



# FRONTLINES

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A girl attends a school in southern Lebanon that received computers, desks, and kitchen equipment from USAID.

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## President's Budget Requests 300 New FSOs Per Year

The Bush Administration's 2009 budget has requested \$767 million for USAID operating expenses—a \$141 million boost over the 2008 request—over half of which is aimed at hiring 300 additional Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) and reversing a 30-year decline in the work force.

Since 1970, the number of FSOs decreased from 4,500 to about 1,000 today, said Acting Deputy Administrator Jim Kunder in a meeting Feb. 6 with contractors, grantees, and leaders of NGOs who work on USAID programs.

Between FY 1995 and FY 2007, as USAID's work force shrank by 24 percent, the funding for USAID programs managed by these officers increased by 40 percent, clearly increasing the burden on each officer.

"We have reached a crisis—we need to do something," said Kunder.

The 2009 budget request unveiled in late January includes \$92 million for the new Development Leadership Initiative (DLI) which aims to hire 300 new FSOs beyond attrition—the number hired each year to replace resignations and retirees.

Administrator Henrietta Fore said that if that level of increase can be sustained for the next three years, USAID would almost double its FSO staff to close to 2,000.

Interviewing has already begun to hire the first batch of new FSOs by September of this year. The new hires would bring expertise in critical areas as well as move the Agency towards greater diversity. And, for the first time in many years, the Agency will pay to bring candidates to Washington for interviews, opening the door to a wider range of applicants.

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## U.S. Food Aid Costs Jump 41%

The cost of wheat and other food the United States donates to poor countries jumped 41 percent in the first half of FY 2008. In response, USAID's Office of Food for Peace (FFP) will spend \$120 million more to cover rising costs, reducing the amount of food aid sent overseas.

"Just like that, \$120 million lost to global food aid," said FFP Deputy Director Jonathan Dworken, at a meeting of the International Food Policy Research Institute.

The price spike in the first half of FY 2008 follows a 34 percent increase last year.

"What it means is less food aid for the beneficiaries," Dworken said Feb. 12 in Washington.

Food prices have risen due to several factors including increased demand, rising costs of petroleum used in food production, and shifting of corn to biofuel production.

The USAID annual budget for food aid, with supplemental appropriations, is about \$1.5 billion.

Most of the poor in the developing world will have to pay higher prices for the food they are not able to produce. As a result, they will reduce food consumption—eating less food, or cheaper and usually less nutritious food—or reduce other necessities, like health care and education.

While it is hard to quantify, it is clear that more people will become food insecure and malnourished, said FFP Director Jeff Borna.

In addition, in the last year, record food prices have sparked unrest in Guinea, Indonesia, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Senegal, Uzbekistan, and Yemen. ★



The city council in Jaar, in Abyan Governorate along the south coast of Yemen, has been working with U.S. support to tackle budgets, sewers, education and other issues traditionally handled by the central government. This camel cart was delivering materials to a fish market built by the council with U.S. support. See pages 8-9 for other USAID projects in Yemen.

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# AGENCY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Some Top USAID Accomplishments in 2007



Guy Lawson

USAID supports education programs in Afghanistan that assist children with school supplies, provide teacher training, and rebuild crumbling schools.

- ▶ **AFGHAN MORTALITY** – Infant mortality in Afghanistan was among the world’s highest in the 1990s, but fell 22 percent since the end of Taliban rule, largely due to U.S. supplied vaccinations and other health care. “We are saving at least 88,000 lives” per year as a result of 670 clinics built by USAID, said Dr. Faizullah Kakar, Afghanistan’s deputy minister of health.
- ▶ **MALARIA DECLINES** – The President’s Malaria Initiative has helped 22.3 million people by: indoor insecticide spraying, new medicine, insecticide impregnated bed-nets, and treatment during pregnancy. Major reductions in malaria cases are have been reported, including a 95 percent decrease in Zanzibar.
- ▶ **BANGLADESH CYCLONE** – In response to Cyclone Sidr, USAID provided Bangladesh with \$19.5 million for shelter, food, water, sanitation, and hygiene. Cement storm shelters USAID helped build since the 1980s saved thousands of lives.



Sue McInyre

USAID provided humanitarian aid in the aftermath of several disasters in 2007, including Cyclone Sidr, which struck Bangladesh Nov. 15. USAID dispatched a Disaster Assistance Response Team to the country soon after the cyclone, and provided more than \$19 million for relief and early recovery activities.

- ▶ **REBUILDING IRAQ** – As the U.S. military stabilized Baghdad and Anbar Province, USAID created jobs for 54,000 Iraqis clearing roads and repairing infrastructure. Some 7,000 Iraqis completed vocational education and 2,000 more had apprenticeships. Some \$276 million in grants funded 5,930 projects.
- ▶ **BEYOND AID** – USAID completed its work in Bulgaria and Romania after \$1.1 billion in U.S. assistance over the past 17 years helped the countries change from centralized, communist states into democratic, free-market members of NATO and the European Union.
- ▶ **PARKS IN PERIL** – After 17 years, USAID completed the Parks in Peril program in 18 Latin American countries. The Agency improved conservation of natural resources and quality of life at 45 sites on 45 million acres.
- ▶ **CENTRAL AMERICAN TRADE** – With USAID assistance, the United States-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) entered into force in the Dominican Republic in March 2007. U.S. and Dominican companies stand to benefit from increased efficiency, transparency, and accountability.
- ▶ **EMERGENCY RELIEF** – In 2007, USAID responded to 76 disasters in 56 countries by providing food and \$410 million in other aid for natural disasters and complex humanitarian crises.
- ▶ **PERU QUAKE** – After Peru was hit by a magnitude 8.0 earthquake Aug. 15, 2007, USAID provided 42,000 Peruvians with temporary shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene kits, as well as the airlift and distribution of emergency relief supplies.
- ▶ **HURRICANES DEAN, FELIX** – After hurricanes Dean and Felix hit Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, and St. Lucia in August and September 2007, USAID provided \$2.8 million for shelter, emergency health services, and airlift and distribution of relief commodities.



Rebecca Guertafon

A health worker in clinic fills out a patient intake form before examining a patient. The clinic was set up by USAID partner CIES to serve families in temporary shelters constructed after the floods in Trinidad, Bolivia.

- ▶ **FEEDING THE HUNGRY** – USAID provided \$1.4 billion in P.L. 480 Title II food aid to prevent famine in several countries. In Darfur, Sudan, U.S. food aid was 50 percent of the U.N. World Food Program Sudan appeal.
- ▶ **INDONESIAN EDUCATION** – In Indonesia, under the President’s Education Initiative, USAID trained 24,000 teachers, improving education for 400,000 students. Some 245,000 junior secondary students and out-of-school youth also received vocational training.
- ▶ **COLOMBIAN ELECTIONS** – Colombia’s congressional elections in 2007 were regarded as generally free and fair despite threats from illegal armed groups. USAID helped democratic institutions that managed or monitored the elections, and strengthened local governments and grass-roots democracy.
- ▶ **CONGO POLLS** – In the Democratic Republic of Congo, USAID supported elections from July 2006 to January 2007 for: president, the National Assembly, provincial assemblies, senators, governors, and traditional chief representatives. Aid was given to civic education, poll-worker training, observers, poll-watchers, election supplies and a get-out-the-vote campaign. Turnout was over 70 percent.
- ▶ **PRIVATE SECTOR** – In 16 countries, USAID mobilized \$407 million in loans from the private sector with an investment of only \$7.4 million through its Development Credit Authority – a leverage of \$55 in private investment for each \$1 spent by the U.S. government. In Angola, for example, USAID mobilized \$45 million in private lending so small farmers could switch to commercial crops, and then worked with Chevron Corp. to cut the cost of lending to the farmers.

## MISSION OF THE MONTH

## LEBANON



Terrorist groups routinely rocketed villages in the region. Fath El Islam prevented any vehicle from crossing the highway to the North to transport food and other supplies.

The mission's implementing partner, the U.S. NGO Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), using contacts in the municipalities, set up locations where food baskets could be distributed.

But another problem loomed. USAID/Lebanon faced pressure from the community to reach more recipients, but the supply was not enough to feed all the families of Bebnine-El Abdeh and Mhamara. A solution was devised: Priority went to the poorest of the poor. Beneficiaries were selected by a committee of representatives from CHF, the municipalities of Bebnine-El Abdeh and Mhamara, and the fishermen's cooperative.

### Results

The food distribution went off as planned, with families gathering within the municipalities to receive their baskets. As a result of USAID's intervention, 1,404 families received food baskets.

The families were relieved that the assistance arrived around the festivities of the month of Ramadan.

"During times like this when people are struggling for their basic necessities, distributing food quickly is one of the most important things USAID can do, especially at the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan," said USAID/Lebanon Mission Director Raouf Youssef. ★

grocery and other vital shops, were closed during the conflict, depriving their owners of income.

The villagers' lives were effectively put on hold as the violence stretched from days to weeks to months, with no clue as to when they could return to a more normal existence.

### Innovative Response

As the Holy Month of Ramadan was fast approaching in October, and the families found themselves without financial resources, USAID/Lebanon proposed to help them through food donations.

Funded by a \$125,000 contribution from USAID, each designated family received a basket containing basic food items including: dates, rice, sugar, milk, oil, fava beans, peas, okra, chickpeas, lentils, beans, crushed wheat, spaghetti, jams, sesame oil, halawa (a sweet), tomato paste, and oregano. Each basket was designed to feed a family of five for about a month.

However, getting the food baskets to their beneficiaries was not an easy task.

Safety was a serious issue for the families and the Agency.

### Food Distributed to Lebanese in Conflict Zone

#### Challenge

Bebnine-El Abdeh and Mhamara villages on the coast of North Lebanon have 4,150 families whose main sources of income are fishing, agriculture, small businesses, and public employment.

In May 2007, the outburst of violence in the North between Fath El Islam terrorists and the Lebanese Army severely affected the lives of people in numerous villages adjacent to the fighting, leading to an almost complete paralysis of Northern Lebanon for three months.

Villagers from Bebnine-El Abdeh and Mhamara were the most affected because of their close proximity to the combatants' camps, and they found themselves with no source of income.

Fishermen in the area lost most of their fishing nets and tools, with more than 300 boats needing extensive renovations. Farmers were unable to work their land and lost their crops. Most of the small businesses, including the local



Women from a local community in Lebanon receive food baskets.

## INSIGHTS

FROM  
**HENRIETTA H. FORE**



On Jan. 8, I arrived in Peru for a two-day visit to a country with which the United States enjoys excellent relations—the fruit of a long and proud friendship between the peoples of both countries.

