



# BAM!

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## Director's Corner

I thought that once we had awarded all of our grants/contracts, life at USAID might get a bit more organized, slower, and easier to manage. Alas, it has not. During the past few months, we have finally managed to get all of our contracts physically on the ground here in Mali. Getting them fully operational is the current challenge. We are making steady progress and it is a joy to watch new programs, ideas, synergies take root.

During this time Mali was selected as eligible to compete for Millennium Challenge Account resources. Everyone from the President of Mali, to the janitor was thrilled with this news. A three-day visit from the Millennium Challenge Corporation team proved to be invaluable as the team had a chance to clarify many issues with the Government of Mali (GRM), the private sector, the NGOs, civil society, etc. The GRM is now trying to put together a winning compact = a rather daunting task since they will be competing with the other 15 countries that qualified.

Mali has taken a strong lead role in pursuing the ways in which biotechnology might be useful in increasing productivity in West Africa. The Minister of Agriculture has been a surprisingly strong force in exploring all possibilities and will travel to the United States in July to

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**MCA MOMENT** —*The Director of the Office de Développement Rizicole de Sélingué, Ibrahima Siby (foreground) appears to captivate his audience while explaining the operation of the Sélingué rice perimeters during a visit by the MCC team. From right to left are Seydou Traoré, Minister of Agriculture, Drew Luten and Rod Norman of the MCC, and Malian Ambassador to the United States, Abdoulaye Diop.*

## Mali Eligible to Receive MCA Funding

*Three-person team visits Bamako to explain what it all means*

**BAMAKO**—On May 6<sup>th</sup> it was announced that Mali had qualified as one of 16 countries (five in West Africa) to compete for Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) funds. A three-person team — Drew Luten, Rod Norman and Delia Welsh — from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) visited Mali May 31 - June 2 to brief the government (GRM), the private sector, non-government organizations and the donor community on MCA, which encourages all nations to embrace political and economic reform. The highlight of the visit was a meeting with Mali's President Amadou Toumani Touré. The President told the team how gratified he was that his country had been one of the few selected for this tremendous opportunity and that he would take a personal interest in ensuring that Mali submitted a successful proposal. Among the Malian leaders of government and industry, the

group met the Prime Minister, the newly appointed Auditor General and many other prominent ministers. They participated in round table discussions with representatives of the donor community, USAID partner NGOs and civil society where they stressed that the MCA was a "new compact for global development" which links greater contributions from developed nations to greater responsibility from developing nations. The team stressed that the MCA is a partnership built on several key principles including a focus on sustainable growth, country ownership, inclusiveness, accountability, and emphasis on results. The visit ended with an informative field trip to Sélingué, a successful fishing and rice-growing area about two hours outside of Bamako. The Minister of Agriculture, the Malian Ambassador to Washington, the Mission Director, and members of the Mali MCA

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## Spotlight on Economic Growth Activities in the North of Mali

*TradeMali and Mali Finance hold business forum and meet with communities*

**TOMBOUCTOU**—On May 4th, 2004, in the historic city of Tombouctou (Timbuktu), USAID held a ceremony inaugurating the official start of two of its principal economic growth programs in the north of Mali. TradeMali focuses on the expansion of the marketing and export of agricultural products, whereas Mali Finance aims to facilitate access to financial services for producers and entrepreneurs. Both projects are being implemented by Chemonics International and represent two of three inter-related projects under the *Accelerated Economic Growth* strategic objective.

In attendance at the launching were the Cabinet Directors for the governors of the three northern regions — Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. Other attendees included a delegation from various USAID offices, representatives of TradeMali and Mali Finance, representatives of the business community, farmers' and traders' organizations, political and religious leaders, and the technical offices representing the various government institutions in charge of economic and social development.

In remarks conveyed by his Cabinet Director, the Governor of Timbuktu praised the cooperation between Mali and the United States. In addition, he identified some of the main constraints and economic opportunities of the northern regions, and expressed his hope that TradeMali and Mali Finance would contribute to the efforts of the government to improve the revenues and the living conditions of the populations in northern Mali.

