USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FRONTLINES

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Photo by Dorelyn Jose, USAID

Profits from Timor-Leste's coffee exports have been used to open a network of health clinics. See page 3.

This woman works in the reinvigorated coffee industry in Timor-Leste.

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Photo by Ashtar Analeed Marcus

Juan Carlos Rodriguez meets Administrator Henrietta Fore following a graduation ceremony for new Foreign Service Officers Oct. 17. He is one of more than 100 new FSOs hired this year under the Development Leadership Initiative, which aims to double the FSO staff to more than 2,000 within three years. Rodriguez' first overseas assignment takes him to Uganda.

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Bush Says US Foreign Aid Is at 50-Year High

President Bush, speaking at USAID headquarters Oct. 21, hailed aid to Africa and other developing countries as a cornerstone of his legacy.

"I appreciate the fact that folks in this room represent thousands that are replacing disease with health, dependency with self-reliance, and despair with hope," Bush told 600 people at the Ronald Reagan Building attending the White House Summit on International Development.

Bush was introduced by Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, whose war-torn country has held elections and is undergoing reconstruction with U.S. and other international aid.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am here today to recognize the sick that have been healed, the hungry that have been fed, the livelihoods that have improved, the hopes that have been inspired, and the dreams that have been realized because of President Bush's leadership," said Sirleaf.

Bush said that it would be "a mistake" to reduce foreign assistance despite the ongoing economic crisis.

Development serves U.S. security interests by reducing support for terrorism, and it serves U.S. economic interests by creating new markets for U.S. goods and services, he told the USAID officials, diplomats, and others attending the day-long conference

Photo by David Anderson

Increased funding for aid in Africa in recent years has included widespread education in remote areas. Mwenya Mvula conducts a first grade Interactive Radio Instruction class at Garden IRI Center in Lusaka, Zambia. See page 5.

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Rieser: USAID Is Needed to Solve Global Problems

Tim Rieser, majority clerk of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, is deeply engaged in crafting the annual foreign assistance appropriations bill that funds USAID. He sat down with Ben Barber, *FrontLines* editorial director, Sept. 30.

Q: *Since 9/11, do you see a broader consensus that foreign aid is important to U.S. security?*

RIESER: That consensus has been developing since 9/11, which contributed to a growing understanding that the United States has important security interests on every continent. Events in Afghanistan, Indonesia, or Mexico can have major consequences for this country.

It isn't just about helping people who have suffered from floods or earthquakes or other natural disasters; it's also about building more stable societies with which we can have closer relations and cooperate in solving global problems.

But it's one thing to understand it and another thing to fight for the budget to support it when you are competing against domestic programs. Our foreign assistance budget often falls short of what the President requests in his budget, which is already woefully inadequate.

It is not close to what is needed for a country of our size, with our interests. Often we are operating at the margin while other countries, particularly China, are dramatically

see **TIM RIESER** on page 14 ▶

World Bank Chief Warns Financial Crisis Will Hit Development

By Ben Barber

WASHINGTON—World Bank President Robert Zoellick warned Oct. 6 that the global financial crisis may have a devastating effect on developing countries even though, up until now, they have shown solid growth.

"The events of September could be a tipping point for many developing countries," Zoellick said in a speech at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

"A drop in exports, as well as capital inflow, will trigger a fall-off in investments. Deceleration of growth and deteriorating financing conditions, combined with monetary tightening, will trigger business failures and possibly banking emergencies. Some countries will slip toward balance of payments crises. As is always the case, the most poor are the most defenseless."

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING . . .

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

3 Former Administrators Call for USAID Control Over Foreign Aid

Excerpted from Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2008—a publication of the Council on Foreign Relations*

By J. Brian Atwood, M. Peter McPherson, and Andrew Natsios

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Washington's foreign aid programs have improved in many ways during the Bush presidency. Official development assistance has increased from $10 billion in 2000 to $22 billion in 2008, funding two dozen presidential initiatives, many of them innovative and groundbreaking.

At the same time, however, the organizational structures and statutes governing these programs have become chaotic and incoherent thanks to 20 years of accumulated neglect by both Republicans and Democrats in the executive and legislative branches.

The president has elevated development to a theoretically equal place with defense and diplomacy in what is considered the new paradigm of national power: "the three Ds." But this vision has not been realized because of organizational and programmatic chaos.

The Defense Department's massive staff has assumed roles that should be performed by the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Pentagon's $600 billion budget has eclipsed those of the civilian agencies.

The Pentagon recognizes this problem. In November 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates called for a "dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security."…

In March 2008, retired Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni and Navy Admiral Leighton Smith, representing a group of more than 50 retired flag and general officers, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in support of a budget increase for the State Department and USAID. Zinni and Smith said, "We know that the 'enemies' in the world today are actually conditions—poverty, infectious disease, political turmoil and corruption, environmental and energy challenges."

The U.S. foreign assistance program has traditionally sought to support U.S. national security and promote economic growth, poverty reduction, and humanitarian relief abroad...

U.S. development efforts lack coherent policy guidance and are spread across myriad agencies with little coordination among them. Such a sad state of affairs did not always exist. We can testify to this from our own experience, having collectively run USAID for 16 years, under both Democratic and Republican administrations…

The United States cannot win the hearts and minds of the world's people with only an anemic USAID presence in the developing world. The situation will not improve without sensible presidential leadership to support an independent, vigorous, and restructured USAID or a new federal department devoted to development…

For much of its existence, USAID had substantial resources and autonomy, but in recent decades these have largely been stripped away. For example, the State Department was given responsibility for U.S. foreign assistance programs in central and eastern Europe in 1989 and in the former Soviet Union in 1992, with USAID placed in a subordinate role. Eventually, in 2001, the State Department took over USAID's account and its direct relationship with the Office of Management and Budget. As a result, USAID lost staff, programmatic flexibility, and influence with Congress, other government departments, other aid donors, and recipient nations…

When the Millennium Challenge Corporation was set up in 2004, the secretary of state—rather than the USAID administrator—was named to chair it. At first, the MCC was discouraged from even working with USAID; when the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was set up in 2003, it was placed in the State Department, with USAID and the Department of Health and Human Services given only supporting roles.

Many new players in the foreign assistance arena—the Centers for Disease Control, the MCC, and now even the Defense Department, through its new Africa Command—have created independent organizational structures to carry out their programs. Not surprisingly, this has led to policy incoherence, a lack of integration across programs and issue areas, inefficient and overlapping bureaucracies, and endless conflicts over roles and responsibilities—not to mention confusion among recipients and among other donors about who represents Washington on development issues.

These new development players are now even using the same contractors as USAID…. There is no evidence that this broad array of new development agencies has done any better than the old, more unified USAID, and much evidence that this organizational structure has done worse.

The most recent reorganization of Washington's development apparatus was announced in 2006. USAID was effectively folded into the State Department and given its allocations through a State Department-controlled budget process, and its administrator was asked to wear two bureaucratic hats: director of foreign assistance at the State Department and head of USAID. Many thought this was a mistake. The practical and policy problems that have resulted have only confirmed their views…

USAID has also suffered over the years from crippling staff cuts. In 1980, the agency had 4,058 permanent American employees. By 2008, the number had dropped to 2,200. Resources for staff training were also slashed dramatically. These cuts have had several detrimental effects. Most important, they forced the closing of 26 overseas missions in the 1990s. USAID's field presence used to be a real source of strength for the United States … the agency now has only six engineers and 16 agriculture experts, far fewer than in the 1980s…

On a policy level, meanwhile, large presidential initiatives and congressional earmarks for health care, HIV/AIDS, K-12 education, microfinance, and the environment have in recent years crowded out other development interventions, such as anticorruption measures, agricultural assistance, democracy-promotion programs, and infrastructure-enhancement measures. The narrower, more focused programs are politically appealing because they appear to have a direct, measurable impact on identifiable individuals. But such a concentration on the short-term delivery of goods and services comes at the expense of building sustainable institutions that promote long-term development.

The problems with current U.S. development efforts cannot be fixed without major organizational reforms. The time has come to recognize that the semi-merger of USAID and the State Department has not worked… State Department officers are superb diplomats, negotiators, political observers, and policy analysts. USAID, in contrast, is an operational and program-management agency focused on achieving sustainable economic growth abroad; its staffers are aid professionals with the technical and managerial skills to get their work done.

With USAID and the State Department merged, the urgency of the State Department's mission and the collective mindset of its personnel end up dominating, to the detriment of the development agenda….

The right approach is to find some way of restoring USAID's autonomy and vitality. The real question is whether USAID should be an independent agency reporting to the secretary of state or a new cabinet department. Both routes have advantages and disadvantages, but either would be preferable to the current setup.