Peru deserves our admiration for being able to rebuild democratic institutions, promote sustained economic growth, and take on regional peacekeeping responsibilities.

I personally congratulated Prime Minister Jorge del Castillo for the government's impressive macroeconomic performance: high growth rates, low inflation, increased employment, and higher tax collection have all led to a drop in overall poverty levels in the past year. U.S. economic assistance to Peru—coupled with export industries stimulated by the Andean Trade Pact and Drug Enforcement Agreement—is helping to generate jobs, improve public health, combat corruption, fight narco-trafficking, and educate people.

In 2006, President Bush signed the landmark U.S.–Peru Trade Promotion Agreement. Upon implementation, 80 percent of consumer and industrial products and more than two-thirds of current U.S. farm exports to Peru became duty-free.

Over the coming years, Peru will continue to provide substantial market access to U.S. goods, services and agricultural products by gradually eliminating all tariffs on U.S. exports to Peru. The agreement also ensures a secure, predictable legal framework for U.S. investors operating in Peru, provides for enforcement of quality labor and environmental standards, protects intellectual property rights, and installs an effective dispute settlement process.

Taking advantage of trade opportunities between our countries is one of the more effective ways we can address the entrenched poverty that grips many regions of Peru. USAID's current activities are laying the foundation for sustained trade-led economic growth and increased market access for micro, small and medium enterprises.

Site visits and meetings with mayors, local officials, and rural Peruvians let me witness first-hand how USAID programs are helping expand opportunities for low-income Peruvians to participate in the international economy.

USAID works with the national, regional, and local governments in areas such as business registration reform, regional export plans, developing licit economic opportunities for former coca farmers, and strengthening government capacity to further these ends.

Beyond these areas, we recognize Peru as one of the cradles of world civilization, and we are pleased to have extended for another five years our Memorandum of Understanding on cultural property protection so our governments can continue to cooperate closely to stop the illegal traffic in cultural artifacts.

We look forward to working with Peru's government and citizens to solidify the ties between our countries and create opportunities for our peoples. ★

# GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS



Peruvian artisan Macedonio Palomino, who is part of USAID's Poverty Reduction and Alleviation Project (PRA), hosted Administrator Henrietta Fore in January at his workshop in Huamanga, Ayacucho, which is in the Andes. PRA works to reduce poverty through trade, focusing on the importance of market-driven demand. Palomino, whose first contact with PRA was in 2002, has grown his business from its initial start with 10 craftswomen to more than 200 – many of whom live in remote communities. He exports their colorful products to Chile, Australia, France, Germany and the United States. Read more about this effort in the Administrator's column on page 3.

U.S. Embassy Peru

## BRIEFS

### U.S. Gives \$750M to Pakistan Tribal Areas

The United States will provide \$750 million over five years to help Pakistan develop its volatile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) along the Afghan border.

USAID will manage projects to strengthen livelihoods, expand economic opportunities, and improve education and healthcare. To monitor the projects, USAID has awarded a \$43 million contract to Development Alternatives Inc.

The FATA has about 3 million residents, mainly ethnic Pashtun, and is reportedly harboring many Taliban and Al-Qaeda members who have attacked Afghanistan and launched bombing campaigns inside Pakistan. The region is governed by Pakistan but tribal elders run daily affairs.

### Congo Holds Peace Conference

The Democratic Republic of the Congo opened a Conference on Peace, Stability and Development in the Kivus on Jan. 6. The conference was expected to be a catalyst for peace and reconciliation, bringing an end to conflict, involuntary displacement, and massive human rights abuses, including gender-based violence. The Congolese government announced its intention to cease military operations during the conference. USAID provided important logistical, material, and technical support to the conference.

### Program Treats Neglected Tropical Diseases

A USAID-funded program integrates for the first time treatment programs for tropical diseases that affect 1 billion people. The Neglected Tropical Disease Control Program is behind the distribution of medicines to more than 14 million people in four African nations affected with lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis, trachoma, onchocerciasis, and soil-transmitted helminths.

Largely unknown in developed nations, the diseases cause severe disability and suffering to millions of the world's poorest people.

Its first year of operation in 2007 saw the distribution of over 36 million treatments worth more than \$400 million to more than 14 million people in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, and Niger as well as 10 million people in Uganda alone. The medicines were donated by Merck, GSK, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Johnson & Johnson, and Pfizer.

The program will reach Haiti, Southern Sudan, and Sierra Leone this year and will be expanded to about 40 million people over five years in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, according to the Research Triangle Institute, which administers the program.

### Philippines Road Spans Former Battleground

U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney and Congressman Adam Smith (D-Wash.) have inaugurated a

road at the former battleground between government forces and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) rebels in Basilan province.

The road, built with USAID funds, is 13 kilometers long and links Barangay Campo Uno in Lamitan City and Tuburan, where fierce fighting took place in the 1970s at the height of the MNLF uprising.

Dubbed as "a road to prosperity," the project will help farmers send children to schools and help sell coffee, black pepper, coconuts, banana, and rubber.

### \$5M Goes to Displaced Kenyans

The United States is donating \$5 million to help Kenyans made homeless by post-election violence. The money from USAID will go to NGOs and international agencies to assist vulnerable and displaced Kenyans with food, water, sanitation facilities, and temporary shelter.

Hundreds died in violence spawned by elections Dec. 27 that returned President Mwai Kibaki to power for another five-year term. His opponent, Raila Odinga, came in a close second after a vote count that foreign election observers say was rigged.

U.S. Ambassador Michael E. Ranneberger declared a disaster on Jan. 3. The current annual USAID budget for Kenya is \$600 million.

## System Monitoring Climate Change Expands to Africa

WASHINGTON—USAID is working with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to expand to Africa a sophisticated forecasting system designed to collect information about droughts, floods, and other natural disasters. The system, which successfully helped predict the impact of recent storms in Central America, is slated to begin operating in Africa later this year.

Last November, Jacqueline E. Schafer, assistant administrator for the Bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade, joined Panama officials and representatives from several U.S. government agencies involved in the project at USAID's public library to herald the system's success in the wake of hurricanes Dean and Felix.

But talk about the system, known as SERVIR, a Spanish acronym for Regional Visualization and Monitoring System, also turned to expansion.

"We are working to implement the SERVIR system in other regions of the world," Schafer said, naming eastern Africa as the next logical area this system should benefit.

Satellite data for this region might not only help anticipate droughts, but also provide general weather forecasting, natural resources management, and disease control, she said.

SERVIR combines space-based imagery gathered by satellites operated by NASA and other federal government agencies with ground-based observations. The information is accessible at SERVIR's web site—www.servir.net—and used in forecasting. The system produces extensive data, including maps containing weather and climate information. Anyone with web access can visit the

site, monitor its contents, and receive real-time data as well—some of it even in 3D.

The data should prove especially helpful to governments, NGOs, and other groups that respond during and after natural disasters, as was the case in Panama with hurricanes Dean and Felix. Then, officials issued warnings that allowed residents to evacuate the affected areas. Eventually, the information could help to ensure that response vehicles, emergency rations, and disaster workers are in place to respond once the immediate danger has passed.

In the past seven months, Schafer said, SERVIR has been used in a half dozen disaster cases, ranging from assessing economic losses from forest fires in Belize to evaluating the impact of flooding from Tropical Storm Noel in the Dominican Republic, Hurricane Dean in Mexico, and Hurricane Felix in Honduras and Nicaragua.

"The people of Central America can take great pride in being the first in the world to implement a system in which an entire region—that's multiple nations—work together in an integrated fashion to manage their environment for long-term sustainability," said John C. Mather of NASA's Office of Chief Scientist.

Eduardo Reyes, the deputy administrator of the Panamanian National Environmental Authority, added that SERVIR has helped reduce poverty and environmental degradation and contributes to improved management of the Mesoamerica region's environmental resources and sustained economic development. Panama is the host country for SERVIR, which began operations in 2005 with initial support from USAID, NASA, and the World Bank. ★

## USAID, Congress Build Strong Legislatures in New Democracies

By Keith Schulz

It has been 15 years since USAID first began working with the U.S. Congress to support independent legislatures in new democracies. The Frost-Solomon Task Force, created by Congress in the early 1990s, worked with USAID to help legislatures in Eastern Europe as they changed from authoritarian rule to democracy.

Today, USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance is working with the House Democracy Assistance Commission to promote democratic legislatures around the globe.

This non-partisan commission, created in 2005, consists of 20 members of the House and is chaired by Rep. David Price (D-N.C.) with Rep. David Dreier (R-Calif.) as the ranking minority member.

Twelve country partners belong to the commission—Afghanistan, Colombia, East Timor, Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Macedonia, Mongolia, and Ukraine.

The commission provides technical expertise to enhance accountability, transparency, independence, and government oversight in the legislatures of these countries. For example, in Macedonia, Kenya, and Haiti, U.S. members of Congress and their staffs acted as trainers in Agency legislative programs.



Rep. David Price (D-N.C.), chairman of the House Democracy Assistance Commission, addresses a session of the Colombian Congress.

"This is a real model for how the commission can help reinforce and augment our program work with the parliament," said Kathy Stermer of USAID/Macedonia.

One added bonus: the commission provides members of Congress the opportunity to see first-hand the impact of USAID programs.

In August 2007, seven Commission members traveled to Colombia to meet with their counterparts. In addition to meetings with President Alvaro Uribe and other high-ranking government officials, congressional members squeezed in visits to several USAID project sites.

In Medellin, they saw a vocational training institute for demobilized former guerilla and paramilitary soldiers, and talked with several young men there. They also visited a coffee cooperative and a flower plantation that receive technical assistance and training from USAID/Colombia.

"USAID is doing outstanding work in legislative strengthening, and our commission aims to complement USAID programs with the experience and expertise of members of Congress and their staffs," said Price. ★

## IMPROVED EMPLOYEE RELATIONS BOOST LATIN AMERICAN FIRMS

Morale among the factory employees was low. Their productivity was declining and the company was struggling to stay competitive.

An anonymous survey determined what Jorge Duarte Diaz, the manager of this jeans manufacturing firm in Managua, Nicaragua, already knew—workers felt disconnected from the management team and from the leadership's decision-making process.

The company needed to change—and soon—if it was going to survive. "We had many problems and we were struggling," said Duarte Diaz. "Communication between the workers and managers was the biggest problem."

In an effort to save his company and stabilize employee relations, Duarte Diaz participated in the CIMCAW (Continuous Improvement in the Central American Workplace) labor standards training program.

