



FRONT LINES

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Under U.S. tropical forest legislation, developing countries can transfer their national debts to local funds to protect biodiversity—a “debt-for-nature” swap. See page 16.



The endangered yellow-headed parrot is getting protection from poachers and wildfires in a 260,000-acre preserve in Belize.

Photo by Programme for Belize

FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVES:

Peace and Security

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US to Provide \$48B to Fight AIDS, Malaria, TB

By Ben Barber

President Bush signed a bill July 30 providing \$48 billion over five years to fight AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis.

The lion’s share of the money—\$39 billion—will more than double the \$15 billion spent since 2003 under the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

PEPFAR has been widely recognized abroad as a successful example of U.S. foreign assistance on par with the post-World War II Marshall Plan. It placed 1.7 million people on lifesaving antiretroviral medication. More than half of PEPFAR’s \$4.6 billion budget in 2007 was spent through USAID.

The bill signed by the president is called the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States



Africans line up for AIDS care and treatment provided through U.S. assistance, which was nearly tripled to \$48 billion for the next five years under a bill signed July 30 by President Bush.

Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008.

It authorizes \$39 billion for HIV/AIDS, \$5 billion for malaria, and \$4 billion for TB

over five years. The massive bill gives USAID:

- ▶ joint responsibility with the Global AIDS Coordinator to use HIV/AIDS funds to cover food and nutrition.

see AIDS on page 15 ▶

Bush Tells USAID to Keep Democracy Focus

President Bush addressed more than 600 diplomats, democracy activists, and USAID employees in the Ronald Reagan Building July 24 to hail the Agency’s work supporting freedom and democracy around the world during the seven years of his administration.

“I want to thank all those who work for this very important Agency. I appreciate you being on the front lines of compassion and decency and liberty,” Bush told Administrator Henrietta Fore.

He spoke during Captive Nations Week, observed during July each year since it was set up in 1959 by President Eisenhower to take note of countries suppressed by Soviet communism.

Those countries are now independent. Bush said today’s “captive nations” are now oppressed not by foreign powers but by their own dictators, such as Iran, Sudan, Syria, and Zimbabwe. Even countries which the United States had

good relations with, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and China, have been asked to improve human rights.

Bush said his administration has worked to spread democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Georgia, Lebanon, and the Congo. He said Kuwait, Liberia, Morocco, and Pakistan have also advanced democracy.

USAID and the State Department played a central role in these efforts through more than \$1 billion a year in support for elections, legislative training, the free press, civil society, and other elements vital for democracy.

Bush also looked to the future—beyond the final months of his second term—and called upon the next presidents to continue to support freedom around the world.

He said U.S. leaders since George Washington believed freedom was a universal cause

see BUSH on page 15 ▶

Fore Dedicates USAID Mission in Vietnam

By Hal Lipper

Administrator Henrietta Fore dedicated USAID’s new Vietnam mission during a three-day visit in July to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Fore told Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung that the United States was looking to deepen its relationship with Vietnam and supports its economic reforms and adoption of the rule of law.

This year, USAID will provide around \$70 million for Vietnam, about \$48 million of which is for HIV/AIDS.

In Hanoi, Fore visited USAID-funded information technology classes for the disabled and struck the gong that opens trading at the Hanoi Securities Trading Center. USAID has been helping Vietnam develop its securities laws and regulations.

see VIETNAM on page 14 ▶



Photo by USAID

Administrator Henrietta Fore and President Bush at July 24 event at Ronald Reagan Building observing Captive Nations Week.

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INSIDE DEVELOPMENT

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ...

A column devoted to what our partners and others in the field of foreign assistance are saying about development.

The following is an excerpted memo of June 1, 2008:

From: Norman E. Borlaug, Emeritus Advisor, International Maize and Wheat Center, Mexico City

To: Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Sen. Herb Kohl (D-Wis.), Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.), and Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)

Subject: In Search of New Green Revolutions

World Food Situation

... Sadly, several decades of complacency in industrialized nations towards food security has led us to the current imbalance between food demand and supply... The consequent skyrocketing food prices are likely to push another 100 million of the world's poorest people into chronic hunger for the next several years, at the very least.

The current global food crisis can be reversed with determined leadership, stimulatory policies, and increased financial support. The solutions are straightforward. We must help the poorest farmers gain access to fertilizer, seeds, and small-scale irrigation. If we set our minds to this task, hundreds of millions can double food output within one or two seasons. If we do not, more hunger, desperation, and chaos await us all.

Sixty percent of the world's hungry are found in Asia and 15 percent in Latin America, Central and West Asia, and North Africa. Most governments in these regions are capable of financing—with assistance from the World Bank and regional development banks—the necessary agricultural development programs to ramp up food production. However, for the 25 percent of the world's hungry who live in sub-Saharan Africa nations—almost all agrarian-based societies—there will be no escape from poverty and misery without significantly greater external assistance from the United States and other privileged countries.

The concept of bio-fuels is a good one. At the moment, ethanol produced by sugarcane is the best global option. However, rapid increases in the use of cereal grains and oil crops in the North America and Europe to produce ethanol and bio-diesel have exacerbated the current food shortages

and price spikes. The U.S. should stop subsidizing the diversion of our corn (now 70 million metric tons) to ethanol and Europe should stop subsidizing the displacement of food crops by oil seeds, such as canola, for bio-fuel. Making ethanol from organic waste, especially cellulosic materials, is where we should aim our policies and R&D [research and development] investment priorities. Most importantly, however, is the urgent and long-overdue need for a comprehensive program to encourage greater energy conservation in transport, industry, and heating and cooling of our homes and buildings.

Fertilizer Situation

Fertilizer is the food of plants. Annually, roughly 80 million metric tons of nitrogen are produced synthetically and add 1 billion tons to our food supply. Without synthetic fertilizers, as much as 40 percent of the world's people cannot eat. Fertilizer production and transport are energy-intensive activities. Moreover, because of inefficient application methods and chemical compounds, only 35 to 50 percent of the nitrogen applied to the soil actually ends up in the plant. Surprisingly, no new fertilizers of consequence have been developed since the 1950s.

We need a four-pronged strategy to deal with soaring fertilizer prices.

1) Investment credits to bring more nitrogen production capacity on stream and to develop phosphate and potassium mineral deposits.

2) Research discovery grants and credits to develop more efficient fertilizers and application methods, both from the standpoint of production and use.

3) Promotion of precision agriculture techniques in industrialized countries and basic training in low-income countries, especially Africa, to assist farmers to obtain the highest fertilizer efficiency rates possible with currently available fertilizers.

4) Targeted fertilizer subsidies for chronically food insecure farmers, which are the least market-distorting, and linked to effective soil health agriculture extension programs are needed, especially for Africa.

Crop Production Technical Efficiency

Overcoming global food shortages must focus primarily on improving productivity of staple foods. Globally, three cereals—corn (720 million metric tons), wheat (620 million metric tons) and rice (410 million metric tons, milled rice equivalents) make up about two-



A Sierra Leone farmer holds stalks of rice before it is separated into small grains.

thirds of the total food system...

Sub-Saharan Africa calls for new undertakings, which will need to rely on more crop options for sustaining agriculture and propelling agro-processing as a source of income. Improving productivity of sorghum, millet, cassava, yam, and banana/plantain must be high on the R&D agenda for Africa. In addition, rice should receive a high priority, as Africa has the ecological conditions to be self-sufficient, yet is importing nearly half of its current consumption of 23 million tons

U.S. Food Aid Policy

... The U.S. policy of supplying all contributions to food aid as domestically produced grain transported on U.S. ships comes at a very high premium (35 to 40 percent higher than local purchasing and shipping) and often exacerbates delivery through congested ports,

especially in Africa. Congress should move to allow up to 25 percent of the appropriation for USAID's food aid program to be used to purchase food locally at the discretion of the administrator of USAID when local market conditions are appropriate.

Biotechnology

Globally, about 300 million acres (120 million hectares) are planted to transgenic crops produced through the science of biotechnology. These are generally referred to as genetically modified (GM) crops... The United States should continue to energetically support the development and safe use of biotechnology around the world, and especially in developing countries.

USAID

USAID played a crucial role in the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, the term

USDA-ARS/Land Grant Universities and Colleges

United States agricultural research, education and development institutions—namely USDA and Land Grant Universities and Colleges—have a great role to play in helping counterpart organizations, especially in Africa, strengthen their human resource and institutional capacities to modernize smallholder agriculture. I am talking about partnering U.S. institutions with developing country institutions in a grand agricultural knowledge initiative (\$50 million per year). Graduate student scholarships and shorter-term, visiting scientist programs to U.S. institutions, such as the USDA Borlaug Fellows program, should also be significantly expanded and given an adequate and reliable funding base (\$25 million per year). Neglect of international development and over reliance on private sector development agencies has caused internationally focused agriculture research and graduate student training to wither at our universities, thus leaving our country without adequate numbers of new agriculture scientists, international networks and access to global agricultural developments.

International Agricultural Research Centers

The Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research and associated international research centers have a vital role to play in the next "Doubly Green" or "Ever-Green" Revolution. Their total funding has eroded by 50 percent, in real terms over the past 20 years... I recommend that U.S. contribution to CGIAR be increased to \$100 million in fiscal year 2009, and maintained at 20 percent of the total budget for at least the next 10 years....

As you chart the course of this great nation for the future benefit of our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, I ask you to think more boldly and humanely about the Third World and develop a new version of the Marshall plan, this time not to rescue a war-torn Europe, but now to help the nearly 1 billion mostly rural poor people still trapped in hunger and misery. It is within America's technical and financial power to help end this human tragedy and injustice, if we set our hearts and minds to the task. ★

Photo by Laura Larrigue, USAID

MISSION OF THE MONTH



Adrienne Mukansanga, a nurse at the USAID-supported Nyamagabe Health Centre in Rwanda's Southern Province, administers a vaccination.