A cabinet-level department would give USAID much greater stature and allow it to influence policy on trade, investment, and the environment while improving existing assistance programs. This approach is the predominant model used in wealthy donor countries. The United Kingdom moved in this direction in the mid-1990s…

The chief argument against a cabinet-level development department in the United States is that the secretary of state needs to have some policy involvement and oversight when it comes to foreign aid. Moreover, the secretary of state is always going to be a more powerful member of the cabinet than a development czar…. For these reasons, many observers believe that a strong agency reporting to the secretary of state would be preferable…

The new USAID must have budgetary independence, and its operating account—which pays for buildings, salaries, and technology—should be dramatically increased in order to boost the size of the permanent staff, invest in training, and increase the agency's technical expertise. This will enable the new USAID to reopen missions that were permanently closed and to staff them adequately.

Second, the head of the new USAID should be a statutory

see **FOREIGN AID** on page 14 ▶

Mission of the Month

TIMOR-LESTE

Photo by Dorelyn Jose, USAID

Coffee industry workers take a break in Timor-Leste. Under the USAID-supported Cooperativa Café Timor project, the country began exporting coffee to Starbucks in the United States in 1999.

Coffee Gives Timor-Leste Economy, Health Services a Pick-Me-Up

Challenge

Following independence from Indonesia in 1999, the country of Timor-Leste was born. Post-referendum violence, however, left much of its basic infrastructure and economy in ruins.

Since then, Timor-Leste (also known as East Timor), with help from the international community, has made considerable progress in establishing a democratic state and revitalizing its economy. It was cited by the Asian Development Bank's Pacific Economic Survey 2008 as "a special case" with an average 6.8 percent growth for 2005-2007 due to "post-violence recovery and international support."

Despite significant offshore oil reserves, the country remains the 23rd poorest in the world.

Innovative Response

As the only significant export in the first few years of independence, coffee served as the take-off point for the country's economic rehabilitation. USAID supported the Cooperativa Café Timor (CCT) project which began buying, processing, and marketing certified organic arabica coffee in East Timor as early as 1994. In 1999, the country began exporting coffee to Starbucks in the United States.

"The project made it a point to educate farmers through examples," said Shane McCarthy, an agroforestry adviser with the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA), which was responsible for carrying out the project. "Our six demonstration plots throughout the coffee growing areas actively promoted the use of low-cost organic methods to increase farmer yields."

The greater challenge, however, was to improve production practices and add value to the coffee.

Before USAID stepped in, nearly 25 years of civil unrest and uncertainty caused coffee quality to severely decline and most of the export market to disappear. Many coffee farmers had stopped harvesting coffee; those who continued "didn't bother to separate good cherries from the bad," McCarthy said.

When CCT opened up new, more profitable markets, large numbers of farmers began to meet the project's strict production and quality requirements. Backers credit the improved coffee quality for the project's success.

Today, with a unique flavor, high-quality processing, and certified organic beans, CCT's coffee commands a premium price—within the highest 1 percent of internationally traded coffees.

In early 2008, USAID launched a public-private partnership with a U.S. trade and investment company, Cooperative Business International, to help the cooperative's farmer members meet the increasingly sophisticated demands of the international coffee market.

Results

CCT is now the largest single-source producer of organic coffee in the world and is Timor-Leste's largest non-petroleum exporter. CCT exports will reach $12 million worth of coffee in 2008.

The cooperative is the largest private employer in Timor-Leste, with 22,000 farmer families as members, 300 full-time staff, and up to 3,500 seasonal processing workers.

With profits from the coffee business, CCT members opened Clinic Café Timor health clinics. The idea was originally to create a free health service for cooperative members who were outside the government health system. They've since expanded to provide services to the general population in the coffee-growing regions.

The clinics serve over one-sixth of Timor-Leste's population with 11 fixed clinics and 28 mobile clinics. The network is the largest private health provider in the country, and the government makes a contribution to the health program that roughly matches the cost of serving non-members.

USAID is also helping cooperative members to diversify their sources of income through other high-value, niche export market commodities, as well as cattle fattening.

Mark A. White, USAID Representative to Timor-Leste, said the CCT program is "one of the most productive USAID-supported economic initiatives in Timor-Leste. Simply put, we succeeded in putting money into Timorese farmers' pockets. This is job creation and income generation at its best, when it's most needed." ★

INSIGHTS

FROM HENRIETTA H. FORE

On Oct. 2, I gave the keynote address at the last public meeting of the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Assistance (ACVFA) that I will attend as USAID Administrator.

I welcomed the occasion to salute ACVFA for the reports I requested on democratic governance and economic growth, both of which can be found on the ACVFA Web site (http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/acvfa) and to comment on the preliminary report of its subcommittee on public outreach.

The latter report draws on extensive polling for an assessment of the current state of public opinion—both at home and abroad—regarding this nation's foreign assistance.

Domestically, polling demonstrates a pronounced interest by Americans in foreign assistance. At the same time, public opinion continues to be riddled with long-standing misconceptions and prejudices that must be countered if we are to sustain the foreign assistance commitment that our humanitarian and national security activities require.

It is the conviction of the ACVFA subcommittee that the success of our foreign assistance mission is as strategically important to the United States as it is to millions of recipients who benefit from it. Its members also believe that increasing awareness of the goals and accomplishments of U.S. foreign aid—both development and humanitarian assistance—through effective outreach is critical to increasing public understanding of foreign assistance.

To this end, the report recommends that USAID increase public outreach resources and hire more professional communication specialists. It also recommends designing an effective public outreach strategy to enlighten domestic audiences and making it central to communications operations.

The situation with international audiences is somewhat different. While Americans typically overestimate the resources devoted to foreign assistance, people in recipient countries are often times largely ignorant of American assistance. Moreover, where this aid is known and acknowledged, it tends to generate positive feelings toward America and Americans.

The subcommittee report has praise for recent innovations at USAID, including its "branding" initiative as well as its Development Outreach Communication program that has placed more than 100 full- and part-time communications professionals in the field. It recommends strengthening these commitments and mainstreaming public outreach at the Mission level. It further recommends the overseas expansion of integrated foreign assistance media campaigns that have been implemented in Lebanon, the West Bank, and most recently being planned in Pakistan.

I called for this report to guide the new Administration and my successor at USAID. I am convinced that following its recommendations will help create the supporting environment necessary to advance our humanitarian and development goals and meet our national security needs. I am also convinced that my successor will benefit from the strengthened ties that I have enjoyed during my tenure with ACVFA and our many implementing partners. Such collaborative efforts are themselves a testament to a brightening future for foreign assistance. ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

Briefs

Boom in Sachs' Millennium Villages Seen As Short-Lived

A U.N. experiment to pour cash and training into development of a dozen African villages, and swiftly boost health, agriculture, and education, has shown "remarkable results" but could be difficult to replicate at a national level, an independent study has found.

The Millennium Villages project—the brainchild of Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University in New York—did raise living standards, according to the Overseas Development Institute, a London think-tank.

But it found the project's reliance on highly trained staff meant it could be hard to replicate at a national level, the *Financial Times* reported Nov. 4.

The project spends $50 per villager each year. Medical staff reduced malaria. Subsidized seed and fertilizer—together with good rains—boosted harvests. But the highly-trained staff at pilot villages will not be available for mass development, which will rely instead on underpaid, less well educated, and sometimes corrupt civil servants often encountered in Africa, the *Financial Times* reported.

One analyst at the Center for Global Development in Washington said a similar attempt to cut poverty in Southwest China in 1995 to 2000 failed when subsidies ended.

Both supporters and skeptics say it will be 5 to 10 years before it becomes clear whether the project has created a self-sustaining model that can be replicated across the developing world.

Peace Corps Returns to Liberia

DAKAR, Senegal—The Peace Corps returned to war-ravaged Liberia Oct. 26 for the first time since fighting erupted nearly two decades ago. Its goal is to help rebuild the West African nation's shattered education system since civil war ended in 2003.

The return of the Peace Corps, which pulled out shortly after rebels invaded the country in late 1989, is a sign of confidence in President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a Harvard-educated economist and Africa's first elected female head of state.

"Sirleaf has done a tremendous job of bringing this country back from chaos and we want to be part of moving her country forward as rapidly as possible," Peace Corps director Ronald A. Tschetter told the *Associated Press* in an interview from Washington. "This is a huge step for us to go back."

Liberia's back-to-back wars, which lasted from 1989 to 2003, sparked vicious factional fighting that killed an estimated 250,000 and displaced millions. Charles Taylor, who launched the 1989 invasion, is now jailed in The Hague facing war crime charges.

Ethiopia Requests Additional Food Aid

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopian officials said Oct. 7 that 6.4 million of the country's people now need emergency food aid due to drought, and appealed for a further $265 million from donors.

That number does not include 7.2 million Ethiopians who receive cash handouts or food aid from the government each year to stave off hunger, aid agency Oxfam said.

The food crisis in the Horn of Africa nation has steadily worsened since April, when the government estimated that some 2.2 million people needed emergency assistance. In June, it revised the official figure to 4.6 million.

Drought, inflation, and high food prices have contributed to the worsening crisis in Ethiopia and other parts of the Horn of Africa like Somalia and northern Kenya, aid workers say.

