In 1970, he also served as a professor at the Army War College. He was an instructor at the U.S. Police Academy in Washington from 1964 to 1972. He was an economic adviser to the U.S. Information Agency from 1972 to 1974, and lived in Washington from 1963 until his retirement in 1996, when he moved to Oregon.

**Ralph Kirk Eyster**, 97, died Sept. 27, 2004, in Washington, D.C. He was born in Haddonfield, N.J., and received a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Pennsylvania in 1929. For many years a financial analyst with the Securities and Exchange Commission, from 1951 to 1961, he was with the predecessor agency to USAID. He administered a technical assistance study group in Washington responsible for determining best techniques and also served as the Agency's executive officer in Tunisia, Laos, Indonesia, and Burma.

## Public Affairs Staff Trained

**ANTIGUA, Guatemala**—More than 35 USAID public information specialists and program officers—as well as public affairs staff from area embassies—attended the first two conferences that kicked off the Agency's new Global Training Initiative for Development Outreach and Communications.

The first conference was held in Antigua, Guatemala, in September. A second took place six weeks later, in Pretoria, South Africa. Similar conferences will follow in Cairo, Dakar, Budapest, and Bangkok.

During the three-day conferences, participants developed draft communications strategies and discussed ways to improve outreach to local audiences. They also discussed ways to work more closely with public affairs sections at U.S. embassies and met with local and international journalists

to discuss the perceptions of USAID around the world.

"Around the globe, public diplomacy efforts are critical to our ability to broaden the world's understanding of America's history and values," Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said in a cable sent out to public affairs staff at all U.S. embassies and consulates Nov. 8. "I applaud the work that each and every one of you performs daily, often in challenging environments."

"I am hopeful that, through this initiative and others, we can be even more prepared and adept at successfully communicating U.S. ideals and objectives," he added.

The trainings, carried out by the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), aim to improve USAID's ability to communicate the U.S. role in delivering humanitarian and

development assistance. They are part of an overall Agency effort to improve public affairs and public diplomacy, as required in the joint USAID/State Strategic Plan for 2004–2009.

"This effort is critical to changing the perception of the United States around the world in the countries in which we partner," said Administrator Natsios. "I believe USAID is the best development agency in the world, but it is a quietly kept secret in many countries."

LPA has also developed a survival manual for outreach and communications—a how-to guide on a variety of subjects, including the Telling Our Story database, website development, and media relations. ★  
<http://inside.usaid.gov/LPA>



## ANE's Gender Adviser Wins State Award

Dr. Vijitha Eyango, gender advisor with the Bureau for Asia and the Near East (ANE), received November 8 the prestigious Swanee Hunt Award for Advancing Women's Role in Policy Formulation for her work to politically and economically empower women in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"The State Department has a strong team in their international office for women's issues, and we share a number of mutual goals," said Eyango. "This award really reflects the spirit of cooperation between State and USAID on gender issues."

Since 2001 Eyango, a native Sri Lankan, has worked on integrating gender into education and economic growth programs and on a policy framework encouraging Afghan

and Iraqi women and facilitating their participation in politics. She was recognized in particular for her collaboration with the State Department.

Previously, Eyango taught at the graduate school of education at the University of California, Los Angeles and chaired its Institute of the Study of Gender in Africa.

"It is a great honor for a USAID employee to win this award and well-deserved recognition of Dr. Eyango's outstanding work in the gender field," said James Kunder, Assistant Administrator for ANE.

Eyango is now working on USAID's Broader Middle East and North Africa Literacy Initiative, which is targeted at women. ★



Dr. Vijitha Eyango, with ANE Deputy Administrator Mark Ward on her left and her husband, Pierre Eyango, on her right.

## Agency Motivates Disabled Youth, Promotes Jobs

Former Miss America Heather Whitestone McCallum, the only woman with a disability to be crowned Miss America, presented the keynote address to USAID/Washington employees at an October 13 event to commemorate National Disability Employment Awareness Month at the Ronald Reagan Building.