RWANDA



"The project came at the right time," said Paul Jabo, the vice mayor in charge of economic affairs in Gasabo District. "Now, the link between the administration and health is obligatory, and the mayors are responsible for the lives of their citizens...and Twubakane is there to support the process."

Many Rwandans now have access to high-quality health care according to USAID's Weller. "The overall health of Rwandans is improving as men, women, and children receive family planning, malaria, and nutrition services without needing to come to the capital city," he said.

Nearly 140 health facilities assisted by Twubakane have trained personnel who can provide a wide range of family planning methods, including long-term options. Initial data indicates significant increases in the use of modern family planning methods.

"I was always struggling with either a child or pregnancy," explained Muriel Mukandinda, a 39-year-old mother of five, as she was waiting to receive family planning services at a Twubakane-supported health center in the Eastern Province. "Now I have the time and energy to do more, and I think it will result in my farm being more productive."

Malaria rates are falling as well. At the end of March, Twubakane had trained over 3,200 community health care workers to treat children under 5 within 24 hours of the onset of fever.

Sister Scholastique, a nurse in Kicukiro, a malaria endemic district on the outskirts of Kigali, explained that "since we introduced home-based management for malaria, we are no longer overwhelmed by many patients at the health center. Most of the fever cases are treated at the community level by community health workers, and we receive only severe cases and have time for preventive activities." ★

Decentralization and Health Program to supply funds to the new districts so they could better provide services.

Twubakane (meaning "let's build together" in Kinyarwanda, the local language) operates in 12 districts across Rwanda and serves over 3 million people.

Twubakane districts are eligible to receive financial support if they can demonstrate the ability to plan, budget, and manage activities.

"Twubakane is a unique program," said Dennis Weller, USAID's mission director in Rwanda. "Without a responsive and capable government, adequate health care is not sustainable. Twubakane balances the need to develop the abilities of government officials and systems, and ensure access to life-saving health services and medicines—governance and health go hand-in-hand."

Good governance enables districts, health facilities, and communities to provide quality services for maternal and child health including family planning, management of childhood illnesses, and prevention and treatment of malaria.

Results

District incentive funds are being used to purchase equipment for health facilities, build public latrines, increase enrollment in Rwanda's community health insurance programs, conduct fiscal censuses, and other activities.

New District Governments Provide Health Care to Rwandans

By David Kampf

Challenge

Rwanda is still largely associated with the genocide and ethnic conflict that overwhelmed its population in 1994. But much has changed since the end of the war. The country now enjoys greater stability, safety, and solid economic growth.

Despite these advances, Rwanda ranks near the bottom of the U.N. Human Development Index which measures well-being around the world, ranking 161 out of 177 countries. The country is burdened with a small economy, few natural resources, and a high poverty rate.

Eighty percent of Rwandans rely on subsistence agriculture. The country's women have an average of six children, and the use of modern methods of family planning remains low. And many health indicators—maternal, infant, and under-5 childhood mortality—have only recently returned to pre-genocide levels.

Innovative Response

In 2005, the Rwandan government initiated a process of redistricting and administrative reform, forming new local governments empowered to deliver basic services, including health care. Districts are now held accountable for achieving results.

In that same year, USAID launched the Twubakane

INSIGHTS

FROM
HENRIETTA H. FORE



On July 16, I spoke at the closing ceremony of the three-day African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) forum in Washington. We are now seven years out from the start of this initiative to help African entrepreneurs take advantage of free and open trade with the United States, and to increase their economic prospects at home. This past year has been especially rewarding.

Trade between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa increased 15 percent in 2007. Imports, in particular, increased 14 percent to \$67.4 billion. AGOA grants more than 6,000 products from qualifying countries in sub-Saharan Africa duty-free access to the U.S. market.

Programs like those run by USAID's four regional Global Competitiveness Hubs—located in Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, and Senegal—have played a major role in improving the business environment in African countries, increasing access to capital for start-up companies and, where necessary, providing training in skills that ready business owners for the challenges of running a company.

Our assistance gives African entrepreneurs the tools they need to make real, sustainable changes in their countries. Their efforts, in turn, create jobs, expand economic opportunities, and reduce poverty.

Attending this year's AGOA forum was Peter Mabeo of MABEO Furniture, a company in Botswana that manufactures contemporary furnishings. One of the company's pieces is now sold at Design Within Reach, the San Francisco-based seller of modern furniture with studios throughout the United States. Another success story is that of Gahaya Links, a Rwandan company that sells woven handicrafts made by women who survived the genocide in Rwanda. The company's "Peace Baskets" are now sold through the Web site of the U.S. department store Macy's.

In the next few years, USAID plans to assist more small and medium enterprises like MABEO and Gahaya so they can take advantage of the eased trade restrictions that AGOA made possible. Such businesses have proved successful at creating new jobs and driving economic growth in the developing nations on the continent. Through the African Global Competitiveness Initiative, a \$200 million, five-year plan started in 2005 by President Bush, the Agency will continue to be a strong partner for Africa.

High-level representatives of many of the 41 countries benefiting from AGOA attended this year's forum, which focused on mobilizing private investment to increase trade coming from the sub-Saharan region. We will continue to work with them as well as the men and women in Africa who are embracing entrepreneurship and creating economic vitality in their countries.

With serious problems across the continent, both natural and man-made, Africa can appear to be a challenging place to do business. But the reality is quite different. Motivated and ambitious entrepreneurs are ushering in a future that is brimming with possibility. I am pleased to tell *FrontLines* readers that USAID is providing a helping hand to support them. ★

BRIEFS

Senators Propose Tripling Aid to Pakistan

WASHINGTON—Sens. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) and Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) said July 15 they will seek to triple development aid to Pakistan to a total of \$7.5 billion over the next five years.

The two leaders of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said they worked closely with the State Department and USAID to draft the bill and believe it would be signed by President Bush.

The money would expand USAID's already hefty program building schools, roads, and clinics. At the same time, the bill would withhold military assistance unless the State Department certifies Pakistan's security forces were making "concerted efforts" to go after al-Qaida and Taliban forces and not interfering in political or judicial matters.

The United States has given Pakistan a total of \$10.8 billion in economic and military aid since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Kenya's President Lost Disputed Election, Poll Shows

NAIROBI, Kenya—An exit poll carried out with a grant from USAID in Kenya after elections six months ago that unleashed a wave of political and ethnic killings, disclosed that the wrong candidate was declared the winner.

President Mwai Kibaki, whom official results credited with a two-point margin of victory in the December vote, finished nearly 6 points behind in the exit poll, which was released in July by researchers from the University of California, San Diego.

Opposition leader Raila Odinga scored "a clear win outside the margin of error" according to surveys of voters as they left polling places on Election Day, the poll's author said.

The exit poll was first reported on by the McClatchy news agency. It was financed by the International Republican Institute, a nonpartisan democracy-building organization, with a grant from USAID.

Amid post-election violence, IRI decided not to release the poll. But the poll's authors and the former head of the institute's program in Kenya stand by the research, which the authors presented July 8 in Washington at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. In the exit poll, Odinga had 46.07 percent of the vote and Kibaki had 40.17 percent.

Rising Food Costs Further Pressure World Hunger

The soaring cost of food increased the number of hungry people in the world by 122 million in 2007 and now threatens to swell the malnourished population for a decade, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the *Wall Street Journal* reported July 9.

According to the department's annual Food Security Assessment, 982 million people were hungry last year, up 14 percent from a revised estimate of 860 million in 2006. The number of new hungry people—the biggest increase since the

department started producing the report 16 years ago—is roughly the population of Japan.

A year ago, USDA economists predicted food insecurity would shrink as a problem in every region except sub-Saharan Africa.

In the new assessment of 70 developing countries, USDA economists project that the number of malnourished will climb to 1.2 billion people by 2017. A year ago, the economists saw that number falling to about 800 million over a decade.

The USDA report signals that the West's food-aid programs will come under increasing strain. The cost of supplying staples such as corn and wheat is rising, even as demand for aid explodes.

Cuba Aid Suspended Over Misuse of Funds

Congress put 2008 funding on hold for USAID's \$45 million Cuba program, following audits revealing possible misuse of federal funds.

On July 18, the Agency ordered a review of all Cuba democracy programs and suspended a Miami anti-Castro exile group that spent at least \$11,000 of federal grant money on personal items.

Rep. Howard Berman, D-Calif., ordered a hold on the USAID Cuba program funding last month after reports that \$500,000 was embezzled at the Center for a Free Cuba in Washington, federal officials told the *Miami Herald*.

Stephen Driesler, USAID's deputy assistant administrator for legislative and public affairs, told Congress in a memo that the Agency recently implemented stricter financial reviews that turned up irregularities at the Grupo de Apoyo a la Democracia (Group in Support of Democracy), a Miami group.

The executive director of Grupo de Apoyo admitted that an employee used the organization's credit card for thousands of dollars in personal items and then billed them to the grant aimed at bringing democracy to Cuba, Driesler's memo said. ★

Iraq Aid Expands as Security Grows

When Kent Larson leaves the Green Zone to review USAID projects, he convoys out to volatile sites in Baghdad's Sadr City to help small businesses as they reopen their doors after years of violence and militia control.

Larson has been living in Baghdad for several years, first as USAID representative on the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and now as head of the Iraq mission's office that works with the USAID representatives on PRTs and ePRTs—PRTs that are "embedded" in military units. All of the PRTs and ePRTs are located outside the Green Zone, which is also referred to as the International Zone, except for the Baghdad PRT.

"[US]AID has a representative in 28 of the 31 PRTs and ePRTs in Iraq who serves as senior development advisor to the PRT

and military units in the area," said Larson in an interview during a visit to Washington July 9.