Since 2004, the CIMCAW Alliance, a USAID-supported initiative, has been helping local Central American apparel suppliers in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic create a better workplace and is now expanding to Guatemala and Honduras. The improved atmosphere in turn will help them meet the demand for high-quality apparel, produced under internationally acceptable working conditions, for brands such as Limited Brands, Timberland, Gap, and more recently—Wal-Mart.

In the target countries, local NGOs provide training for

managers and workers to identify and resolve gaps in compliance issues such as forced overtime, improper health and safety practices, communication, and maternity leave. In so doing, factories aim to become compliant with their respective national legislation and the International Labor Organization's Core Labor Standards, and to increase worker morale and productivity.



Employees like this woman in Nicaragua are enjoying better workplace relations with their colleagues and supervisors as a result of a USAID program that helps company leaders become better managers.

CIMCAW is also helping raise labor standards—one goal of the Central American Free Trade Agreement—Dominican Republic (CAFTA-DR)—by emphasizing worker empowerment and the importance of trade unions in growing their industrial base.

"The CAFTA-DR Free Trade Agreement opens the door to new markets for Nicaragua," said Alex Dickie, USAID/

Nicaragua mission director. "The goal of this alliance is to help increase the productivity and competitiveness of Nicaragua's enterprises to take advantage of the opportunities of CAFTA-DR. These businesses can play a catalytic role in their communities by creating jobs and being a role model."

For Duarte Diaz's company, the training addressed issues such as freedom of association, gender discrimination, employee rights and obligations, and child labor. Workers and managers determined that to become more competitive and attractive to U.S. apparel companies, employers needed to create an open-door policy where employees had access to all levels of management.

"The trainings were very important for worker empowerment and initiative, as well as building trust between workers and managers," said Duarte Diaz. Without the training, "the factory would still be searching for solutions to its problems and struggling to improve competitiveness."

So far, the \$3.7 million alliance, implemented by Development Alternatives Inc., has trained and disseminated information to an estimated 40,000 people from the private sector, unions, NGOs, and multinational brands. By September 2008, when the CIMCAW Alliance expires, alliance members expect to have reached over 50,000 workers, directly and indirectly, through the training program. ★

## REPORT: INVESTMENTS IN CHILD NUTRITION PAY OFF IN HEALTH, ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

New research in *The Lancet* medical journal suggests one in four child deaths could be easily prevented by scaling up infant and young child feeding, including breast-feeding, fortifying food with vitamins and minerals, adding zinc to diarrhea treatment, and effectively managing acute, severe malnutrition.

The five-part series on maternal and child under-nutrition found that during pregnancy and infancy, malnutrition is by far the biggest contributor to child mortality, present in half of all cases. Four in five of the world's under-nourished children live in just 20 countries.

At the U.S. launch of the series, held at the Woodrow

Wilson Center for International Scholars Jan. 16, Dr. Robert Black, chairman of the Department of International Health at the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health and lead author, called for greater investment in nutrition services and improved coordination among governments, donor organizations and health groups

to scale up essential nutrition services and good health practices.

About 3.5 million children die from malnutrition each year, and millions more are permanently disabled by the physical and mental effects of a poor diet in the earliest months of life. By their second birthday, under-nourished children can suffer irreversible physical and cognitive damage, impacting future health and economic well-being.

These effects continue for a lifetime and are passed on to

future generations.

Dr. Kent R. Hill, assistant administrator for the Bureau of Global Health at USAID, said nutrition services can play a key role in supporting broader public health campaigns, especially the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis.

"These interventions need to be connected," he said, with clinics supplying iron, folic acid, and zinc supplements; oral rehydration

see **NUTRITION** on page 15 ►

# THE REGIONS

## LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

### From Coca to Cacao— Peruvian Farmers Turn Away from Narco Trade

**LIMA, Peru**—The tour of the jungle's farming plots starts this way: robust cacao trees, coffee plants, and oil palms. There is not a leaf of coca—the key ingredient in cocaine.

USAID has assisted nearly 64,000 farm families to produce licit crops since its Alternative Development Program began in Peru in 2002. Today, more than 15,000 hectares of coca have been voluntarily eradicated by communities joining the program, making it a key component of the U.S. government's counter-narcotics strategy in the country.

The transition from a *cocalero*, or a coca-producer, to a farmer who embraces a legal income and lifestyle is fraught with challenges, making alternative development communities similar in many ways to post-conflict communities.

Paul Bonicelli, assistant administrator for the Latin America and the Caribbean Bureau explains that, “the first priority for post-conflict and alternative development programs must be to provide at least minimal security and re-establish state presence in the areas where USAID is working.”

“Another critical factor for success is to ensure that project areas have at least minimum levels of productive and social infrastructure and that private sector partners are fully engaged in the development effort,” he said. “Long-term sustainability depends on the development of effective democratic institutions to ensure ongoing community participation and accountability of local officials.”

The USAID program takes an integrated approach, working with communities on both

economic and social fronts, including support to build community infrastructure, improve schools, and boost community health education.

In Peru, in exchange for eradicating coca permanently, residents get a basket of short- and long-term assistance, including temporary income assistance, short- and long-term agricultural crops, and small infrastructure projects, such as schools, health posts, community roads, and potable water systems.

Alternative development assistance appears to have completely turned around the economies of some areas of the country. The 21,000 hectares of cacao planted through the program represent 48

percent of the nation's cacao crop and will generate an estimated \$20 million a year in annual revenues when they reach full production in 2009. When processed, cacao becomes chocolate. Similarly, the 4,500 hectares of alternative development palm oil make up one-fifth of the national total.

Both palm oil and cacao are in high demand in world markets. USAID's Poverty Reduction and Alleviation Program helps connect these new crops with markets around the world. The project provides business development services to enterprises throughout

the production process, identifying markets for local products and helping entrepreneurs and producers to improve competitiveness in the market place.

The Agency also has specific programs aimed at schools and health programs, prioritized by regions that have eradicated their coca. And a democracy program contributes to the program by working with local governments in the coca-growing areas. Resources are used for training and technical assistance to strengthen regional and municipal governments, improve staff, and expand responsibility and accountability. ★



In the depths of the island of Pongo in Chazuta, a remote jungle area in the San Martín region in northeastern Peru, two former *cocalero* women cut open cacao pods for the sun-drying process to prepare the beans for organic chocolate production.

## AFRICA

### Mobile Phones Link West Africans to Banking Services

By Julianna White

**ACCRA, Ghana**—Billboards around West Africa are heralding banking by mobile phone as the latest way to check balances and transfer money—but the phones also are giving millions their first chance to use banking services.

These services are presently available only to those with a bank account—in West Africa

that is only about 5 percent of the population. The remaining 95 percent rely on cash, couriers, and “suitcase” transactions—thus risking loss, theft, and corruption.

Mobile phones, however, which are common throughout the region, can offer financial services traditionally available only via banks, said Ann

Casanova, a financial services advisor for USAID's West Africa Trade Hub 2.

For the new technology to be successful, Casanova said, appropriate oversight and consumer protections must be in place. The Hub supports widespread adoption of mobile banking—alternatively known as both SMS banking and M-banking—in West Africa by analyzing legal, regulatory, and technological barriers to the practice.

Around the world, successful M-banking networks have been launched by financial institutions, mobile phone operators, and even software companies. Mobile phone companies in Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, the Philippines, and other countries have discovered that financial services can be provided to “unbanked” clients over the mobile telephone network.

In other regions, M-banking customers use phones to make deposits, withdrawals, money transfers, savings, person-to-

person transfers, bill payments, loan repayments, and investments. They can open accounts, collect incoming and send outgoing remittances, collect insurance premiums, and receive balance alerts and statements.

In West Africa, M-banking's biggest effect could be to move unbanked people—who circulate an estimated \$10 billion a year—into the more formal economy. As they become accustomed to making more formal transactions, M-banking users could begin using bank products to expand businesses and negotiate deals. M-banking can also be used to create a financial history and thus evaluate credit risk, as well as contribute to national economic statistics on cross-border trade.

“The technology can leapfrog past the infrastructure requirements,” Casanova said. “You don't need an ATM or a physical bank—in its simplest form all you need is a phone, someone else with a phone, a network, and a point of sale.”

Specific issues the Hub will address include safeguarding funds in transit, standardizing M-banking legal requirements across the region, fraud protection, expansion of roaming capacity, and lowering roaming rates. The technology must also ensure compatibility of devices, 24-hour reliability, and secure transactions between financial institutions and points of sale.

Also, customers must be consulted about what services they would use, under what conditions, and at what price.

“To unleash the true potential of M-banking, we must convince the consumer that an electronic wallet is better than cash because it is safe, fast, low-cost, and widely available throughout the West African region,” Casanova said.

“The timing is right,” she added. “This has to be private-sector driven to work well, and the private sector is now seeing M-banking as a way to provide services in a very cost-effective way.” ★

#### M-banking in Focus

Kenya's Safaricom, in partnership with Vodafone and the local microfinance institution Faulu, launched M-Pesa in February 2007. Within the first three months, M-Pesa had enrolled 111,000 users, who transferred nearly \$6 million between individuals. The service is successfully competing with existing money transfer agencies and the postal corporation, which are slower and less convenient, especially for rural users. In addition to speed, M-Pesa offers full-time availability and a low transaction cost—averaging about \$1 to send or receive money, as opposed to the 12 percent fee customarily charged by other agencies, according to the UK's Commission on Africa.

## EUROPE & EURASIA

# Southeast Europe Legislators Join Corruption Fight

By Stephanie Atkinson Pepi

**TIRANA, Albania**—Legislatures across Southeast Europe, as in other regions across the globe, remain weak compared to their executive branch counterparts. Critical powers to deter and fight corruption—from the oversight of public spending to the authority to carry out investigations—are woefully underutilized.

Since 2004, USAID/Albania has helped to strengthen government audit and accountability mechanisms and to aid the fight against corruption in that country. At the same time, parliamentary anticorruption programs in the Balkans have become more significant since the European Union (EU) recently identified corruption as a potential barrier to membership for aspiring countries in the region.

Lawmakers in the region took yet another step toward strengthening their governments on Nov. 7. That is when

legislators from six Southeast European countries formed a new chapter of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC) to coordinate their efforts to fight corruption in the region.

The new chapter was formed at a three-day conference in Tirana attended by parliamentary delegates from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Romania.

Presiding over the conference was Canadian Member of Parliament John Williams, GOPAC's founder and chairman, who urged parliaments "[to] become leaders in fighting corruption by acting as a watchdog of government instead of lapdogs of government."

