

FRONT LINES



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

MARCH 2006



A food warehouse in Wajir, Kenya, receives U.S. food aid for drought victims.

Horn of Africa Receives \$110M Food Aid in Growing Emergency

USAID is providing \$110 million in additional emergency food aid to the Horn of Africa as warnings mount that the region is facing serious shortages because of a prolonged drought.

Drought is not new to the Horn, where in any given year tens of millions of people are vulnerable even to the smallest climatic shocks. But the widespread failure of rains in portions of Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia this year means that people who normally migrate to areas where rains are good have no place to go to find water and forage.

“Numerous pre-famine indicators have been reported, including widespread livestock deaths, culling of young animals to protect breeding animals, distress migration, increased animal and human disease, and high acute malnutrition rates,” the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported.

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Swift Relief Averted Post-Quake Tragedy in Pakistan

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan—As winter winds down, the death rate among survivors of the Oct. 8 earthquake has been far less than feared due to a swift airlift of U.S. and other food, medicine, tents, and blankets, officials said.

A relatively mild winter also spared many of the survivors.

“People said 200,000 would die after the quake but it didn’t happen,” said USAID Pakistan Mission Director Lisa Chiles.

Although the earthquake killed nearly 75,000 people and left more than 2 million homeless, fewer Pakistanis have died in the region since that time than die in an average winter, according to World Health Organization Acting Country Representative Dr. Rana Graber Kakar.

“The second wave of deaths, usually due to lack of shelter and injuries not treated in time, was averted by quick response by partners,” Dr. Kakar said in an interview. “There was a huge helicopter evacuation of the injured.”

“The third wave [of deaths] usually comes from outbreaks of disease and it was completely averted. Before the quake, this region was isolated and had little health care. You might have seen more deaths than now since we have immunization and surveillance in every district and responded to every report of illness.”

Reports that the homeless Pakistanis had received enough aid to successfully weather the winter came as U.S. and NATO troops began ending their massive

SEE MISSION SPOTLIGHT: PAKISTAN ON PAGES 8-9 FOR RELATED STORIES

airlift to remote villages.

NATO troops in February ended their relief mission, saying they had flown 18,000 tents, 50,000 blankets, 32,000 mattresses, 50,000 sleeping bags, 17,000 stoves, and large amounts of medicine. It was the largest NATO humanitarian operation outside its member countries.

U.S. officials announced Feb. 4 that U.S. military operations will end March 31 and USAID will transition from emergency relief operations by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance into longer-

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SCHOOL GONE BUT STUDY GOES ON



Two girls who survived the Oct. 2005 earthquake that killed 77,000 people study outside next to their destroyed school in Langla, a village perched above the Jhelum River in Pakistani Kashmir. U.S. assistance is helping rebuild the village homes after people spent the winter in emergency tents.

Bush Asks \$23.7B Foreign Aid in '07

The Bush administration announced Feb. 8 that the president will ask Congress for \$23.7 billion in fiscal year 2007 for foreign assistance programs.

USAID would administer about \$9.3 billion of those funds for development and humanitarian aid, an 11 percent increase from 2006. It would also administer funding allocated throughout the year by the Millennium Challenge Account and the Global HIV/AIDS Initiative.

Of USAID’s requested budget of \$9.3 billion, the Agency will directly manage \$5 billion, while the rest is managed with the State Department.

- The 2007 USAID request includes
- \$1.4 billion for child survival and health
 - \$1.3 billion for development assistance
 - \$1.2 billion for Title II Food for Peace
 - \$350 million for disaster and famine aid
 - \$50 million for transition initiatives
 - \$207 million for Andean counter-drug efforts
 - \$274 million for the Baltics and Eastern Europe
 - \$441 million for the Freedom Support Act
 - \$3.2 billion for economic support funds

The Agency would receive \$680 million in operating costs.

The Administration is also requesting authority to use up to 25 percent of the \$1.2 billion in food aid to buy food abroad, close to the hunger zones, to speed delivery, save lives, and stimulate regional food production.

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GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS PAGE 15

International Women's Day Is Celebrated around the World

As International Women's Day, March 8, is celebrated around the world, USAID boosts efforts to help women economically and to exercise their rights in countries where they are held back by political, legal, cultural, and social restrictions.

More than 800 million women are economically active worldwide—in agriculture, small and microenterprises, and, increasingly, in the export processing industries that drive globalization. Over 70 percent of these women live in developing nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. But there, women's unemployment is high relative to that of men. And when employed, women are paid less than men for the same work.

USAID works to change that situation through various projects and initiatives, including projects that aim to accomplish the following:

- Provide women and young children with healthcare.
- Train women in job skills and improve their ability to find work.
- Improve the limitations on women's legal rights and their participation in civil society. Legal restrictions on women's land and property ownership in poor countries hamper women's ability to acquire

"Women are integral to the process of building responsible governments and democratic institutions."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

productive assets and reduce their vulnerability when crises affect them.

- Educate girls. Girls' education has been shown to have a dramatic impact on women's earning power and on families' welfare but gender equality in education still lags.

"Women are integral to the process of building responsible governments and democratic institutions," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said March 7, 2005, in her speech commemorating International Women's Day. "Women's participation and empowerment at all levels of society will be key to moving these new democracies forward." ★



Nariman Hefawi manages her ill husband's construction company in Jordan. "I would not have succeeded without a lot of will power and the assistance of the Microfund for Women [a lending organization established by USAID]," she says. "They didn't just give me a loan. They gave me encouragement and moral support to help me succeed in a difficult business."



Meri Awaz Suno, a journalist in Pakistan, interviews a vendor at a market in Rawalpindi. Better curricula for broadcast journalism students and campus production studios help strengthen the media, giving the public a better source of information, an important element of democracy.



Romanian students in a *Gata, Dispus si Capabil* (Ready, Willing, and Able) training class. The GDC project, supported over the years by three USAID grants, is designed to improve living conditions and educational opportunities for severely impoverished families and offers children educational and social support and their parents the tools to provide for their families.



A seamstress of a small swimwear firm based in Bahia, Brazil, is working to help the business grow through exports. This is one of several micro and small enterprises in north and northeast Brazil receiving trade technical assistance from USAID.



Two women tend a community garden in South Africa that helps them generate income in a large informal settlement far from shops.

Swift Relief Averted Post-Quake Tragedy in Pakistan

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term reconstruction activities by the USAID mission based in Islamabad.

Rear Adm. Michael Lefever told a press conference that “U.S. forces along with myself arrived within less than 48 hours” after the quake and in the next 117 days flew “over 4,000 sorties with our Chinooks [helicopters] delivering over 11,000 tons of relief supplies. Nearly 32,000 patients have been seen at the hospitals in the different locations including remote outreach missions and we also cleared over 50,000 tons of debris and built numerous schools and facilities with our Navy construction battalion.”

From the window of a Chinook helicopter clattering in the narrow corridors between the snow-covered peaks north of Islamabad, the extent of the damage is apparent: one can see tens of thousands of tents pitched in the center of big cities such as Muzaffarabad and Bagh. Thousands more are pitched in orderly rows in camps set up by Pakistan’s army and serviced by the United Nations, USAID, and NGOs.

Tens of thousands more tents are pitched near small clusters of homes, in the terraced fields, and among the rocks and the rubble of destroyed houses.

Many of the blue and white tents lie next to what appear to be intact houses. However, upon closer examination the structures have cracked walls, shattered beams, and ruined foundations.

The Pakistani survivors of the earthquake have been thoroughly traumatized by the Saturday morning earthquake and are not eager to try and resettle in the damaged buildings.

Instead they spend the winter in tents, often with USAID-provided waterproof tarps to provide an outer layer of shelter from rain, snow, and wind. Inside are families snuggled together under thick quilts and blankets, awaiting the end of the short but bitter winter.

In early February, USAID provided tens of thousands of families with vouchers to



HAULING FLOUR—A Pakistani worker unloads U.S.-donated wheat flour at the Mehra Camp for displaced earthquake survivors. Families use the flour to make flat bread.

obtain materials and tools to build small houses that will be a step up from the tents and provide warmth and privacy.

In the village of Langla, reached by crossing a suspension bridge over the Jhelum River, people carried their materials over the steep paths to their home sites.

Chiles said that the USAID relief experts of the Disaster Assistance Response Team, or DART, who rushed here within hours of the disaster, have been providing relief with an eye toward “recovery and transition” so that the earthquake survivors will be able to quickly return to their homes and farms.

USAID has provided assistance in the following ways, she said:

- Cash for work has given tens of thousands payment for clearing debris, repairing roads, and other vital tasks. The money stimulates local markets to recover.
- Women, traditionally secluded inside the family compound, have been trained to

sew clothing and learned to interact with other women in community tents.

- Thousands of children who never went to school have been enrolled in USAID-funded schools and are now eager to continue education once they return home.
- Training in hygiene, sanitation, and clean water prepare the Pakistanis to maintain better health once they return home.
- USAID helped thousands of families obtain enough tarps, tents, and corrugated galvanized iron sheets to create a warm place to survive the winter without entering camps.
- For those unable to stay near home but afraid to leave their livestock, displacement camps also provided fodder and shelter for their animals, giving them important assets when they return home in the spring.

Chiles said that the overall U.S. commitment to Pakistan for relief and reconstruction is \$510 million. It includes \$110 million for military operations; \$100 million in relief; \$200 million for reconstruction; and \$100 million from private-sector contributions.

USAID officials are working with Pakistani officials on the aid program for the coming months. “This may include, for example, helping people restore their livestock, plant their crops that need to be planted in March, April, and May, and meet other kinds of livelihood, health, and education needs as they return home,” said Chiles.

USAID also plans to rebuild hospitals and schools, using earthquake-resistant designs. The new buildings will be furnished and ready to use.