Dr. Dennis McCarthy, speaking on behalf of the USAID/Mali Mission Director, said that holding the launching ceremony in the North demonstrates the commitment of the United States to the development, peace and stability of this part of the country. By happenstance, the launching ceremony coincided with the Muslim feast of *Mawlud* (Birthday of the Prophet Mohammed). McCarthy earned a warm round of applause from the audience when he expressed his wish that this concurrence of events augur well for the success of the two projects in bringing prosperity to the northern populations.

USAID, TradeMali and Mali Finance

made presentations detailing the overall strategy as well as the approaches that will be employed by the two projects. TradeMali has identified various products produced in the northern regions

Local participants affirmed that the two events helped to restore and strengthen hope in the region. Officials and ordinary citizens alike expressed confidence that the new projects would build-on the



**GETTING FEEDBACK**—*The team interviews residents of Bourem-Inaly about the impact of USAID-supported activities in their community.*

such as rice, anis, livestock products and handicrafts, which have major trade potential. Rice is marketed from producing zones to urban areas within and outside the northern regions. According to some accounts, rice is often exported to Mauritania and even Niger. Anis is another commodity produced in the Bourem-Sidi-Amar and Diré zones and exported to Niger, Burkina-Faso, Togo, Benin and Ghana. Handicrafts and livestock products (camel cheese in particular) were also identified as potential export products.

At a two-day Business Forum organized following the opening event, members of the business community and representatives of farmers' and traders' organizations exchanged views with project staff about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats affecting business and economic development in each of the three northern regions. This analysis and definition of actions will help to both fine tune current and develop future work plans for the two projects.

initiatives undertaken by USAID through its past activities in the North.—*Amadou Camara, USAID*

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Task Force accompanied the team.

In all its meetings, the MCC delegation emphasized the importance of a solid, well-developed proposal initiated by the GRM and driven by the pressing needs of the country to promote economic stability and sustainability. Moreover, delegation members stressed the fact that Mali's eligibility to compete for MCA funds did not guarantee an award of funds. Rather, the quality and feasibility of the proposal will determine the amount, if any, to be awarded. The delegation expressed its desire to work in partnership with the GRM as Mali moves forward with its proposal.—*Matt Miller, Embassy Bamako*

**Radios, Radios, Radios Everywhere!** *Bright new FREEPLAY® wind-up/solar charged battery-free radios gave hundreds of women from communes in the Ségou Region more than enough reasons to celebrate*

**SEGOU**—On Tuesday, April 6, 2004, the USAID-financed Women in Governance or WING Project (DTS/WI) hosted a launching ceremony for the distribution of more than 500 radios in sixteen communities. The ceremony took place in Sébougou, a community just on the outskirts of Ségou town. The women from several other communes in which the WING project works in the Ségou Region, joined the women of Sébougou.

Information – getting information, discussing information, reacting to information, acting on information – and its role in democracy and development are all messages women have been hearing during WING training and information-sharing sessions over the past months. Now, with their new radios they will have better access to this all-important medium.

Throughout rural Mali access to information largely depends on access to a radio set. Radios, owned by over 64% of rural households, remain the only reliable way



when women have access to a radio, the money for batteries is often not available.

The Freeplay radios aim at resolving some of the barriers women face in getting the information they want. This is a

enty turns in thirty seconds will provide the listener with thirty minutes of play-time. When fully charged, the radio can play up to 24 hours.

Over 500 radios will be distributed within the WING project zone, thereby promising to touch the lives of thousands of women. How will thousands of women be affected by 500 radios? The Freeplay radios will be used for collective listening by groups of women and are not given to individuals for personal use. Each recipient women's group will select a Freeplay radio guardian. Guardians will be asked to sign an agreement policy to ensure that both the guardian and the group are fully cognizant of the role of the guardian and purpose of the listening group. The Freeplay radio remains the property of the listening group.