GOPAC's mission is to enhance the legislative role in battling corruption by setting up a network of parliamentarians region by region. The Canada-



based organization, founded in 2002, currently has 400 members in regional and national chapters. With the formation of this most recent chapter, Southeastern Europe Parliamentarians Against Corruption (SEEPAC), GOPAC hopes parliamentary action will improve the economic and social environment in the Balkans.

"This new network is truly a positive development for the region in the anticorruption fight," says Bruce Kay, USAID/Albania's democracy and governance advisor. "Not only does it give legislators the moral and political support to carry on the battle at home, but may lead to a much-needed push by parliaments to assume a stronger role as protagonists."

According to Kay, these legislatures are relatively inexperienced in using oversight powers to counteract a tradition of overpowering executives, which has persisted in the post-communist era. "Further, parliaments—as other branches of government—also succumb to conflicting political agendas, corrupt influences, and immunity provisions, which weaken their commitment to tackle corruption in earnest," he said.

Regionally, USAID programs work with legislative staffs, especially in budget, finance, and other permanent committees, to oversee government spending and follow up on internal audits from independent agencies.

"Parliaments represent the people and have the authority to oversee," said Leonard Demi, a member of Albania's parliament and newly-elected board chairman of SEEPAC. "Our chapter

of GOPAC will support the institutions that have the expertise on these issues and will aim to be more effective and produce more concrete results [in curbing corruption]."

Former U.S. Congressmen Webb Franklin (R-Miss., 1983-1987) and Jim Moody (D-Wis., 1983-1993) addressed delegates and have requested help from the Association of Former Members of Congress to create a sister organization to GOPAC-Canada comprised of American legislators. "Assistance from U.S. congressmen," said Moody, "can contribute significantly to helping start-up democracies establish effective legislatures."

The conference was hosted by the Albanian Parliament, GOPAC, USAID, and the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE). USAID is one of GOPAC's principal funding partners. ★

## ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

# Nepal Youth Radio Program Wins Global Junior Challenge Award

**KATHMANDU, Nepal**—Nepal's top youth-focused radio program, "Saathi Sanga Manka Kurra" ("Chatting with My Best Friend"), which is supported by USAID/Nepal, has won the 2007 Global Junior Challenge Award for the use of technology in the education and training of youth.

The weekly radio program was launched in April 2001, with the aim of empowering Nepali youth with the life skills needed to make sound decisions and to tackle peer pressure and stigmatization.

"Chatting with My Best Friend" was recognized from among 600 competing entries from 80 countries and awarded 25,000 euros by Italian President Giorgio Napolitano at an event at the Presidential Palace in Rome in November 2007.

"This program has had a positive impact on the lives of thousands of Nepali youths and meets

a real need for reliable information and open discussion on life topics," said Mission Director Beth Paige. "USAID/Nepal is thrilled that 'Chatting with My Best Friend' has been recognized with this important award."

"Chatting with My Best Friend" has gained unprecedented popularity in Nepal through its casual, peer-to-peer discussion format and for encouraging young people to break the silence surrounding physiological and emotional issues related to growing up. It also focuses on building teenagers' self-confidence and encouraging them to arrive at their own conclusions through unbiased information and uninhibited, nonjudgmental discussion.

The radio programs reach the most remote areas of this mountainous country, and the staff answers about 1,000 letters from listeners each month.

"Chatting with My Best Friend" reaches 6 million Nepalese youth under age 29—or roughly 50 percent of its 14- to 29-year-old target audience, making it the most popular program for young people in the country—and 20 percent of the entire population of Nepal. Originally designed with a focus on safe behavior to reduce the risk of HIV infection and drug abuse, the program has expanded to meet the audience demand. It now incorporates other issues of interest to youth, such as employment, reproductive health, and conflict. In addition, a half-hour weekly program called "Kaamka Koora" ("Talking about Work") supplements the regular hour-long program with information about building skills for employment.

The national broadcaster, Radio Nepal, airs the program every Saturday, and it is rebroadcast by more than two



"Chatting with My Best Friend" is being recognized beyond its radio audience of Nepalese youth: the weekly program recently won the 2007 Global Junior Challenge Award, and was featured on CNN.

dozen local FM radio stations all over Nepal. The show's unique format and immense popularity also have attracted attention from the international media, with a recent online story by CNN discussing the success of the model.

Now that "Chatting with My Best Friend" has proven itself, USAID/Nepal is working on

ways to expand it. The mission aims to target more support for outreach and to attract and educate new listeners across Nepal.

Youth in several neighboring countries where teams have trained others to start programs modeled on the peer-to-peer discussion format will soon be able to tune in to similar youth-oriented programming. ★

# FOCUS ON YEMEN

## TRADITIONAL YEMEN SEEKS TO MOVE FORWARD

U.S. assistance workers and their projects have long been welcomed in Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the Arab world. However, security concerns have grown in recent years—especially since the October 2000 bombing of the USS Cole. The challenges and opportunities facing the country are as diverse as the country itself.

From its bustling markets to the spectacular mountains and deserts of its tribal regions, Yemen retains its strong traditions while looking ahead to the future. Frequently, one of the first things foreign tourists notice about Yemenis is their traditional practice of treating visitors from all countries as honored guests.

Another sign of the strength of traditional society in Yemen can be seen at the crowded Old Sanaa gold market, where shop after shop displays gleaming 22 karat jewelry—the shop doors are wide open and not a single policeman

or guard is needed to prevent theft.

In 2003, after an interruption resulting from Yemen's action in the UN Security Council following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, USAID restarted its assistance program, targeting five Governorates in the northeast of the country: Sadah, Al-Jawf, Amram, Marib, and Shabwa. These remote areas lack adequate education, health and other services and are seen as prone to terrorist recruitment.

The focus of the aid program was on maternal and child health, basic education, income, food security, and democracy.

In 2005, \$14.8 million was budgeted for aid to Yemen. However, in 2006, USAID funding fell to \$7.92 million after Yemen lost its standing as an applicant for Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) aid. This occurred as a result of repression of journalists and failure to tackle corruption. In addition to the drop in USAID

funds, Yemen failed to receive \$20.6 million in MCA support requested for 2007 as well as more than \$100 million in World Bank aid.

While Yemen is a delightful place to visit, where ancient cities and villages and peaceful markets seem a throwback to the times of the Bible, much of the country is under the influence of tribal leaders who sometimes find it difficult to work together with other tribes or factions as a national team. In recent years, foreign diplomats and tourists have been kidnapped in tribal areas to pressure the government to provide benefits or release prisoners. Generally, the foreigners were all released after a few hours or days, but those incidents discouraged tourists, investors, and development.

Working in this country has proved fascinating and challenging and rewarding, to both USAID expatriates as well as the Yemeni aid staff. By teaching



In Marib Governorate of Yemen, Ali Benzaid Albehaiti, chairman of the Parents Council at a school being expanded and refurbished by U.S. aid, helps assemble desks.

midwives to deliver babies and vaccinate them, keeping camels and goats free of disease, helping local councils take charge of their

budgets, and improving badly-needed schools, USAID employees are making a difference in the lives of the people of Yemen. ★

### Imams and Mothers Councils

Sana Al Towayty, 26, who wears the traditional black cloak and veil of a devout Muslim woman, has played a decidedly innovative role in creating nine mothers' councils in one month in her region of Marib Governorate.

She was a teacher, but saw the greater need of getting parents involved in schools.

"I worked with the imam [cleric] at the mosque who favors women getting education," said Al Towayty in an interview at a hotel in Marib. Her father sat nearby—he accompanies her on all her social work projects to protect her honor. As an unaccompanied woman she would find it difficult to get around on her own in the conservative Muslim society.

U.S. support for mothers' councils has helped build local support for improving schools and getting family support for education.

Imams tell the community during sermons that "woman is the sister of man and has a right to get an education," she said. They then encourage parents to meet with social workers to form councils.

When a group of seven to 10 mothers meet at someone's home, Al Towayty or other social workers lead discussions on renovating schools, mixing boys and girls in the schools, the lack of female teachers, the lack of latrines or proper classrooms, and the benefits of an education.

"Here women are very tough—if mothers decide to do something, it will happen," Al Towayty said with a humorous twinkle in her eyes.

The headmaster of a local school said: "I am thankful USAID built classrooms and latrines and formed mothers' and fathers' councils. The parents can ask for more teachers from the education ministry. Mothers councils also raise money for poor students as well as carry out literacy and small projects such as sewing and weaving."

He said most girls drop out of school at the sixth grade and, "we need to encourage them to complete 12 years and then they can become teachers."

## SCHOOLS AND DESKS IMPROVE MARIB SCHOOLS

**MARIB GOVERNORATE, Yemen**—On a bright morning in the sandy plateau northeast of the capital Sanaa, in a sparse region of rugged Marib Governorate, Ali Benzaid Abdelhaiti tightened his belt and leaned over a new school bench and desk taking shape under his busy hands.

Plywood and iron were bolted together with care as Abdelhaiti, chairman of the Parents Council at the Al-Jafr school, spent yet another of his spare mornings working to improve the local education system.

Abdelhaiti and other parents supply the muscle, while U.S. aid projects are supplying the wood, tools and a small electric generator that powers an electric saw, welding torch and electric drill—making the work fast and fruitful.

"I love this school," said the grey-bearded Abdelhaiti, "and I come here every morning till noon—without pay. In the afternoon I do my own work as a farmer."

Asked why he comes to volunteer each day, he said: "So that our students are successful and learn."

The new classrooms and desks at the Al-Jafr school are part of a \$10 million U.S. program initially funded in 2006 over three years to renovate or rebuild 77 schools serving 17,000 students. To improve staffing at those schools, 1,500 teachers and administrators have been trained in modern teaching methods and administration.

Since most adults in the region have never had a chance to learn to read and write, special literacy programs have also been carried out in 80 communities. In some families, children and parents are both learning to read at the same time.

A 10-year-old boy at the school that was getting new desks and classrooms, Mufarg Abdallah Hamet Arai, tried out one of the new desks in a sparse new classroom still under construction – iron rods stuck out of the cement posts as if in need of a haircut.

"Last year I had to sit on the floor while learning Arabic and Koran," he said.

The U.S.-funded project at his school is also building new latrines and washrooms for both boys and girls, to improve

health and provide privacy that might encourage families to send their girls.

The school has 180 students in the first to 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Most will end up farming in the arid surroundings. Many of them also will keep goats, sheep, cattle, and possibly camels.

Like most U.S. assistance projects in Yemen, the education program is focused on the four governorates that are in greatest need and—at the same time—most likely to be infiltrated by terrorism. This includes Marib.