“USAID will also provide professional training for new and existing health and education personnel and we will re-establish systems needed to sustain these facilities in the long term,” Chiles said.

“Our reconstruction program is added to our five-year, \$1.5 billion commitment to Pakistan to support education, health, economic growth, and governance programs throughout the country.” ★

“Mission of the Month” will return to its normal format in the April issue of *FrontLines*.

Notes from Schieck

★★★★★★★★



A Five-Year Plan for Afghanistan

On Jan. 31, I accompanied the U.S. delegation, led by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, to London for the 2006 Afghanistan Donors’ Conference. The Afghanistan Compact agreement, signed the following day, was the result of consultation between the government of Afghanistan, the UN, and other donors. It put in place a framework for cooperation for the next five years.

With completion of parliamentary and provincial government elections in September, the so-called Bonn Process ended. That process was designed five years ago to begin the reconstruction of the country following a quarter-century of war and to lay the groundwork for reestablishing a sovereign government for the people of Afghanistan.

The London conference was an occasion for stock-taking—a look back at how far we have come and a look forward to the course of development over the next five years. It was also the moment for the international community to recommit itself to the Afghan people and for the Afghan people to come forward in assuming responsibility for their own future.

The next five years will see us focused on trying to help the Afghans deepen democracy and build their government’s capacity so that education, health, and other essential services are provided and improved. We will also be focused on strengthening a market economy, rebuilding much needed infrastructure, and resuscitating agriculture as an alternative to poppy production, a problem that limits Afghanistan’s national goals.

The London conference was by no means a traditional donors’ conference. Until now, the G-8 countries have been the organizational structure for international assistance. At this conference we put in place a coordinating and monitoring board that will be led by a minister of the Afghan government and by a UN representative.

The United States is by far the leading donor to Afghanistan, giving at a pace that has accelerated over the past two years. This includes significant amounts of assistance for governance, reconstruction, and security provision.

▼ SEE NOTES FROM SCHIECK PAGE 14



NEW HOUSE—Villagers in Langla along the Jhelum River in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir stand near a new home built on the foundations of a house destroyed in the earthquake. USAID supplied the metal roofing sheets, other materials, tools, and know-how. It is earthquake-resistant, its wooden structure made from heavy beams that were sawn into thinner boards.

ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE

New Maize, Cowpea Plants Resist Pests

The African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) is ready to introduce “striga killer” to farmers in Kenya after eight years of research to create this variety of maize that is resistant to the parasitic weed striga.

Striga causes more than \$11 million in crop losses each year in Kenya alone, where it has invaded 200,000 hectares (494,200 acres) of cropland and threatens the food supply in the western part of the country where maize is the major staple. The weed has not spared the rest of Africa either. One estimate put the crop lost on the continent at \$1 billion.

Striga killer maize is the result of new technology developed by a group of partners—national and international research institutions, seed companies, and NGOs—that AATF pulled together.

Scientists breed maize seeds with a maize gene that makes the plants resistant to herbicides. Then, the seeds are coated with the herbicide. When striga tries to attack, the herbicide kills it but has no effect on the maize. The maize continues to grow as it normally should. The new technique has no impact on the quality or taste.

Rose Katete, of the Kisumu district in Western Kenya, is one of 3,000 farmers who have tried the new maize variety on their farms as part of an initial test group.

“I have been pulling and burying striga on my five-acre farm for the past 17 years, and the problem has only grown worse,” she said. “Ua Kayongo [striga killer] has provided the best crop of maize that I have ever grown.”

AATF expects the new maize variety to become available commercially in Kenya later this year. There are also plans to launch striga killer in other affected countries.

Buoyed by its success, last year the AATF, with further support from USAID, signed a licensing agreement with Monsanto Company to access the “Bt” gene, which allows the development of insect-resistant cowpeas.

Grown on more than 12.5 million hectares, cowpea is one of the most important food grain legumes in Africa and an important source of protein. But insect pests can cause losses of up to 90 percent unless pesticides are used. Traditional breeding cannot create a cowpea resistant to insects. But a new, bioengineered cowpea will be hardy enough to resist the pests without the environmental and health risks associated with pesticides.

“This project is exciting for two reasons,” said Robert Horsch, an executive at Monsanto. “First, there is great potential for Bt technology to solve a key problem in cowpea production for small holder farmers. The second is the development of the institutional capacity within Africa to lead a global consortium of public and private organizations needed to create and deploy this high-tech product. AATF, with help and support from USAID, is developing both the product and the African leadership capacity.”

The British Department for International Development recently announced that it would increase its support for agricultural biotechnology through the AATF. ★



A farmer discusses the performance of a new variety of maize planted on her farm in Kisumu, Kenya.

GLOBAL HEALTH

Health Workers Join Forces to Fight AIDS



Wendy Seal, the Barbados national training coordinator for CHART, left, prepares for a nurses meeting with fellow nurse MaryAnn Vitiello from I-TECH. I-TECH is providing technical assistance to the USAID-funded program.

BARBADOS—Nurses from 20 Caribbean nations met here last month to create a mission statement to guide them through the year. They also discussed ways to improve their work as educators, advocates, and caretakers of HIV/AIDS patients.

The meeting is among the efforts of the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Regional Training Initiative (CHART), a five-year USAID project to insure the region builds a cadre of highly trained, committed professionals to help combat HIV/AIDS. The \$6 million project also trains health practitioners and encourages them to work together.

The Caribbean has the world’s second highest rate of HIV prevalence, with 2.3 percent of the population—mostly women and young girls—infected.

CHART runs five training centers in the Bahamas, Haiti, Jamaica, and Barbados, which are supported by the regional coordinating unit in Jamaica. Each center is linked to a health facility.

At the start of 2006, more than 100 doctors, nurses, and other health practitioners had been trained to become trainers and spread their knowledge to other health workers. Another 1,200 healthcare workers have undergone multidisciplinary training where they discuss case studies, role play, and create national work plans for addressing HIV/AIDS infection. The project also holds workshops addressing stigma and discrimination of HIV patients.

Dr. Brendan Bain, director of the CHART Regional Coordinating Unit at the University of the West Indies campus in Jamaica, is optimistic about the project’s development.

“In the midst of ‘birth and teething pains,’ we have succeeded in building alliances with partners within and outside of the Caribbean to improve the quality and coverage of care and treatment for persons living with HIV/AIDS,” he said.

Dr. Bain pointed out that individual countries are backing the project and magnifying

its impact by allocating building space and providing technical input from their local healthcare personnel.

As a regional organization, CHART coordinates and shares HIV/AIDS infection information alongside key medical organizations, including the Caribbean Network of Seropositives, the Caribbean Health Research Council, the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre, and the Coalition of Caribbean National AIDS Program Coordinators. This has helped the groups share best practices and lessons learned, which is helping achieve a more standardized and consistent approach to combating the deadly illness, said Angela Davis, USAID’s project management specialist in the Caribbean regional mission.

“Given the changing nature of the HIV epidemic, healthcare worker burnout, and the outmigration of many Caribbean professionals, ongoing training is essential to sustaining an HIV/AIDS trained workforce in the Caribbean,” she said.

A recent survey of CHART training participants found that the majority now feel more confident, have more compassion, and are more sensitive to issues of stigma and of discrimination against HIV patients. They also spend more time counseling patients. Mainly, participants said, they coordinate with each other more closely after the training and recognize the value of a team approach.

“My most important lesson came from interacting with the people living with HIV/AIDS—this did a lot for me,” said one health practitioner. “It helped me to understand more and to be a better counselor. I began to take more time with [my HIV/AIDS patients.]”

CHART is funded jointly by USAID, the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with additional support from UNAIDS and, more recently, from a Global Fund grant to Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS. ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Small Business Loans Help Angola Economy

LUANDA, Angola—Celestina Pedro is one of the 5 percent of this country's 11 million people to run her own business. A hairdresser, Pedro lacks most required business documents and did not have a bank account for the first two years of her enterprise.

This changed after NovoBanco, a small business lender created through the Global Development Alliance, opened its doors across the street from Pedro's salon. For some time she watched small business owners come in and out. She contemplated her worn out chairs and washbasin, thought about refurbishing and expanding her bustling salon, and finally crossed the street to ask for a loan.

Eight months later, Pedro had paid off her \$2,000 loan. She also had new equipment, and four new salon assistants.

The bulk of money in Angola is made from oil and diamond extraction, so small businesses have long been overlooked, said NovoBanco Chairman Koen Wasmus.

"Through our efforts, we hope the government will begin to realize how important microenterprises can be in creating a middle class that can be a stabilizing force for a country in transition," he said.

Free market principles like this were unheard of in this former Marxist state, which suffered 22 years of war until 2002. Inadequate and cumbersome business regulations still hamper small business development. For instance, NGOs can make small loans but cannot accept deposits or establish accounts. Meanwhile, traditional

banks can provide account services, but require high minimum deposits.

Angolans face some of the highest business startup costs in the developing world, averaging \$6,000, or more than twice the nation's average income per capita of \$2,500.

Through the NovoBanco alliance, USAID along with partners Chevron and ProCredit Holding, an international network of micro-finance banks, is working to make Angola's business environment friendly to small entrepreneurs.

To date, NovoBanco has disbursed more than 1,600 small business loans totaling more than \$9.5 million. It has also opened more than 10,000 deposit accounts worth \$2.7 million.