Larson and other PRT officials operate a range of aid programs that include:

- ▶ Grants that are offered to help Iraqis reopen small restaurants and other shops.
- ▶ Loans or business training that are offered to small and medium business enterprises.
- ▶ Grassroots democracy programs that train people to organize communities so they can tackle local problems ranging from water to schools to security.
- ▶ Agriculture programs that create "value chains" linking farmers to suppliers of seed, fertilizer, transport, storage, credit, and marketing; as well as buyers or exporters.
- ▶ Short term jobs that help stabilize a community by



offering income and job skills that undermine the appeal of insurgencies.

- ▶ Youth programs that offer skills training, seminars, and other activities at the local level.

- ▶ Support for provincial elections scheduled tentatively for late 2008 that are receiving wide support.

To reduce risks, the PRT representatives travel in secure military convoys into the Sadr City sector of Baghdad that is mainly Shiite and other places where violence has declined in recent months. Already the Abu Nawaz area of Baghdad is secure enough that one of the U.S. NGOs held a meeting there for selected tribal leaders from Sadr City, Larson said.

The effort to carry out aid programs has had its risks. But, Larson said, "At least we can now get to those places—previously we would have to fight our way in. Things are better now."

Larson joined USAID in 1994, left to serve in the U.S.

Army from 2004 to 2006, and then returned to USAID.

Among the major successes the Agency has had in Iraq, Larson cites the help given to the 18 governorates or provinces around the country in writing and passing a law sharing some of the central government's power with the local governments.

USAID also helped each province draw up a development strategy which he said was "the first time they've had a bottom-up approach with input from all the stakeholders" concerned with provincial development goals.

The greatest challenge apart from security issues, according to Larson, is the need for more long-term programs and funding that can increase economic growth. ★ —B.B.

THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP: AN INTERVIEW WITH CEO JOHN J. DANILOVICH



John Danilovich

Introduction

President Bush decided in his first term to increase foreign assistance—to improve the lives of people in the developing world and to reduce the poverty that might spawn extremists—so he proposed increasing funding for countries that invest in their people, rule justly, and promote economic freedom.

Congress then established a new government agency, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), with the secretary of state as chairman of the MCC board and the USAID Administrator as a member. Bush asked Congress to build up the MCC budget to \$5 billion per year at the end of five years. Funding has, however, fallen far short of this goal.

The idea was that a developing country makes a Compact proposal and the MCC board approves it. Then the country designs and carries out the Compact over five years.

To be eligible, a country must rank highly in three categories: ruling justly, including control of corruption; investing in people through health and education; and promoting economic freedom. Countries not quite ready for a Compact may be assisted by USAID to become eligible with Threshold Programs.

USAID would remain the main U.S. foreign assistance agency and provide development aid; humanitarian assistance for natural disasters such as storms, earthquakes, and famines; and help for man-made crises such as after conflicts.

MCC Chief Executive Officer John J. Danilovich spoke with *FrontLines* editor Ben Barber on June 25. A condensed transcript of that interview follows:

Q: When MCC first landed, people in and out of the administration

downplayed the success of USAID and said maybe this is another way that can work better. What is it that you'd like to say about USAID cooperation with MCC?

DANILOVICH: I see USAID and MCC as being very complementary to U.S. development assistance. USAID has a tremendous legacy. We are building our legacy. The Millennium Challenge Corporation is only in existence for the last four years. At the end of the second Bush administration, it will have 18 compacts and over \$6 billion committed to poverty reduction and economic growth throughout the world.

The USAID administrator sits on our board and plays a very dynamic and robust role. Henrietta [Fore] and I meet to discuss our various activities together.

Secondly, the MCC has a threshold program that targets specific indicator weaknesses. We have 17 indicators that a country must comply with in political, economic, and social categories.

USAID administers our threshold programs and does so very effectively and very satisfactorily. We take advantage of USAID's presence on the ground and expertise and knowledge in the countries in which we're operating.

Q: What percentage of your overall commitment of \$6 billion is for threshold programs?

DANILOVICH: It's just shy of \$400 million.

Q: Critics say that the MCC has been slow to disperse its money. How would you respond to that?

DANILOVICH: The MCC model, as created by Congress, is really very unique. It's based on accountability: accountability on our part to be effective and efficient and prudent in spending U.S. taxpayers' dollars; and accountability on the part of the recipient country to spend that money effectively and efficiently and to achieve results for the investment grants, which we are making.

Many countries have not been asked to take ownership of their own programs. We ask the country to do it for themselves. We're willing to provide them with the money. But they must find their own solutions to poverty constraints, to growth constraints.

And they must also implement their own programs. We don't want to do it for them; we feel that their buy-in will ensure the long-term success of these programs.

Q: So it's basically getting the countries to stand up their own administration of these projects.

DANILOVICH: Absolutely. I mean, we look at it—to use the jargon—we look at it as a hand-up, not a handout.

Q: What's your biggest success?

DANILOVICH: For a start, the creation of the [Compact] proposal itself. Many countries

have adopted themes, such as infrastructure, roads, agriculture, and irrigation.

In Burkina Faso, there is a tremendous education program building on the initial Burkina

see **DANILOVICH** on page 11 ▶

Early Reading Skills Seen as Key to School Success

The second grade student in Nicaragua beams as his teacher stops the stopwatch with a quick click. The student has just completed a timed oral reading assessment. Recent research shows that to understand what they have read, students must be able to read at a rate of about one word per second with about 95 percent accuracy.

Across Europe and the United States this level is achieved by the end of first grade or during second grade at the latest. In many low-income countries, students do not “crack the code” until much later, many times not until sixth grade.

To improve basic education in developing countries, USAID and the World Bank are working with education experts from RTI International to develop and refine an Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)—a 15-minute oral reading test administered to students in the early grades of primary school to measure their reading skills. Research shows that students who acquire strong reading skills early on are more likely to become successful students. Students who don't learn to read as soon often fall behind, and in many countries, drop out of school.

This assessment tool helps education officials identify hurdles that hinder reading: Do students know their letters? Are they having difficulty with sounds? How fluently and accurately are they able to read a simple paragraph? Do they understand what they have read?

With this information, school administrators and teachers can assess how to boost student learning. District personnel can identify schools with particular

needs and support teachers' efforts to improve reading. Ministry officials can use the results to develop teacher training programs and curriculum materials. And donor agencies can track progress in improving early reading outcomes.

“All of the evidence indicates that if we don't intervene early, students struggling to learn to read will eventually give up and drop out,” said Joseph Carney, director of USAID's Education Office, part of the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade.

“Early grade reading assessments, coupled with targeted efforts to support teachers and improve early reading competencies, will go a long way in ensuring that all children have a chance to succeed in school.”

USAID, the World Bank, and other donors have already carried out assessments in 15 countries and 15 languages, including English, French, Spanish, Kiswahili, and Wolof. More than 10 additional EGRAs are currently underway or planned, including development of an assessment tool in Arabic.

“The research base for understanding cognitive



The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), a 15-minute oral reading test, is being used to assess student literacy in Nicaragua.

development and reading acquisition in Arabic is limited, but growing,” said RTI Senior Researcher Amber Gove. “We weren't sure if the principles for Latin scripts would apply to Arabic. But the results of our pilot indicate that foundation skills in Arabic, including accurate and fluent reading of letters, sounds, and words, are just as important for ensuring that students comprehend what they have read as they are in other languages.”

In March, nearly 200 people from 40 countries attended an EGRA workshop in Washington. International reading experts, donors, NGOs, and developing country education officials reviewed the results of pilot EGRAs in The Gambia, Senegal, South Africa, and Nicaragua, and shared field experiences in improving early reading proficiency.

Participants also discussed an early grade math assessment tool, which USAID is developing. ★

To see a video of students taking this assessment, go to www.eddataglobal.org

THE REGIONS

EUROPE & EURASIA

Serbia Spurs Business Growth by Cutting Red Tape

By Mirjana Vuksa

BELGRADE, Serbia—Serbia has launched a major campaign to reduce bureaucratic red tape and attract foreign investors.

Dubbed “Out of the Labyrinth,” the effort advocates abolishing obsolete, excessive, or costly administrative procedures that impede business growth. Businesspeople, foreign investors, and citizens have been asked to share their business grievances and suggest improvements that could result in more efficient and more productive procedures.

The campaign is being carried out by USAID and Serbia’s National Alliance for Local Economic Development and independent national television station B92.

Similar campaigns carried out in neighboring countries have contributed to a regulatory “guillotine”—or abolition—of redundant procedures that burden citizens and hinder economic development.

Toplica Spasojevic, vice chairman of the National Alliance, pointed out that Serbia dropped from a rank of 84 to 86 on the list of competitive countries in the World Bank’s “Doing Business” report for 2008. The country’s recent pace of reform has not been as rapid as in neighboring countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia.

Small- and medium-scale entrepreneurs, the drivers of economic development, stand to gain the most from a successful campaign. “Big businesses have teams of lawyers helping them go through particular procedures in Serbia that are not business friendly,” explains Spasojevic. “Small and medium enterprises do not have that opportunity, and this is why we chose to support them, letting their voices be heard and removing the obstacles on their way towards success.”

The campaign has attracted massive public interest and generated considerable feedback.



This poster for the “Out of the Labyrinth” campaign conveys the complex and intimidating business registration process in Serbia.

Suggestions include improved coordination between the Business Registry and tax authorities to speed up registration of new businesses; creation of a “one-stop shop” for registration and de-registration of employees by businesses; and simplification of government procedures by integrating software and computer networks of various administrative institutions.

The Serbian Chamber of Commerce has joined the campaign, volunteering to provide advertising services and collecting handwritten proposals from those without access to modern communications tools.

USAID is working with government authorities to help process submissions and will support policy and advocacy work based on the campaign’s findings.