The difficulty of providing aid to Yemen, where tribal rule may be stronger than that of the central government, is that tribal jealousy and conflict can interfere with the best of intentions. There are 4,000 schools in the five target governorates, so although 77 get U.S.-funded renovations, the rest remain in need of improvements. And the pressure on schools is huge given that enrollment in grades one through nine has increased 1,000 percent in the past 15 years.

Other donors such as Japan and the World Bank are also assisting Yemen education. ★

FrontLines Editorial Director Ben Barber visited Yemen and wrote this collection of articles and captured these images.





Ali Benzaid Albehaiti is chairman of the Parents Council at a school. His forehead shows the mark left from Muslim prayers.

## ELECTED LOCAL COUNCILS LEARN TO GOVERN

**JAAR, Yemen**—A group of 26 untested council members gathered around a table recently in Jaar, capital of Khanfr District in Abyan Governorate, along the south coast to learn how to govern.

Since 2000, a new law has allowed the election of local councils—this one is responsible for 116,000 people in the district. But in spite of the law, critical decisions about budgets, sewers, education and other issues have always been made by the central government.

A U.S.-funded program is assisting the local council here to improve its ability to run the affairs of this region. Experts train the council members on budgets, dealing with the media, programming and operating local projects. They also learn how to discuss controversial issues and come to agreement through the rules of debate and the art of compromise.

Some 12 million rials (\$60,000 in U.S. dollars) is given to the council by the central government, but another 25 million are raised in local revenues. The elected council members know that if they are able to apply these revenues to the projects of concern to the voters, it will mark an important step on the road to achieving accountable government. It may also get

see **COUNCILS** on page 15 ►

## U.S. HELPS YEMEN FIGHT LIVESTOCK DISEASE

**SANAA, Yemen**—The vibrant and noisy livestock market Souk Nokom in the center of this capital city seems a great place to do business and to provide people with meat and other animal products.

The slow and heavy cows, the frisky goats, and bleating sheep are bought, sold and sometimes even slaughtered right here.

But the brisk livestock trade has been threatened by the discovery that animal disease such as Rift Valley Fever was being imported among some of the thousands of goats, sheep, cows and camels ferried across the Red Sea from nearby Somalia and Ethiopia.

So U.S. agriculture experts began working with Yemeni authorities to set up a system of screening animals, treating or isolating those that are infected and hoping to get a clean bill of health for Yemen's livestock.

A decade ago about 1 million animals each year—either imported from Africa or raised here—were shipped to high-paying markets in Saudi Arabia.

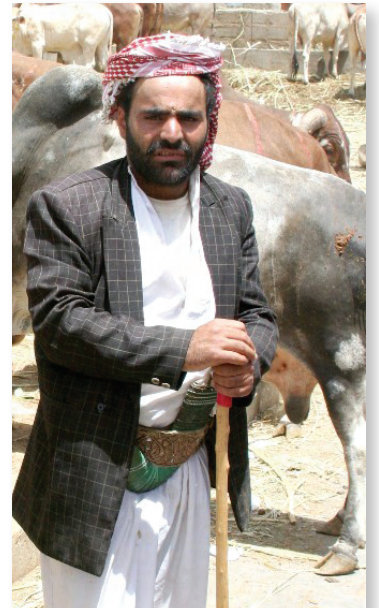
But the fear of livestock diseases has changed that and led to a Saudi ban since 2000 on much of the animal imports from Yemen. Some animals still make it across the largely desert and unpatrolled frontier—but most of the trade has been stopped.

U.S. aid officials are working to set up a quarantine system and health standards that would persuade the Saudis to resume the trade.

One trader, Yehiya Yehiya Al Bashiri, had just sold about 100 cows at the market—his brother is in Africa where he buys them there and sends them to Yemen in small boats. “The ones I sold today are for local use in Sanaa,” he said.

He is aware of the need to improve the health of the livestock in the country and said: “We traders would pay for testing if it would help move the animals” into wider markets such as Saudi Arabia.

“I could easily sell 100 to 150 cows a day to Saudi Arabia,” he said. ★



Trader Yehiya Yehiya Al Bashiri, center, had just sold about 100 cows at the market in Sanaa where USAID programs aim to improve animal health.



A technician works with medical equipment provided by USAID to a district hospital in Yemen's Marib Governorate.

## NURSES AND DOCTORS IN MARIB HOSPITALS GET EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

Doula Ali, 25, had traveled 30 kilometers with her child by car across the sandy reaches of Marib Governorate to reach the district hospital so her child could get a vaccination and she could get information about family planning. Six months ago she was treated here successfully for a burning pain

that turned out to be a urinary tract infection.

“I know the United States supports this hospital,” she told a visitor. “I am happy for it and want more support.”

A U.S.-funded project has supplied the hospital with laboratory and ultrasound equipment, training for nursing

and other staff, and medical supplies.

Sitting in his office at the 7th of July Hospital in Majzer district, Somali-born internist Abdul Rashid Mahmoud Ali told a visitor that modern microscopes and ultrasound machines are extremely welcome and useful. However, he noted that traditional problems continue to trouble health care in Yemen.

“Eighty-five percent of women will not accept a male health provider,” said Dr. Ali.

“I have to treat women through dialogue with her husband, then external touch, and then lab tests leading to a diagnosis.”

The illnesses he sees nearly every day in the hospital include malaria, typhoid, anemia, malnutrition—especially in children and pregnant women—diarrhea and respiratory infections, the doctor said.

But poverty is at the root of many problems: “This is a very poor community,” he said. There is a lack of clean water so many people develop bilharzias, hepatitis, dysentery and cholera. “We need to train health workers to educate people on family planning, vaccinations and pre-natal care,” he said. “We need public toilets so when it rains we don't have dirty water spreading disease.”

Nurse Guma Hajir was trained to work on nutrition through a U.S. project. “Meat is cheap,” she said. “But maybe the father or mother eat the meat and don't know its importance for their children.” She travels on foot to

reach villagers and educate them on sound nutrition.

The 7<sup>th</sup> of July Hospital serves about 13,000 people dispersed over a large, arid region.

At the nearby Medghal District Hospital, U.S. aid has also provided ultrasound equipment to diagnose problems during pregnancy and other issues. It also gave microscopes and other lab equipment to identify malaria parasites in blood and other problems.

And since educated health workers such as doctors and nurses would find it hard to live in the mud and stone houses of the poor region, U.S. aid built a small house with apartments for the medical staff. The hospital also has a four-wheel drive ambulance to take patients to the bigger hospitals of Marib City or Sanaa.

One woman patient told of coming 15 kilometers to the hospital, accompanied by her brother. “This is a good place,” he said, and he will allow his sister to be treated by the doctors.

The hospital has a delivery room for safe delivery of babies, an autoclave to sterilize instruments and suction machines—all supplied by a U.S. aid program.

Because of the hospital's reputation for cleanliness and good care, two-thirds of the district's babies are born in the hospital and one-third are born at home. This is far better than the national average for Yemen where only 16 percent of babies are born in hospitals. ★