The lender makes its banking services accessible and affordable to everyone regardless of minimum deposit; earning potential; or social, gender, ethnic, and financial status. Loans ranging from \$100 to \$15,000 are given to minimarkets, wholesalers, market traders, hairdressers, taxi drivers, and private schools, among others. The average loans range from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

One client, Dona Fernando, who along with her husband took out a loan to expand their pharmacy, said: "I realized that people can need medication at any hour of the day, so I decided to open my pharmacy 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When I've finished repaying the current loan, I hope to get another one because I have more plans for the future." ★



Celestina Pedro, a salon owner and hairdresser, works on a customer's hair. Pedro is one of thousands of small Angolan entrepreneurs tapping into expansion loans offered through the Global Development Alliance.

DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Congo Ex-Combatants Transition to Jobs



Ex-combatants in the Congo's east-central Maniema province participated in a USAID-funded project that provided bicycles so the community could start a bicycle taxi business. About 200 ex-combatants participated and are earning as much as \$25 per day, a large salary for that region.

KINSHASA, Democratic Republic of the Congo—A USAID program educating and putting to work former combatants in this war-torn country was so successful that the Agency is now enlarging the project with support from the World Bank Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP).

The large nation had been at war for five years, during which 3 million people died and another 3.2 million were displaced from their homes.

After a peace agreement signed in late 2002, a transitional government was formed to put Congo on the road to peace.

One hurdle the new government had to overcome was how to reintegrate ex-combatants, refugees, and internally displaced persons into their communities. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) took on the task, and over three years worked with 19,000 people in war-affected communities in two central and northern regions on

- a youth education and skills program to train war-affected youth on agriculture, civic education, health, conflict management, reconciliation, personal values, and basic literacy and numeracy
- a media program supporting access to information about issues key to the transition
- small grants funding vocational training, kits, and pay-for-work community rehabilitation projects for ex-combatants

Now the effort is being expanded to reach more than 11,000 ex-combatants and some

5,000 residents of war-affected villages in the northeast part of the country. Like its predecessor, the project will combine five-month lifeskills training with vocational training

and community rehabilitation projects for ex-combatants and the communities to which they are returning.

"I don't need to pick up a gun to make a living anymore because I have two hands and two feet and I can work," said Dona Mayala, an ex-combatant who participated in the OTI program. He

and fellow ex-combatants are learning how to make bricks, sew, and manage small businesses.

In the east-central Maniema province, for instance, about 200 youth joined a newly set up bicycle taxi business. In a region with few cars and poor roads, bicycles are a convenient form of transportation. Participants are earning up to \$25 per day, a large salary for the region.

The scaled-up project will spend \$6.4 million and marks the first time that USAID and the World Bank have combined resources this way to tackle a critical yet recurrent worldwide challenge: the reintegration of ex-combatants following civil war and conflict, said Konrad Huber of OTI. The partnership results from a collaboration between USAID's Africa bureau and the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance.

"This partnership paves the way for better use of scarce resources and future partnerships with USAID's international network of partners," Huber said. ★

"I don't need to pick up a gun to make a living anymore because I have two hands and two feet and I can work," said Dona Mayala, an ex-combatant who participated in the OTI program.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Haitians Recover from Cycle of Violence

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti—A 26-year-old peasant farmer was arbitrarily detained in prison here for 11 months last year. He came out with various injuries, including a broken leg, which he said was the result of a severe beating.

The farmer gained his freedom when human rights organizations, including IFES, brought attention to his story. IFES's Victims of Violence program does this with political violence cases.

IFES, which is receiving \$1.7 million

from USAID over three years for its anti-violence project, has helped nearly 1,000 victims since it started in February 2004. The group works with doctors and psychologists to provide medical and psychological care to victims. The program also works to find ways to prevent torture and to increase the ability of local human rights organizations to document their work.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, with 80 percent of the country's population living below the poverty line. Starting in 1956, the country suffered under a series of autocratic leaders, including Francois Duvalier and his son Jean-Claude Duvalier. Successive coups, reports of electoral irregularities, gang violence, and natural disasters have thwarted the country's progress.

Random violence of street gangs and armed political factions have claimed more than 1,500 lives since former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide left the country in 2004. Kidnappings, including the seizure of a presidential candidate and international elections workers, have terrorized the capital. Presidential elections were postponed four times in four months before the first round was held Feb. 7 (see page 11).

Lesley Richards, IFES program officer for Haiti, describes politically driven local violence as "systemic."

"It's been passed down from generation to generation, the result of many years of tyranny," Richards said. "IFES' goal is to

teach how to resolve conflict peacefully rather than violently. We want victims to be reinstated in society, and we want society to accept them."

Added Cecile Marotte, the program's chief of party: "[The program] is important because it's implemented in the rural parts of the country, which are not easily accessible."

Marotte works with individuals to ensure that they qualify to receive assistance, and she organizes therapy groups for the victims. These therapy groups are composed of six people, including both victims and psychologists.

The project runs 15 field monitors in all of Haiti's nine departments or states.

"It's not easy to work in Haiti. Nothing is normal in Haiti," said Marotte, who has aided victims for over 15 years. "It's different every day, but I know I am working in the right direction."

The United States has provided foreign aid to Haiti for more than 50 years. USAID/Haiti programs support the improvement of public healthcare and education, the reform of the judicial system, independent media, and training. Haiti is also one of the targeted countries under President Bush's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief. Most recently, aid has gone to prepare the country for presidential elections. ★

Katie Lynch of IFES contributed to this story.



Dr. Cecile Marotte (left) looking at a victim's x-ray with a doctor and hospital administrator in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The x-ray shows severe damage to the victim's vertebrae because of a beating. Dr. Marotte works with a project helping victims of random, politically driven violence that plagues Haiti.

EUROPE AND EURASIA

Special Olympics Comes to Romania's Disabled

BUCHAREST, Romania—"I'm a happy woman," said 27-year-old Emilia Vaduva, an intellectually disabled Romanian. "I may be different, but I'm full of joy."

Vaduva—along with about 15,000 similarly disabled Romanians and their families, friends, and coaches—is part of a three-year project to improve the quality of life of the disabled.

The project supports families of Special Olympics athletes and increases public awareness of the contributions disabled people make to society.

Vaduva, who has won medals in track and field competitions in Special Olympics competitions since the 1990s, was chosen in 2004 as the Special Olympics Romania Foundation's athlete representative.

"I like when people respect, appreciate, and understand me," said Vaduva, whose natural aplomb was one of the reasons she was selected to represent athletes like herself. "Respect for other people is important."

The Special Olympics began in the United States in 1968. Today they are held in more than 150 countries and have 1.7 million participants.

In Romania, as in most developing countries, disabled people are stigmatized and not well integrated in their communities. Although Romania has several programs for children and adults with special needs—many of them created through USAID

projects—the communist era left a lack of awareness about disabled people.

Events like the Special Olympics are helping change those attitudes.

Romania has hosted two major competitions and several smaller events around the country. The first major event, the Special Olympics Romania Games, was held in Bucharest in September 2004, and attracted more than 300 athletes and coaches.

The second, the Special Olympics Friendship Games, was held one year later and brought more than 500 athletes from nine countries to the Black Sea coastal city of Constanta. It was the first international event of its kind held in Romania. The opening ceremony was shown live on national TV, and the games were in the news frequently during the week, raising public awareness about disability issues.

In September 2004, USAID awarded Special Olympics, an NGO dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit through sports training and competition, a \$500,000 grant to expand activities in Romania.

"All too often, the attitudes of other people pose more of a challenge to someone with a disability than the disability itself does," said USAID/Romania Mission Director Rodger Garner. "Special Olympics provides opportunities for people with and without disabilities to get to know each other better. That's how

people learn to value their differences."

Vaduva agrees. "Special Olympics brought a positive change to my life, and I hope that you will feel the same," she said. "It's important to support each other. We shouldn't be isolated, because together we are stronger."

The medalist was born in a small town near Timisoara in the western part of Romania,

and as a child became involved with a foundation providing educational, vocational, and social programs for the disabled. This helped her to complete her education and begin work as a cook, earning enough to help pay the bills in the apartment she shares with her mother. She later became involved with the Special Olympics. ★



Athletes compete at the Special Olympics Friendship Games in Constanta—the first international event of its kind held in Romania. The competition, held in 2005, drew more than 500 athletes from nine countries.

ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

Afghanistan's Women Judges Train on Web

KABUL, Afghanistan—The theme for this year's celebration of International Women's Day, March 8, is "Women in decision-making," an apt description for Afghan female judges.

Today there are about 40 women serving in the judiciary, and some of them are getting help from a USAID program that provides

them with computer and English language training.

The judges say new skills and computerization will improve their efficiency and increase the prospects of bringing better judgments. Having access to the internet opens the door to general and professional libraries and a huge reservoir of knowledge.

"This training is meant to facilitate the work of Afghan women judges," said Mohammad Arif, senior program coordinator with Checchi and Company Consulting Inc., which carries out the program. Since it began in August 2005, 17 women judges and two lawyers have participated.

"Women judges are now getting some of those things that they asked for from the U.S. government," Arif said, listing laptop computers provided by USAID and desktop models from the State Department and the Office of the First Lady.

Training and equipping judges is one among a number of projects that USAID supports related to Afghan law. The Agency also distributes written materials—copies of the constitution, for example—to educate Afghans about their rights and responsibilities. Some of the products are posters. Others, like comic books, are designed to reach people of various reading levels.

USAID also helps Afghanistan to collect, classify, index, and publish its laws, both in paper and electronic formats. Inge Fryklund, USAID's legal advisor in Afghanistan, explains that people cannot follow the law if the law is not available and understood.

USAID trains judges, repairs judicial institutions and district administration buildings,

and provides equipment. The Agency is also contributing to the development of a national communications system that will connect court offices in Kabul with those in the provinces.

Initiatives like this are meant to set the foundation for the rule of law, but the road toward justice for all is a long one, the judges acknowledge. Critical problems have yet to be resolved.