Aid Sent to Pakistani Quake Region

USAID increased its aid to victims of an earthquake in Pakistan's Baluchistan Province Oct. 29, to $2.5 million. One million dollars is being distributed via the International Committee of the Red Cross, which is providing health care, shelter, relief commodities, water, and sanitation. Up to 300 people were killed and tens of thousands left homeless when the 6.4-magnitude quake struck before dawn in the mountainous region, flattening mud-brick houses as people slept.

Health officials have warned of the spread of deadly diseases among children as nighttime temperatures plunged below freezing.

UN Renews Haiti Peacekeeping But Declines Development Role

UNITED NATIONS—The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously Oct. 14 to renew its peacekeeping mission in Haiti for another year, saying it is important for the troops to keep working with the government to reduce violence and crime. Still, the council did not heed calls by the country's U.N. envoy to shift the focus of the 4-year-old mission from security to economic development in the hurricane-ravaged nation.

Four storms left at least 793 dead and thousands homeless. Bridges have fallen and roads are flooded, making it impossible for many to reach their fields or markets. Food prices in Haiti are rising; 60 percent of the harvest was wiped out. The peacekeeping mission's mandate was extended until Oct. 15, 2009, and keeps the number of troops at 7,060 and police at 2,091. The mission costs nearly $575 million a year to operate.

U.S. Pledges $1B For Georgia

At a conference for Georgia in Brussels Oct. 22, Administrator Henrietta Fore pledged $1 billion to help the small country recover from the August 2008 conflict with Russia. The money was previously announced by the President and Secretary of State on Sept. 3. All donors together pledged $4.55 billion.

The U.S. support will go to internally displaced people, infrastructure, economic growth, investor confidence, democratic reform, and energy security. The United States has provided Georgia with over $1.89 billion to support its democratic, economic, and social development since 1992.

Taliban Claims Slaying of Woman Aid Worker in Kabul

KABUL—A foreign aid worker was shot dead in a residential area of Kabul by two gunmen on a motorbike as she walked to work Oct. 20, police officials and residents said.

Gayle Williams, 34, had worked with the British Christian organization, Serve Afghanistan, for two years in Afghanistan, directing projects for the disabled, the organization said in a notice on its Web site, serveafghanistan.org. She held British and South African citizenship.

A Taliban spokesman claimed responsibility, saying she was targeted because her organization was proselytizing.

Band Plays to Fight Trafficking in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH—The American rock band The Click Five plans to play a concert at Cambodia's Angkor Wat temple Dec. 7, sponsored by USAID and the MTV music channel, as part of a campaign to raise awareness in young people about human trafficking in the region, said a statement released by the organizers Nov. 3.

"What we have is the chance to reach out and create a lot of interest about human trafficking," Matt Love, spokesman for the MTV Europe Foundation, said, *Agence France Presse* reported.

Cambodia this year suspended marriages between foreigners and Cambodians amid concerns they were being used to traffic poor, uneducated women.

Bush Cites U.S. Support Ahead of World AIDS Day

As the world prepared to observe the battle against HIV/AIDS on World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, President Bush said that 200,000 African children were born free of AIDS due to the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Bush said PEPFAR also provides life-saving antiretroviral drugs for 1.7 million people in Africa, and care for nearly 7 million people, including millions of orphans and vulnerable children. He spoke at the White House Summit on International Development held in Washington Oct. 22 (see article, page 1).

USAID carries out 60 percent of PEPFAR programs—roughly $3.3 billion in fiscal year 2008 alone. The programs reached 58 million people with HIV prevention programs and supplied 1.9 billion condoms between 2004 and 2007. ★

From news reports and other sources.

In many developing countries, traditional classroom education is ineffective or impossible. USAID-supported radio instruction can reach thousands of learners, such as these Somali students, above and right, at minimal cost.

Photos by Feysal Osman

Radio Instruction Reaches Thousands in Developing Countries

Violence in Somalia prevents many children from attending schools: only 23 percent of them are enrolled—among the lowest rates in the world according to UNICEF.

But the use of radio to teach those who cannot attend formal schools—a technique pioneered by USAID more than 30 years ago—is making a huge difference.

USAID's Somali Interactive Radio Instruction Program (SIRIP), implemented by the Education Development Center Inc. (EDC), will reach over 400,000 Somali students in grades one through five with instruction in reading, math, and life skills. That figure includes thousands of students who could not attend schools during a tumultuous period in 2007 when the Islamic Courts Union gained control of Mogadishu.

"The SIRIP program remains the only alternative for education for many [internally displaced] children encamped in the Mogadishu outskirts," said EDC's Feysal Osman, a regional SIRIP coordinator. "A whole generation faced a black future because of lack of basic education. Fortunately, now there is a joint education response program for providing basic education."

Halima Ibrahim, who fled with her two children to the Mogadishu outskirts, appreciates the flexibility of the radio instruction. "We are not intending to go back to Mogadishu anytime soon. This radio program is a golden opportunity for our children to continue their learning in the camp's tent school," she said.

The efforts in Somalia are building on a long history of programs using radio for in-class instruction that USAID has funded. The Agency pioneered Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) in Nicaragua in 1973, using it as a classroom tool to counteract inadequate teacher training, poor resources, and low achievement.

In many developing countries, traditional classroom education is ineffective, inconvenient, or impossible due to any number of factors. IRI can reach thousands of learners, many of whom would not otherwise have access to education, at minimal cost. That, in turn, has allowed countries to keep their IRI programs going long after the USAID financing has ended.

In more than 30 years, USAID has reached large numbers of people through radio classes in Bolivia, El Salvador, Guinea, Haiti, India, Mali, Nepal, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, and Zambia.

Programs are based on local curriculum, but can weave in messages about other topics. For example, in Tanzania's Radio Instruction to Strengthen Education project, radio programs teach life skills related to health, hygiene, nutrition, and HIV/AIDS prevention.

In Zambia, USAID support is extending the reach of IRI programs. USAID's Quality Education Services Through Technology (QUESTT) Program supports a network of more than 300 community centers that bring education to AIDS orphans and others in areas lacking formal schools. These centers are run by unpaid mentors using lessons delivered via radio. The success of the program in community centers has prompted the Zambian government to begin using IRI in formal classrooms.

To extend the program beyond the reach of radio, QUESTT is now piloting an MP3 player program. Video-capable iPods have been loaded with 150 IRI lessons for the Zambian curriculum for the first, second, third, and sixth grades. Phase I of the project provides teachers with speakers and an alternative energy source—either solar panels or a foot-pumped generator—to power the equipment. Phase II supplies FM broadcasters, which attach to iPods and allow teachers to use existing radios as speaker systems.

In Zambia, AIDS orphans enrolled in the IRI program at learning centers scored as well or better than their government school peers on fourth grade exams. In Guinea, rural students and girls, who traditionally scored worse on government tests than their urban and male peers, achieved similar scores to their age-group peers within three years of beginning IRI. In South Africa, test scores of students who received "English in Action" lessons over the radio improved significantly over those who learned via other techniques.

Following those successes, there has been a recent resurgence of interest in IRI, particularly in post-conflict countries and those with hard-to-reach school children. New or expanded programs have also been developed for Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Pakistan, Sudan, and Tanzania. ★

Internews Trains 1,000 Journalists to Report on HIV/AIDS

The best way to reach vast numbers of people about how to avoid HIV/AIDS is through the radio and other media. But before the knowledge can spread, journalists need training to understand health issues and to explain the story.

A U.S.-backed program has just completed training 1,000 journalists in Africa and Asia on how to prevent AIDS. These reporters and editors in turn have reached millions of people with their messages.

The program aims "to provide interesting and actionable information about health, disease prevention, support and treatment, about the rights of health consumers, and about what governments and other actors are doing to protect the health of the public," said Gloria Coe of the USAID Global Health Bureau, manager of the Communications for Change project.

She spoke at a briefing at the National Press Club in Washington, Sept. 9.

"Health and journalism is a winning combination," said Coe. "We all know that the media sets the public agenda and helps to set the policy agenda; in essence, the media is the world's storyteller. We also know that well-written articles

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The next edition of *FrontLines* will be a double Dec./Jan. issue.

THE REGIONS

MIDDLE EAST

Jordanian Young Adults Engage for Family Planning

By Elizabeth Kountze

Photo by JHCP/Courtesy of Photoshare

Hanin Habashneh speaks out to fellow students about why she plans to wait to have children and to space them out.

AMMAN, Jordan—In Jordan, large families have long been highly valued. Hanin Habashneh, 19, a freshman medical student at the University of Jordan, is trying to change that. She wants to have just a few children and to raise them to be well-educated and healthy.

She leads a student outreach group at the university started to encourage students and other Jordanians to consider family planning—part of a $16 million Global Development Alliance funded by USAID and led by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communication Programs.

Students like Habashneh encourage other students to take responsibility for their own health issues with respect to family planning and women's rights.