McCallum said that negative thinking is the biggest handicap, and that people handicap themselves by concentrating on the negative rather than the positive. She focused on her own personal story and aimed to motivate others to achieve their dreams through dedication, commitment, and hard work.

The program was sponsored jointly by the USAID's Office of Equal Opportunity Programs, the Department of Commerce, the Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

In another USAID event October 20, Disability Mentoring Day, students and younger people with disabilities spent time shadowing USAID personnel to see what working for the Agency is like. It was

sponsored by the American Association of People with Disabilities and the U.S. Department of Labor to gain insight into career options and promote employment of students with disabilities.

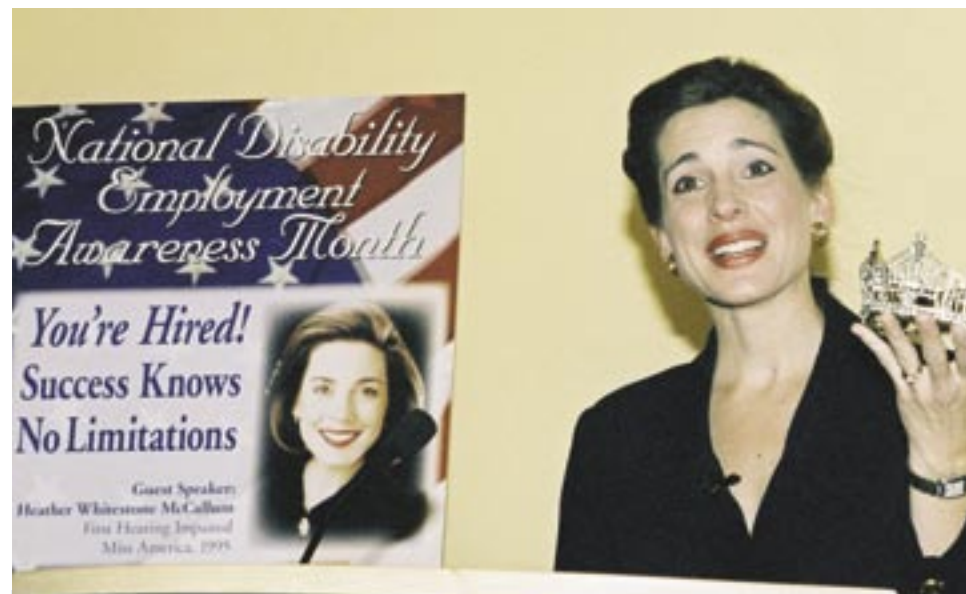
"The tour arranged was informative and beneficial for me in seeing the distinct parts, such as finance, audit, procurement, security, and foreign assistance, that make up the well-known USAID," said one of the young people, Norma Moran.

"The Office of Procurement was very interesting, as I developed a better understanding in how USAID functions."

National Disability Employment Awareness Month was started in 1945 with a week set aside to recognize the great potential of people with disabilities and encourage all Americans to work toward their full integration into the workforce. In 1998, Congress expanded the week to a month-long celebration.

This year's theme is "You're Hired! Success Knows No Limitations!" ★

Gloria Greene-Blackwell contributed to this article.



Former Miss America Heather Whitestone McCallum was the keynote speaker at a USAID-sponsored event marking National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

## Assistant Administrators Kunder, Menarchik, Pierson Confirmed

On Nov. 20, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations confirmed nominees James Kunder, Dr. Douglas Menarchik, and Lloyd Pierson for assistant administrator posts at USAID.

Kunder has been serving as Assistant Administrator for Asia and the Near East since July under a recess appointment from President Bush, and will continue in that position. He was a Deputy Assistant Administrator in the same office from July 2002 to July 2004 and was the Director for Relief and Reconstruction in Afghanistan during the first half of 2002. Kunder was also an Assistant Administrator for USAID's Bureau for External Affairs and Director of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance under the first President Bush.