Speaking in front of her peers, Anisa Rasouli, head of the Juvenile Court in Kabul, explained that Afghans are not aware of their rights, with a majority of Afghans—particularly women—being illiterate. "They do not have an understanding of their rights," Rasouli said.

Illiteracy, lack of economic opportunity, gender inequality, and lack of awareness of rights are some of the hurdles that can perpetuate injustice, she added.

Judges like Rasouli say they squeeze computer courses into their schedules because of the potential they have for bringing justice to their country.

"We are busy making judgments and bringing justice," she said. "It is very hard to make a living as a judge. Afghanistan and Afghan women judges face many problems, but a change needs to start someplace." ★



Computer and English language training for 12 Afghan woman judges is part of a rule of law program run by Afghans with support from USAID/Afghanistan, in partnership with Checchi and Company Consulting and Management Systems International. Afghan woman judges say that the new skills and computerization will improve efficiency and increase the prospects of bringing better judgments.

AFRICA

Malawians Reclaim Their Land, Livelihoods through Environmental Project

CHIA LAGOON, Malawi—For years, the people who lived around Chia Lagoon in central Malawi earned their incomes through fishing, supplemented by food from their gardens. But in the late 1980s and early 1990s, they began to notice a decrease in their gardens' yields and fewer fish in their nets.

At the time, large areas in the upland were opened for a booming business—estate tobacco farming.

The results were devastating to farmers. Land overuse practices, including uncontrolled tree clearing, unnecessary bush fires, and cultivating crops on steep slopes and in stream banks, left the air polluted, the land unhealthy, and the local lagoon a swamp. Local residents also began to see increases in malaria, respiratory ailments, dysentery, and cholera.

The Chia Lagoon Watershed Management Project is allowing a number of public and private organizations—brought together by the Nkhosha District Assembly through USAID's Global Development Alliance—to attack the problems. The project combines enterprise development with environmentally sound practices. USAID put \$2.1 million into the effort, while the partners are picking up the remaining \$2.7 million for what is envisioned as a three-year project.

The partners—Washington State University, Total LandCare (TLC), Cooperation for the Development of

Emerging Countries, Business Consult Africa, AgriCane Malawi, and the Dwangwa branch of the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi—each have specific roles. But the goal is to give people living within the watershed skills to manage natural resources, sustain agricultural production, and pursue enterprise development on their own.

The types of assistance include hands-on training sessions, farmer-to-farmer exchange visits, marketing assistance, and business management training. The project has also helped establish community-managed revolving funds, and is working to create comanagement agreements between local and higher level governments.

"This is one of the most important projects I have been involved with both in terms of size and scope," said Zwide Jere, the director of TLC. "The biggest challenge for all of us was to get the team together, which later turned out to be a big opportunity as each team member brought to the table a wide array of experience and expertise."

After one year, the project has helped farmers form business associations and raised their awareness of environmental degradation. Chia Lagoon's residents are now cultivating chilies, beans, and mushrooms; producing honey; and farming fish. The project includes 7,970 farmers—43 percent of them women—from 126 villages.

One of them is Eliya Sitolo, a 60-year-old farmer and father of eight who began growing chilies for paprika production through the initiative. He also joined an association of chili producers, which allowed him to negotiate higher prices. After an especially dry year, Sitolo and his wife still made enough profit from only a half acre's worth of chilies to buy food for the family, fertilizer, and a bicycle to ease travel. The couple plans to plant 2.5 acres with chilies this year.

Communities are also raising and planting seedlings to replace trees lost to poor land management. The partnership is helping with woodland protection, conservation techniques, and soil fertility as well.

Mark Visocky of USAID/Malawi calls the project a "shining example" of what can be accomplished with private-public partnerships. "Linking fishermen, farmers, woodcutters, and households together

has created a better understanding of the interlinkages of economic and environmental problems among the stakeholders, and how to move forward to solve these problems in a way that brings lasting results and benefits to all the stakeholders," he said. ★



A woman from Chilipula Village in Malawi explains how she grows mushrooms. She and other farmers in the region are getting help with their crops through the Chia Lagoon Watershed Management Project, a \$4.8 million collaboration between public and private institutions.

MISSION SPOTLIGHT:

World's Biggest Chopper Lift Brought U.S. Relief to Survivors

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan—It was not yet dawn when the first blades of the relief helicopters began to slowly turn out at Qasim military airfield outside this sleeping capital city.

A long row of 22 U.S. military Chinook helicopters stood in a straight row ready to take off. Beyond, four Australian military Blackhawks stood ready.

A pair of the Chinooks rose and clattered low over the flat city, circling wide around the parliament building, then heading straight north towards a cut in the hills.

Half an hour later, as thousands of tents began to appear on the hills and in the valleys, the helicopters descended to an airfield in Muzaffarabad where an elephantine procession of heavy trucks have hauled thousands of tons of food—mainly U.S. flour and oil donated through the UN World Food Program.

The helicopters descend to the tarmac but do not land. Hovering about six feet above the ground, they slowly advance over nets loaded with food sacks. U.S. Marines crouching around the nets reach up through the wind, sand, and sound thrown up by the helicopter blades and clip two nets to hooks on the chopper's belly.

As soon as the troops scramble away from the nets, the helicopters rise. Slings below each is 4.5 tons of food.

Up and over the airfield the helicopters head deeper into the mountains where some of the 2.3 million people made homeless by the Oct. 8 quake need food to get through the winter.

Within half an hour, the choppers are back for another load. The process repeats

throughout the day, only pausing so the helicopters can refuel. Aside from the U.S. Chinooks, the United Nations has rented Russian-built Mi-8 helicopters from Ukraine and other countries, capable of hauling about half the weight of the Chinooks.

From Oct. 10, two days after the quake, until Feb. 4, over 4,000 Chinook flights delivered over 11,000 tons of relief supplies. The U.S. military airlift is due to end March 31.

"We send 100 tons of food out every day—flour, split peas, steel sheets, vegetable oil," said an official with the UN Humanitarian Air Service. "It's a seamless operation. The locals and the Marines all work together."

Marine Cpl. James Green, 20, shouting over the roar of the helicopter, said "I feel great about this mission. We've been sent here to help and we are making a difference in the world. We're changing hearts and minds of Pakistanis."

Muhammad Khalid Mughal, 26, taking a break from hauling sacks of U.S. flour from the Pakistani trucks to helicopters, said he appreciated the aid.

"America is very good," he said. "It helps all Muslims in the right way."

He gets 300 rupees per day—about \$6—and like the two dozen other loaders seems eager to work.

"I was in a field when the earthquake hit," Mughal recalled. "My house was damaged. My uncle and my daughter are dead. People need food, tents, and shelter—everything for a normal life."

The narrow corridors between the peaks of the region mean that it is only possible to safely operate around 45 helicopters at



SLING LOAD—A U.S. Army Chinook helicopter lifts 4.5 tons of wheat flour from the Muzaffarabad airfield in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. U.S. Marines stand by after clipping the loads to the hovering helicopter. After a 20-minute flight to deliver the food to remote villages damaged by the earthquake, the chopper will return for fresh sling loads. In the background, a UN white Mi-8 Russian-built helicopter is slowly loaded by hand with two tons of food for the airlift.

one time. About half the aircraft have been American. But because they have twice the lifting power and are able to pick up and haul slings without landing and loading by hand, the U.S. military has delivered the lion's share of the aid.

"This is an excellent operation that gives this region an opportunity to see what we are like instead of seeing us on TV or hearing from other people," said Victor Robinson-

Yarber, 32, a former Marine in charge of all U.S. sling load operations in Pakistan since Nov. 2 when the British, who ran initial relief flights, left.

"We have not lost one bag of food. You know you are helping. Once you see people waving, it's very invigorating." ★

FrontLines Editorial Director Ben Barber visited Pakistan recently and wrote this collection of articles.

After Relief Comes Reconstruction



PLANNING TO REBUILD—Noor Badsha stands in front of the ruins of his shop in the city of Bagh, in the Pakistani-controlled portion of Kashmir known as Azad Jammu and Kashmir. On Feb. 8, four months after the earthquake, he said he was planning to begin rebuilding the following day.

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan—In March, the U.S. emergency relief effort shifts into a \$200 million long-term, reconstruction plan, rebuilding schools, clinics, roads, and other structures destroyed in the quake.

USAID's strategy in Pakistan focuses on health, education, and livelihoods. Earthquake-affected populations were expected to begin moving back to rural areas as soon as late February, to prepare for spring planting in March or April.

Pakistan's Federal Relief Commission anticipates 40 to 60 percent of people in camps will be cautious about returning home, most likely waiting until basic housing is in place and livelihoods, including livestock, are restored.

Since many areas of the earthquake zone are easily reached by roads and have ample access to aid from Pakistan's government and other aid groups, USAID will focus on three remote regions where relief programs have been successful and are likely to bear fruit:

- In Kagan Valley and Siran Valley in Mansehra District, 90 percent of health facilities and 46 percent of schools were destroyed. USAID will rebuild these

buildings and train teachers and other officials to run them over the next four years.

- Bagh District was also heavily damaged, and its government has supported continuing USAID reconstruction efforts in conjunction with aid from Europe and the Asian Development Bank.

- Allai Valley was also selected for intense reconstruction aid, in part because of the success of USAID programs in the largest earthquake-survivor camp, Mehra, where 20,000 people have sheltered during the winter—about 10 percent of the region's population. Many of the camp's 11,000 children have been attending USAID-sponsored schools for the first time in their lives, and their parents said in interviews they want them to continue learning. USAID intends to provide education even after they return to the upper mountains.

USAID was already building dozens of schools in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan along the Afghan border before the earthquake and will now apply that experience to the earthquake zone. ★

New Homes Rise Amid Tents and Rubble

LANGLA, Pakistan—On the steep hillside overlooking the Jhelum River, dozens of men are beginning to build their new houses next to the tents where they have spent the winter since the earthquake in October.