Today, the average Jordanian woman has 3.6 births in her lifetime. A survey found that three out of four Jordanian women have a new child less than three years after giving birth. Such short birth intervals increase health risks to mother and child. And having many children strains family resources.

The partnership works with the Jordan Ministry of Health and the Higher Population Council to inform the public how small family size, and healthy spacing and timing of births can improve children's lives, provide a better quality of life for the entire family, and preserve the health of women.

Half-way through this eight-year partnership, the plan is reaching individuals, government officials, health care professionals, and leaders of private companies on family planning and other health issues. The nationwide slogan—"Our health, our responsibility"—is widely recognized across Jordan.

The program introduced the first Arabic health Web site in the Middle East—www.sehetna.com—and provides resources to Arabic and English newspapers to publish weekly articles on health topics.

Groups not traditionally involved in health such as religious leaders, civil society groups, and the telecommunications sector are working together to get the message out. Partners include the Ministries of Health, Education, Interior, and Al-Awqaf and Religious Affairs; the Higher Population Council; and the private sector.

Umniah, one of the four mobile phone providers in Jordan, sends free monthly text messages with health information to its 300,000 subscribers. The Nuqul Group, a conglomerate of 27 companies, published a book on care and nutrition in infants. The program also promotes the benefits of physical fitness, protection of children and women from second-hand smoke, and smoking cessation.

The program provided healthy living information to students at 60 elementary and middle schools, and helped institute health standards for schools. The partnership also created the "One Stop Health Booth Initiative" to promote physicals on college campuses and in shopping centers throughout Jordan, serving 12,000 people. ★

LATIN AMERICA

Switching from Corn to Plantains Helps Honduran Farmers

JESUS DE OTORO, Honduras—Marta Galeas used traditional farming techniques to plant her corn but felt her harvests were too small and the yields were too low. She lives in a fertile valley where big nearby landowners have one of the largest yields of rice in the region. She said she was sure she could improve her yields and livelihood, if she only knew how.

Galeas and her family in the valley of Jesus de Otoro, Honduras, have grown corn all their lives. She normally planted 1 acre of corn for her household. She sold any leftover corn at the market for a profit of $160 per season.

Galeas, like many other women in the area, had been looking for alternate ways to increase her family's income. She joined the regional women's cooperative and tried planting sweet potatoes as well as corn. She had some success with sweet potatoes, but had not increased her net profit significantly.

USAID's Rural Economic Diversification Program (USAID-RED) offered Galeas the opportunity to switch from corn production to plantains. But plantains are not traditionally grown in Jesus de Otoro, and she was reluctant to make the change.

USAID-RED provided the plantlets, or corms; technical assistance; and a small irrigation system. Galeas took a chance and replaced her corn field with 3,200 plantain plantlets.

Her first challenge was preparing the soil. Unlike corn, plantains need soil beds so water can easily drain from the plant. Galeas's soil was hard and she did not progress much doing the labor by hand.

RED brought in a special soil bed-making machine from Copan, in western Honduras. With the machine, it took Galeas seven days to prepare the soil and begin the planting process.

Another challenge was getting a loan approved to buy fertilizers and other supplies. But Galeas was approved for a $600 loan by going to the project's financial institution and to the women's cooperative in the area.

Galeas's crop has grown in size and has begun to produce seedlings. She has invested about $500 to date and expects to produce about 80,000 pounds of plantains. Her farm is a model where other people receive training.

Conservative estimates predict she will earn $10,000 from this crop, and an additional $5,000 if she chooses to sell her seedlings.

Photo by Samantha Croasdaile

Marta Galeas's plantain farm.

Galeas's life has been transformed, she said. She went from being a traditional corn farmer with food security issues to a plantain grower who employs nine people, eight of which are family members.

Galeas has already secured a buyer in the area, who is capable of purchasing her entire production. She plans to expand next year's crop and is actively recruiting people in her community to help them diversify their own production. Her goal is to have enough plantain growers to begin a cooperative and sell at the regional level. ★

AFRICA

Photo by Matthew Harder, SISP

A tanker truck is chlorinated near the Nile River. Approximately 3,300 tanker truck loads per week are chlorinated at pumping stations along the river—about 13.3 million liters of water are chlorinated and delivered to 114,000 beneficiaries each month.

EUROPE & EURASIA

World Bank Reports Albania Reforms Improved Business Climate

By Aybeniz Ganjaliyeva and Joan Vermette

Photo by Agim Dobi, Albania Threshold Project

A year after opening its doors in September 2007, Albania's National Registration Center has registered 18,000 new businesses and provides online public access to business registration data.

TIRANA, Albania—Doing business in Albania is easier and faster, thanks to overhauls, supported by USAID, of its business registration, tax, and procurement systems.

The World Bank *Doing Business* report for 2009 ranked Albania second among countries that undertook reforms during 2007 and 2008 to make it easier for businesses to register and operate. Albania's overall rank on the business index climbed to 86 from 135—out of 191 economies.

Two years ago, Albania's business registration process was costly and time consuming, requiring 42 days and a court decision. That system has been replaced with a simplified, one-day procedure that leaves few opportunities for bribes. The entire process takes place at the Tirana-based National Registration Center or any of its 10 branch offices.

After only one year, over 18,000 new businesses have been registered and the tax base has increased 25 percent. The USAID program was funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Threshold Program.

Another reform noted by the *Doing Business* report was e-filing of corporate taxes for large businesses, which has severed the exploitative relationship between officials and taxpayers. On average, more than 61,000 tax forms are now downloaded per month, and over 2,100 monthly declarations are e-filed—and the numbers are increasing.

Albania's new e-procurement system, developed by USAID, became the government-wide standard in March 2008, and has since generated 98 competitive awards worth more than $38 million. E-procurement has raised the average number of bids per procurement, lowering the average price for those goods and services.

A new institution, the National Agency for an Information Society, hosts the e-governance systems and ensures they are secure and maintained. The agency was inaugurated by Administrator Henrietta Fore during a May visit to Albania.

At the inauguration, Albania Prime Minister Sali Berisha thanked USAID and the MCC, "for funding these [reforms] and helping with their implementation. E-taxes, e-business, and e-procurement have made Albania's development path easier."

Albania's enhanced business climate appears to have changed perceptions of corruption as well. In one year, the country advanced 20 places—the largest leap among European countries—in Transparency International's (TI) global ranking of corruption perceptions. TI cited tax administration, procurement, and business registration reforms, among others, as responsible for the improved perceptions.

Building on the successes of the reforms, a $15.7 million MCC Stage II Threshold Proposal is scheduled to begin in January. The program will be administered by USAID and is designed to streamline the building permit process and establish Albania's first administrative courts. ★

ASIA

New Junior High School Serves Disadvantaged Vietnamese

By Richard Nyberg

KON RAY, Vietnam—Ninth-grader Y Nga bikes to her new school through rolling, green hills, past the old elementary school where she and her friends shared cramped quarters with younger pupils last year.

Her daily ride ends at the Kon Ray Ethnic Minority Boarding School, which was designed to serve both traditional students and those with disabilities. It is the first school of its kind funded by USAID, perched high above lush valleys in Vietnam's picturesque Central Highlands.

"This school is so clean and so nice," says Y, a 14-year-old from Kon Keng village, an ethnic Sora farming community producing cassava, rice, corn, and rubber. "All the students will share the responsibility to keep the school clean."

Her friend, Y Chuc from Mong Tu village, is equally impressed with the new science lab. They didn't have one in their former school last year.

With 240 students from ethnic minority groups, the school for sixth- through ninth-graders features modern facilities, a standard curriculum, and vocational training. Although there are currently no students with disabilities enrolled, the school is one of a handful in the country equipped to meet their educational and social needs.

Wheelchair ramps zigzag up to all wings and rooms of the school, and walls of each building have signs in Braille. To date, USAID

see **VIETNAM** on page 15 ▶

Photos by Richard Nyberg, USAID/Vietnam

Ninth-grade student Y Nga is grateful for the new school near her home in Kon Keng village in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. She plans to continue her education and become a teacher or a doctor.

Hygiene Education and Chlorinated Water Fight Sudan Cholera

By Jessica Wells

JUBA, Sudan—The onset of the rainy season here can be a dangerous time, increasing the risk of cholera and other serious waterborne diseases.

Contaminated water is one of the primary ways that people contract cholera, an infection that causes severe diarrhea. Left untreated, those with cholera can die within hours from dehydration and shock, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Diarrhea is the second leading cause of death in children under age 5 in sub-Saharan Africa.

To improve water and sanitation, raise public awareness of health risks, and help prevent the spread of cholera throughout the year in southern Sudan—especially during the heavy rains that generally come between April and October—USAID has started the Urban WASH Program as part of its Sudan Infrastructure Services Project (SISP).

The program uses outreach, education, and marketing to address immediate and long-term water and sanitation needs in southern Sudan.

For example, the Juba Community Hygiene Improvement Initiative is promoting hand-washing, hygiene, safe water storage, and water chlorination tablets called WaterGuard to make water safe for drinking, cooking, and other home uses.