# WHERE IN THE WORLD...

**NOVEMBER 11, 2007 – JANUARY 5, 2008**

## PROMOTED

**Charisse A. Adamson**  
Supervisory Program Analyst

**Annalisa Alford**  
Program Analyst

**Michael Ashkouri**  
Contract Specialist

**Jeannie Bassett**  
International Cooperation Specialist

**Amber B. Brooks**  
Management & Program Analyst

**Christopher N. Broughton**  
Country Coordinator

**Kyung Choe**  
Democracy Specialist

**Scott P. Cook**  
Supervisory Contract Specialist

**LaVern Y. Crowner**  
Legal Assistant

**Chitahka Floore**  
Contract Specialist

**Megan Fotheringham**  
Public Health Advisor

**Ronnie Y. Gilmer**  
Supervisory Program Analyst

**Stephanie P. Harvey**  
Program Analyst

**Althea Hawthorne**  
Financial Management Specialist

**Diane M. Howard**  
Supervisory Procurement Analyst

**Sharon S. Hsu**  
Energy Program Specialist

**Regina F. Huggins**  
Human Resources Specialist (Benefits)

**Debra B. Jennings**  
Administrative Officer

**Lena R. Johnson**  
Financial Manager

**Bonita A. Jones**  
Administrative Operations Specialist

**Melissa Kennison**  
Liaison Specialist

**Tracie D. McCreary**  
Administrative Officer

**Elizabeth A. McKeon**  
Program Analyst

**Eunice S. McLeod**  
Secretary OA

**Michael Metzler**  
Program Analyst

**Gary W. Mitchell**  
Supervisory Program Analyst

**Sarah M. Perrine**  
Presidential Management Fellow

**Moncel E. Petitto**  
Contract Specialist

**Jean Poe**  
Presidential Management Fellow

**Elizabeth G. Ramirez**  
Democracy Specialist

**Elizabeth T. Roen**  
International Cooperation Specialist

**Debra M. Scott**  
Management Analyst

**Teresa Spikes**  
Supervisory Human Resources Specialist

**Kathryn D. Stratos**  
Supervisory Information & Outreach Analyst

**Allyson K. Stroschein**  
Program Manager

**Gene M. Villagran**  
Comptroller

**Damian M. Wilson**  
Auditor

**Sylvia Denise Wimbley**  
Administrative Officer

**Juliette Dorsel Wood**  
International Cooperation Specialist

**Valerie Jean Wright**  
Program Analyst

**Marjan A. Zanganeh**  
Lead Contract Specialist

## REASSIGNED

**Noel B. Anderson**  
RIG/Manila to RIG/Baghdad

**Kathy Body**  
Jamaica-CAR/OFM to COMP/FS

**Kevin Dean Brownawell**  
A/AID/COO/PAC to ANE/SPO

**Enrique A. Brunet**  
OIG//LAC-E&E-A to RIG/Cairo

**Dennis M. Bryant**  
OIG/A/HL&C to RIG/Dakar

**Marvin Burgos**  
RIG/Cairo to RIG/Manila

**Connor Cherer**  
OIG//LAC-E&E-A to RIG/Baghdad

**Thaddeus S. Corley**  
RIG/Cairo to RIG/San Salvador

**John B. Crihfield**  
Iraq/GPRT to Iraq/PRT

**Matthew R. Drake**  
OIG//AFR-NE to RIG/Cairo

**Ramona M. El Hamzaoui**  
Colombia to Morocco/PDI

**Mary Pamela Foster**  
Pakistan/PDO to Africa/SD

**Michael Conan French**  
A/AID to EGAT/PR/MD

**Christopher B. Frost**  
COMP/NE/OJT to RS/Africa/RCO

**Robert G. Hellyer**  
DROC to West Africa/OMD

**Shirley D. Hoffmann**  
Dominican Republic/PDO to COMP/FS

**Mai L. Huang**  
RIG/Frankfurt to RIG/Pretoria

**Barbara Hughes**  
O/S LANG TRNG to Madagascar/POP

**Edith J. Humphreys**  
Iraq/MGT to SA/REXO

**Brooke Andrea Isham**  
Jordan/PM to Sudan/OMD

**Hugo A. Jimenez**  
OIG/A/PA to RIG/Cairo

**Ralph Koehring**  
Bolivia/AAO to Zambia/D

**Paul R. Kolstad**  
Iraq/CAPB to Zambia/D

**Jaroslav J. Kryschal**  
RS/Africa/RCO to Iraq/OAA

**Rebecca J. Krzywda**  
El Salvador/CONT to Nicaragua/CONT

**John P. McMahon**  
Ethiopia/ANR to Mozambique/AFR

**Kevin James Mullally**  
Rwanda to Senegal/D

**Charles Whitney Oliver**  
Sudan/OSSP/HC to Indonesia/BHS

**Sean J. Osner**  
Iraq/GPRT to Iraq/PRT

**Henderson M. Patrick**  
Madagascar/D to Ghana/OD

**William M. Patterson**  
Zimbabwe/GD to Nepal/ARD

**Gregory E. Picur**  
OIG//Africa-NE to RIG/Cairo

**Shally Prasad**  
Jordan/SSO to DCHA/DG/SAR

**Allan E. Reed**  
Sudan/OMD to Sudan/OSSP

**Laszlo F. Sagi**  
OIG//LAC-E&E-A to RIG/Pretoria

**Michael G. Sampson**  
COMP/FS/OS/DS to COMP/FS

**Ragip Saritabak**  
OIG/A/IT&SA to RIG/Dakar

**Jonathan A. Schofield**  
OIG//LAC-E&E-A to RIG/Manila

**Theford L. Shanklin**  
M/MPBP/PERF to M/MPBP/BUD

**Rosalind R. Sika**  
Benin/PFNP to Senegal/PFNP

**Shanda Steimer**  
COMP/NE/OJT to Uganda/JOPA

**Scott R. Stiens**  
M/CIO/BSE to FA/COO/PM

**Gordon W. Tachuk**  
RIG/Frankfurt to OIG//LAC-E&E-A

**Lewis J. Tatem**  
Iraq/GPRT to Iraq/PRT

**Catherine M. Trebes**  
Iraq/PO to Pakistan/PFNP

**Patrick J. Wesner**  
COMP/NE/OJT to Malawi/JOPA

**Julie Janet Wilson**  
OIG//LAC-E&E-A to RIG/Cairo

## RETIRED

**Dana P. Doo Soghoian**

**Richard Edwards**

**Frances M. Erby**

**Antoinette Ferrara**

**David G. Grossman**

**Paul D. Guild**

**Gloria Halm**

**Douglas W. Heisler**

**William A. Jeffers**

**Paul L. Kramer**

**Timothy M. Mahoney**

**Jerre A. Manarolla**

**Timothy J. Miller**

**David E. Mutchler**

**Cecilia D. Pitas**

**Mark I. Silverman**

**Dorothy May Stoltz**

**Margaret H. Tomlin**

**Michael F. Walsh**

**Joann Whitt**

## MOVED ON

**Mohamed K. Abdou**

**Olukemia A. Adebiyi**

**Michael L. Bak**

**Nancy L. Barnett**

**Jatinder K. Cheema**

**Susan J. Cowley**

**Luigi F. Crespo**

**Shannon M. Darcy**

**Tonya A. Himelfarb**

**Kim Young Hupp**

**Dennis Lauer**

**Mark E. Lopes**

**Sean Michael McClure**

**Sharon Leigh Morris**

**Patricia O'Connor**

**Hector M. Reyes**

**Peter T. Rough**

**Fenton B. Sands**

**Leigh Shamblin**

**Mariet F. Shanaberger**

**Sherry E. Solodkova**

**Lucretia D. Taylor**

**James M. Weatherill**

**Carol J. Wilson**

# WHERE IN THE WORLD...

## IN MEMORIAM

**William C.C. Baron**, 83, died Dec. 28, 2006, in Arlington, Va. A Foreign Service Officer whose specialty was engineering, Baron served with USAID at missions in Sudan, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Senegal. He was recalled to active duty in the U.S. Army—which he had first joined during World War II—while working in Senegal and later retired from military duty in 1984.

**Dallas Ford Brown**, 75, died Jan. 6 in Richmond, Va. He joined USAID in 1959, and served at posts in Washington, Beirut, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Cameroon, Morocco and Egypt. Just before retiring, Brown worked in Washington as a controller for the Africa Bureau.

**Henry E. Gruppe**, 78, died Jan. 25 in Potomac, Md. Gruppe joined USAID's predecessor agency in 1961 and served in the Southeast Asia, Africa and South America bureaus.

He retired from USAID as a program manager in 1978 and continued to work as a contractor in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.

**Dr. Albert E. Henn**, 70, died May 5 in a Kenya Airways plane crash in the Republic of Cameroon. Dr. Henn joined USAID in 1974 as the chief of the Health, Nutrition and Population Division at the regional USAID mission for Central Africa, in Cameroon. There he was responsible for directing U.S. assistance to the health, nutrition and population sectors in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, and Gabon. Between 1978 and 1981, Dr. Henn served as the director of the Human Resource Development Division for USAID/Tanzania, where he was responsible for developing and managing the health and education sector program. During 1982, he became USAID's chief of the Health Services Division in what was then the Office of

Health. Holding the rank of Minister-Counselor in the Senior Foreign Service, Dr. Henn was responsible for world-wide coordination of the Agency's expertise in health services, delivery technology, management, man-power training, operations research and financing. He left the Agency a year later to join the faculty at Harvard University. At the time of his death, Dr. Henn was working with a British-based NGO that tested people in Africa for HIV.

**W. Wayne McKeel**, 72, died Dec. 24 in Falls Church, Va. He joined USAID's controller division in 1961 and was assigned to the mission in Saigon. He then moved to USAID's program in Taiwan, where he where he helped to close out the Agency's effort there as that nation's economy improved. McKeel then served as controller of the USAID mission in Bolivia before a 20-year assignment in Washington. As

deputy controller for USAID, McKeel directed the Office of Financial Management and worked with donor agencies. From 1991 to 1994, he served his last assignment as controller with the USAID mission in Senegal.

**Jesse Robert Moffett**, 80, died Jan. 14 in Harrison, Ark. Moffett joined USAID in 1965 and led agriculture and rural development offices at missions in Panama, Bolivia, and El Salvador. He worked to develop field programs in new lands colonization, crop substitution, land titling, and agrarian reform. In Panama he initiated a series of joint studies with the Panamanian government analyzing the role of agriculture in the economy and its development. After retiring from USAID in 1979, Moffett continued to assist USAID and senior officials in the governments of Bolivia and Costa Rica on agricultural policy, colonization, land titling and agrarian reform.

## Contractor Thor Hesla Slain in Kabul

Thor Hesla, a USAID contractor, was one of eight people killed Jan. 14 in Kabul when gunmen attacked the five-star Serena Hotel where many foreigners lived or held meetings.

Hesla, 45, worked since October in Kabul as a public affairs officer for BearingPoint, a U.S. firm with a USAID contract to help Afghan government institutions, social organizations, and universities improve their financial management skills.

Taliban insurgents claimed responsibility for the attack, in which one bomber blew himself up at the entrance, allowing his colleagues to get past the armed guards, metal detectors, and blast walls protecting the hotel.

One attacker raced to the hotel gym where he killed Hesla, who had come to the hotel to work out, and three or four others. Norwegian journalist Carsten Thomassen also died.

Hesla studied at Atlanta's Emory University where his father was a professor. He had worked in Kosovo, South Africa, and Kazakhstan.

"We mourn the loss of our fellow employee, Thor Hesla," said Elizabeth Palmer of BearingPoint. "He was a loving son and brother and an important part of our BearingPoint family. His commitment to helping the people of Afghanistan was well known, and we will miss him terribly." ★

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recycled paper.

## U.S., VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS PAY TRIBUTE TO USAID'S DENNIS ZVINAKIS

By Hal Lipper

**HANOI**—U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Michael Michalak led a memorial service on Jan. 11 for Dennis Charles Zvinakis, the Vietnam country manager for USAID who died Dec. 22 in Bangkok where he was awaiting his family's arrival for the Christmas holiday.

More than 200 people attended the ceremony for Zvinakis, 64, a hard-driving and deeply committed manager with a dry sense of humor. He had headed USAID's Vietnam office since 2004 and paved the way for establishment of the first USAID mission in Hanoi this year.

In addition to Michalak, several senior Vietnamese officials spoke during the memorial service about Zvinakis' dedication, his passion for development work, and his regional expertise. Speakers included heads of delegations from Vietnam's Office of Government, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the State Securities Commission. Representatives from the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Finance, and Peoples' Aid Coordination Committee also attended the memorial service.



Dennis Zvinakis

Representatives from donor organizations, diplomatic missions, USAID partners and businesses were also on hand, recalling a frank, fair-minded leader who loved both the United States and Vietnam.

Before serving as USAID's country manager, Zvinakis was manager for Asia for the United States-Asia Environmental Partnership that oversaw environmental programs in 10 Asian countries, including Vietnam.

He also was USAID's representative to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, managing assistance programs with both organizations. He previously supervised USAID infrastructure and economic growth portfolios in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.

During his USAID career, Zvinakis served as an officer counselor in the senior Foreign Service. He retired from the Foreign Service in 1997.

Before joining USAID, he worked in international banking with Citicorp in Singapore, Brunei, and New York. He also had a distinguished U.S. military career.

USAID Regional Mission Director Olivier Carduner, USAID's Hanoi staff, and members of the U.S. Embassy staff paid their respects to Zvinakis' family at the service. Vietnam's Office of Government and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development also presented certificates of appreciation for Zvinakis' contributions to their country. Development Alternatives Inc. presented the Zvinakis family with a plaque.

Zvinakis is survived by his wife, Anh; three children, Aimee, 28, Alex, 31, and Andrea, 20; and his brother, Allan. ★

## Global Health's Mini-University Expands Virtual Courses

By Chris Thomas

Changes in Internet use for e-learning and the annual Global Health Mini-University are boosting professional development opportunities at USAID and within the development community.