In WING-organized "Leadership for Change" workshops women are learning that they too can play a role in public life and decision-making for the good of their families and their own well being. In a remarkably short time, WING field agents are observing a quick rise in the number of women willing to speak out, willing to commit themselves to change, willing to fully participate in the public sphere of community development.

The WING project fully recognizes the direct link between information and positive change. The project was designed with radio in mind, incorporating radio messages into its training modules and producing local programs for and by women in the WING targeted communes. Women are speaking out, women are struggling to get their names on party lists in the upcoming elections... and they are not settling for just getting on a list but are fighting to get their names at the top of the lists. The road will not be easy, but these women are accustomed to facing challenges and overcoming barriers that life presents them so they will not be deterred easily from their objective – becoming active in public life and playing a role in creating a better future for their communes. The radio is an essential instrument on this road of change. —Julie Fisher, WING Project



**SPEAKING OUT**—*Many women in the WING target communes claim they are ready to speak out and become active participants in local decision-making.*

to receive information (with only 5% of Malian households possessing a television set and written news sources being virtually non-existent in rural areas). And yet women often lack direct access and control over the family radio sets. Even

radio truly created for use in rural areas and harsh conditions. Freeplay radios, designed to function without changing batteries, depend on a little wrist action – using a manual crank – or on solar charging the permanent internal battery. Sev-

## WAWI Partnership: The Best is Yet to Come

*Partners meet to discuss progress and future plans*

**TAMALE, GHANA**—Mali partners of the West Africa Water Initiative (WAWI) met in Tamale, Ghana, in May to review progress of work in Mali as well as talk about the WAWI framework throughout Mali, Ghana and Niger.

The five-year, \$40 million project, funded in majority by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and World Vision International, plans to improve water, hygiene, health and education in the three West African countries through the combined efforts of more than 15 organizations worldwide, including NGOs, government ministries and research institutions.

The meeting provided opportunity to address partner roles within WAWI during the next five years, as well as consider additional aspects of WAWI. For example, Dr. Abdoul Diallo, ARD WAWI regional coordinator, spoke about gender mainstreaming and its role in WAWI, while World Vision's Dr. Braimah Apambire addressed special needs services that should be considered within WAWI. Designs of pumping mechanisms on wells, for example, might take into consideration the needs of disabled people who might not be able to use traditional hand or foot pumps.

While WAWI is still in its early stages, the Mali partnership is already making great strides. Whereas Niger and Ghana just this year launched their programs, the Mali partnership has been at work for 12 months. Last week, World Vision announced its 50<sup>th</sup> wet borehole as well as an 80 percent drill success rate. World Vision's projected results for fiscal 2004 (ending September 30, 2004) were 50 wet boreholes. World Vision's National Director Jean-Baptiste Kamaté said he is "optimistic that we will potentially hit 60 to 70 successful wells by the end of the year."

"With the success already very real after just one year, it is exciting to imagine the overall impact both individual [partners] and shared successes [of the partnership] will bring about in the next few years," said Kamaté.

WAWI is somewhat unique as it pulls together multiple organizations, each contributing their own best practices, meth-



**THAR SHE BLOWS!**—Muddy water spews up from 50 meters beneath the earth's surface as the World Vision drill team prepares to add a three-meter shaft to the drill. Drilling in the Koro region puts man and machine to the test, where wells range from 95 to 140 meters deep.

odologies and geographical territories of influence, into a single program. While collaboration of NGOs is hardly new, the partnership is one of the largest collaborations Mali has seen in recent years. According to Kamaté, the end result is an opportunity to make a bigger impact for Mali without duplicating efforts. "As we work together we are seeing shared common focus," said Kamaté. "We are slowly

experiencing a concrete impact of synergy that has never been there before. Ultimately, this means good stewardship."—Scott Lout, World Vision

## “Halls of Knowledge” Open to Communities Across Mali

*High technology comes even to remote areas*

**KADIOLO**—May 5th - 7th, 2004 saw the official inaugurations of three new Community Learning and Information Centers (CLICs) in Bougouni, Kadiolo and Ségou, Mali. These three centers are part of a USAID/Mali funded initiative to open 13 public access telecenters across Mali.