Raw water collected by tanker trucks from the Nile River—a long-standing practice—is now chlorinated with WaterGuard before distribution to communities around Juba. Tablets are also available at various access points along the river to people collecting water in jerry cans. About 35,000 cans are chlorinated each week. In addition, three community-operated chlorinated water supply tanks have been constructed along the river.

Plans for the future include installation of two water pipelines to connect existing tanks to the city water system, and construction of public latrine and bathing facilities in major market areas.

To date, over 240,000 people have benefited from improved drinking water under USAID-supported programs in southern Sudan. Beyond Juba,

see **SUDAN** on page 15 ▶

USAID TRAINS WITH TROOPS AT FORT BRAGG FOR AFGHAN RECONSTRUCTION

Holly Hughson, back from 13 months in Afghanistan with an NGO, wears her armored vest as she walks to classes where she tells about life on a PRT. She is returning to Afghanistan for another tour in a PRT.

FORT BRAGG, N.C.—It may be North Carolina, but USAID employees and U.S. troops are under attack by mock suicide bombers, roadside bombs, and snipers—all of it mimicking the Taliban insurgency the Americans will face when they deploy to Afghanistan in a few weeks.

About 35 civilians from USAID, the Departments of State and Agriculture, and over 1,000 U.S. soldiers recently spent three weeks ending in early October training at Ft. Bragg to prepare for service overseas.

During exercises, they are hit with artillery rounds and sniper from Afghan actors posing as Taliban insurgents who shoot at them—with blanks—to test their readiness to react.

The trainees are on their way to Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) scattered across Afghanistan. PRTs extend the reach of the central government in Kabul by building the capacity of local governments to provide for their citizens. PRT activities include building schools, clinics, and government centers; and supplying medicine, books, seeds, irrigation, and electric power as well as other building blocks of modern development.

At one clearing in the piney woods, a dozen heavily armed U.S. troops in camouflage and body armor stand in a circle as the only civilian among them—wearing a USAID vest and a floppy hat—tells them about the mistakes they just made on a mock Afghan development mission.

"You have not got the population supporting the government—police shake down the people—these are the dynamics," USAID trainer Jim Derleth tells the troops during a "hot wash," or rundown of their practice mission.

"We are not just doing projects—they are a means to an end. If they link people to the police, and they like the police, that is the goal: stabilization. We need to make the people the center of activities. The military say 'center of gravity.' We say 'community-based development.'"

In this exercise, the troops had driven in a convoy of Humvees to a spot in the woods to check progress on a project and found little work had been accomplished. Then, when a group of disgruntled villagers and rowdy children closed in, raising a ruckus, the soldiers fired warning shots to keep them at bay.

Shooting at civilians is not a good way to win hearts and minds, Derleth tells the soldiers who scuff the earth with their boots, looking dejected at having let the Afghans unnerve them.

"Every time you open a project in Afghanistan, it opens the door to corruption," said one frustrated soldier, explaining why his troops lost their cool and opened fire.

Derleth tells them: "I'm giving you a lot of criticism now, but you actually performed better than any of the groups that have done this exercise."

In the distance, the crump of artillery sounds.

The trainees also learn how to escape a Humvee if it flips upside down. They load into a Humvee chasis that rotates 180 degrees, leaving them hanging upside down by their seat belts. The trainees must first grab the legs of the roof gunner to prevent him from being thrown out, then release their seat belts without falling on their heads, and open the heavily bolted doors.

When the PRTs were created several years ago, civilian development advisors from USAID, State, and Agriculture all learned on the job how to deliver assistance to the Afghans while collaborating with 75 to 100 U.S. soldiers on each base. Recognizing the inefficiencies of this process, USAID formed a State/U.S. Army coalition to develop a program to train civilians and troops before their arrival in Afghanistan.

Ft. Bragg is a sprawling military base about one-quarter the size of Rhode Island, covered with scattered pine trees and dry soil. The troops camp out in tents hooked up to air conditioners and heaters. Their officers train alongside the USAID, State, and Agriculture civilians.

Dozens of Afghans and others have been hired from across the United States to play the roles of villagers and provincial officials for $13 an hour.

A fake village was created from shipping crates and plywood. Women in burqas and abayas cook on grills while men in flat wool Afghan caps and shirttails down to their knees pretend to be villagers.

The trainees drive up to the fake village to hold a mock meeting with provincial leaders. Everyone sits outdoors at a long table as a ritual of speeches begins, including a series of arguments in rapid-fire Dari language. The women's committee wants help for women. An elections official wants help. Others ask for help with various activities.

A USAID trainee, a young woman with a maroon headscarf, cautiously says through the interpreter that she is happy to meet them and hear their concerns and understand their views, but she makes no promises.

Outside the compound, shouting is heard. It is unnerving.

"Sometimes a woman with a suicide vest blows up right here," said one of the actors playing a villager. His job is to stand guard around the meeting site, his assault rifle loaded with blank cartridges.

The PRT training course, headed by Jim Hanley of USAID's Office of Military Affairs, begins in Washington with courses on Afghan history and culture, and working with the military. Trainees are then bussed down to Ft. Bragg for three weeks.

For one week they study life-saving skills such as how to insert an intravenous fluid drip, escape from a flipped Humvee, use radios in the vehicles, and weapon familiarization.

The second week is dedicated to civilian-military joint training, mostly in a classroom setting,

focusing on issues such as stabilization. The two sectors learn about each other's way of doing business—or simply the fact that USAID exists.

"This is the first time I learned of USAID and your mission," said Air Force Lt. Jon Farley, who is heading out to a PRT in Parwan and Kapisa provinces north of Kabul. "I had no idea you folks existed, to be quite honest. It is absolutely important to get the humanitarian aid and USAID side."

The second week the trainees also learn how to conduct meetings with Afghan leaders and the Provincial Development Councils. USAID employees who have already spent many months on PRTs fly back to the States to teach these lessons.

Holly Hughson, for example, back from 13 months in Afghanistan with an NGO, wears her armored vest as she walks to classes where she tells about life on a PRT. "I'm in Paktika—it's invaluable to have a chance to engage the incoming PRT leadership," she said.

The third and last week of the training, which ended Oct. 9, involves living in tents, bonding with team members, and mock missions in a mythical province named Darmandi.

"We do 13 or 14 events during the week, some under simulated attacks," Hanley said. "Yesterday the base came under attack. All day long things were going 'boom.' And we get helicopters coming and going."

The setting—a military base and in close proximity to an artillery range and tactical Air Force flight strip—adds to the realism of the training.

The training curriculum exposes the trainees to a host of challenges they will face on a PRT such as Afghans injured by U.S. tactical operations, dealing with the media, responding to

A mock Afghan village built from packing crates is the backdrop for training civilians from USAID and the Departments of State and Agriculture as well as U.S. military officers heading out to Afghanistan development teams.

floods, supporting shura council meetings and governors' meetings, conducting engineering assessments, and support to elections. Other study topics include evacuating American citizens, responding to artillery or mortar fire, and providing emergency medical care to local Afghans.

The next training session will begin in nine months. ★ —*B.B.*

Jim Derleth of USAID's Office of Military Affairs does a "hot wash" to help troops understand what they did—right and wrong – during a mock development site visit at Fort Bragg.

Civilians from USAID and the Departments of State and Agriculture as well as military officers (seated at left) meet with Afghans playing the roles of a provincial governor and other local officials.

A convoy of Humvees practices pickup and delivery of a visiting official at the mock Afghan site at Fort Bragg.

An Afghan man playing the role of a community leader addresses U.S. trainees at a mock local council meeting.

Col. Charlie Glenn, commander of the 189th infantry brigade, which trains civilians and military officers heading to Afghanistan PRTs, listens in on the training.

All photos by Ben Barber, USAID

WHERE IN THE WORLD. . .