The Global Health e-Learning Center, developed by USAID's Bureau of Global Health, has 20 Web-based, self-instructional courses authored by a subject matter expert or team of experts. For USAID health staff and partners, who are increasingly comfortable with the Web, e-learning can offer a preferred training method. Online classes tend to be highly focused, can be completed in about one to two hours, and provide a flexible study schedule.

The courses allow staff to expand their knowledge in key public health areas, and to access important up-to-date technical information. The list of courses—it can be accessed at [www.globalhealthlearning.org](http://www.globalhealthlearning.org)—includes antenatal care, diarrheal disease, emergency obstetric and newborn care, logistics for health commodities, preventing postpartum hemorrhage, malaria, tuberculosis, and more.

Last fall, about 650 global health students and professionals attended USAID's 7th annual Global Health Mini-University. That year's event featured nearly

70 global health topics and over 100 instructors.

"These high-quality learning resources are part of Global Health's excellence in program science—an integral part of professional development at USAID and our partners," said Jim Shelton, the bureau's science advisor.

Bridging the so-called digital divide by connecting billions of people to the Internet has become an important business objective within the Agency. USAID recently launched the Global Development Commons in an effort to link public and private donors, agencies, NGOs, host governments, and civil society in both the virtual and physical worlds. With Internet access and other Web-based communication tools, USAID is hoping to accelerate information sharing on development issues.

"For a global organization such as USAID, e-learning is an effective technology for ensuring technical excellence without being subject to the geographical limitations," said Matt Sattah, information officer with Global Health. "By coupling this technology with a face-to-face learning platform that the mini-university provides, the Agency is capable of delivering cutting edge knowledge to staff with both speed and quality." ★

## Baghdad Market Opens Doors to Marketing a Better Future

**BAGHDAD**—For many Americans, shopping means safe parking and clean, well-stocked supermarkets. But in Iraq, shoppers often risk their lives to buy groceries and their produce tends to rot for lack of electricity or transport to keep it fresh.

So the U.S.-funded *Al Jadida* Baghdad Market—also known as "9 Nissan" or the New market—will soon be able to meet these needs.

The New Baghdad Market is being built on the site of a market which was constructed with USAID funding in 2004, but remained unoccupied as violence and sectarian tension drove many residents away. When stability returned, hundreds of vegetable and meat vendors commandeered nearby streets, building makeshift stalls from scrap wood and plastic sheeting.

The neighborhood council, Iraqi police, and Coalition forces decided to improve the market and clear the streets.

Late last year, the "Baghdad 2" Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT) and the U.S. Military's Second Battalion, 69<sup>th</sup> Armor Regiment, asked the USAID-funded *Inma* Agribusiness Program to help make the New Baghdad Market viable. *Inma* aims to improve Iraq's private sector agribusiness, in part, by improving produce markets.

*Inma* will install security elements and provide generators and cold storage units. It also assisted the 9 Nissan Market Agricultural Association, which will manage the market and train members in market operations and food safety.

Representatives of the Iraqi government and local councils also met with staff from USAID's *Izdihar* economic development program to document land ownership at the market, and set up a system to lease stalls to market vendors.

USAID's stabilization program, which built the original market, will complete display stands and install roller shutters on the stalls. Another USAID-funded program, the Iraq Rapid Assistance Program, will manage construction, repairs, and upgrades.

The New Baghdad Market will ease traffic congestion by ending street-selling. Many vendors say they prefer renting one of the 730 new stalls to improve their safety and comfort.

"It's a tremendous opportunity for stability," said Capt. Joseph Peppers of the Second Battalion, 69<sup>th</sup> Armor Regiment. "These stalls mean steady jobs—a chance to have a regular business." ★

*This article is based largely on a story by Elaine Eliah of American Forces Press Service.*

## PHILIPPINES MISSION DIRECTOR HONORED

USAID/Philippines Mission Director Jon Lindborg was inducted into the Order of Horace B. Silliman, an honor from the Philippines' Silliman University that recognizes an organization's work in support of the school's mission to provide better opportunities to students and the university community.

USAID has been involved in several projects at the university, including research work by the Institute of Environmental and Marine Sciences under the country's Department of Energy Coastal Resource Management Program. USAID also funded construction of a marine laboratory building.

"This support has made Silliman a Center of Excellence in Coastal Resource Management, allowing the University to develop programs aimed at sustainable management of coastal resources," said Mark Raygan Garcia, the university's information director. ★



In mid-January, 26 Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) from USAID missions all across the world visited Washington for a week of training on travel and transport policies and regulations. The goal of the visit, said travel and transport chief Diane Carter, "is to empower and inspire" the FSNs. They are the face of USAID."

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# SPECIAL REPORT

## WOMAN URGES MOTHERS NOT TO CUT THEIR DAUGHTERS



Maryam Sheikh Abdi educates Kenyan communities about the damage female circumcision can cause.



Abdi educates a youth group in Wajir about FGM/M



Sheikh Ibrahim Asmani accompanied Abdi on her education travels through parts of Kenya.



The village of Abaqkorey was on Abdi's route.

Growing up in a devout Muslim Somali family, Maryam Sheikh Abdi knew she would undergo female genital cutting or mutilation (FGC/M) because her family and her community believed that female circumcision was a required Islamic practice.

Rooted in culture and believed to be prescribed by religion, the procedure involves cutting off all or part of the external genitalia. The practice is found in 28 sub-Saharan African countries, a few countries in the Middle East and Asia, and among immigrants in Europe, North America, and Australia. Up to 140 million girls and women worldwide have undergone the practice and 2 million more risk being cut each year, or about 6,000 each day.

Abdi is using her personal experience to help end the practice. She works with FRONTIERS, a USAID-funded project in Kenya that is attempting to de-link FGC/M from Islam, and focuses on that country's Somali community. FRONTIERS works with religious leaders to raise awareness about the harm FGC/M can cause and to convince people to abandon the practice. Some of these religious leaders now travel to communities to educate people about the myths and misconceptions surrounding the practice.

The following is excerpted from a diary Abdi wrote this summer as she traveled to communities, accompanied by a consultant in the FRONTIERS project, Sheikh Ibrahim Asmani, to talk with people about FGC/M. Two policemen traveled with the pair.

### First stop: Abaqkorey

The first stop was in the Abaqkorey center where Sheikh Ibrahim entered into conversation with a young man. When he discovered the youth not only spoke Arabic, but had gone to a madrassa in Wajir, Sheikh Ibrahim asked him what he thought about FGM/C.

"Is it an Islamic practice or a cultural practice and should it be left [abandoned]?"

"It is more of a cultural practice than a religious practice. At best it is only sunnah [an optional act] and it is best left [abandoned] because it causes lots of harms" the young man said.

I got interested and asked "Are you married?"

"No."

"Will you marry an uncircumcised girl?"

"In fact, I am looking for one."

We have hit a jackpot! I was thrilled and immediately gave the young man reference materials to help him understand the correct Islamic stand on FGC/M. I took his contacts and invited him to the youth forum to be held later that week.

**Lesson:** There is hope in the young and educated, including the men.

### The encounter with the circumciser

"Huyu ni mkataji" (this one is a cutter) said one of the policemen, a Somali. The woman he pointed out sat next to us and said hello. The woman confirmed that she cuts girls and has been doing so for 10 years. I sought her opinion about circumcision. She said it was done because it is a religious requirement.

I asked: "Mama, we are Muslims, isn't it [aren't we]?"

"Yes."

"We should follow Islam, isn't it [shouldn't we]?"

"Yes."

"Do you think all Muslims cut their daughters?"

"Yes."

"Do you know that there are Muslims who do not cut their daughters?"

"I have not seen and I have not heard of any."

"Mama, do you know that it is haram [unlawful] to spill anybody's blood and nobody has the right to cut any part of the body from another person?"

"Yes."

"What is the Islamic stand on those who cut any organ from others?"

"Diig [blood money] will be a must on that person."

"Why then are you cutters going on with cutting organs from the girls?"

I talked at length about how it is wrong for her to keep cutting girls. I said if we look into the life of the Prophet Muhammad, we see that there is no reference to cutting any of the women in his household. I reminded her of all the many sunnah [optional acts] that are not harmful and we do not practice them. She continued to nod her head in agreement and I saw remorse on her face. The cutter asked: "Why is it that we never heard of this before?"

Misinterpretations have been the root cause of the perpetuation of the practice and the time had come to question the harm that was being done. If there is conflict between Islam and a cultural practice, Sheikh Ibrahim said, then Islam must take precedence. We said that it is

harmful, which she affirmed and even narrated painful stories from the community and suffering of women as a result of the cut. Sheikh Ibrahim told her that anything harmful was to be avoided and she promised not to cut.

"Discrimination against the girl child must stop and it starts with your actions," I concluded.

When we got back into our car, we brought up the subject with the policemen accompanying us. One was shocked there was a law prohibiting the practice in Kenya. Sheikh Ibrahim produced a copy of the Children's Act. I told the police that we had a CD showing the cutting of a young girl. They said we should show them, so I put on the laptop. As we bounced up and down and swayed from side to side in the car, their eyes were glued on the most horrendous act that they have ever seen. Within a few minutes the short documentary was over. These two men were touched and shaken.

Looking at the photo of his daughter on his mobile phone one of the officers said, "If anybody touches my beautiful daughter I will kill them!"

"And should I hear anybody talking of circumcision in the community or witness any cutting, I will arrest and charge all those who are involved," said the other officer.

**Lesson:** It is important to reach the cutters by explaining the Islamic position. There is ignorance of the law prohibiting FGC/M among law enforcement agents.

### Lag Boqol

We stopped for prayers and took tea in Lag Boqol. As I washed for prayers, a young girl of about 5 years came near me. I asked her name, she said she is called Rahma. I asked for her parents and she pointed at her mother seated in front of another tea kiosk a few meters away. I asked her if she was cut. She shook her head and while shyly fumbling with my hijab [dress], she said that they were waiting for money to go to Habaswein [the district headquarters] to be cut. I asked if she wanted to be cut and she shook her head, explaining that it was painful. I just held her as my mind raced back to my own ordeal. I then said, "When they want to cut you just tell them that Allah is seeing them and he will punish them." She nodded in agreement.

After prayers, I went to Rahma's mum to talk to her. After explaining the practice from an Islamic perspective, I talked about issues of sin in Islam in the hope that I will save Rahma. She said that Rahma had already cautioned her that Allah will punish her in the event that she cuts her. I was amazed and proud of Rahma even though I knew she was still very helpless and powerless.