Menarchik will become the Assistant Administrator for Policy and Program

Coordination. He is replacing Patrick M. Cronin, who is now with the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Menarchik is currently the director of the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum in College Station, Tex. From 1997 to 2001, he served as director of The Center for the Defense Leadership and Management Program at National Defense University in Washington, D.C. In the early 1990s, Menarchik was at the Pentagon, working on terrorism policy, and in the mid-1990s he was a professor at Germany's George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in the Department for Democratic Defense Management. A retired Air Force officer, he served on the staff of Vice-President Bush.

Pierson will become the Assistant Administrator for Africa, replacing

Constance Newman, who is now the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Pierson is the chief of staff to the director of Peace Corps. In the mid-1980s and early 1990s, he served in Africa as the Peace Corps's Country Director, managing programs in Ghana, Botswana, Namibia,

Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.

He later returned to Washington to be the Agency's Associate Director. From 1994 to 2001, Pierson headed the Africa division of the International Republican Institute in Washington.



James Kunder



Douglas Menarchik



Lloyd Pierson



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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](mailto: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.

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## Agency Budget

▲ FROM PAGE 1

Hill since 9/11, the foreign operations bill was passed first, and the other spending bills were attached to it. In the past, foreign aid bills were quietly added to other, more popular bills.

The 2005 budget bill expands USAID authority for community-based police assistance; authorizes the use of program funds to hire up to 25 personal service contractors; and allows the use of \$37 million in program funds per year until 2007 to convert 175 non-direct hire employees to foreign-service limited direct hire status.

It also bars economic support funds to governments that have not agreed to exempt U.S. citizens serving overseas from the International Criminal Court. Ten countries potentially affected by this are: Burundi, Cyprus, Ecuador, Ireland, Paraguay, Peru, and South Africa.

The bill "earmarks" or sets aside \$507 million for trade capacity building and \$400 million for basic education. It also gives \$404 million for Sudan, deletes the Special

Notification Requirement for the Congo, and provides \$980 million for Afghanistan.

Elsewhere, the bill earmarks \$85 million for Haiti and \$441 million for international family planning.

The Millennium Challenge Account, managed outside of USAID, was given \$1.5 billion, \$1 billion less than the president requested for the new aid program for countries that are well governed and that support health, education, and free markets.

Morocco was added last month to last year's list of 16 eligible MCA countries.

The MCC also named six new countries to the list of "threshold countries" eligible for a total of \$120 million through USAID in 2004 and 2005 to help them qualify for MCA funds: Burkina Faso, Guyana, Malawi, Paraguay, Philippines, and Zambia.

They join seven countries selected for the threshold program for FY 2004: Albania, East Timor, Kenya, São Tomé and Príncipe, Tanzania, Uganda, and Yemen. ★

# Malawi President Helps Celebrate Mission's Anniversary

**LILONGWE, Malawi**—On the 44th anniversary of the U.S. foreign aid mission to this country, President Bingu wa Mutharika attended a celebration of the event and thanked the United States for its long-term commitment to reduce poverty and foster democratic stability in Malawi.

"This is indeed a great day in the history of our two nations," Mutharika told 600 guests at the day-long event in October, which featured booths for 33 of USAID's health, democracy and governance, education, and economic growth projects.

The Agency has spent \$917 million in Malawi since 1960.

Mutharika reiterated his commitment to combat corruption, reform the public sector, and spur economic growth, promising "fundamental policy reforms" to reduce government interference in the private sector. He also requested continued U.S. support for anti-corruption and poverty reduction efforts.

"I need hardly emphasize that the fight against corruption, underdevelopment, and poverty requires huge amounts of resources," Mutharika said. "I therefore hope that the U.S. government will stand by us and that they will ensure that our reform program... [does] not slide backwards."

Mission Director Roger Yochelson said U.S. aid provides benefits to Malawian citizens in education and training; HIV/AIDS awareness and testing; and infrastructure projects such as roads.

Traditional dances with masks, animal skins, and spears were performed at the anniversary event, as well as dramas that had the



Aggrey Kanyerere, Chemonics International  
President Bingu wa Mutharika and Mission Director Roger Yochelson.

crowd chuckling over issues of inheritance, women's rights, and corruption.

One agriculture project displayed three rows of corn plants that graphically demonstrated the results of three different growing regimens: no fertilizer, inadequately applied fertilizer, and a proper fertilizer regime.