AUGUST 31, 2008 – SEPTEMBER 27, 2008

PROMOTED

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Patick L. Robinson
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Michele Russell
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Ernesto Uribe
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Clinton D. White
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Noel B. Anderson
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Yohannes A. Araya
OIG/A/IT&SA to COMP/NE/OJT

Peter Argo
Ukraine/D to Afghanistan/OD

Randall Y. Ase
RIG/Frankfurt to RIG/Baghdad

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CA/DO to East Africa/CON

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M/OP/EER/DGLA to M/OAA/GH

Robert M. Birkenes
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RIG/Frankfurt to RIG/Baghdad

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LAC/SA to Afghanistan/OPPD

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William L. Dunn
LAC/RSD to HR/FSP/SP

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M/CIO/BCCS to M/CIO/IOM

Allen Eisendrath
EGAT/PFNP to EGAT/I&E

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Indonesia/DDG to Pakistan/PDO

Mustapha El Hamzaoui
Iraq/DG to Morocco/EG

Amr H. Elattar
Nepal/FM to Uganda/CONT

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Nigeria to COMP/FS

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Janina A. Jaruzelski
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Terence E. Jones
Philippines/OFM to Caucasus

Scott H. Kleinberg
EGAT/PR/MD to West Bank/Gaza

Robert C. Layng
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Enilda Martin
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Steffi E. Meyer
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Terence A. Miller
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Andrew K. Posacki
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Afghanistan/ODG to CA/DM

Joseph W. Van Meter Jr.
COMP/FS to HR/TE

Saiming T. Wan
OIG/A/IT&SA to COMP/NE/OJT

Clinton D. White
Senegal/CONT to Pakistan/EXO

Marcelle J. Wijesinghe
M/OAA/POL to M/OAA/GRO

Marjan A. Zanganeh
M/OAA/GH to M/OAA/GRO

RETIRED

Stephen C. Allen

Rema L. Smith

Kenneth Bruce Wiegand

MOVED ON

Scott A. Berenberg

Jatinder K. Cheema

Denny F. Robertson

Timothy R. Shortley

Clyde H. Sorrell III

Wolff Promoted to Colonel with Father's Silver Wings

James Wolff of the Office of Military Affairs was promoted to colonel Oct. 3 with the help of his father, who pinned his old set of silver eagles on his son's shoulders.

"Jay has been involved since Desert Storm in every engagement this country has been in," said OMA Director Tom Baltazar. Wolff's mother, wife, and children also attended the promotion ceremony held in the Ronald Reagan Building. Wolff said he wanted to have his promotion at USAID because of his strong feeling of commitment to the Agency where he said he "met some of the most professional people in my life, people with dedication and drive." ★

Photo by Ben Barber, USAID

U.S. Army Col. James Wolff is flanked by his father, John, and wife, Celia.

PRT Officer Helps Diyala Revive Production of Dates and Other Crops

Stephen Morin

DIYALA, Iraq—Touted as the breadbasket of Iraq, Diyala was once famous for fertile farmlands, dense palm groves, and winding waterways.

Today, the province of 1 million people is a volatile mix of Sunni, Shias, and Kurds. While its natural advantage in agriculture remains, a crumbling infrastructure—due to years of neglect and poor planning—has left the economy stagnant and the farmers divided and isolated.

Part of Stephen Morin's job during the past year has been to help turn those conditions around. As one of USAID's members of the Diyala Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), Morin helped farmers regain their footing. That meant providing credit; affordable tools and technology; structural reforms to raise growth and productivity; and exposure to markets to stimulate the economy.

"Every PRT has different challenges," said Morin, who headed the PRT's economic section and honed his agriculture bona fides during stints in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Azerbaijan. "There is no one-size-fits-all solution."

The 45-member PRT called farmers and local leaders to regular meetings. Farmers pitched their problems, questioned the wisdom of leaders, and lobbied for tools, wells, water pumps, greenhouses, and fish ponds.

"Considering all the problems the people of Diyala face, it amazed me how often our provincial counterparts, including local extension agents, actually came to work," Morin said. "They are committed to moving forward. It was great to be involved in that process."

Morin tapped the University of Diyala and the director general of agriculture to set up a cooperative extension program to enhance education and training for farmers. He held video conferences to introduce farmers to modern methods of crop production and management. Soon after, the first Agriculture Unit Manager's Conference came to Baqubah, the provincial capital.

Morin also worked with Iraqi banks to help farmers buy equipment. In addition, Diyala farmers were given 2,400 loans worth about $5.3 million to operate their businesses. The loans helped farmers carry out hand and aerial spraying of crops for the first time since 2003. Diyala recorded a bumper harvest of dates for 2008.

In recent months, the Iraqi government has set aside part of its $100 million in reconstruction funds to provide public services for areas hit by military operations, and the provincial government is increasing its annual budget expenditures. ★

Food Expert Thomas Marchione Dies

Thomas J. Marchione

Thomas J. Marchione, 67, died Sept. 27 in Reston, Va.

From 1963-1965, Marchione worked as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Liberia; at the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Centre in Jamaica; and at Case Western Reserve University and the Ecumenical Great Lakes Project on the Economic Crisis in Ohio. Marchione received his PhD in 1975 as a researcher in Jamaica, where he found that families growing their own food were less likely to have malnourished children than those dependent on world prices for bananas grown for export.

Since 1988, Marchione worked in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, especially with its offices of Food for Peace; Foreign Disaster Assistance; and Program, Policy, and Management. His work showed that food aid had a better impact on nutritional status when money, rather than food, was given to community nutrition programs.

During his career, Marchione managed assessments and participated on teams conducting evaluations and research in more than 10 countries. He represented USAID on the U.N. Standing Committee on Nutrition. He held academic positions at the Case Western Reserve University and Brown University and served as a social science advisor for the Pan American Health Organization at the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute.

Marchione retired from the Agency in 2006 after working on development of a high nutrient density emergency food that could be dropped from a plane (see October 2008 *FrontLines*, page 1) .

Dr. Samuel Kahn, a former USAID senior health and nutrition adviser, was a colleague of Marchione for 15 years and said in an e-mail: "Tom added an intellectual stimulation to what could have been an uninspiring bureaucratic process. Tom was a bright individual who expressed intense opinions, but welcomed the opinions of others. He possessed respect for the social concerns of others, in particular, those who society relegated to the fringe. I will greatly miss him." ★

AGENCY APPOINTS NEWTON TO SPECIAL ADVISOR POST

Gary Newton has been named the U.S. Special Advisor for Assistance to Orphans and Vulnerable Children, a position within USAID's Global Health Bureau. Newton had been the Agency's mission director in Namibia.

The special advisor position was created in 2005, and, up until this year, had been combined with the job of director of USAID's Office of HIV/AIDS. The job involves improving the coordination and effectiveness of all U.S. government assistance to orphans and vulnerable children in developing countries. These are children affected by natural disasters, HIV/AIDS, war and conflict, internal displacement, exploitive labor, trafficking, disability, abandonment, and extreme poverty.

In its first report to Congress last year, the Agency said 143 million children in developing countries had lost one or both parents and that an even larger number of children were vulnerable to becoming orphans.

Because HIV/AIDS among their parents places a large number of children in the vulnerable category, the special advisor will be working closely with USAID's Office of HIV/AIDS and the U.S. State Department's Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, as well as other government agencies that focus on this and other issues affecting children in developing countries. ★

Gary Newton, the new U.S. Special Advisor for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, stands with a student at a school in northern Namibia.

IN-HOUSE NEWS

USAID Offers $10,000 for Best Development Idea Using Cell Phones

When violence broke out following Kenya's elections, citizens became journalists and sent text messages to David Kobia and Erik Hersman—innovators who then mapped areas of high conflict on their Web site, Ushahidi.com, and Google Maps. This enabled citizens to avoid dangerous hot spots.

Last spring, Kobia and Hersman won $25,000 in an online challenge for creating Ushahidi.com.

Using technology to improve life in developing countries is a goal of USAID's Global Development Commons (GDC). Call it Web 2.0, inventive economics, wikinomics, or crowdsourcing—it's changing the way business is done.

On Oct. 13, GDC opened a public contest—the Development 2.0 Challenge—offering a grant of $10,000 to the winner.

"[The Challenge] is more of a competition-cum-collaboration—a continuous, online set of brainstorming to combine, test, and refine innovative approaches to specific problems," Administrator Henrietta Fore said.

The Challenge invited the public to submit ideas that use cell phones for international progress and growth issues.

"Mobile networks are one of the few infrastructures that work and are accessible to low-income populations," said Al Hammond, entrepreneur in residence at Ashoka, a global organization that runs similar open-source challenges on Changemakers.net.

"If mobile phones could be used more readily for financial transactions, for healthcare services, or to empower small producers with trade information, then they would be immensely more valuable to low-income communities," Hammond said. "The key to that is software applications—and especially voice activated applications—that empower users to do things they now can't do."

Any innovator or organization that registers at the Challenge through www.globaldevelopmentcommons.net can submit an idea for a mobile application that addresses a major development issue.

Viewers can review and rate each project, and offer constructive criticism. Innovators can revise and resubmit projects based on the critiques until just before the Challenge closes on Nov. 28.

In addition to competing for a grant of up to $10,000, worldwide applicants gain visibility for their ideas, constructive feedback, and the chance to present before senior USAID officials and investors.

USAID employees can register, review, and vote at www.netsquared.org/usaid.

"The beautiful thing about an open call is that you don't need to know the solution that you are seeking until it hits you," said Jeff Howe, author of *Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of the Crowd Is Driving the Future of Business,* and contributing editor at *Wired* magazine. "You just have to be astute enough to recognize gold when it comes up."

With the prize money they won for their Web site, Ushahidi—which means "testimony" in Swahili—Kobia and Hersman reinvested in their company, with plans to add reports and encouragement for peace efforts. They hope to expand the mapping system, build a heat map highlighting deeper conflict areas at specific times, and link the data to news stories and YouTube.