Rahma is still on my mind to date and my heart goes to her and the many million girls who will be robbed of their childhood, womanhood, and bodily integrity in the name of culture. How I wish I could just put them under my arms and protect them.

Though this was wishful thinking, it helped strengthen our resolve to forge ahead in this campaign. It is the desire to save Rahma and her innocent counterparts which allows us to go on because they are being initiated into a world of violence. There is just no excuse for this practice to continue and we prayed that if we are patient, we will see this age-old ritual end.

**Lesson:** The wind of change is already blowing, it is unstoppable, and there is hope at the end of the tunnel.★

## BUDGET from page 1

About 40 percent of new hires will go to Africa, more than 25 percent will go to Asia, and the rest will work in Eastern Europe and Eurasia and Latin America. They will be trained as experts in programs, planning, democracy, conflict, public health, contracts, financial management, economic growth, education and other fields.

Janet Ballantyne, a former counselor at USAID, has returned to the Agency as a senior advisor to head up this new hiring operation. She noted that the Agency is seriously lacking in technical expertise with only five engineers on staff, although it constructs bridges, schools, clinics, government buildings, and canals around the world.

"I've got five engineers on my street on a sewer project," she quipped.

USAID also has only 29 education officers to run programs in 84 countries; and a small staff of only three runs the Global Development Alliance which has leveraged \$4 billion in private funds to support U.S. aid programs in recent years.

The DLI funds will not only hire 300 FSOs, it will have them trained and mentored by retired USAID personnel since there is a growing lack of senior level expertise due to retirement.

Support for increasing USAID's work force has come from across the political spectrum and from other branches of government. Foreign assistance is increasingly viewed as a way to win friends, support democratic and peaceful change, and avoid resorting to force in intractable conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

"One of the most important lessons of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is that military success is not sufficient to win: economic development, institution-building and the rule of law, promoting internal reconciliation, good governance, providing basic services to the people, training and equipping indigenous military and police forces, strategic communications, and more – these, along with security, are essential ingredients for long-term success," said Defense Secretary Bob Gates, Nov. 26, 2007, at Kansas State University.

"What is not as well-known, and arguably even more short-sighted, was the gutting of America's ability to engage, assist, and communicate with other parts of the world—the 'soft power,' which had been so important throughout the Cold War," Gates added. "The State Department froze the hiring of new Foreign Service officers for a period of time. The United States Agency for International Development saw deep staff cuts—its permanent staff dropping from a high of 15,000 during Vietnam to about 3,000 in the 1990s."

USAID's overall administrative budget for FY 2009 is \$9.5 billion. Of that, operating expenses will be \$767 million, the Capital Investment Fund will be \$171 million, and program funding will be \$8.6 billion.

The Capital Investment Fund is more than double that of 2008 and will cover Agency costs of building space in new embassy compounds in Thailand, Burundi, Senegal, Afghanistan, Mozambique, and the Dominican Republic. ★

## COUNCILS from page 9

them re-elected when the new council is chosen.

The U.S.-funded program has helped provide furniture for the meeting room, but more importantly, it is helping the council members assert their authority.

"At first, the central government told them what to do," said an adviser to the Decentralization project.

"Now, with the training they have received, it feels more like real decentralization."

Decentralization means that local councils or other bodies take the responsibility of governing away from the central government. If done properly, this should mean that decisions reflect the needs and the will of local communities who are best suited to know what they need.

The money goes to schools, clinics, water and infrastructure, and not to operating expenses—that comes from the central ministry, said one council member.

The head of the budget and planning committee said that he and other members "go to the field to find out the problems."

"For example, if we find no teacher in a school, we notify the

head of the local council who then talks to the Ministry of Education to solve the issue."

In this way even without spending money, the local council can become an influential voice that is listened to by the central government.

The council admits that the money it controls is not enough to tackle the many needs in the community for education, water, sanitation, and roads.

Already, however, the council has built schools, water systems, a fish market, and sanitary pipelines.

"Before, it was random, as the central government had no people in the field," said the council chairman, who was appointed by the central government. (A reform in the works will mean that local council chairmen will also be locally elected very soon.)

"Before, a local sheikh would call the government and say 'I want a clinic or a road next to my house.' Now, local people's voices and needs can be heard and decisions are made at the local level."

"Also, when people know that the local council ensures

that taxes go to benefit the community, they have more trust," the chairman added.

Previously, the government might say it built 500 schools, but there was no monitoring to see if it was true. Now local councils can verify the information and communicate to the public through town meetings or the media.

"People used to throw trash in the roadside ditches, but after we had a meeting we got the public to cooperate," said one member.

Another member said that "we are able to plan better and have a vision—we learn how to interact with the community and respond to their needs."

"Before, our council meetings were routine and formal—now they have goals and objectives."

Things are more democratic but "it all depends on the budget," said one member.

"Good governance is part of democracy," said another.

"Through our training we are learning how to prioritize. Before, each member worked only for their own area. Now we work as a team." ★

## NUTRITION from page 5

therapy; mosquito nets to protect against malaria; and routine childhood vaccinations.

The good news in the fight against under-nutrition is that efforts like fortifying fish sauce in Vietnam and cottonseed oil in Burkina Faso with iron, iodine, vitamin A, and other micronutrients are extremely cost effective.

A single dollar spent on vitamin A fortification returns \$7 in work force and health care savings. A dollar spent on fortifying products with iodized salt returns \$28, and for iron fortification the return is \$84.

The series concluded that money spent now on combating

under-nutrition will have great positive social and economic returns for future generations.

USAID spends about \$30 million a year for nutrition programs to include vitamin A, iodine, food fortification, anemia packages, and zinc.

The United States is also the largest food aid donor in the world, and the largest single contributor to the World Food Program, providing over \$1 billion in aid each year. About half of non-emergency resources support multi-year, community-based maternal and child health and nutrition programs. ★

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## ANIMATED PSAs RAISE POLITICAL AWARENESS IN NEPAL

As Nepal moves toward elections for its Constituent Assembly (CA), public service announcements are addressing core issues that threaten lasting peace in the politically turbulent nation. Over 1 million Nepalis have already seen the PSAs that address critical topics such as communal harmony in the Terai, voter education, and civic responsibilities.

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) is spending about \$150,000 to help produce the 3D computer-generated PSAs for television—the first of their kind in Nepal.

Since signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in December 2006, Nepal has faced several threats to its fragile peace process, including political upheaval and human rights abuses.

With media centered in the capital, Kathmandu, and with public discussion about Nepal's

ongoing political transition media largely accessible to only urban educated elites, most Nepalis are desperate for access to information about, and opportunities to participate in, the national debate about these profound events, explained OTI Media Advisor Adam Kaplan.

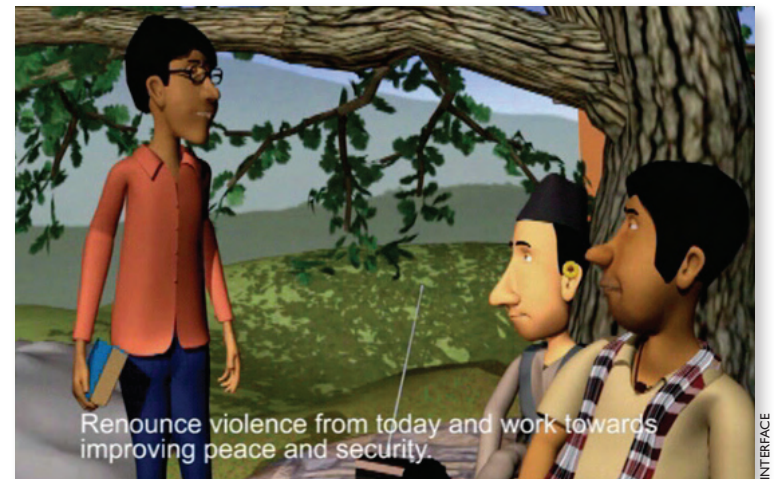
USAID grantee INTERFACE designed five computer-generated characters to represent Nepal's diverse population. The technology is similar to that used in movies like "Finding Nemo" and "Toy Story." Set in a serene rural background, the characters are neighbors who routinely congregate in public places to discuss their views on transitional issues and ways to help in their communities.

The PSAs focus on citizen involvement in CA elections; Nepal's ethnic diversity and the need for communal harmony; community engagement in

reconstruction after years of fighting; and the need to fully implement the CPA.

In one PSA, the characters discuss reconstruction as they rebuild a community health post. In the background, children celebrate the festival season by flying kites. In another, characters representing marginalized groups talk about the importance of the CA to achieve social inclusion as they sip tea in a tea shop.

The success of these PSAs and comics at least partially comes from their use of accessible language, characters that reflect the country's ethnic diversity, and a new visual style in Nepali media, Kaplan said. While the messages themselves are important, their presentation in a community discussion context models how all Nepalis can personally engage in the momentous and transformational issues presently facing their society.



USAID doubled the length of the PSAs in later versions in response to their popularity. The effort is also expanding: Comic strips based on the original animations will run in the Saturday supplements of four of Nepal's most-read newspapers. USAID is spending another \$46,000 on this phase to reach a wider audience.

INTERFACE is also developing animated versions of the country's most popular comic duo, who will be introduced in the forthcoming PSAs. The characters are collectively branded as "Messengers of Change," and may be used for other kinds of social messaging campaigns in the future. ★



**CHARACTERS**—Nucheman (Jyapu), Raju (Youth), Jharilal (Madhesi), Kanchhi Tamang (Pahadi), Maya (student).

(In the early morning, everyone has gathered in Kanchhi's shop for tea. The recently reconstructed community health center can be seen in the background. While tea is being made on the stove, Kanchhi is reading the handbook on Comprehensive Peace Treaty. At that moment, Maya enters.)

Maya—Oh, Kanchhi, what are you reading with so much attention?

Kanchhi—I'm reading the Peace Agreement of last year again.

Raju (pointing to the book in Kanchhi's hand). You are reading a very important book. (Taking a deep breath). What a waste, we didn't abide by it sincerely.

Nuchheman—Yes! It includes many concerns of human rights like respecting the independence of the citizens, the right of the displaced to return home, the restriction on forcible appropriation of donation and wealth, freedom of movement.

Maya—And this agreement was signed by all political parties with a commitment to abide by it.

Jharilal (with pride and smiling). As a whole, the Peace Agreement has important points that will give the country a new direction like social, economic and political change, protection of human rights, management of army and weapons, reconstruction, and social reintegration.

Raju—For peace and prosperity of the country, the contribution of each Nepali is important. Come, let us together respect the Comprehensive Peace Accord and protect our rights.