U.S.-funded work to combat malaria and HIV/AIDS and to promote child health, nutrition, and survival were on display. Paralegals from Malawi Carer, an NGO that educates Malawians about their rights under the law, explained their work to the president.

One female member of parliament greeted attendants at the International Republican Institute booth by saying, "I won my seat because of the tips I learned in your training workshop!" ★

## West Bank and Gaza Mission Wins Award for GIS System

**TEL AVIV**—More than 1,300 computer wizards were gathered for the 13th annual conference of geographic information systems (GIS) users Nov. 15, when USAID's West Bank and Gaza mission honored for developing a sophisticated internet-based GIS that manages humanitarian and development activities.

The GIS User Conference was hosted by California-based ESRI, a software and technology company.

The developer of the technology is Tayseer Edeas, management information systems specialist at the mission's Program and Project Development Office. Working with Israeli and Palestinian GIS firms, Edeas built an internet-based GIS system that helps manage, track, and evaluate USAID activities in the region. The system also

helps the mission to measure its achievements more accurately.

With a click of a mouse, the technology allows Edeas to ask, for instance, the location of all projects under \$100,000, and immediately come up with a map of the region that pinpoints such projects and identifies them by sector.

Among other uses, the technology has helped the mission analyze the cost efficiency of partners involved in similar projects—pointing out discrepancies in overhead costs or showing that one partner can create twice the number of jobs with the same budget as another partner.

USAID headquarters is now mulling over the idea of developing a GIS system to improve access to information for the entire Bureau for Asia and the Near East. ★



## Natsios, Tobias Say U.S. Leads World AIDS Fight

The United States is leading the world battle against AIDS, said Ambassador Randall Tobias, the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, and Administrator Natsios, addressing reporters at the Foreign Press Center in Washington, D.C., Nov. 29, two days before World AIDS Day.

"In 2004, we contributed about as much to the battle against global HIV/AIDS as the rest of the world's donor governments combined, some \$2.4 billion, and we have requested even more for the coming year," said Tobias.

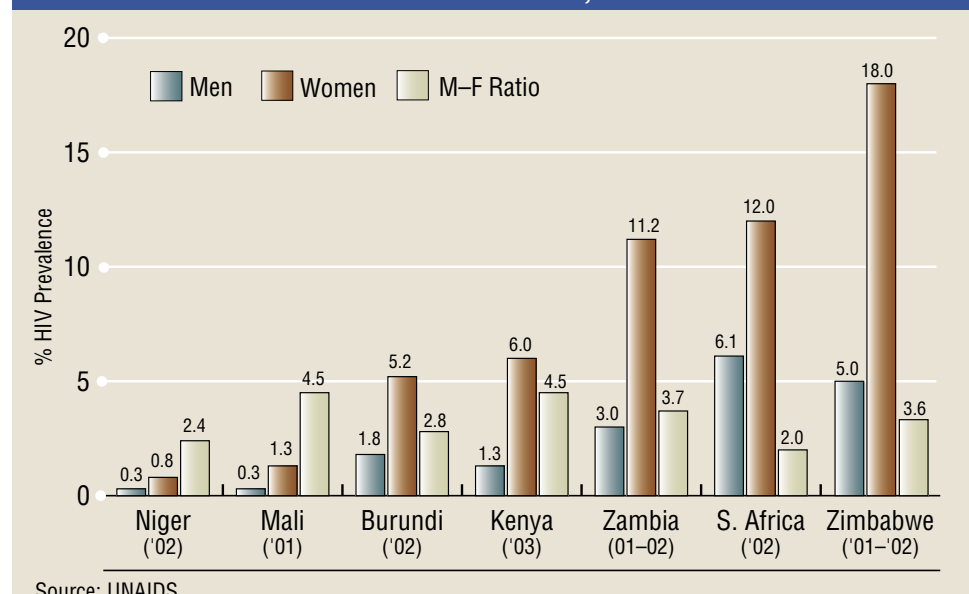
"USAID has been fighting HIV/AIDS globally for really more than two decades now," he added.