Join the Global Development Commons at www.globaldevelopmentcommons.net. ★

Photo by Jason McElweenie

David Kobia, left, and Erik Hersman won an online contest for their Web site that identified violent areas in Kenya based on input from text messages.

Mark Ward Moves to United Nations Post in Afghanistan

Mark Ward, senior deputy assistant administrator for Asia, departed USAID in late October to serve as the senior development advisor at the United Nations assistance mission to Afghanistan. He will work on priority reconstruction and development projects, and will be based in Kabul.

Ward, who is a career minister in the Senior Foreign Service, managed the Asia and Near East Bureau. After the bureau was reorganized into separate bureaus, he continued as head of the Asia Bureau. He served as the Agency's mission director in Pakistan from July 2002 through December 2003.

Ward was the 2006 winner of the Service to America Medal for international affairs.

In a statement Oct. 21, Administrator Henrietta Fore noted that Ward's "innovative work forging public-private partnerships in the wake of the Asian tsunami disaster and the devastating earthquakes in Pakistan and China has broken new ground in how the world responds to massive regional upheavals. Mark's deep personal commitment to mobilizing reconstruction assistance following these disasters linked USAID's work to the highest levels of the U.S. Government and private sector, and earned him the personal gratitude of President Bush and former Presidents Bush and Clinton." ★

EGYPT FSNs DEVELOP ACCOUNTING SYSTEM THAT GOES GLOBAL

Sherif Zohdi, a Foreign Service National (FSN) staff member in Egypt, threw down his pen late one night in Cairo, exhausted after working on the USAID mission's financial accounts.

"There has to be an easier way. We spend days reconciling cash accounts manually," Zohdi told fellow accounting team member Emad Shawky that night.

Zohdi said he knew that the mission was not alone and that other missions were also struggling with an onerous manual system of validating records against those of the U.S. Treasury.

Eager to develop a better system, Zohdi and Shawky spent many weeks and weekends exploring software options, preparing the design and flow, writing their own software program, and testing the results.

Zohdi demonstrated the preliminary system, which was praised by worldwide colleagues, in a USAID controller workshop in Kiev in 2005. The team continued to refine the system with help from USAID Egypt Controller Jed Barton and FSNs Hossam Rahman and Marmar Farid.

The system was ready to launch in September 2005. In Egypt, it would mean full control over cash reconciliation, significant time saved, and accurate financial reporting.

Photo by USAID/Egypt

USAID staff who developed the new CART system, left to right: Sherif Zohdi, Jed Barton, Marmar Farid, Hossam Abdel Rahman, and Emad Shawky.

In August 2006, the system gained the full support of the Agency's chief financial officer.

Hungary and the Dominican Republic took the lead in piloting the system and declared success. Cairo worked closely with Washington's accounting team to ensure consistency with the USAID headquarters accounting system.

In November 2007, a gradual worldwide implementation began of the system, dubbed the Cash Reconciliation Tool or CART.

"CART increases accuracy by reducing the opportunity for human error and provides detailed reporting and tracking," the Agency's chief financial officer said.

The Egyptian team worked closely with more than 50 missions on installation, trouble-shooting, and resolving technical issues. By June 2008, the last mission had installed the system—three months before the goal set by the chief financial officer.

"It is an easy tool that has transformed a cumbersome task into an expeditious and flawless process," said Maria Virginia Garcia of the Dominican Republic.

"It is an excellent system. The manual process that used to take two to three days is now done in a couple of hours with CART," said Roberto Brito from El Salvador.

"It is a fantastic tool. It eliminates the possibility of errors which was inherent in the manual system," said Stephen Kairu of Kenya. ★

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TIM RIESER from page 1

Tim Rieser

increasing their visibility, even in this hemisphere. There's a lot at stake, particularly at a time when our image and influence have been so diminished.

I think the next 20 years are going to determine how we are positioned in the world as other countries, like China, India, Russia, and Brazil, gain influence, and as the number of nuclear powers increases.

Q: *What are some important strengths of USAID, and what are some of the main weaknesses?*

RIESER: Its greatest strength has always been its field presence, its technical expertise, its direct engagement with governments and civil society organizations in the field. Unfortunately, we've lost a lot of that as the number of USAID technical staff has plummeted, at least since 1989 when I started working here [on Capitol Hill].

We've seen USAID's ability to carry out its mission has shrunk over the years, and it has become, to a large extent, a check writing agency for big contractors that implement programs.

This is not what Senator Leahy [Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt.] and those who work on these issues, or USAID itself, think USAID should be doing. We want a much more hands-on agency that is well-staffed with people who have the technical expertise in agriculture, health, energy and environment, business development, governance, justice—all the different areas that USAID has a role in.

USAID's competitive advantage is being able to work effectively on the ground, to respond quickly and over the long term with people who are well-trained and familiar with the culture and dynamics of the particular country.

But USAID, as long as I have worked here, has never been a priority for any administration. And that has been reflected, to an extent, in its leadership and in its budget.

It has lost control of programs which it once would have had responsibility for, like PEPFAR and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and we now see almost every agency of the federal government involved in foreign assistance, particularly the Department of Defense. This is not necessarily all bad, but each of these factors has hurt USAID's image and its effectiveness. USAID shares some of the blame for too often being an inaccessible, bureaucratic agency that had made some big mistakes. Also, USAID does not accept criticism well, nor is it as receptive as it should be to new ideas that aren't its own.

Q: *Well, let's talk about the other side of it. Does the Congress hamstring USAID by earmarks or other ways?*

RIESER: It does in some ways. But unlike other appropriations bills, the State and Foreign Operations bill does not earmark for organizations or entities of the type you would think of as an earmark. We make clear that grants or contracts are to be awarded on a competitive, open-bidding, transparent basis.

That said, we do specify amounts for certain programs and accounts, as well as for some countries. USAID may want to spend more on agriculture in a country but it can't because Congress may have budgeted more for health. So there are complaints about the way Congress divides up the budget. But the alternative is to write a blank check to the President, which Congress won't do.

Q: *What areas of foreign assistance do you think are some of the most underfunded?*

RIESER: I think it would be hard to think of any that are not underfunded.

Q: *How did you get interested in foreign aid?*

RIESER: I worked as a lawyer, as a public defender, in Vermont. After a time, I went to Sudan to volunteer for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, where I worked during the 1985 famine in Ethiopia. Afterwards, I heard about a job in Senator Leahy's office, and over the years I was able to work increasingly on foreign policy. I've always been interested in other cultures, other countries, problems of poverty and conflict which affect the world broadly and which the United States has a strong interest in solving.

Q: *Why is there still a need for foreign aid?*

RIESER: The world today seems to be suffering from more problems than when I started here 20 years ago. It makes you think we need to change some of the ways we do things.

We see real progress in some areas, particularly health and education—poverty has decreased in many countries—but the world's population continues to grow at a fast pace in the poorest, least stable countries, demand for energy is skyrocketing, world food supplies are under great strain, cities are becoming unlivable, water scarcity is becoming a cause of conflict around the world. The proliferation of conventional and more dangerous weapons continues unabated.

We have humanitarian aid programs to respond to emergencies, but foreign aid is really about building more stable, more open, more prosperous and just societies with which we can work together to prevent conflict. And USAID, like it or not, is the agency best equipped with the mission to do that.

I think we need to work closely with the new Administration to increase USAID's profile, increase its budget, rebuild its staff, and give it the support and recognition it needs to meet the challenges we face. It's more needed today than ever.

Q: *What change do you see in the future for USAID? Several think tanks have made recommendations.*

RIESER: There are lots of recommendations, some practical, some impractical. We hope the best ideas get picked and implemented, and Senator Leahy will be following this closely. I do think that development is fundamentally different from diplomacy. USAID should decide how to spend its budget, in consultation with the State Department and other relevant agencies. But, ultimately, it should be USAID's decision.

I also think the director of foreign assistance needs to have broader oversight of all international assistance programs—whether it's the Department of Energy, Agriculture, NIH [National Institutes of Health], CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention], USAID, the MCC [Millennium Challenge Corporation], etcetera—because the job should be to coordinate and it was defined too narrowly. ★

FOREIGN AID from page 2

member of the National Security Council and serve as part of the president's international economic advisory team on the National Economic Council…

Third, the new USAID will need a new congressional mandate. The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961—which has not been amended in any meaningful way since 1985—is a Cold War artifact that has become obsolete….

To streamline and strengthen the State Department bureaucracy and restore USAID's authority over aid programs, all humanitarian and development programs now assigned to the State Department—such as refugee programs, PEPFAR, and the programs implemented by the new bureau for post-conflict reconstruction—should be placed under the aegis of the new USAID. Likewise, democracy-promotion programs and the Defense Department's aid programs around the world should largely return to civilian control, with the relevant authority and resources assigned to the new USAID. …

Furthermore, the head of the new USAID must have the authority to devise an overall U.S. government strategy on humanitarian and development programs and to coordinate the activities of other departments at the global, country, and regional levels. In addition to presiding over a White House interagency committee on foreign assistance, the new USAID's head (instead of the secretary of state) should chair the MCC board….