With corrugated galvanized iron sheets, insulation, wire, nails, shovels, and other tools and material provided by USAID, through Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the houses are sprouting everywhere amid the ruins of the houses destroyed by the quake.

The beams are now being converted, in a steady whine of the saw and flurry of sawdust, into 2-by-4-inch studs used to support corrugated galvanized iron roofing sheets. In case another powerful quake should hit, these roofs would be less likely to harm the people inside.

While two young men use the pick and shovel provided in the building kits to flatten the ground for their new home, the rest of the family gathered around the \$1,000 building supply kit provided by CRS.

It includes 12 sheets of metal for the roof and sides; a sheet-metal woodstove with stove pipe for heating and cooking; plastic tarps and mats for the floor or internal partitions; wire mesh to hold foundation stones in case of quakes; foam insulation for the ceiling to retain heat in winter and block the sun's heat in summer; and tools such as a hacksaw, chisel, tin cutters, hammer, steel wire, and rope.

Each family also gets 2,000 rupees—about \$40—to clear rubble, transport kits from distribution centers, and slice up the old beams.

Ten thousand of the 18-by-14-foot homes have been completed elsewhere in the quake region, and another 7,000 were being built in February in Langla and other villages, said CRS program manager Khalid Javed.

Mohamed Maskeen, 55, had already built his own small, new home with his own savings and was ready to add on a second room with the kit. "I'm satisfied with the new roof—it can bear the weight of snow," he said. However, he noted that his former home—the outlines of its ruined walls still sticking above the ground—was four times as big as his new house, where 10 people are sleeping each night.

Most families expect to upgrade to the new houses this spring. Then many hope to expand and build on as resources permit. ★



Ben Barber, USAID

LEARNING TO SEW—A woman learns to sew on a hand-powered sewing machine in Mehra Camp for displaced Pakistanis. The community tents and sewing machines were provided by USAID so that women could meet and learn—many of them for the first time in their lives—without violating traditions that keep women sheltered from contact with men outside their family.

Using a bandsaw powered by a small gasoline engine, carpenters are slicing up the massive roof beams from the old houses—the kind of beams that killed many of the village's 1,500 residents when they collapsed in the quake. Traditional houses have flat roofs formed of heavy beams topped with mud and straw.



Ben Barber, USAID

FIRST LESSONS—One of seven young women teachers brought to Mehra Camp from a nearby city teaches girls in a tent school set up with U.S. assistance. Most of the girls said they had never been to school before, but after four months of education, they already were reading English and Urdu and filling their notebooks with vocabulary, math, and drawings.



Ben Barber, USAID

TRAUMATIC SHOCK—A doctor with the American Refugee Committee examines an earthquake survivor in a tent clinic above the city of Bagh. The USAID-supported medical team said many people have problems such as pain, insomnia, and indigestion due to depression and post-traumatic shock. However, through quick treatment of contagious diseases and vaccination campaigns, the death rate this winter has been lower than in most previous years, the World Health Organization said.



IB-International Business Initiatives



Ben Barber, USAID

NEW LATRINE—Workers deliver a new latrine to its site in the Mehra Camp for 20,000 Pakistanis displaced following the October 2005 earthquake. The latrines provide privacy, especially important for women in the Muslim society, as well as sanitation, which has prevented outbreaks of cholera and other diseases. USAID provides materials and funds NGOs that build latrines.

December 25, 2005–January 21, 2006

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Dorothy M. Awosika
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Democracy Specialist**Tara S. Faconer**
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Afghanistan/OM to Pakistan/EXO**Karen J. Doswell**
GC/ENI to EGAT/DC**Virgolino L. Duarte**
Africa/WA to EGAT/EG/EPG**Claire E. Ehmann**
E&E/PO to E&E/EG**Vanessa Garza**
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PPC/P to EGAT/ESP/MPC**Thomas J. Johnstone Jr.**
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COMP/NE/OJT to Indonesia/BHS**William C. MacLaren**
CA/FM to Iraq/OFM**John P. McMahon**
EGAT/ED/PT to Ethiopia/ANR**Elizabeth Moushey**
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RIG/Baghdad to OIG/AIG/A**Howard E. Pfeffer**
OIG/A/HL&C to OIG/AIT&SA**Michele Russell**
COMP/NE/OJT to Peru/OHR**Gail Monique Spence**
Angola to WARP**Siana E. Tackett**
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PPC/P to AA/PPC**John M. Winfield**
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M/CFO/FPS to M/CFO/APC

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Comments, corrections, submissions, and suggestions for *FrontLines* are welcomed and should be sent by email to frontlines@usaid.gov; by mail to USAID, Ronald Reagan Building, Suite 6.10-020, Washington, D.C. 20523-6100; or by fax to 202-216-3035.

Donald Gambatesa Appointed Agency's Inspector General

Donald A. Gambatesa was sworn in Jan. 17 as USAID's fourth inspector general.

As such, Gambatesa is charged with leading independent audit and investigation activities to support integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness in USAID's operations and programs. The inspector general is responsible for keeping the Administrator and Congress fully

informed about problems and deficiencies in USAID programs and operations and the necessity for, and progress of, corrective actions.

Gambatesa previously served as the deputy director of the U.S. Marshals Service and has more than 30 years of federal law enforcement experience. He has worked in OIG investigations, and for 24 years was a special agent of the U.S. Secret Service, where he held several leadership positions managing protective and investigative operations at home and overseas.

In addition to USAID, Gambatesa serves as inspector general for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the African Development Foundation, the Inter-American Foundation, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

Gambatesa is a graduate of John Carroll University and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Executive Institute. He is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the National Executive Institute Associates.

USAID's former inspector general, Everett L. Mosley, retired in 2004. Several acting inspectors general carried out the duties of the post between that time and Gambatesa's appointment. ★



Donald A. Gambatesa

IN MEMORIAM

Arthur F. Byrnes, 88, died Dec. 30, 2005, in McLean, Va. From 1955 to the mid-1960s, Byrnes worked for USAID in Brazil, first in the field of education and then as deputy director of the Recife mission in northeast Brazil. He later became deputy director of USAID's mission in Ecuador. Other assignments included director of international training at USAID headquarters in Washington. Byrnes attended the Army War College.

John Damon Peabody Jr., 84, died Jan. 23 in Hancock, N.H. Peabody spent most of his career at USAID working on health programs that revolved around family planning and population control in Third World countries. His work included assignments in Turkey, Rio de Janeiro, Honduras, and Washington, D.C. He retired in 1980. Peabody

graduated from Trinity College in 1944 and served in the Naval Air Corps during World War II.

Walter J. Sherwin, 74, died Jan. 18, in Bethesda, Md. He began his career as a writer for *Scholastic Magazines* in New York, and then joined the foreign service in 1959. From 1965 to 1971, Sherwin worked in Burkina Faso, Madagascar, and Senegal. He then spent seven years in Washington before returning overseas to Niger and Guinea for five years. Sherwin retired in 1986 but consulted for several years on USAID projects. He also volunteered with reading for the blind and dyslexic and was trying to launch a similar project to provide textbooks on tape for the blind in Africa in their local languages. Born in Germany, Sherwin escaped Nazi persecution in 1939 by moving to the United States. ★

Human Rights Advocate Willie Grace Campbell Dies

Willie Grace Campbell, who spent five decades promoting human rights and women's empowerment around the world and advising USAID on these issues, died Feb. 6 in Los Angeles. She was 90.

Campbell was a member of USAID's Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid during the 1980s, offering advice on how to promote women's rights.

During the 1960s, Campbell launched voter education projects in six inner cities. She took part in the first White House Conference on Civil Rights, trained legions of female political candidates, pushed the League of Women Voters to challenge social inequities

with lawsuits, and served as vice chair of the federal African Development Foundation from age 75 until her death.

In 1945, Campbell helped establish a chapter of the League of Women Voters in Indianapolis. She served as the organization's state president before rising to the national board in 1959. In the 1970s, she became president of the National Women's Education Fund, part of the National Women's Political Caucus. At the same time, she worked for the league's Overseas Education Fund, trying to improve schooling in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

"What affects women in one country affects us all," she told *The Washington Post* in 1991. ★

Aid Pours into Philippines Village Devastated by Mudslide

GUINSAUGON, Philippines—Emergency aid poured in for a mudslide-devastated village in the eastern Philippines as rescuers desperately searched for survivors after a mudslide struck Feb. 17.

At least 84 people have been confirmed killed in the village, which is about 435 miles southeast of Manila, but officials said the death toll could be much higher. All 1,500 residents have been affected.

As of Feb. 21, nearly 1,000 people were missing, including 253 students and staff of an elementary school that was buried under tons of soft mud and debris, according to the National Disaster Coordinating Council.

An advance team of U.S. Marines arrived at the area Feb. 18 to help in the frantic rescue operations. Rescuers from Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan and other countries, as well as international agencies, were also on their way.

The United States has also dispatched two Navy ships and 17 helicopters to the area to boost the delivery of relief goods and other supplies needed for the rescue.

The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster

Assistance (OFDA) disbursed \$100,000 in aid for emergency relief supplies immediately after the disaster. In later days it added another \$150,000 for additional relief supplies and to cover transportation costs.

USAID/OFDA provided emergency relief commodities, including 100 rolls of plastic sheeting, 1,000 water containers, 1,000 blankets, and 400 body bags. U.S. Marine helicopters transported these commodities from Tacloban to the affected area Feb. 21. Philippine authorities say that about 2,900 villagers are being cared for in temporary evacuation sites, including about 450 survivors

from the surrounding area, as a precaution.