These CLICs are intended to be vital resources for the community to gain access to information and communication tools and content such as political news, health information, agribusiness resources and market information, email, word processing and spreadsheets. Each CLIC is hosted by a local organization, selected based on their capacity to be available to the entire community without discrimination, and also their ability to effectively manage the CLIC.

Each CLIC is also expected to gather and create local content (especially in local languages) in digital formats and to share this content with the other CLICs and with other organizations throughout Mali.

The communities have already coined their own local names for their CLICs, referring to them as halls or houses of knowledge.

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### The CLICs are Launched

At each of the three inaugurations, local politicians, officials from host organizations, and community leaders welcomed the USAID and CLIC team, and reaffirmed the commitment to open and free access by the community, regardless of race, religion, political views, or gender. The purpose and equipment of the CLIC was described to the audiences, with special emphasis on welcoming women to use the computer centers.

USAID and the CLIC team, during their speeches, stressed the need for local content creation and dissemination throughout Mali. They answered specific questions about the construction and Internet connectivity at each CLIC location, and the difference between this CLIC and a cyber-café.

After the official ribbon cutting by representatives of USAID and local political leaders, a tour of the facilities was given

and the local organizations hosted either a reception or lunch for attendees.

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### Different Communities, Different Contexts, Different CLICs

These inauguration celebrations underscored the commitment and excitement felt by the communities for these CLICs. Intended to be sources of information for the community, the CLICs represent the diverse contexts in which the CLIC project is working.

Bougouni and Kadiolo are smaller cities where Internet access is not currently available, due to poor or non-existent infrastructure. The CLIC project is testing a variety of alternative connection methods, including the use of satellite transmitters. The Bougouni CLIC is being hosted by the local Mayor's office, and as a result will focus on providing key government and civil society information and services to the local citizenry. In Kadiolo, the host for the CLIC is a local radio station, the primary source of news for most of the people in the region.

No matter where the CLICs are hosted, they will offer the same variety of information in all development sectors: health,



**OFFICIALLY OPEN**—Dennis Bilodeau (left) and Seydou Timbely, deputy of Kadiolo's Préfet cutting the ribbon to open Kadiolo's CLIC.

education, democracy and governance, civil society, economic growth and communication for development. Self-sustainability is also a critical program goal - the CLICs are expected to offer fee-for-use services and cover their recurring costs.

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### CLIC Mali Partners

Core partners in the implementation of the CLIC project are USAID/Mali, the Academy for Educational Development and the *Institut Africain de Gestion et de Formation* (INAGEF), a Malian NGO, which is responsible for the daily management and oversight of the project. World Links, a US-based resource partner, is providing training and equipment provision.

Other vital partners in this initiative are the Malian Ministries of Education, Health, Territorial Administration, Communications and New Information Technologies, and Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, the Mali Office of New Information and Communication Technologies, and the US Government's Education for Development and Democracy Initiative (EDDI).—*Reprinted from DOT-COMMENTS: Spring 2004*

### USAID/Mali Facilitates Integrated Framework for Trade Process

**BAMAKO**—USAID is at the forefront (as chief facilitator) of a multilateral technical assistance program initiated by the World Bank to develop an Integrated Framework for expanding Mali's international trade. An exhaustive diagnostic study has been recently completed and was the subject of discussion and validation at sector workshops held in Bamako from July 19-22, 2004. The workshops aimed to define a matrix of actions that should be undertaken in key trade-related sectors.

The study provides a focal point for mainstreaming trade in Mali's poverty reduction strategy. The Diagnostic Trade Integration Study is meant to enable stakeholders to jointly analyze the constraints to Mali's integration into the global economy and to identify technical assistance needs that are key to improving trade-related prospects and coherence with national development strategies.