At the end of this summer, the “Grey Book of Impediments for Doing Business in Serbia” is planned for publication and an action plan for simplifying procedures will be presented to the central and municipal governments, relevant ministries and agencies, and others. The Grey Book will be updated regularly to document persisting obstacles, identify administrative impediments that are being eliminated from the system, and credit

see **SERBIA** on page 15 ▶

ASIA

Nepali Youth Groups Promote Peace and Reconciliation

By James Ellis

SUTAIYA, Nepal—Rabeeta Chaudary joined the village youth club in her hometown of Sutaia because she saw it as a way to contribute. One and a half years later, she is now president of the group and leads an important movement for peace and reconciliation in her community.

Youth clubs in Nepal are part of an effort USAID began in 2006 to engage young people between ages 16 and 30 in activities that promote peace and reconciliation. The

groups organize activities that offer creative alternatives to conflict, develop new skills, and promote self-confidence, which is considered a priority after 12 years of conflict in Nepal that disproportionately affected the country’s youth.

In 1996, the Maoist-dominated United People’s Front began an insurgency against the ruling Nepalese government that would drag on for years and lead to several thousand deaths. Young people moved away from rural areas to

urban centers, both inside and outside the country, to escape the conflict, avoid recruitment by the Maoists, and to seek education and jobs.

Chaudary, who is 20, is from a traditional, predominantly rural area of the restive Terai region. Poverty here is widespread, and she and her peers were seriously impacted by the protracted conflict, with many getting caught up in violent encounters and cross fires.

Today she is among the roughly 32,000 members of youth clubs located across five districts in southern Nepal. In addition to working on

see **NEPALI** on page 15 ▶

AFRICA

Sewing Uniforms, Sowing Dignity in Namibia

SAUYEMWA, Namibia—

Namibia’s orphans and vulnerable children are often unable to attend school due to an inability to contribute to the school fund or a lack of food, especially in the morning. Some orphans are forced to beg for money or food at gas stations or markets instead of going to school.

Orphans and vulnerable children are also absent from school because they frequently don’t have the uniforms required to attend. Thanks to uniforms sewn by volunteer tailors, orphans can now join their peers at the Sauyemwa Primary School for class.

Before the tailoring project started at the Sauyemwa Primary School, almost none of the 688 children there identified as orphans by the Ministry of Education had uniforms. But a USAID-supported small-grants program has removed that obstacle.

Principal Joseph Shininge, a few teachers, and members of the school board wrote a successful proposal for funding a tailoring project. They used the funds to purchase sewing machines and fabric to make school uniforms, and to hire a local tailor to train community members, who now volunteer their services.



Thanks to uniforms sewn by volunteer tailors, orphans can now join their peers at the Sauyemwa Primary School for class

The project’s first goal was to provide uniforms to children in need, and the second was to bring funds back into the school program by selling uniforms.

Within two months, the first goal was accomplished. All 688 orphans in the school received uniforms. Volunteers also achieved their second goal. Five parents trained by the volunteer tailor are making uniforms for nearby schools at a price parents can afford.

“This small project is proving to be a big success and we are very proud of our accomplishment,” said Magdalena Shihako,

a parent in Namibia who volunteers with others to sew uniforms for orphans.

Funds from the uniform sales were used to buy supplies for the orphans, as well as offset their school fees. Earnings also went into a fund to pay for much-needed textbooks and substitute teachers.

“This uniform is helping me to keep warm,” sixth grader Fina Johannes said. “Before I was cold and shy because my clothes are not good, and I don’t have a uniform. Now I am happy, and I wash my uniform every Friday when I come home.” ★

LATIN AMERICA

Jamaican Police and Residents Join Forces to Fight Crime

ST. CATHERINE, Jamaica—A crime surge this year has many Jamaicans caught between fear and outrage. The island nation has experienced more than 700 murders, 200 of which occurred in May alone.

Persistent crime is Jamaica's greatest development challenge. It dissuades investment and weakens social interventions designed to improve quality of life. And high security costs undermine the competitiveness of many Jamaican businesses in an economy where manufacturing and tourism contribute the largest share of the gross domestic product.

On June 20, the Jamaican government formally launched community policing as a national policy. The strategy focuses on building stronger relationships between residents and the police force to prevent and tackle crime.

"Community policing is not soft policing," said Rear Admiral Hardley Lewin, commissioner of police. "It is a style of policing where the police respect the people and the people respect the police, where there is trust and communications."

Lewin said the time had come to develop a professional policy force, free of corruption. "Not until now has there been a widespread development and deployment of community police officers on the ground throughout Jamaica," he said.

Marilyn Nash, head of the Flanker Peace and Justice Center in St. James, said residents have started to trust

police officers because they interact with them during their 24-hour patrols. "Young people now seek out the police," she said. "And this is a phenomenon in this community."

"When we helped residents resolve domestic disputes early, we helped reduce murder because domestic disputes cause most of the murders in the community," said Constable Marvin Franklyn of the Community Safety and Security Branch in Spanish Town, St. Catherine.

USAID's Community Empowerment and

police responsible for the Community Policing/Community Safety Branch.

A team of representatives from law enforcement, the private sector, the Social Development Commission, and international donor agencies is charged with country-wide coordination of community policing activities.

"Whereas past community policing programs were largely donor-driven and, as a result, quite limited in their impact, the current program puts the JCF squarely in the lead on policy



Photo by James Ellis

As president of the local village youth club in Sutaiya, Nepal, Rabeeta Chaudhary, 20, organizes projects and helps mediate disputes for her community.

MIDDLE EAST

U.S. Studies Prepare Middle East Students for Leadership Roles

By Lori Severens

CAIRO, Egypt—Hieroglyphics covered the walls. But they were not the time-worn etchings and faded lapis lazuli of the pharaohs. Instead, the vivid reds and blues came from markers wielded by 22 exchange students from across the Middle East and Africa.

Asked to create a series of hieroglyphics that symbolized their hopes and fears, the students covered the Vodafone conference center walls with depictions of successful careers and a future free from intolerance.

The students are the first group of USAID's regional Middle East Peace Scholars and will travel to five U.S. universities for a year of study, leadership development, and a chance to experience America. The program is designed to build a regional network that encourages students to take a broader view of the world, instead of one focused solely on their local and country-level experiences.

Team building and leadership are essential because USAID

see **CAIRO** on page 14 ▶



Photo by Lori Severens, USAID

Dina Mansour from Egypt and Saifeddin Atari Saif from Morocco participate at a leadership conference in Cairo for Peace Scholars.



Community policing in Jamaica builds stronger relationships between residents and the police force to prevent and tackle crime.

Transformation project provides training and technical assistance to the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF) and helped develop a manual for community policing that is now being used by police officers and community development workers. The project helps communities address crime and disorder through partnerships between citizens, police, and other state and non-state actors that play a role in safety.

"Policing, though it is the responsibility of the police, cannot be done by the police alone," said John McLean, assistant police commissioner

development," USAID's Mission Director Karen Hilliard said.

"The fact that the entire donor community has signed up to support the JCF's agenda in a way that is consistent with Paris Declaration principles signals a sea change in development programming in Jamaica that we hope to replicate in other sectors," she added.

Community policing is being implemented in 39 communities across 19 divisions in the first phase of the program, with an expected increase of at least 38 communities per year, officials said. ★

FOCUS ON ARAVA DESERT

PALESTINIANS, ISRAELIS, AND JORDANIANS STUDY ARAVA DESERT, LEARN ABOUT PEACE

On the border between Israel and Jordan, in the arid Arava Valley dividing the two countries, Arabs, Jews, and others study their environment in a small USAID-supported project.

The students at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies are learning to get along with each other while they learn about the acacia trees, palms, desert animals, and lack of rain, said Rabbi Michael Cohen, founding faculty member of the Institute, in a meeting June 24 in Washington with USAID staff. The institute is based in Kibbutz Ketura, an Israeli farming settlement 30 miles north of Eilat and just a couple of miles from the now-peaceful frontier with Jordan.

The students hike through the desert, visiting ancient reminders left through the millennia by travelers. They study how animals and plants survive, how to tap solar energy, and how to use natural materials to build survival structures. For example, they've made small huts out of bales of straw covered with mud and painted with linseed oil.

The students are also conducting environmental studies of one of the region's most challenging and historic projects—a plan to divert water from the Red Sea into the Dead Sea, which has been dropping three feet a year due to overuse of the Jordan River, which feeds it.

The Arava Institute also used a USAID grant to carry out a three-year study of species diversity on both sides of the Arava—Jordanian and Israeli. The joint research team detected differences in biodiversity due to land development and discovered previously unknown animals and five new spider species.

"There is a link between peace and the environment," said Cohen.

He noted that alumni from the program went on to found organizations aimed at developing cross-border projects.

The institute also carries out research on solar panels and hopes to supply power to Israeli and Jordanian power grids—enough for 400,000 homes.

However, politics is never far away, even in the pristine beauty of the Arava. The Israeli government refused to allow Palestinians from Gaza to attend the programs until the institute brought a case in the Israeli Supreme Court and won.

Jordanian students who have returned home from the program found they were criticized by local media and barred from jobs by the guilds which control employment. And Egypt is reluctant to allow students to attend at all.

"You need to deal with the conflict—this is the hardest part of the program," said Cohen.

"Too often, when you bring Jews and Arabs together it is only fluff. It requires a lot of hard work. Students learn there are two narratives [that describe Middle East history]. Each side must hear both. It takes time if you want to see transformation take place."

The students cook, hike, and live together. The study of the environment binds them together around a practical goal. "If we were only about peace studies, this would have collapsed after the Intifada [2000 Palestinian uprising] began," Cohen said.

The physical strain of being in the desert also forces students to become a family, and these relationships continue after the program. "The main problem in the Middle East is that people don't know their neighbors," Cohen said.