OFDA estimates that water, blankets, medicine, and food are needed for more than 1,600 people from the affected villages, as well as for potential additional evacuees from neighboring villages. Rubber boots and earthmoving equipment are required immediately for relief and recovery operations.

According to the Philippines Geosciences Bureau, the landslide area is 13 feet deep and covers approximately 2.5 square miles, making the area unstable and difficult to traverse. ★

Nearly 1,000 people were missing, including 253 students and staff of an elementary school.



U.S. Marines help Philippine villagers dig out of a mudslide that struck Guinsaugon Feb. 16.

Election Aid to Haiti Tops \$31M

René Prével is expected to be sworn in as Haiti's new president March 29, after besting more than 30 candidates in the nation's February elections that came off without major bloodshed.

That alone may be considered a small victory by international election observers in the Caribbean nation, which has been plagued with conflict for much of its history. USAID spent \$31 million over the last two years to support the electoral process.

In addition to contributing to the costs of voter registration and elections oversight carried out by the UN and the Organization of American States, USAID fielded national and international observer teams; conducted political polling; provided technical assistance to the country's Provisional Electoral Council; and helped train journalists.

The Agency also helped strengthen the ability of political parties to compete, including help with office and communications equipment; and helped conduct voter education drives. Election officials and international observers put the number of voters at 2.2 million—out of 3.5 million registered voters.

International observers have called the elections free and fair. However, protesters challenged the early results of Prével—and the country's electoral chief fled the country after receiving death threats. Prével, who is considered a champion of the poor, won just over 51 percent of votes cast.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the new president provides a “chance

for a country that has had too few chances. I think you will see that we will be looking at what resource needs we have for Haiti as this new government gets up and running.”

Donors are now looking for ways to extend assistance to the new administration. Since July 2004, the international donor community has provided over \$780 million to Haiti. Of that, the United States contributed \$277 million.

Currently, USAID/Haiti supports programs focused on public healthcare, community revitalization and empowerment, job creation, local government partnerships, education services, judicial system reforms, independent media, and agribusiness. Haiti is also one of the targeted countries under President Bush's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS relief.

With the inauguration of the new government, USAID will look for additional opportunities to introduce new programs to strengthen the parliament and local governments, the mission said. The local governance program will be carried out in conjunction with continuing stabilization activities, including short-term job creation activities. The jobs programs increase citizen participation in local decisionmaking, provide useful public works, and offer a monthly source of income to some of Haiti's citizens, the mission said.

The country remains the poorest in the Western Hemisphere, and today the annual per capita income is less than \$400. The life expectancy is 53 years, and an estimated 163,000 children are AIDS orphans. Just over half of the population can read. ★

MCC Sets \$60 Million Threshold Funding to Fight Corruption in Tanzania, Albania, and Paraguay

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) approved Threshold Program funding packages in January for three countries—Tanzania, Albania, and Paraguay—to tackle corruption over the next two years.

Tanzania will receive \$11 million to help civil society monitor the government's fight against corruption. It aims to strengthen the rule of law so corruption cases can be successfully tried and offenders convicted, establish a financial intelligence unit to detect financial crime, and increase the transparency of public procurement.

Albania will receive \$14 million to reduce corruption through reforms in tax administration, public procurement, and business registration over two years.

The MCC approved \$35 million for Paraguay to reduce corruption by strengthening the rule of law and fostering conditions for economic growth and poverty reduction.

The Threshold Program is designed to assist countries committed to reforms but that need help to reach a certain level before qualifying for funds from the Millennium

Challenge Account (MCA), which is administered by the MCC.

The announcement increases the number of threshold countries to five. Previously, MCC approved aid for Burkina Faso, which is trying to improve education for girls in 10 provinces that have the lowest girls' primary education completion rates; and Malawi, which is fighting corruption and improving fiscal management.

USAID, with its partners, is carrying out all threshold efforts in the five countries.

MCC Chief Executive Officer John Danilovich issued a statement congratulating the governments of Paraguay, Albania, and Tanzania “for their results-oriented program to root out corruption and improve the economic environment that leads to poverty reduction and private sector led growth.” He also thanked USAID for carrying out anticorruption projects in those countries.

Threshold Program assistance is designed to help countries address specific policy weaknesses indicated by country scores on 16 policy indicators central to MCA eligibility. ★

Liberia Bridge Part of Post-War U.S. Aid

MONROVIA, Liberia—Once it is reconstructed, the Barclayville Bridge will open up areas in the southeastern region of Liberia that had recently only been accessible by helicopter.

The bridge is part of a package of quick impact projects slated for the West African country by USAID after the democratically elected President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf took office Jan. 16.

The bridge repair is expected to be among the more symbolic and tangible results of the “quick and visible progress” Sirleaf called for in the first 150 days of her presidency. Other projects include work to enhance infrastructure, healthcare, education, job creation, and government efficiency.

“With the commitment of the new Liberian government, and the ongoing support of the international community, a brighter future for the population of all West Africa is within our reach,” Assistant Administrator Lloyd Pierson told the House subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights, and International Operations at a hearing in February, where he also outlined some of USAID’s continued efforts in the country.

He called Sirleaf’s election a “hopeful sign” for Liberia and the region.

Civil war broke out in Liberia in 1989 after rumblings of discord that began earlier

that decade. Despite a change in the administration—rebel leader Charles Taylor became president—fighting continued. More than 200,000 people were killed and about a million people left the country. After a ceasefire in 2003, Taylor was forced to resign and went into exile. A transitional government held power until Sirleaf’s victory.

Much work lies ahead. Liberia’s economy is in shambles with the unemployment rate hovering around 70 percent. The literacy rate is 20 percent, and the country’s youth has barely any formal education.

The U.S. government committed more than \$880 million for Liberia’s reconstruction over the past two years. Funding for 2006 is expected to top \$94 million, and a request for 2007 should top \$72 million.

Much has been spent providing humanitarian assistance, such as food aid and sanitation for 200,000 refugees and more than 270,000 internally displaced persons. The United States also spent \$10.4 million to support the October 2005 elections, including helping to register 1.3 million voters, 75 percent of whom showed up at the polls.

USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), whose mandate is to quickly deploy high-impact programs, began the Liberia Transition Initiative in 2004. Now, with



USAID helped train teachers who are taking part in Liberia’s Accelerated Learning Program.

Sirleaf’s election, OTI is revising its strategy to better respond to the new political environment on the ground now that the transitional government’s mandate and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2003 have expired.

Among its successes so far has been an accelerated learning program, which helps youths catch up on their education by compressing six years of primary education into three years.

About 6,300 students in more than 110

schools are participating. The Liberia mission took over funding the program in February, said John Gattorn, a program manager in the OTI. “There’s a lot of positive energy,” he said.

USAID is spending \$6 million on improving governance, fighting corruption, and promoting sound economic management. And an infrastructure project will repair several schools, a hospital, roads, and other public facilities, while providing work to more than 1,500 people. ★

Horn of Africa Receives \$110 Million Food Aid in Growing Emergency

▲ FROM PAGE 1

Some 30 to 50 percent of livestock in the region have reportedly died. Food prices have skyrocketed throughout the region, while livestock values have decreased dramatically. Malnutrition rates are hovering around 30 percent—well above the 15 percent at which experts begin referring to the situation as an emergency. The UN’s World Food Program (WFP) estimates that more than 5 million people in this region are close to starving.

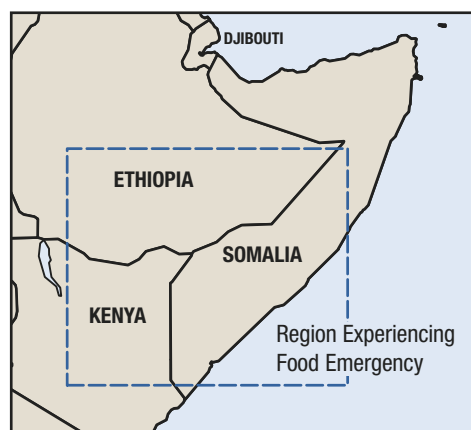
“The real epicenter of the current crisis is northeast Kenya, southeast Ethiopia, and southern Somalia,” said Nancy Estes, director of Food for Peace in the USAID REDSO office in Kenya.

The U.S. ambassador to UN food agencies in Rome, Tony Hall, recently visited communities in northern Kenya and witnessed first-hand the devastating situation.

USAID’s Title II food assistance to the Horn of Africa is going through the WFP and NGOs. A U.S. wheat-for-local-corn swap in Kenya will fill a local wheat shortage and has allowed distributions to begin ahead of the arrival of the wheat.

The crisis situation in the Horn of Africa is expected to continue for the next few months as food shipments and other aid begin to arrive and are distributed. But development workers already worry about the next rainy season from March to July. Kenya’s meteorological service is predicting the rainfall will not be enough.

“If those rains don’t come,” said Estes, “then we’re facing a huge international crisis.”



Jonathan Dworken, acting director of USAID’s Office of Food for Peace, is working to make sure that the U.S. government is prepared to respond, but he stresses that the current situation isn’t just another hunger crisis. “The entire way of life of the people in this region—social, political, and economic—has been eroded by years of drought, marginalization, and conflict,” he said. “The situation here has been described as the collapse of a livelihood system—something that no amount of food assistance alone can address.”

“The combination of desperate poverty and lack of governance is dangerous to the entire region—and maybe beyond the region. Somehow we’ve got to find the right resources, and enough of them, to deal with the long-term issues. Otherwise, we’ll be struggling to deal with this kind of humanitarian crisis, and worse, at shorter and shorter intervals.” ★



A student in Wajir, northeastern Kenya, receives a school lunch from the World Food Program.

