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First Lady Highlights FBCO Contributions in Africa



Mrs. Laura Bush addresses the Inter-Religious Campaign against Malaria, Wednesday, June 27, 2007, at the Maputo Seminary in Maputo, Mozambique. White House photo by Shealah Craighead.

At the end of June, First Lady Laura Bush traveled through four African countries: Senegal, Mozambique, Zambia and Mali. Focused on education, clean water, AIDS, and malaria, the First Lady visited faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) involved in these key issues.

At the Mozambique Maputo Seminary, Mrs. Bush announced the first grant of almost \$2 million to the Inter-Religious Campaign Against Malaria through the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI). The Campaign was established by ten faith leaders in Maputo representing the Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and Baha’i communities with the participation of the Washington National Cathedral and the Adventist and Development Relief Agency.

The First Lady noted, “Faith communities exist in every village in the country; therefore, faith leaders can reach their members and impact their attitudes and behavior related to malaria...trust is built, and hope is provided in places where hope is scarce. Churches, monasteries, temples, mosques, and synagogues have gone where no one else would go.” This grant is expected to allow the Campaign to reach over a million and a half people in the fight against malaria.

In Zambia, the First Lady highlighted the role of FBCOs in fighting disease and providing clean water through their involvement in the Zambia Partnership and the Zambia National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework. “Because of these partnerships, there's now great optimism to the challenge of HIV/AIDS. And one of the greatest sources of hope is the compassion of people of faith. In the United States and around the world, I've seen how houses of worship inspire volunteers with their messages of charity and hope...they know that religious institutions bring a personal, healing touch to the fight against AIDS. Their compassion is right on display here in Zambia.”

The malaria work of the Zambia Partnership is expected to reach approximately one million young children, pregnant mothers and people infected with HIV/AIDS. Through programs supported by the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), nearly 100,000 people are currently receiving antiretroviral treatment.

State of New Hampshire Introduces Faith-Based Office

Under the leadership of Commissioner John Stephen, the state of New Hampshire recently announced the establishment of a faith-based office



to be housed under the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. The faith-based office will play a key role in helping faith-based and community organizations to network together to meet social needs in their local areas.

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In a congratulatory letter to Commissioner Stephen on behalf of President Bush, White House FBCI Director Jay Hein praised the new office as a positive step forward, stating: "We are proud that under your leadership, New Hampshire has become the thirty-third state to form a statewide faith-based and community initiative. Today's partnership is evidence of your powerful vision of compassion and commitment to strategically resolve the crises our communities face. With similar strides, we will see a lasting impact one state, one city, one neighborhood and one life at a time."

National Summit on Supplemental Services and Public School Choice

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings delivered remarks at the National Summit on Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and Public School Choice on June 28, 2007 in Arlington. Spellings discussed the school choice and tutoring options available under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and announced the results of a RAND Corporation study focusing on the achievement of SES students from nine large urban districts.

The RAND study demonstrates that SES effectively improves student achievement, with impact increasing as students continue in the program. African-American and Hispanic students represent the highest participation rates in SES, followed by limited English proficient students and students with disabilities.

At the Summit, the Department distributed a draft handbook containing ideas and strategies on a variety of issues related to effectively implementing school choice and SES. The handbook also features methods of reaching out to

parents and informing them about SES and school choice.

The Department is working to improve SES implementation and to help students access options for free tutoring more easily. Under its NCLB reauthorization proposal, for example, the Department will allow schools to make tutoring available to students as soon as it knows a school needs improvement. In addition, more funding will be provided for free tutoring to students in rural areas, English language learners, and those with disabilities.

Parents and parent organizations attending the Summit emphasized the significant role that faith-based and community organizations can play, not only as approved providers, but also in SES outreach efforts.

For more information about the Summit and a complete copy of the report, please visit www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2007/06/06272007.html.