The environment training center was created in 1996, just

two years after Israel and Jordan signed their peace treaty ending nearly 40 years of conflict.

One-third of the 40 students in each semester are Israeli Jews; one-third are Arabs from Israel, Jordan, the Palestinian territories, Tunisia, etc.; and one-third are American and European.

The programs are linked to Ben Gurion University in the nearby town of Sde Boker, where students can earn master's degrees in environmental studies and renewable energy.

USAID contributes about \$300,000 a year out of the institute's \$1.5 million budget through support of Arava's training programs under grants from the Agency's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation. In addition, USAID's Middle East Regional Cooperation Program has funded many environmental and agricultural research collaborations at the Arava Institute as well as over 30 ongoing Arab-Israeli research projects with other institutions throughout the Middle East. ★ —B.B.



Students at the Arava Institute hike down a sharp, rocky ridge towards the desert floor.



This wild ibex near the Maktesh Ramon crater in the central Negev Desert is one of thousands roaming Israel from the Arava Valley to the Judean hills and beyond.

FOCUS ON ARAVA DESERT



Students rest under an acacia tree on a desert hike.



During a visit to Jordan, students dance to traditional music.



A class takes place on mud building in front of the peace bunker, a shelter that dates from before the Jordan-Israel peace treaty of 1994.



Students hike towards a West Bank village past an old water channel.



Students learn to make mud repairs on mud seats with Arava Institute dormitories in the background.

WHERE IN THE WORLD...

JUNE 8, 2008 – JUNE 28, 2008

PROMOTED

Susan M. Baxter
Management Analyst

Steven B. Bennett Jr.
Auditor

Sandra M. Byrnes
Contract Specialist

Daniel Cabet
Auditor

Stanley Dean Cain
Budget & Accounting Analyst

Michael A. Clark
Supervisory Contract Specialist

Patrice L. Cunningham
Contract Specialist

George J. D'elia
IT Specialist

Georgia G. Fuller
Lead Contract Specialist

Helen Grant Glaze
Program Analyst

Walter Gordon
Supervisory IT Specialist

Pamela M. Hamilton
Auditor

Bryan T. Highfill
Auditor

DeShanta N. Hinton
Human Resources Specialist

Likza Iglesias
Auditor

Frederick G. Jones
Supervisory Auditor

Timothy Lamping
Auditor

Annmarie McGillicuddy
Budget Analyst

Ryan L. McGonagle
Auditor

Lorraine E. Meehan
Supervisory Security Specialist

Ami Morgan
Management Analyst Officer

Christine N. Nteireho
Auditor

Naadia L. Porter
Auditor

Steven K. Ramonas
Auditor

Judith L. Robinson
International Cooperation Specialist

Laszlo F. Sagi
Criminal Investigator

Leona Sasinkova
Contract Specialist

Margott L. Skrobisz
Budget & Accounting Analyst

Kenneth Stein
Lead Contract Specialist

Inga C. Sydnor
Management & Program Analyst

David Thomanek
Auditor

Eric M. Watson
Information Analyst

Julie Janet Wilson
Criminal Investigator

Sovanna Danny You
IT Specialist

REASSIGNED

Syed A. Ali
India/RMFO to Iraq/OFM

Dana E. Beegun
COMP/NE/OJT to Haiti/HRD

Donald J. Brady
COMP/FS to Liberia

Larry H. Brady
Asia/SPO to El Salvador/D

Connor Cherer
RIG/Baghdad to RIG/Pretoria

Jeffery Cohen
COMP/NE/OJT to Dominican Republic/PDO

Fernando Cossich
COMP/LT TRNG to DCHA/OMA

Kirk M. Dahlgren
El Salvador/SDO to DCHA/OMA

Charles V. Drilling
Egypt/EXO to Afghanistan/OD

Martin Fischer
M/OAA/CAS to SA/RAAO

Bruce Gelband
O/S LANG TRNG to COMP/FS

Mark W. Gellerson
Egypt/PPS to EGAT/I&E/E

Deanna Gordon
Afghanistan/JOPA to Asia/EAA

Karen R. Hunter
GC/Africa to COMP/FSLT

Christopher E. Johnson
M/CFO/FPS to OIG/A/FA

Ajit V. Joshi
DCHA/PVCASHA/PDM to DCHA/PPM

Sunil R. Kadam
RIG/Frankfurt to OIG/A/FA

Han Kang
COMP/NE/OJT to Zambia/D

Deborah Kennedy Iraheta
El Salvador/D to AA/LAC

Gretchen M. Larrimer
M//CIO/BIE to M/CIO/ICIO

Carol Q. Mitchell
Nicaragua/SMA to Asia/SCAA

Carstella M. Moore Jones
AA/PPC to M/MPBP/AMD

Francesca Nelson
DCHA/FFP/PTD to COMP/FSLT

Sean J. Osner
Iraq/PRT to Jamaica-CAR/OEG

Mark H. Parkison
Morocco/PFNP to Afghanistan/PFNP

John Michael Phee
OIG/AIG/MCC to OIG/A/HL&C

R. Thomas Ray
West Bank/Gaza to Mozambique/AM

Veena Reddy
El Salvador/D to CA/DO

John Riordan
COMP/FS to Iraq/PRT

Rebecca J. Rohrer
Haiti/PHN to COMP/LWOP

Kevin C. Sharp
Ukraine/OEG to West Africa/FFPO

Michael B. Stewart
Iraq/MGT to Pakistan/EXO

Tanya S. Urquieta
Colombia to Afghanistan/ODG

Gordon W. Weynand
EGAT/I&E/E to ME/TS

Michael J. Yates
Bolivia/D to Afghanistan/OD

RETIRED

Robert Alan Archer

Carol M. Cissel

Tadeusz Findeisen

Clara B. Kimbrough

Millicent E. Muschette

Mu O. Taalib

MOVED ON

Rachel R. Grant

Wade E. Green Jr.

Gwendolyn D. Harper

Hugo A. Jimenez

Dorothy Jordan Rayburn

Joseph Schmidt

IN MEMORIAM

William H. Janssen Jr., 75, died Dec. 20, 2007, in Sebastopol, Calif. Janssen joined USAID in 1967 as an agricultural economist working in Vietnam and Indonesia. From 1974 to his retirement in 1988, Janssen was head of the Agency's agricultural division, working in the Dominican Republic, Honduras, India, and Egypt. As a contractor for USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, he continued his career, working in Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, Kazakhstan, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Janssen served with the U.S. Army during the Korean War.

Sherwin Landfield, 86, died Feb. 3, 2007, in Arlington, Va. Landfield joined USAID's predecessor agency in 1960 as a Foreign Service Officer. He worked on education reform in Haiti, Paraguay, Ecuador, and Bolivia. He later served as the USAID-State Department liaison to the Organization of American States and the U.N. Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. On his last assignment to Abidjan in the Ivory Coast, Landfield traveled throughout West Africa as USAID's regional program evaluation officer. He served with the U.S. Army during World War II. ★

FSN CORNER:

An occasional look at how USAID's Foreign Service Nationals provide expertise, continuity, insight, and devotion.

Irma de Melzi: After 45 Years, Longest Serving FSN at USAID

Irma de Melzi began working with USAID in Peru 45 years ago—and today she is still at her job in the mission in Lima.

She is the longest-serving Foreign Service National (FSN) in the Agency.

When asked about her 45 years of employment with USAID/Peru, she takes a deep breath and, off the top of her head, begins to tell stories—experiences both good and not so good, lessons learned and given, and many other memories.

As the communications and records (C&R) supervisor, she is used to keeping track of things and putting all sorts of documents, records, and files in the right place. For such a job, her



Irma de Melzi now and earlier in her USAID career (far right).



memories are in her head as well as in her hands.

"The whole history of USAID/Peru in the last 45 years has gone through these hands," she said.

When de Melzi was 19 years old, she was interested in working for the U.S. government. When she got an opportunity to interview for a C&R clerk position, there was a glitch during the job interview that she still remembers clearly.

In 1963, typing and shorthand skills were fundamental for administrative staff. As she went through a dictation exercise to test her shorthand, the interviewer, who was to become her future

boss, asked her to read back what she had taken down. She told him simply that all she caught was "Dear sirs" and "Sincerely yours." She was sure she would not be hired. But her straightforward honesty got her the job, and helped her keep it for 45 years.

De Melzi's 45 years of service provided continuity for the mission. Institutional memory, she said, is the greatest contribution of FSNs to USAID. In 1990, the Agency recognized the value of this contribution by naming her the FSN of the year for Latin America and the Caribbean.

She is still on the run. She said she feels that there is still so

much she can do for the Agency and for her country.

"I am proud to be part of an institution that has contributed to the development of my country in so many ways that it's hard to describe," she said, pointing out poverty reduction and education as the main challenges yet to be addressed in Peru.

De Melzi is part of the USAID story and a reminder of how much the FSNs have contributed to the Agency history. Her message to others is that honesty, continuity, and commitment are what made her job stay rewarding over the long term. ★

Kevin Burke Finds Second Career as Park Ranger After USAID

By Ashtar Analeed Marcus

Kevin Burke, once one of the first Peace Corps volunteers, went on to spend 29 years in USAID. Now, in a second career, he is a park ranger in Cape Cod, Mass., helping visitors discover and enjoy the natural beauty of his own country.

“Most Americans don’t have contact with government officials beyond the postal clerk and an [Internal Revenue Service] agent calculating their work,” Burke, 67, said.

“Africans in the village have no running water or electricity, but have a better understanding



Kevin Burke today as a park ranger in Cape Cod.

of how their government works than most Americans do. That’s pretty heavy stuff.”

Because he had repaired buses and trucks after school, in 1963 the Peace Corps sent him

to Kankan, Guinea, as an agricultural equipment mechanic.