New Foreign Aid Director Will Improve Coordination, Bush Official Tells ACVFA Meeting

The Bush administration decision to combine the next administrator of USAID with the new State Department position of director of foreign assistance aims to improve coordination of U.S. aid now spread over more than 15 federal agencies, says one White House official.

"We need more policy coordination and cohesion," said Faryar Shirzad, who is a deputy assistant to the president for international economic affairs and deputy national security advisor. "It's an ongoing process."

Shirzad, speaking at the Feb. 22 Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA) meeting, said that to promote development—which is part of his job at the National Security Council—the administration is focused on

- opening markets to promote growth
- working with international financial institutions and bilaterally with other countries to stabilize economic policies and prevent great shocks from energy prices and other issues
- promoting the global economy through a rules-based trading system

The ACVFA meeting, held in Washington, D.C., also included talks on

the U.S. foreign assistance budget, potential pandemic outbreaks, and USAID's work in Africa.

Shirzad said that "the president increased aid more than any president since Harry Truman," and noted that 34 percent of foreign aid by the G-7 industrial nations comes from the United States.

Bush intends to leave his mark on foreign assistance and to make sure that a development agenda "takes hold" through sound policies rather than throwing money at chronic problems, he said.

One step in that direction was the attempt by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to move State and USAID closer through the creation of the new director of foreign assistance position, which will oversee and coordinate the foreign assistance programs at State and USAID, he said.

The administration also created, some years ago, a special directorate at the National Security Council headed by former USAID official John Simon to tackle the development agenda. Bush also created special programs with billions in funding such as the Millennium Challenge Account for well-performing poor countries, the

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and the Malaria Initiative.

In addition, the administration is working through the Doha agenda of international trade talks to improve trade opportunities for poor countries through tariff cuts and technical assistance. However, Shirzad warned that trade deals also require support at home where U.S. producers may lobby for their own interests.

The Bush aide noted that the president asked the private sector to mobilize assistance by U.S. corporations. Those donations often go through U.S. nongovernmental organizations, whose leaders were in the audience at the ACVFA meeting.

He noted that former presidents Clinton and Bush were among those asked to mobilize donations to the 2004 tsunami, the Pakistan earthquake, and Central American flooding.

Shirzad said that a major change in the way USAID, State, and other agencies share their work is upsetting to some: "We all panic about boxes being shifted and turf lines moved," he said.

"But we all got into this [assistance work] to have a job, but also a calling and to make a difference.

"I'd ask that you understand that [at the White House] you have got a group of people very, very, very committed to the development agenda that will leave a legacy you can be proud of." ★

President Bush intends to leave his mark on foreign assistance and to make sure that a development agenda "takes hold" through sound policies rather than throwing money at chronic problems

Online Food Safety and Marketing Course Reaches Developing Countries

USAID and the World Bank have launched a distance learning course that is bringing together a virtual community of as many as 400 people to talk about ways developing countries can meet food safety standards and successfully sell products in international markets.

The classes began Jan. 30 and run through the end of March.

Public officials and representatives from the private sector and NGOs are among the participants, and the vast majority of them already deal with food and marketing standards on a day-to-day basis. Among them are representatives from 30 countries, including Laos, Bangladesh, Ukraine, Ghana, and Honduras.

There has been "significant e-discussion on the chat forums, and the curriculum content—in terms of readings—is excellent," said David Soroko, an agricultural economist in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade's (EGAT) Office of Agriculture.

"The level of interest illustrates a growing developing country realization that product standards, and specifically food standards, will have a tremendous impact on farm, firm, and country competitiveness, government policy, employment, and individual professional careers," Soroko added.

Product standards are becoming more important in determining whether a country's agricultural producers can compete and make a profit. But meeting specific standards in agricultural, food, and other

exports presents challenges in developing countries.

EGAT and the World Bank already provide technical assistance in developing countries to improve product standards and competitiveness. They say that strengthening quality, sanitation, environmental management, and other aspects of the production process can spur economic growth.

Take fresh fruit and vegetables: Their global trade value has exploded over the last decade, Soroko explained. "If a country with the right production conditions and location can create a food-standard regulatory environment that supports profitable farm and firm participation in global markets, the investment and employment impact may be unlimited," he said.

The virtual course, named "Standards and Trade: Challenges and Opportunities for Developing Country Exports," invited facilitators from international organizations, governments, the private sector, NGOs, and universities to lead the virtual classrooms



Maintaining production standards is critical for successful vegetable export programs. A distance learning program sponsored by USAID and the World Bank is tackling this issue in developing countries.

and e-discussions over seven weeks. There are also course materials and case studies available online.

Internet access and language barriers have been challenging, but not insurmountable. In Zambia, the World Bank created a bank of computers for course participants who do not have internet access.

Following the course, participants are

expected to join with others from their country to come up with an action plan highlighting some of their specific problems and potential solutions.

The classes mark the first time the Office of Agriculture has implemented a distance learning course. The office is spending about \$70,000 on the effort. ★

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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.

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Rice also used the occasion to announce the Businesses Building Bridges initiative, a public-private partnership with U.S. business leaders that will help cement business relationships and other productive linkages between the U.S. and Afghanistan private sectors.

Over the next year, these entrepreneurs will use their expertise and knowledge of U.S. business practices to help launch programs to mentor

the Afghan business community—including women entrepreneurs. These linkages will broaden understanding of business environments in both countries and help develop innovative ways to increase foreign investment. American business leaders will also be traveling to Afghanistan and will host senior Afghan business executives in the United States to further exchange knowledge and skills. ★

Bush Asks \$23.7B Foreign Aid in ‘07

▲ FROM PAGE 1

The overall U.S. foreign aid budget request continues to focus on the War on Terror, increasing aid to key strategic states such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sudan, much of which will be carried out by USAID. Congress approved \$20.9 billion for foreign assistance accounts in fiscal year 2006.

The new USAID budget focuses on Africa’s long-term development by fully funding presidential initiatives such as

the Malaria Initiative, the Initiative to End Hunger in Africa, the Africa Global Competitiveness Initiative, the Women’s Justice and Empowerment Initiative, the African Education Initiative, and the new Development Credit Africa Housing and Infrastructure Facility.

USAID is also seeking funding to restore foreign service staff needed to oversee the Agency’s responsibilities, as well as funds to ensure security of employees and facilities worldwide. ★

U.S. Trade Agency Gives \$360,000 to New Partnership for Africa’s Development

Washington File staff

WASHINGTON—Reflecting President Bush’s commitment to expand U.S. cooperation with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) announced Feb. 13 it would award a \$360,000 grant to the NEPAD Secretariat to help it prepare a guide for investors in Africa and move three regional infrastructure projects toward implementation.

USTDA Director Thelma J. Askey and Chief Executive Firmino Mucavele signed the grant agreement in Johannesburg, South Africa, on behalf of the U.S. government and NEPAD, respectively. NEPAD is an initiative spearheaded by African leaders in 2001 to create a new vision and an integrated socioeconomic development framework for renewal of the continent.

The USTDA grant award follows a June 2005 meeting between President Bush and South African President Thabo Mbeki in which Bush committed U.S. support to advance NEPAD’s vision of improved governance, better economic management, and regional integration.

These strategies, a USTDA press release notes, are consistent with the economic development goals of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provides beneficiary countries in sub-Saharan Africa with preferential access to the U.S. market. USAID is working with NEPAD to help strengthen Africa’s agricultural devel-

opment, and is a major player in AGOA efforts to spur trade and economic development.

NEPAD has selected AfricaGlobal Partners LLC of Washington to deliver the USTDA-funded technical assistance. In addition to the preparation of a NEPAD guide for investors, the technical assistance program will provide project promotion services related to three priority projects: the Benin/Togo/Ghana Power Interconnect Project, the COMESA Telecom Project, and the Addis Ababa Dry Port Project.

If implemented, the USTDA document added, these projects will help establish essential infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa to further the objectives of AGOA.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds various forms of technical assistance, feasibility studies, training, orientation visits, and business workshops that support the



Women pick green beans in a field in Ethiopia. The beans are about to be graded, packed, and shipped to Europe where they will be sold at supermarkets. This is just one example of a project USAID runs helping farmers improve and export their produce.

development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment.

USTDA’s strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decisionmaking in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment, and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission,

USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that could benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.

Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. FrontLines also contributed to this article.



A soil and peat cleansing bed in Uganda's flower industry, which has received support from the Strengthening the Competitiveness of Private Enterprise project.

USAID Boosts Ugandan Flower Exports

KAMPALA, Uganda—Rosebud LTD, a Ugandan company, delivered its first shipment of 500,000 roses to the United States in early February, just in time for the floral industry's busy season around Valentine's Day. The company, Uganda's largest flower producer, is exporting to the United States for the first time, after linking up with Miami-based Orange Flower Connect. USAID assists Ugandan flower exporters with U.S. entry regulations, export documentation, and certification of origin. The work is done through the Strengthening the Competitiveness of Private Enterprise project, which aims to enhance Uganda's export capacity.

"This is a remarkable step for Uganda, and we are glad to be a part of the progress," said Lloyd Pierson, assistant administrator for the Africa bureau.

Flower exports from African nations enter the U.S. market quota and duty free under the African Growth and Opportunity Act trade legislation, which helps African companies gain access to the global marketplace. Floriculture is Uganda's fifth largest export earner, and it is estimated that every direct job in the flower industry supports five individuals. For Ugandans, this newly tapped U.S. market has great potential to increase incomes and improve livelihoods, especially for women, who make up 60–80 percent of workers on flower farms, Pierson said.

Rural India Gets Clean Energy

WASHINGTON—General Electric Co. (GE) and USAID on Jan. 26 launched a joint project to increase access to modern and affordable energy services in rural India.