Natsios told the press conference: "We are carrying out a good portion of the program, the \$2.4 billion program...in terms of prevention, in terms of care, and in terms of treatment."

USAID has given over \$3.2 billion to HIV/AIDS programs since 1986, more than any other public or private organization, and works in nearly 100 countries.

Secretary of Health and Human Services Thomas Thompson, chairman of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, said, "The United States is by far the largest donor to the fund and has paid almost \$1 billion of the \$3.1 billion" given by all donors. ★

### HIV RATE AMONG 15-24-YEAR-OLDS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, 2001-03



## Women Focus of World AIDS Day

The mounting rates of HIV/AIDS infection among women—especially in Africa where they face social and economic inequality—sparked a decision to dedicate this year's World AIDS Campaign, which culminates on World AIDS Day December 1, to gender inequality and AIDS.

"Today, 60 percent of all people in sub-Saharan Africa with HIV/AIDS are women," said Dr. Kathleen Cravero, deputy director of UNAIDS, the Joint U.N. Program on HIV/AIDS, at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Nov. 10.

"Getting HIV from older boyfriends, or unfaithful husbands, or through forced marriages all stem from one stark reality: that women lack control over their bodies and their daily lives and lack the tools, resources, and support they need to change their situations," Cravero said.

"If we don't expand our concept of what prevention means and make our strategies more relevant for women and girls, time, energy, and countless lives will be lost," she added.

In South Africa, girls make up 75 percent of those infected with HIV. In Kenya, there are 45 young women with the virus for every 10 young men with HIV.

Dr. Anne Peterson, USAID Assistant Administrator for Global Health, said she came to understand the issue of female vulnerability in Kenya in the 1980s when women would knock on her door and ask what they could do to protect themselves from their husbands.

The husbands had just come back from

Nairobi, and the women knew they had been with prostitutes and might have contracted the AIDS virus, she said. But the wives were powerless to protect themselves—physically, socially, or legally.

Young schoolgirls, she explained, also were at the mercy of men if they wanted to pass their school exams.

"If women had more options, the option to choose marriage rather than have it be forced upon them, to decide when and with whom they have sex, to negotiate condom use with their partners, to live their lives free from violence, and to earn incomes adequate to feed their families, then their ability to protect themselves from HIV might be real," Cravero said.

A UNAIDS coalition—the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, which was launched earlier this year by an informal group of 10 partners—has designed a new program to deal with gender inequalities characteristic of many African countries and make women more autonomous in family and community life.

In addressing the five key issues for women—domestic violence, property rights, access to healthcare, female-controlled HIV prevention methods, and access to education—the coalition is working to pass laws that make rape and domestic violence serious crimes, protect women's property rights, and provide access to free legal aid. ★

This article was written by Emily Harter of the State Department Washington File.

## YOUR VOICE

# Madagascar Battles Against HIV

BY JEFFREY ASHLEY

USAID/REDSO, Office of Regional HIV/AIDS Programs

In Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, my taxi driver told me: "I have never heard of anyone with AIDS... I haven't seen this disease, AIDS."

I have heard this many times while traveling with my colleagues, Dr. Maryinez Lyons from the USAID regional office, and Wendy Benazerga, chief of the Health Office at USAID/Madagascar.

Madagascar has a reported HIV prevalence rate of 1.1 percent. But that could change without appropriate and consistent intervention.

USAID/REDSO and USAID/Madagascar are poised to assist the Malagasy to reduce—or at least maintain—the very low prevalence of HIV/AIDS, especially given the high number of mining laborers coming in from mainland southern Africa and the potential impact on sexual health.

It will not be an easy task, as public health history has shown the difficulty of sustaining health and prevention messages.

The long latency of HIV before the onset of AIDS means that many people simply do not perceive themselves to be in danger of infection.

Elsewhere in Africa, countries with much higher rates of HIV infection have launched effective campaigns to prevent its spread only when a significant proportion of the population has begun to experience personally the impact of the epidemic. It was only when family or neighbors began to fall ill and die that many individuals could personalize the risk of HIV sufficiently to take real steps to avoid contracting the virus. Public health messages that attempt to shock people into behavior change usually do not work. Behavior change, while an individual action, takes place within a context of social, economic and political factors often over a very long period. Sustaining it is a major challenge.