“When I finished Boston College, I wanted to have an education,” he said. “I had this feeling that education wouldn’t be complete until you traveled and experienced other cultures.”

In high school, he memorized all the countries in Africa out of his dictionary, “for fun,” he said, because he didn’t have any geographic maps.

The French-speaking Burke spent 12 years in Africa for USAID in Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Guinea, Chad, Central

African Republic, and Sierra Leone. He also spent three years in Haiti and 14 years as a special assistant in the Office of the Assistant Administrator for Management.

During a game of soccer with aid recipients in Guinea-Bissau, Burke’s visiting college-age son, Brendan, was surprised to learn that people in less developed countries spoke several languages.

“These people that were poor seem so well educated compared to Americans,” his son said. “After the game they tried to speak to me in Portuguese...in French, and then they tried to speak to me in Spanish... I didn’t understand their level of sophistication.”

Burke’s wife Linda and their three sons came with him throughout his career. In those

years, her cooking and comportment were part of his record and review.

“My wife was extremely supportive and I thought it was payback time,” he said. “The notion was to do something totally different, so I went back to the job that I best loved before foreign aid and Foreign Service.” He found a summer position as a park ranger near the sandy shores and beaches of Cape Cod where his wife grew up.

Burke’s passion is the photography of the cape and he distributes his landscape shots to visitors and to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for use in the new Cape Cod Canal Visitor Center. “I’m now kind of their mascot,” he said. ★

DANILOVICH from page 5

Faso Threshold Program which built 132 girl-friendly schools with USAID direct involvement. USAID assisted even in the proposal for the Burkina Faso compact education component.

Another country is Morocco where there are roads and water and irrigation; also some very unique fishery port activities; and a unique artisanal crafts rejuvenation project in the Fez medina.

In the results achieved at this early date—of course, infrastructure projects take longer—but agricultural projects come on course, come on stream with the natural cycle of nature in a 12-month period.

Q: *USAID has missions in all these countries. How does MCC work without such a staff?*

DANILOVICH: We don’t implement the programs on behalf of our MCC countries. The MCC countries themselves implement the programs with their personnel, with their agricultural sectors, with their farmers, with their home-grown industries. We don’t send over American specialists, experts, agronomists to do the work in-country. We want the countries to develop their own capacity.

In Washington, we’re only 300 people. And in [Compact countries], we have only two country representatives [the MCC Resident Country Director and Deputy] who monitor, evaluate, and have oversight over the national identity, called an Accountable Entity, which implements the programs.

That Accountable Entity is composed of a committee, which has some government members but also civil society members, NGOs, et cetera, a broad spectrum of national participation, independent of the government in many cases.

Q: *What was the greatest problem you solved?*

DANILOVICH: The problems that have been encountered have been with countries’ inability to meet our MCC criteria.

This morning, I met with the new ambassador from Lesotho to the United States. We have an outstanding program in the kingdom in the sky, as it’s called, which is primarily health-related. But in Lesotho, they had to change their constitution to allow women to own land.

Q: *Looking forward, what do you think are the challenges that you’d like to knock down in the future?*

DANILOVICH: I suppose one of our greatest challenges is country capacity. Encouraging countries to assume the responsibility for their own development, there has been an international culture that has developed over decades where all of us, the United States, the European Community, all countries throughout the world have contributed enormous sums of money, often to little long-term effect.

Q: *And is it working?*

DANILOVICH: It is working. The [MCC] model is working.

We’re very happy to see this now. It is remarkable that in the space of four and a half years, the MCC is up and viable and acknowledged as an effective tool of U.S. development assistance and foreign policy worldwide. We are frequently contacted by development ministers throughout the world who come to Washington and—because we’re making waves in the foreign-assistance world—asking what exactly is the MCC model? How do you do it? What kind of results are you getting?

And that, in turn, has turned out to be an incentive for foreign direct investment. A number of corporations have used the fact that countries are MCC countries and have complied with good business practices or improved business practices to make a decision as to whether or not they make investments.

Q: *When MCC was passed, there was a promise that this would never crowd out USAID in the MCC countries.*

DANILOVICH: I think we now see that in countries where MCC and USAID are both operating, that in fact the programs are complementary.

They in fact do different types of things, and therefore are all the more better to cooperate.

Henrietta’s [the Administrator] efforts, with regards to trying to bring greater coherency into the development assistance programs with the U.S. government is one that we fully cooperate with.

Q: *There is a focus on host-country ownership, accountability, and partnerships, not just government partnerships but private-public. What is MCC’s biggest success in these areas?*

DANILOVICH: In terms of partnerships, the MCC has in those three areas, which you’ve outlined, a number of partnerships, which we are very committed to. We have a memorandum of understanding with the General Electric Company for cooperation in countries in which they operate.

We have an agreement with Microsoft to work with them in our MCC countries. We signed two weeks ago a tremendous agreement with AGRA, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. It’s the old green revolution, Rockefeller, India, Mexico legacy—AGRA headed up by Kofi Annan.

Q: *Do all of your Compact programs have agriculture?*

DANILOVICH: I think without exception every single one has an agriculture component. And I think almost without exception, every single one has a road component of various sizes, and then other components.

Q: *In five years, what do you think the shape of the U.S. foreign aid program will be?*

DANILOVICH: The United States has always been in the forefront, even before the end of the Second World War, in providing aid to the developing world and to those in emergency

need, as well as increased efforts to sustained economic development... primarily responses made by USAID. All of those responses as well as increasing development assistance that structures sustainable economic development will certainly be part of the U.S. development program.

Q: *People at USAID were worried that you were going to get the easy ones, the Cadillacs of development countries whereas we would get the ones that are really in bad shape.*

DANILOVICH: It’s true. We deal with countries who have good policies. But they are struggling to have good policies. Our 16 to 18 countries are post-Soviet, post-colonial, post-civil war; have very weak—in many cases—institutional infrastructure. So we are trying to build those government institutions so that they can implement their own programs for their own development. If they don’t do that, they’ll never lift themselves out of poverty.

It’s not easy to be an MCC partner country. It’s a demanding program that requires a lot of a country.

These countries aren’t the Cadillacs. They’re countries that are trying to keep their engine running smoothly. And we want to help them to keep their engine running smoothly because that’s the only way the wheels are going to turn and go forward. ★

WHAT USAIDERS ARE READING/DOING THIS SUMMER

FrontLines asked USAID employees at random what books they planned to read this summer and what other fun things they hoped to do. Below is a sampling of some of the replies:

Steve Gale, Legislative and Public Affairs:

"I'm reading a couple of go-to-the-beach books ... one on the Eastern Shore, one on Alaska. I'm going to Alaska in August for the first time. I've got an interest in the environment, and that seems to be the ideal place to see glaciers, fjords... caribou, elk, and bear."

Donna Sediqi, Executive Secretariat:

"I'm planning to go to Vegas for my birthday. It's a really big one, 6-0. I'm planning to see Bette Midler. And I have my nephew's wedding in Maine."



Donna Sediqi

Patricia Davis, Office of the Chief Operating Officer:

"There is a book I was planning on reading about a person born in Gulag in a concentration camp in [North] Korea, [Escape to the Outside World] by Dong Hyuk Shin. We still have concentration camps there. ... The author did a Google Earth search and he could zero-in on the concentration camp he was born in."



Patricia Davis

Sam Carter, Overseas Management Support:

He is reading The Shack by William P. Young and Why is God Laughing by Deepak Chopra; and "I'm going to Six Flags with my daughters. I've got passes so we can end up there three or four times."

Dena Bunell, Office of Acquisition Assistance:

"My plans are to intern here and also to attend Georgetown. I'm taking comparative economics and American politics. I'm interested in sustainable

agriculture and I'm exploring doing foreign service."



Dena Bunell

Rich Bachman, Financial Management:

"I am going to spend the summer practicing with my daughter at 6 o'clock in the morning for an ice skating team that begins competing this fall; also going to the beach, the amusement park, and the USAID picnic."



Rich Bachman

Zandro Walker, Security Officer:

"I'm trying to open up a

painting business on the side and I'm going to school for building maintenance tech. I go golfing with my father. I'm in the learning process so I'm not paying attention [to the score]. I've been married for 10 years. I want to learn how to salsa."



Zandro Walker

Bill Riley, Egypt Desk Officer:

"I have to drive a car from San Francisco, where my wife's from, to Washington. It's 42 hours, so you have to break that up into how long you can drive in a day."

Scott Berenberg, Office of Inspector General:

"I'm taking guitar lessons. So far I'm pretty good at children's nursery rhymes. 'Twinkle Twinkle' is my best."

Cheryl Wojciechowski, Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade:

"I'm looking for a job. I had a two-year fellowship. So if anyone wants to hire me! I just

finished reading The Kite Runner—[it's about] how when something goes wrong in a life, there's a way to make up for it in the end, redemption. We all need that."



Cheryl Wojciechowski

Richard Johnson, Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade:

"I'll spend a week at my cabin in Tamworth, New Hampshire, do some hiking, do some reading. I'm reading Laura Lippman, she's a Baltimorean who writes mystery stuff situated in Baltimore. And Nora Roberts, also a mystery writer, who has several series, more than 100 books."

Sara Borodin, Office of Middle East Affairs:

"I'm doing a two-week TDY in the West Bank, Gaza... the mission is in Tel Aviv. Then I'm going, for a week, home to Toronto." ★

All photos by: Kristina Ferris

Hometown Diplomats Program Will Introduce U.S. to USAID

USAID launched its Hometown Diplomats program in June, providing Foreign Service Officers, Foreign Service Limited members, and some other employees opportunities to present the Agency and their experiences to a domestic audience.

Employees returning from overseas assignments on annual or home leave will have an opportunity to speak to high schools, universities, faith-based organizations, community centers, and other organizations of interest on behalf of the Agency. The Office of Public Liaison in the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs will work with the employees to pair them with an organization or local media outlet.