Over two years, the partnership aims to provide up to four communities, home to about 15,000 people, with access to clean energy through GE power generation technologies using agricultural waste (such as banana leaves), wind, and solar resources.

USAID is contributing \$600,000 to the effort, while GE will employ its worldwide network of partners to invest \$2.7 million in the development of new rural electrification technologies. Some 56 percent of India's 700 million rural residents lack adequate and/or reliable power supplies.

"Access to clean energy helps rural communities create new opportunities for employment and income generation," said James Smith, deputy assistant administrator for the Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade bureau.

"This can help meet a variety of develop-

ment objectives such as improved health care services, enhanced agricultural productivity, increased access to clean water, and economic empowerment."

Africa Receives \$4.8 Million in Food Aid

WASHINGTON—USAID is providing an additional \$4.8 million to southern Africa for food assistance. The money will be used in areas of Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia where there is a deteriorating food situation.

The money is in addition to the Agency's ongoing food assistance to these three countries and to Lesotho, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. More than 12 million people in the six countries are in need of emergency food assistance. Several factors are exacerbating the conditions, including a poor harvest in 2004 and 2005 due to erratic rainfall, poverty, HIV/AIDS, and government mismanagement.

The latest money will be used to care for malnourished children and to help local farmers grow food to provide for their families in the coming months. The money will also be used in communities to provide clean water and sanitation facilities. Since June 2005, USAID's Office of Food for Peace has provided more than 380,000

metric tons of food assistance. The Agency is also supporting programs in the affected countries to promote long-term improvements in agriculture that could help stave off future food emergencies.

Former Accountant Sentenced for Theft

WASHINGTON—USAID's Office of the Inspector General announced that on Jan. 17, Michael Steiger, 41, of Stafford, Va., was sentenced in U.S. District Court to one year probation, including six months of home detention and 150 hours of community service.

The sentence followed Steiger's Sept. 26, 2005, plea of guilty to interstate transportation of stolen and fraudulently obtained property in violation of 18 U.S.C. Section 2314.

The guilty plea and subsequent sentence resulted from Steiger's theft of \$58,337 from his former employer, Management Sciences for Development, Inc., a Washington, D.C.-based company carrying out USAID projects. Steiger was the company's accountant/controller at the time of the theft.

Heavy Rains Cause Flooding in Bolivia

LA PAZ, Bolivia—USAID is providing more than \$300,000 in emergency relief supplies and transportation here after unusually heavy rains in eight of Bolivia's nine departments, or administrative regions, caused flooding and landslides.

Five people have died, and about 600 homes have been damaged, according to the Bolivian National Civil Defense. The bad weather has also damaged agricultural lands.

Preliminary reports from the Bolivian government and international organizations indicate that La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, and Beni are the most affected regions. USAID emergency relief items include rolls of plastic sheeting for temporary shelter purposes, large water tanks, water containers, blankets, and personal hygiene kits.

Four agency consultants are also working on assessments to identify further needs.

Microsoft Donates \$41 Million to NGOs

REDMOND, Wash.—Microsoft Corp. announced Feb. 22 that it is donating \$41 million in software and cash to two umbrella NGOs whose members carry out humanitarian relief operations across the globe.

The money will go to NetHope, which comprises 17 global NGOs working in international development, and to the Interagency Working Group on Emergency Capacity Building, which is made up of seven groups, including Mercy Corps, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Save the Children.

The software should improve collaboration among these groups and those they work with in the field. The \$41 million effort comes after Microsoft teamed with CRS to provide it a tailored portal to help the NGO accelerate its relief response to the South Asia earthquake and tsunami in December 2004. Microsoft considered the effort a success and decided to replicate it through the donation.

"Sadly, disasters do happen," Pamela Passman, Microsoft's vice president of Global Corporate Affairs, said in a statement. "Through our long-term involvement with disaster response, we have built programs designed to maximize use of our technology expertise as well as our cash contributions. Our partnerships with nonprofit organizations are designed to provide long-term value for the organizations and their ability to respond in crisis situations."

In the same statement, Molly Tschang, NetHope's executive director, said: "Microsoft has played a catalytic role in fostering strong partnership among leading international NGOs, enabling them to unleash the power of technology to solve common problems cooperatively. This collaboration model creates leverage for technology to dramatically improve the efficiency, speed, and information share by those who need it most during emergencies." ★

TUBERCULOSIS TREATMENT IN INDIA



A clinic for tuberculosis treatment in India, a country of more than a billion people, where USAID is making directly observed treatment strategy (DOTS) accessible. DOTS coverage rose from 50 percent in 2002 to 65 percent in 2003. The goal is to achieve full national coverage by 2005.

Ten Young Former Gangsters Start Businesses on Guatemala Reality Show

GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala—A less-than-typical, five-episode reality show will air here in March: it will follow the transformation of 10 former young gangsters into small business owners.

Funded by USAID and private businesses, the reality gang show dubbed *Challenge 10: Peace for the Ex*, will document the life of the 10 former gangsters as they live together for two weeks in the same house. They will be taught basic skills in accounting, customer service, human resources, sales, marketing, and motivation. At the end of the show, they will establish a car wash and a shoe repair business.

“This is basically trying to promote the idea of rehabilitation as an alternative to relying only upon repression or law enforcement as a means,” said José Garzon, a democracy and governance officer with USAID/Guatemala. “When you have 150,000 gang members in a country with only about 8,000 jail spaces, you have to figure out how to deal with the rest.”

“A lot of gang members want to get out of gangs and have left,” he added, “but they are hard to employ.”

The show participants had already abandoned gang life. Some had joined evangelical churches, as under gang rules, religion and death are the only legitimate ways to get out of gangs.

In the show, five of the participants will spend their time washing cars in the parking lot of a housewares store in downtown Guatemala City. The other five participants will set up and run a small shoeshine and repair shop in an upscale office building in a residential neighborhood.

Quite often, it is the lack of opportunities that motivates young people to join gangs, Garzon said. “We have to give them a chance,” he said, adding that the reality show is doing just that.



“You hear about a lot of awful things that gangs do, so it’s easy to dehumanize them. But when you hear a life story, of someone who got in and out, it has a whole new meaning for people.” —José Garzon, USAID

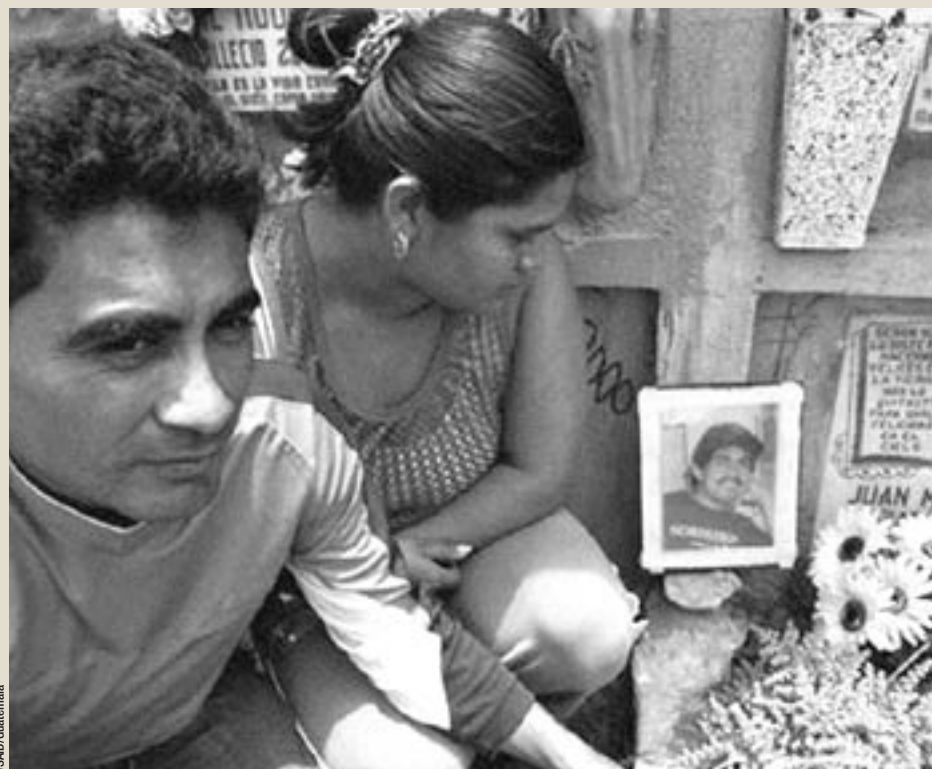
“Many young people are able to give up gangs by joining a church, but no one will give them jobs,” he added. “They are just

there with bibles in their hands.... The lack of opportunities motivates them again as gangsters.”

USAID invested about \$300,000 in this project through the Global Development Alliance. USAID/Guatemala has put in another \$900,000 overtime. The Guatemalan private sector and federal government have supported the program, which is being carried out by Creative Associates.

The project targets youth at risk, aiming to deter them from becoming involved in gangs as well as rehabilitating former gang members. It runs three youth houses, sponsored by donors and the Guatemalan government, where former gangsters can get nonformal education and receive counseling. The project also worked with five crime prevention councils that organize programs with schools and get youth at risk involved in sports.

“The idea [behind the show] is to put a human face on the whole phenomenon because it hasn’t been done before,” Garzon said. “You hear about a lot of awful things that gangs do, so it’s easy to dehumanize them. But when you hear a life story, of someone who got in and out, it has a whole new meaning for people.” ★



USAID in Guatemala works with youth, aiming to deter them from becoming involved in gangs as well as rehabilitating former gang members. A project runs three youth houses, sponsored by the Guatemalan government, where former gangsters get nonformal education and receive counseling. It also works with five crime prevention councils and schools that get youth at risk involved in sports and hobbies such as chess.