It would be disastrous for the Malagasy to delay changing behavior until individuals witness personally the impact of HIV/AIDS. Fortunately, the Malagasy government has

taken energetic steps to quell the epidemic and the president has made the fight against HIV/AIDS a major priority.

USAID supports various initiatives in Madagascar. Organizations such as Catholic Relief Services support voluntary counseling and testing; the Futures Group International provides condoms; and Population Services International works with sex workers to combat sexually transmitted diseases.

USAID led a two-day workshop in June that brought together groups to work on developing a "statement of collaboration." While there are impressive programs presently operating in the country, greater collaboration will ensure better delivery of services and information and help Madagascar to avoid the ravages of a full-blown epidemic.

Equipping the Malagasy people with appropriate knowledge and access to effective, high-quality prevention and care services is an important and fundamental task for the Agency's HIV/AIDS program in this beautiful country. ★



Rajaonisaona Njaka, Population Services International  
A peer educator talks to a group of Malagasy youth about ways to prevent HIV infection, such as delayed onset of sexual activity, proper condom use, and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.



**CARE's Hassan Believed Slain in Iraq**

**BAGHDAD, Iraq**—Margaret Hassan, CARE's Country Director in Iraq who had been kidnapped in October, was apparently killed according to British officials and the humanitarian organization CARE. A video tape that appeared to show her execution surfaced in Iraq Nov. 17.

Hassan was kidnapped Oct. 19 while on her way to work. She was the first woman kidnap victim to be slain.

CARE hailed Hassan for her "courage, tenacity and commitment." Though the organization ceased operations in Iraq shortly after the kidnapping, CARE vowed its staff and volunteers would continue battling poverty around the world.

During more than two decades of work in Iraq, Hassan, who held British and Iraqi citizenship, assisted more than 17 million Iraqis, CARE said in a statement.

Since March 2003, USAID provided the group just over \$9 million for assistance to internally displaced persons, water and sanitation projects, healthcare, and emergency relief in Iraq.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said: "To kidnap and kill anyone is inexcusable. But it is repugnant to commit such a crime against a woman who has spent most of her life working for the good of the people of Iraq."

**USAID Gets Second Clean Audit**

USAID received an unqualified—or clean—audit opinion in November on all five of

its principal financial statements for fiscal year 2004. Required by the Government Management Reform Act of 1994, the Office of the Inspector General audit resulted in a clean opinion for USAID for the second consecutive year.

USAID is one of the 22 (of 24) major federal agencies that met the Nov. 15 deadline for submission of the Performance and Accountability Report (that includes audited financial statements) to the Office of Management and Budget.

The new deadline is 45 days after the end of the fiscal year.

USAID continues its activities to improve financial systems and processes and roll out its core accounting system to the field missions worldwide. On Aug. 10, Phoenix, the Agency's core accounting system, began operations in five pilot mission sites: Peru, Colombia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Egypt.

**Cuba Exchange Program Signed**

**CHICAGO**—USAID and Loyola University officials signed a two-year agreement Oct. 25, with Rep. Henry J. Hyde (R-IL) at their side, to develop an exchange program in Cuba.

The initiative, called the Henry Hyde Program of People-to-People Development, will provide training, informational materials, and other non-financial support to Cuban faith-based NGOs. The Agency is investing \$425,000 in the effort.

"A new birth of freedom will happen as the Cuban people create their own civil society, and, of great importance, their own faith-based communities that set the founda-

tions for democracy and respect for human rights," said Hyde, a Loyola alumnus, at the ceremony.

**AIDS Orphans Get \$100M in Assistance**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—The Bush Administration announced in late October the award of \$100 million in new grants to 11 organizations to support orphans and vulnerable children as a part of the President's \$15 billion, five-year Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

By 2010, it is estimated that more than 25 million children will have lost at least one parent to AIDS. Among the groups that got new grants are Africare, Christian Aid, Christian Children's Fund, HOPE Worldwide, Project Concern, and Salvation Army World Services.