Talking points, speeches, or PowerPoints provided by the Agency will help employees introduce U.S. audiences to the structure, goals, and accomplishments of USAID so that the American public will understand how their tax dollars are being invested to reduce poverty, promote education, provide health care, and respond to natural disasters.

Participants can submit a photo and brief report to receive 1) an administrative leave day, 2) a \$50 stipend to help with expenses, and 3) a thank-you letter from the Administrator.

For further information, contact Ramsey Day at rday@usaid.gov or Matthew Johnson at majohnson@usaid.gov. ★



About 600 USAID staff attended a town hall meeting July 23 in the Reagan Building in Washington to hear from Administrator Henrietta Fore and to ask questions—many of them focused on personnel and job issues. The transcript of the meeting plus the questions raised then and by e-mail in the two days after the conference, along with responses, are available on the internal Web site at: <http://inside.usaid.gov/LPA/townhall2008.html>. This was the first USAID town hall meeting to be Web cast live.

Requiem for a Brave Man

Miguel Daza was a visionary who led his community to trade coca cultivation for cacao—standing up to drug traffickers and terrorists in one of Colombia’s most vulnerable regions. His voice has been silenced, but his legacy remains alive for those following in his path.

On April 11, Cecilia Vaca



Miguel Daza was a positive leader who promoted peace and community work in a region surrounded by illicit crops, drug traffickers, guerrillas, and paramilitaries.

could not hold back her tears when U.S. Ambassador William Brownfield presented her with a personal message from President Bush offering condolences for the death of her son Miguel.

Daza was a small farmer who had fallen victim to Colombia’s long-running drug war. Throughout the 1990s, Daza grew coca and sold it to the narco-traffickers who terrorized Colombia’s northern regions. He knew what he was doing was wrong, but with kidnapping and murder commonplace for those who stood up to the drug lords, he saw few other options available.

That all changed in 2002, when Daza learned about a USAID-funded alternative development program that was bringing new legal alternatives to small, vulnerable farmers around the country. He got involved and convinced his friends and neighbors to do the same.

Daza was the driving force behind the Asociacion de Productores de Cacao del Sur de Bolivar (APROCASUR), a local producers association established with USAID support to

promote the cultivation and marketing of cacao, the primary raw ingredient for chocolate. Over time, APROCASUR worked with more than 200 farm families, getting them to replace almost 5,000 acres of coca with cacao, giving them dignified living wages, and helping their community take a stand against the drug dealers.

Daza was chosen to meet with Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during their visits to Colombia to share the APROCASUR success story. Two weeks after meeting Rice, he was gone. Miguel Daza and his APROCASUR colleague John Martinez were murdered by gunmen from one of the numerous narco-trafficking groups struggling to control drug production and transportation



In 2007, Miguel Daza was chosen to meet with President Bush during his visit to Colombia to share the APROCASUR success story.

routes in the area.

The murder was a setback for APROCASUR, the community, and USAID efforts in the region. On April 11, Brownfield and Mission Director Liliana Ayalde visited Daza’s hometown to honor him and demonstrate the U.S. government commitment to ending Colombia’s drug war.

Brownfield planted a cacao tree in Daza’s honor and encouraged the community to keep his legacy alive by continuing his work to bring peace, reconciliation, and prosperity to the region.

“Miguel planted a lot of seeds, and though he is no longer here, his dream is being kept alive by the many lives he touched,” said Ayalde. ★

FOUR NAMES ADDED TO MEMORIAL WALL

The names of four USAID officers who lost their lives while serving with the Agency were added to the Memorial Wall in the lobby of the Reagan Building July 14 in a ceremony attended by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Administrator Henrietta Fore.

Close relatives to the two officials slain this year—John Granville and Abdelrahman “A.R.” Abbas Rahama—also spoke. The two men were shot and killed Jan. 1 by unknown gunmen in Juba, Sudan.



Fatma Osman

“My late husband was an ideal kind of person,” said Rahama’s widow, Fatma Osman, speaking in Arabic. “He was caring, compassionate, and understood all aspects of family life ... He was happy that he was contributing in delivering assistance to needy people through his employment with USAID.”

Rahama’s widow, their infant son, and Rahama’s father were flown to Washington from Sudan by USAID for the ceremony.

Six members of Granville’s family, including his mother Jane and sister Katie, were among more than 120 people at the ceremony.

“[John] chose USAID because of his commitment to their mission ... the possibility of implementing real change in this world,” Jane Granville said. “And I know that he was happy. He loved his work. He loved Africa. And most of all, he loved the people of Africa.”

The State Department previously honored Granville and

Rahama in a May 2 ceremony in the lobby of State headquarters in Washington (see May 2008 issue of *FrontLines*).

The four names that were added to the memorial wall included Dominic Morris and Chaplain Lako, who were killed in Sudan in 1992.

The memorial at USAID was held on the same day that the International Criminal Court charged Sudan President Omar Hassan al-Bashir with genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The United Nations and aid agencies moved personnel away from Darfur over concern for their safety, news agencies reported.

Rice said that Foreign Service Officers and diplomats serve in the most dangerous positions in the world.

“They do so for the noblest of purposes,” she said. “So that others may know lives of dignity and opportunity and liberty and peace. It is to the success of these principles in Sudan that we, in their memory,

reaffirm our commitment today.”

She awarded Granville and Rahama with the Thomas Jefferson Star for Foreign Service, the highest honor awarded to a Foreign Service Officer.

Granville was a former Peace Corps volunteer, Fulbright fellow, and democracy officer. For one project, he had worked to provide handheld radios to Sudanese women to promote understanding of democracy.

“Their work will affect generations of Sudanese and Americans to come,” Fore said. “They represent the best of this agency.”

Osman, who wore her gold wedding band, placed the plaque bearing her late husband’s name on the wall that marks the entry to USAID’s offices.

“Life gave me joy and happiness when we got married, but life also hurt and deeply saddened me when I suddenly lost him,” Osman said.

Her son Mujtab, who celebrated his first birthday just one



Jane Granville

month before his father was shot down while driving with Granville, will receive funding for his education through USAID.

“Mujtab’s high level of education was his father’s greatest wish,” Osman said. “I promise you all as I promised his father before to take full care of our son until his father’s wish is realized.” ★ — A.A.M.

VIETNAM from page 1



Administrator Henrietta Fore opens the Hanoi stock exchange during a recent visit to dedicate USAID's Vietnam mission.

Fore and Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc signed an agreement promoting trade and investment as well as good governance and enhanced rule of law.

In Ho Chi Minh City, Fore visited an HIV/AIDS and methadone outpatient clinic. She urged health officials to look to the private sector as a partner in

ceremony, Fore noted that the creation of the new mission reflects the growing importance of U.S.-Vietnam diplomatic and economic relations. ★

HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment to lessen the government's dependence on international aid. Fore also toured the Saigon Port to study infrastructure problems.

USAID's Vietnam mission previously was part of the Regional Development Mission for Asia, which is based in Bangkok. During the dedication

Fore Visits China After Earthquake

Administrator Henrietta Fore led a delegation of U.S. business leaders and rescue organizations to China to assist in earthquake reconstruction efforts just before stopping off in Vietnam in early July to dedicate the Agency's mission there.

Fore and other members of the delegation visited the affected region to view the devastation around Yingxiu Township, near the earthquake's epicenter, and to visit makeshift hospitals and shelters overlooking Yingxiu. More than 4,800 of the township's 12,500 residents died in the May 12 earthquake. The death toll from

the earthquake exceeds 80,000; approximately 5 million people are homeless and 15 million have been displaced.

Delegation participants included the CEOs of Johnson & Johnson, CISCO, Honeywell, and Procter & Gamble, who pledged to support long-term reconstruction efforts, as well as top executives from the American Red Cross, Chevron Corp., aid groups, and the U.S. government. The U.S. private sector has provided more than \$102 million in cash and in-kind contributions since the earthquake. U.S. government assistance to China is approaching \$5 million. ★



You are cordially invited to
USAID's 2008 Alumni Day
Friday, September 12, 2008

at the
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523

Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. with the program beginning at 8:30 a.m.
 The event will conclude at 5:30 p.m.

Please RSVP by September 2nd to:

Alumni@usaid.gov or
by calling (202) 712-4300
or by returning this form:

- Yes, I would like to attend Alumni Day
 I will not be able to attend, but please keep me up to date on future Alumni Events

Name: _____
 Street: _____
 City, State and Zip Code: _____
 Telephone No.: _____
 E-mail: _____

Form can be returned to:
 U.S. Agency for International Development
 ATTN: LPA/Public Liaison – Alumni Day
 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
 Washington, DC 20523

CAIRO from page 7

hopes these young people will return to be ambassadors for tolerance and international understanding in their communities.

And so the students, whose ages range from 20 to 24, gathered here during July to prepare for their August departure for the United States.

Each was selected based on academic achievement, a demonstrated commitment to social service, and a strong desire to learn. Most come from outside the capital cities—they hail from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen—and from families that have faced significant hardships. Four such groups of students will participate in Peace Scholars over the next several years of the pilot program.

At their orientation, where the students were already juggling excitement and trepidation, David Barth, USAID's director of the Office of Middle East Programs, reminded them, "You represent the finest qualities of your generation. I am so impressed by your talents, confidence, and determination. Rely on these skills and you will surely do extraordinarily well in the U.S."

"One of the most interesting things I learned was about social entrepreneurs and how people use their ideas to get

people together to solve problems in their communities," said Yassir Wakach from Morocco. "I would like to try that when I come back."

The students will study at the Universities of Arizona, Colorado State, California-Santa Cruz, Connecticut, and at the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. Bonding quickly, they've already created a Facebook page to stay connected.