A national validation workshop for the revised diagnostic study is planned for September to be followed by a donor roundtable tentatively scheduled for March 2005.—*Sikoro Keita, USAID*

## West Africa Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology

*A conference participant's report*

**OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO**—USAID/Mali Director, Pamela White and Agricultural Development Specialist, Ram Shetty participated in the Ministerial Conference on “Harnessing Science and Technology to Increase Agricultural Pro-

ter of Agriculture. The conference brought together four Presidents, 18 Ministers from West African nations and more than 300 participants from Africa, Europe, South America and the United States. The conference examined the use

The four major themes covered were: water management and conservation technologies; crop biotechnology and biosafety; policies and regulatory frameworks; and partnerships. “Water resource management” and “Biotechnology” received much attention throughout the conference. The Malian delegation provided leadership on both these themes and stressed the importance of science-based solutions and regulations. The successful example in Mali of reforming water policies by obtaining farmers’ input and also in providing training in use of the best water management practices was highlighted by the delegation.

The delegation also participated actively on the development needs of the cotton industry in the region and on specific ways the US can help the region. Mr. Woody Anderson, Chairman of the National Cotton Council of America presided over the session on public private partnerships. His presence was a direct outcome of a recent visit of the Malian Minister of Commerce to meet with the Cotton Producers in the US that was organized by USAID/Mali. It symbolized the newly emerging relationship between US and West African producers and their willingness to exchange ideas and forge common areas of interest, and potentially, action. From July 19—26, the Malian Ministers of Commerce and Agriculture will visit four US states to be followed by a meeting with the Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman in Washington.

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**CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS' PHOTO-OP**—Hon. Seydou Traore, Mali's Minister of Agriculture (third from left stands to the right of his Nigerian counterpart, Hon. Chief Banidele Dada. Also included are from left to right: Dov Pasternak, ICRISAT, Ram Shetty, USAID, Shantanu Mathur, FAO, Robert Kagbo, USAID and unnamed Nigerian official.

ductivity in Africa: West African Perspectives” held on June 21-23, 2004 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The high level Malian delegation was led by the President of the Republic and the Minis-

of appropriate technologies to raise the productivity of staple food and high value crops in West Africa, with the goal of strengthening food security, reducing hunger and improving nutrition.

## Training in Action: Mali Finance

*Capacity building course for Malian business service providers*

**BAMA KO**—Mali Finance project, funded by USAID and managed by Chemonics International, Inc. aims to reinforce the capacity of Malian business development services (BDS) consulting firms, financial institutions, small and medium enterprises, and agricultural and women's organizations.

To achieve a greater impact, Mali Finance collaborates with Making Cents, a sub-contractor, to incorporate best practices in participatory adult training. This particular training was delivered in 2 sessions: a training of trainers (TOT) from

March 17th to 19th and 22nd to 24th for 18 course participants including three Mali Finance staff, and a practical session for 54 Malian agro-entrepreneurs including 24 women.

The training course began with an overview of Making Cents attended by other Mali Finance staff and the Director of USAID/Mali.

By the end of the six-day Making Cents Entrepreneurship Training of Trainer course, the objective was for participants to have transferable training skills and to

be able to plan and run a training course using the Making Cents *MicroPlan* curricula. To achieve this objective, the *MicroPlan* TOT focused on having course participants develop and/or expand their expertise in the three principle areas of understanding and application of experiential methodology training skills, training planning and follow up skills, learning to transmit cross sector business start up and management skills to micro and small entrepreneurs using the Making Cents *MicroPlan* curricula.