**Agency Programs Helped Save Millions**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—USAID played a major role in five of 17 large-scale successes in global health, including prevention of diarrhea through oral rehydration therapy in Egypt, polio eradication in Latin America, river blindness and guinea worm control in Africa, and family planning in Bangladesh, according to findings to be released in December in the book *Millions Saved: Proven Successes in Global Health*.

Published by the Center for Global Development's Global Health Policy Research Network, the book concludes that far-reaching success is possible even in the poorest of countries, in the face of grinding poverty and weak health systems.

The economic and social returns from successful health programs far outweigh the outlays required, and aid has worked even in difficult conditions.

**USAID Helps Those Fleeing Fallujah**

**BAGHDAD, Iraq**—The recent fighting between coalition forces and insurgents in Fallujah, Iraq, has displaced up to 249,000 people to surrounding villages. In response, USAID provided food, tents, blankets, mattresses, plastic sheeting, jerry cans, buckets, and hygiene kits to 12,000 of the displaced people.

The Agency also contributed four health kits, each of which will support 10,000 people for up to three months. The International Organization for Migration and NGOs distributed these emergency relief supplies and

**Water and Coastal Resources Funded**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—USAID announced Nov. 1 five awards to support developing countries' long-term goals of managing water and coastal resources while protecting the environment and maintaining ecological balance. The five awards—based on full and open competition—fall under one umbrella, called an Indefinite Quantity Contract and have a ceiling of \$2 billion.

Groups receiving the five awards are ARD, Chemonics International, PA Government Services, Joint Venture of International Resources Group and Tetra Tech, and DAI.

## Agency Marking Evolved from Marshall Plan

Found in the most remote corners of the globe, the USAID handclasp is one of the best known U.S. emblems throughout the world. It has become a symbol of the United States' long history of aiding those in need.

Labeling was first required during the Marshall Plan, when Congress became concerned that the Soviet Union was taking credit for the poorly marked U.S. foreign aid donations to European countries.

The original 1948 design was adapted from the Great Seal of the United States with the words "For European Recovery Supplied by the United States of America" in the center. It was translated into the languages of the recipient countries.

But the slogan became obsolete when military aid was added to the economic program, and when some Near East and

Asian countries were added to the roster of recipients under President Truman's Point IV Program. In 1951, the slogan became "Strength for the Free World from the United States of America."

In several countries, the slogan could not be translated into local dialects, so different designs and slogans were used. Moreover, the wide variety of containers needed made it necessary to have a range of labels, decals, metal plates, tags, and stencils in all sizes. As a result, the value of the overall message was lost due to a lack of uniformity.

In 1953, Eleanor Gault, an employee in the Marking and Labeling Office of the Mutual Security Agency—a USAID predecessor—revised the emblem. During her research, Gault discovered that "clasped hands" have been recognized as a sign of

unity, goodwill, and cooperation for centuries. She concluded that clasped hands "could serve to identify the aid as part of the mutual effort with mutual benefits shared by our country and friends around the world."

In the early 1990s, a completely new logo was developed. It combined a modern image of the globe and U.S. flag, with USAID prominently displayed. This image, however, was viewed as too radical a change, and it was soon rejected.

The Agency returned to the shield in the mid-1990s as the primary symbol of U.S. foreign assistance, but moved the stars and stripes to the lower third of the design and added USAID to the top. Color also was removed from the handclasp to ensure no specific race was identified.

In 2001, "United States Agency for

International Development," was added in a circle around the shield to ensure people understood the assistance provided was from the United States government.

The logo was updated in 2004 to make it easier to read and reproduce. The typeface was changed to a sans serif, and the Agency name was repositioned around the shield to increase clarity; the handclasp was redrawn to be gender neutral and anatomically correct.

These minor updates improved the overall communication, yet maintained the integrity and long heritage of this important U.S. symbol. A brand name and tagline also were added to ensure people understand the assistance is provided by U.S. taxpayers. ★

<http://www.usaid.gov/branding>