The orientation here featured other activities as well, including a "Women in Leadership" dinner panel where students asked questions of assembled business and media leaders, including USAID's Egypt Mission Director Hilda Arellano. A Jordanian student, who aspires to be the country's first female prime minister, asked about balancing a career and a family. Another, whose goal is to increase the professionalism of and respect for nursing in Lebanon, wondered who the leaders' role models were. One young man from Morocco asked business and NGO leaders how they financed their work.

Several common threads ran throughout the responses: believe in yourself, be passionate about what you do, make good choices, prepare for sacrifices, and learn from every experience—positive or negative. ★

BUSH from page 1



President Bush moves through the crowd at Ronald Reagan Building July 24.

Photo by Kristina Ferris

shared by all mankind. Tying support for democracy to the U.S. battle against terrorists, Bush said: "To protect America, we must defeat the ideology of hatred by spreading the hope of freedom. Over the past seven years, this is exactly what we have done."

He noted that "free societies don't harbor terrorists, or launch unprovoked attacks on their neighbors."

Foreign aid is vital to the advance of freedom since advances in health, education, and living standards help eliminate the "hopelessness" that drives people to terrorism, he said. U.S. aid is also a moral issue, he said, in that "Americans believe that to whom much is given, much is required."

He insisted that democracy should remain an aid focus.

"In the past seven years we've more than doubled the federal budget for democracy and governance and human rights programs," Bush said. "The challenge for future presidents and future Congresses will be to ensure that America's generosity

remains tied to the promotion of transparency and accountability and prosperity."

Summing up foreign assistance achievements during his administration, Bush reported that 1.7 million people with HIV/AIDS receive medication through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and he predicted Congress would extend and double the program.

Citing Nobel Prize winner Norman Borlaug as saying "you can't build peace on empty stomachs," Bush said the United States has increased food aid by \$1.8 billion. He also called on Congress to let USAID use 25 percent of food assistance funds to buy food in the developing world and stimulate local agriculture there.

Finally, the president returned to his democracy theme, honoring activists from several repressive countries who were brought to Washington for this event. (A report on those activists is scheduled for the September issue of *FrontLines*.) ★ —B.B.

NEPALI from page 6

reconciliation among its members, the groups organize sports and cultural events for their own and neighboring communities, providing a non-threatening forum for youth from different areas. The groups also undertake community service projects, including planting trees, improving roads, and assisting in dispute resolution.

The effort has not been without its challenges. Maoists abducted the chairman of the implementing partner, vandalized his office, set fire to a youth training center, and tried to recruit its members. In spite of

such setbacks, the young people in southern Nepal continued to focus on constructive activities and the clubs remained intact and grew.

Chaudary's club is flourishing. She sees the fruit of its labor when she passes by a prominent meeting hall the club built for the village. Chaudary said she recognized that, while an individual could have only a limited impact, a group could organize and do something larger for the community. "Youth are the potential energy of the country," she said. "When we organize, we can do something special." ★

AIDS from page 1

- ▶ a lead role in helping developing countries train health workers
- ▶ confirmation of the Agency's leadership in fighting malaria over five years.
- ▶ leadership in international TB funding for five years.

"In sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and beyond, PEPFAR is saving lives," said First Lady Laura Bush at the White House signing.

She said an HIV-positive boy, Raphael, was orphaned at the age of 3 and near death when he first started antiretroviral treatment. "Now at the age of ten, Raphael told me he was first in his class and he was planning on attending the University of Zambia," said the first lady.

President Bush said: "This Act is going to save millions of people." It is named after Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde, former Democratic and Republican chairmen, respectively, of the house Foreign Affairs Committee.

The president recalled how HIV/AIDS raged out of control in the 1990s, and in Africa, life expectancy fell by as much as 15 years in Botswana. But PEPFAR blunted the pandemic. When launched in 2003, 50,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa were receiving antiretroviral treatments.

Today, U.S. funds support treatment for nearly 1.7 million people in the region—and tens of thousands more around the world, from Asia to Eastern Europe—leading two years ago to the first annual decline in the number of AIDS deaths since the disease was identified in the 1980s.

PEPFAR has also supported care for nearly 7 million people, including millions of orphans and vulnerable children. To date, medicine provided by PEPFAR has allowed nearly 200,000 children in Africa to be born HIV-free.

Bush also said that U.S. funds help prevent many new infections through a policy known as "ABC" or Abstinence, Be faithful, and use Condoms. The global number of new infections was down to about 2.7 million people in 2007 from a peak of about 5 million new cases annually in the early 2000s, according to a report released in July by the U.N. AIDS agency.

"We've achieved more in the past five years than in the previous 20 years," said Peter Piot, the agency's executive director. "But if we relax now, it would be disastrous. It would wipe out all of our previous investments."

The new funds Congress approved will support treatment for at least 3 million people and prevent 12 million new HIV infections worldwide, Bush said. It will

support care for 12 million people affected by HIV/AIDS, including 5 million orphans and vulnerable children. And the bill will train at least 140,000 new health care workers to provide HIV prevention, treatment, and care.

The bill will increase the President's Malaria Initiative—housed inside USAID—with \$5 billion in new funds; and it commits \$4 billion to fight tuberculosis, the leading killer of Africans living with HIV.

The bill passed the House by a 303-115 vote and the Senate by a vote of 80-16. ★

SERBIA from page 6

public agencies as they address and correct legitimate grievances. With the Grey Book's information, advocates hope to apply pressure on the government and other institutions to make regulations more efficient. ★

Correction

An article in the May 2008 *FrontLines* incorrectly stated the amount of money that USAID invested in higher education programs between 2002 and 2007. The correct figure is \$1.6 billion. ★

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BELIZE PROTECTS BIODIVERSITY BY TRANSFERRING DEBTS TO CONSERVATION FUND

By Scott Lampman

The teeming jungle and brooding Mayan ruins of the tropical forests of Belize have attracted hunters, looters, loggers, and other illegal activities for many years. Today the incidence of these crimes has been significantly curtailed, in large part due to a “debt-for-nature swap” under the U.S. Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA).

The TFCA transfers national debts into local conservation funds in 12 countries. Under the Act, developing countries can redirect payments towards U.S. government and Food for Peace loans into a local fund to conserve biological diversity and protect ecosystems.

TFCA is carried out by an interagency team including the departments of State and Treasury, and USAID. TFCA’s secretariat is housed in USAID’s Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade Bureau; the Agency usually oversees in-country programs.

In Belize, the TFCA fund provides a grant to the local NGO, Program for Belize (Pfb). The Pfb manages the country’s largest protected region, the Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area (RBCMA).

“With the advent of the TFCA funding in 2001, Pfb has been

able to ensure that the security and protection of the RBCMA is now firmly rooted within its short and long-term management planning efforts,” Pfb Planning Manager Herbert Haylock said.

This 260,000-acre preserve is home to 392 species of birds, 200 species of trees (including costly, threatened mahogany), 70 species of mammals (including jaguars and howler monkeys), and 30 species of freshwater fish. There are also 60 Mayan ruin sites throughout the jungle.

“We now maintain a core unit of 10 rangers year-round who monitor access gates, boundary lines, and conduct routine ground and aerial patrols who additionally provide support to research activities,” Haylock said. “We have seen tremendous decreases in the number of reported illegal activities as a result of the presence by the ranger unit, and we expect this trend to continue despite the many challenges we continue to face.”

In 2007, rangers stopped one illegal logging operation—compared to about 10 in 2005.

TFCA monies also contribute to the certification that timber is harvested in a sustainable manner, development of park monitoring systems, upgrading

of park facilities, and outreach to buffer-zone communities.

The program strengthens civil society and democracy by providing small grants to NGOs and local communities. It also brings government and non-government members together to manage the funds transparently.

As of December 2007, \$95 million has been used to complete 13 TFCA debt-for-nature agreements in Bangladesh, Belize, Botswana, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, and Panama. The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, and the World Wildlife Fund have contributed an additional \$12 million to eight of these agreements.

These TFCA programs are expected to generate local currency worth \$163 million for grants and projects by 2017 to help conserve tropical forests. Two to three new projects are developed each year under the TFCA program.

For more information on TFCA programs, visit www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/forestry/tfca.html. ★

Scott Lampman is director of the TFCA secretariat.



Program for Belize timber harvesting contractors mark logs to track certifiably harvested timber “from stump to the store.”

Photo by Scott Lampman, USAID

WATCHING OUT FOR THE YELLOW-HEADED PARROT

The variety and accessibility of exotic tropical species in Belize make for a bird watcher’s dream destination. One species supported by the Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area (RBCMA) is the Belizean yellow-headed parrot.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, bird watching is the most popular sport in the United States with over 50 million participants, many of whom travel to see new species and spend dollars in the local economy. This ecotourism provides local communities with a highly profitable and non-destructive use of their natural resources.

The Belizean subspecies of the yellow-headed parrot is endemic to Belize and is classified as endangered by monitoring organizations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. It nests in cavities of mature pine savannah trees, which have been largely destroyed by over logging of pines, introduction of pasture, land development, and fires that destroy nests and inhibit pine regeneration.

The RBCMA serves as the last vestige of healthy pine savannah breeding habitat in the region. During the dry season when poaching and hunting picks up, RBCMA rangers engage in more rigorous surveillance of the pine savannah areas where the rare parrots nest. The rangers monitor nest locations using Geographic Positioning Systems, look for chicks, and record other relevant data used to provide counts of the RBCMA parrot population.

The U.S. Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA) program (see accompanying story) also helps protect the recovering population of these parrots by active participation in wildfire detection and suppression.

According to monitoring data from TFCA-supported park rangers of the Programme for Belize, a total of four chicks were stolen from their nests in 2007, a substantial reduction since 2005 when 18 chicks were lost to poaching.



Rangers in Belize are protecting the endangered yellow-headed parrot through poaching surveillance and wildfire suppression.

Photo by Programme for Belize