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**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES FLAGSHIP PROJECTS
IN SOKOTO STATE**

On Thursday, March 11, 2010, the Mission Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Dr. Ray Kirkland and the Governor of Sokoto State, Alhaji Aliyu Magatakarda Wammako launched three new flagship development projects with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in Sokoto. The United States of America, acting through USAID will be providing approximately US$169 million, subject to the availability of funds, to undertake activities in Sokoto and Bauchi states to fund a wide range of activities over a five year period that will assist the Government of Nigeria to achieve stability and growth. To implement these activities USAID will partner with the Government of Nigeria in its long-term vision to tackle the most critical social and economic development issues that have confronted the country.

The new flagship projects are: The "Two States High Impact Project", an integrated maternal neonatal and child health initiative which uses high impact and low cost interventions to reduce maternal and child death commenced six months ago; The "Northern Education Initiative", which will strengthen state and local government systems that lay the foundation for delivering quality education services and improve access of 15,000 orphans and vulnerable children to basic education, preventive health education, psychosocial support and referral health services; and The "Leadership Empowerment and Advocacy Development" program, which will promote democratic local governance to assume greater roles in addressing the needs of the citizenry with a view to improving the delivery of basic services.

USAID's partnership with Sokoto State has, over the years, yielded positive results in strengthening routine immunization, maternal and child health, reproductive health and family planning. The Agency is also instrumental in reducing polio and obstetric fistula in Sokoto.