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## USAID and DOD Activities in the North of Mali

**KIDAL**—USAID staff members and Department of Defense Humanitarian Affairs (DOD/HA) personnel visited the regions of Kidal and Gao on June 6–11. The trip was made to survey sites for planned humanitarian assistance projects in the two regions. The various projects in the pipeline for villages in the regions include the construction and equipping of schools, health clinics and the building of wells. USAID used the opportunity to hold discussions with local authorities in Tessalit about the possibility of installing a FM radio station and to meet with USAID partners in Kidal (World Education, *Action Contre la Faim*), and a local women's association. In Kidal they also paid a visit to the recently opened Community Learning and Information Center (CLIC). In Menaka, the joint team met with local authorities and community members interested in school and health projects.

*Aman Imane; Ahe Issoudare* (Water is Life; Milk is Food) is a well-known Tamashék (language of the Touareg ethnic group) saying that is extremely apt for the harsh environment of northern Mali where survival is never taken for granted. Water consistently ranks among the communities' most critical needs not only for household use but for small gardening and animal husbandry. Similarly, health clinics and schools are pressing concerns for the often isolated northern populations. In these sparsely populated regions some communities are a considerable distance from schools and clinics.

### Success Story

*Tassikt is a small public school applying the new curriculum, with 3 classrooms*



**PRECIOUS WATER**—Nomads herding animals around a well in Tinichni, a commune of Tessalit.

*(1<sup>st</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> grades), 36 students and 3 teachers, and located 50 km from Kidal. The school suddenly closed in early May 2004 because of the lack of water – the traditional wells surrounding the school having dried up. Since it was among the 405 schools participating in its Communautés d'Apprentissage (school clusters) program, World Education and AEDS, its local NGO implementing partner, were able to mobilize the community to do a Participatory Diagnosis (DPC). The population provided water from Kidal for the 2-day DPC, and supported other costs of the workshop worth 60% of the total cost. With the push from World Education, AEDS and the community, the director of the school and the director of the Centre d'Animation Pédagogique were able to put the school on the priority list of the water programs to be funded by*

*Canada in Kidal in time for the start of the new school year.—Ibrahima Sissoko and Cheick Coulibaly, USAID*

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talk with various US experts in the field of biotechnology – including cotton. Since USAID/Mali has been given a generous amount of biotech funding, we will be able to support the GRM's interest in the area.

So there are a lot of NEW things in Mali – new contractors, new MCA, new ideas and new challenges. We should have fun setting all these new things into productive action.—Pamela White, USAID

## Official Launch of USAID's "Programme de Gouvernance Partagée"

**BAMAKO**—Management Systems International with CARE and Save the Children launched a three-year \$9,362,324 million dollar governance "Programme de Gouvernance Partagée" (PGP) in Bamako on July 8<sup>th</sup>. Ambassador Vicki Huddleston and Hon. Kafougouna Koné, Minister of Territorial Administration, presided over the event following a welcoming speech by USAID Director, Pam White.

This program reinforces USAID's com-

mitment to democracy in Mali through decentralized local governance. The Democratic Governance Strategic Objective is "A Decentralized System of Shared Democratic Governance Consolidated." This program has three objectives: (1) to develop participation and partnerships at the local level between citizens, locally elected officials, civil society and the private sector to ensure local development; (2) mobilization of local resources and transparent budget management; (3) reinforcement of the national level enabling

environment for decentralized local governance.

The PGP will reach 250 of Mali's 703 communes in 7 of Mali's 8 regions and Bamako. The DG Team looks forward to advancing decentralization and good governance in Mali through the partnerships PGP are creating between citizens, civil society and locally elected leaders, the mayors and counselors elected during the June 2004 local elections in Mali.—*Hannah Baldwin, USAID*

## Innovative and Cost Effective Solutions for Education

*Teacher Training via radio in Mali to go on the air in early 2005!*

**BAMAKO**—In March of this year, USAID/Mali signed a new 3.6 million dollar, three-year, Cooperative Agreement with Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), who, with its subcontractor, the Academy for Educational Development, is supporting the Ministry of Education in creating a new radio and technology based program of teacher training. The name of the new program is Teacher Training via Radio (TTvR) or, in French, “*Formation Interactive des Enseignants par la Radio (FIER)*.” Under FIER, EDC is working directly with the “*Division de l’Enseignement Normal*” (DEN) — Mali’s structure in charge of teacher training — to provide support to both pre-service and in-service teacher training. Pre-service training will be supported through the creation of “virtual training centers” (including computers, printers, scanners, photocopiers,

video cameras, and, where possible, internet) in Mali’s teacher training colleges (*Instituts de Formation des Maîtres, or IFM*). In-service training will be supported through the writing, production, and broadcasting of radio programs for supervisors and teachers that will help them assimilate student-centered pedagogical techniques crucial to the success of the Ministry’s current education reform.

The FIER program is still in its early stages, but has already set up an office at the Ministry of Education (at the teacher training division), identified which government personnel will work with the teacher training division as scriptwriters, and completed a six region “audience research” survey with personnel from the IFMs, the ministry supervision offices, and schools. Results from the audience

research will allow the teams working on the virtual training centers (VTCs) to select the first VTC sites, and to prepare training material to be used in these sites with the newly available technology. Audience research results will also allow the teams writing the radio programming to determine what themes and what types of radio formats should be featured in each radio series. Over the summer, the radio writing teams will begin work on one series for supervisors and on another for teachers, with further series to be developed in the future. So be on both the “look-out” and the “listen-out;” by January of 2005, FIER will have operational virtual training centers in 2-4 IFMs and radio-based training on the air for all Malian supervisors and teachers to use!—*Rebecca Rhodes, EDC*

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As a follow-up to the Ministerial meeting and by invitation of the Mali delegation, the West African ministers have decided to meet again in Bamako, Mali during early 2005 to continue their discussions and to build on the progress achieved at the Burkina conference.

The conference demonstrated a strong commitment by the region’s policy makers to improve people’s lives by adapting a broad range of agricultural sciences and technologies to West African needs. It provided opportunity for every one — ministers of agriculture, trade, environment and science and technology, and the leading international scientists — to share information on technologies, policies and partnerships to increase agricultural productivity in West Africa.—*Ram Shetty, USAID*

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All 15 TOT external participants successfully completed the six-day TOT and received certificates of attestation. All elected to progress to the second and final stage of the certification process presented with the view to then being contracted by Mali Finance to provide training to agro-entrepreneurs on an on-going basis.

Having identified ways to adapt *MicroPlan* for training of different Malian entrepreneurs groups, the trained trainers put into practice their know-how by training 54 agro-entrepreneurs including 24 women. This practical session demonstrated their confidence and motivation. Many more agro-entrepreneurs (with a special emphasis on women) will participate in Mali Finance capacity building sessions thus improving entrepreneurs’ ability to access finance. Pamela White,

Director of USAID/Mali remarked: “... this is a great kick-off activity and should have extremely positive, and relatively quick, impact on Mali entrepreneurs’ ability to access finance.”—*Chris Juillard, Mali Finance*

### Mali Holds Municipal Elections

**BAMAKO**—USAID and other donors provided support for municipal elections held on May 30th 2004. A civic education campaign helped Mali to realize its highest voter turnout (43%) since 1992. Voting was higher in the rural areas than in the capital city where only 23.3% of citizens participated. Nonetheless, the signs are encouraging for the continued strengthening of democracy in Mali where the poll was reported to be generally orderly, transparent and devoid of significant irregularities.—*Mervyn Farroe, USAID*

## USAID/Mali

**“Reducing poverty and accelerating economic growth through partnerships.”**

**Pamela White**, Mission Director  
**Kevin Mullally**, Deputy Director  
**Mervyn Farroe**, Program Officer  
**Steve Cowper**, Executive Officer  
**Latanya Mapp**, Project Development Officer  
**Kathy Body**, Controller

**Team Leaders**  
**Ann Hirschey**, Health  
**Jo Allen Lesser**, Education  
**Hannah Baldwin**, Democratic Governance  
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To learn more about who we are and what we do visit our website: <http://www.usaid.org.ml>