Finally, the next president should establish a civilian equivalent to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that would include the most senior career officers of the State Department, the new USAID, the Treasury Department, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative…. The next president will have to dramatically overhaul the foreign aid establishment during his first year. The United States' national security and its global leadership position will depend on it.

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J. Brian Atwood is dean of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota and was administrator of USAID from 1993 to 1999. M. Peter McPherson is president of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges; he was president of Michigan State University from 1993 to 2004 and administrator of USAID from 1981 to 1986. Andrew Natsios is distinguished professor in the practice of diplomacy at Georgetown University and a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute; he was administrator of USAID from 2001 to 2005. ★

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impact on individual and collective decisions to adopt healthy behaviors. Recognizing this, many USAID projects routinely include journalism in their programming."

The 1,000 journalists received five to seven days training by Internews, including visits to the home of a person with AIDS. The reporters learned to record background sounds and create a news magazine-style piece, which is new to Africa and other developing media. Some 70 percent of training focused on journalism techniques and 30 percent on medical knowledge.

Without training, too many stories were simply lists of government statistics, lacking real voices and stories, one trainer said. ★

CONTINUED. . .

BUSH from page 1

on U.S. foreign assistance.

Development is also in the United States' "moral interests," he said, citing "the timeless truth: 'To whom much is given, much is required.'"

"We are a blessed nation and I believe we have a duty to help those less fortunate around the world."

The Bush presidency has made international development "one of our biggest priorities," he said. "For the past eight years, the United States has provided more foreign assistance than at any time in the past half-century."

Sirleaf said that, despite the fiercely-contested U.S. presidential election in November, "U.S. policy towards the continent of Africa—is broadly bipartisan. When President Bush introduced his vision, when he submitted his budgets, the Congress didn't balk; in fact, in some cases budgets were increased.

"On the continent of Africa, this Administration, this President, will be remembered for its generosity; for taking a historically limited amount of funds dedicated to the continent and increasing assistance exponentially."

Bush, listing his foreign aid achievements, said the Millennium Challenge Account invested $6.7 billion in 35 countries around the world. And since 2002, the United States has provided $16 billion in food assistance. Some $5.5 billion has been committed over the next two years to combat the world food crisis.

U.S. aid has also dedicated nearly a billion dollars to improve sanitation and water supplies in developing nations. And it has supported education by building schools and training teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers, and entrepreneurs—"the future of the developing world"—he said.

Bush launched the $15 billion fight against HIV/AIDS, which treats 1.7 million people today, and provided $1.2 billion to cut malaria-related deaths in 15 African nations by half, reaching 25 million people.

Bush said trade is even more important in development than aid, citing the Clinton Administration's African Growth and Opportunity Act, which Bush extended.

The President said Latin America has made progress but "we also see terrible want," which is exploited by populists in the region.

"True social justice requires creating new opportunities for prosperity and upward mobility," Bush said. "Since I took office—with support from the Congress—the United States has provided nearly $15 billion to the region with a special focus on helping the poor." ★

WORLD BANK from page 1

Zoellick said that, over the past year, most developing economies grew robustly and in 2007 averaged a record 7.9 percent in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth; in 2008 it was perhaps 6.6 percent.

However, soaring food and fuel prices hit many poor people and "families are worried about what coming days will bring," he said.

Higher prices for food and fuel could push some 100 million people in developing countries "back into poverty," he said.

The rising economic clout of China, India, Saudi Arabia, and other countries makes it important to create what he called a new "architecture" of the world financial system. The G-7 group of Western industrial powers—the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, and Canada—no longer has the power to control the world economy.

"For financial and economic cooperation, we should consider a new Steering Group including Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the current G-7," he said.

"Such a Steering Group would bring together over 70 percent of the world's GDP, 56 percent of world population, 62 percent of its energy production, the major carbon emitters, the principal development donors, large regional actors, and the primary players in global capital, commodity, and exchange rate markets."

International Monetary Fund Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn said in Washington Oct. 13 that developing countries face reduced export demand and reduced access to trade credit.

Strauss-Kahn, speaking as the IMF and the World Bank held their biannual meeting in Washington, said that many developing countries "are already suffering from the other crisis—the food and fuel crisis that has strained budgets and balances of payments, and raised inflation and living costs."

"I understand that the budgets of advanced countries will be under more strain because of the financial crisis. But it is very important that donors do not respond to the crisis by cutting aid to the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world."

Zoellick said donors must listen to Africans who say they want markets and opportunities, not aid dependency: "Private capital and markets will remain the drivers of growth. We must look beyond projects and programs to new ways of doing the business of development."

He proposed connecting sovereign wealth funds to equity investments in Africa; building local currency bond markets in emerging markets; managing development risks through insurance facilities for weather and catastrophic events; public-private financing of infrastructure; and broadening assistance to development of life-saving pharmaceuticals and debt or rate buydowns.

Zoellick also called for reform of humanitarian food assistance by using financial market tools to manage liquidity, market, and operational risks; and a worldwide agreement not to apply food export bans or prohibitive taxes to humanitarian purchases. ★

SUDAN from page 7

growing urban areas such as Wau and Malakal are targeted.

SISP is among several USAID programs that began after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005. Implemented in close collaboration with the government of Southern Sudan, the programs are designed to promote resettlement and sustainable development in the region.

The Louis Berger Group Inc. is working with Population Services International and Cooperative Housing Foundation International on these USAID-funded projects. ★

VIETNAM from page 7

has provided more than $43 million to help people with disabilities in Vietnam, mostly through the Leahy War Victims Fund.

Local communal leaders, who had the school grounds leveled and terraced, are also working to cover boarding costs for students studying away from home.

USAID, through its implementing partner, the East Meets West Foundation, built the school as one of many initiatives to help reduce the education gap between people like Y Nga who live in mountainous terrain and more prosperous families in urban areas.

USAID provided more than $600,000 to construct the school; the Vietnamese built the access road for an additional $129,000. Students pay only for their transport, with local educational authorities paying other costs associated with the students' education.

USAID began its assistance program to the Central Highlands in 2005 to improve the lives of ethnic minorities who missed out on recent economic growth and poverty reduction in many areas of the country. On almost every development indicator, the Central Highlands is below average, and ethnic minorities in the Highlands are the most disadvantaged.

"This school project makes a good first impression of the donor community and what it can do to help our communities in this region," said school Principal Doan Van Thoai.

After finishing ninth grade, Y Nga will head to the commune's senior high school. Later, she plans to take up teaching, or become a doctor, like her sister. Then she pledges to return home to help her community—maybe even by car. ★

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CHANGING IMAGE ATTRACTS TOURISTS TO BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

By Kasey Vannett

How do you convince people to vacation in a country whose name evokes images of war, ethnic cleansing, and landmines?

That's the dilemma that Bosnia-Herzegovina's (BiH's) tour operators faced when they began trying to promote their country as an international tourism destination.

"The tour operators in neighboring countries wouldn't even talk to us because Bosnia's image was so negative from being associated with the war," said Vladimir Milin, a USAID project manager.

"Four years ago, everyone was saying, 'Bosnia-Herzegovina is such a beautiful country. Come and see,'" said Milin. "But it was being done on an ad-hoc basis by individual operators. There was no presentation of an overall vacation experience."

USAID worked to convince tourism industry members to look at each other as partners rather than competitors. After a series of joint meetings, USAID helped organize the event "Days of Krajina Tourism." It marked the first time that a group of outdoor service providers—ski operators, rafting companies, hotels, and caterers—had come together to present themselves as a regional destination.

"The response was higher than any of them expected and really helped to break the ice as far as cooperating with each other," said Snjezana Derviskadic, senior tourism advisor for the Cluster Competitiveness Activity (CCA) project.

The next step was to identify regional activities that had already gained recognition and elevate them to be competitive on the international market. For example, a certification program was set up for rafting and outdoor guides. The certification provides assurance that activities are safe and of the highest standard. One early pay-off: Bosnia-Herzegovina was recently chosen to host the prestigious 2009 Rafting World Championship.

Once high-quality regional activities were identified, USAID invited international media to experience some of the country's offerings. "Bringing in the media brought us more legitimacy as they are considered independent and objective," said Derviskadic.

The media also were invited to tourism fairs. USAID supported creation of a logo and contracted with a local firm to produce promotional videos. The "Enjoy Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina" series of spots features a mélange of summer and winter motifs. The videos can be seen at www.usaidcca.ba/index.php?otvori=vijest&id=37&lang=eng.

The spots were shown on CNN and won international awards throughout Europe, including second place at Berlin's Golden Gate film festival, known as the Oscars of the tourism film industry.

USAID also supported the creation of an exhibit to be displayed at tourism fairs around the world. Visitors to BiH's booths are invited to take a "stroll" across the country on the interactive exhibit by walking inside two large wheels. Walking rotates the wheels, displaying scenic sites. The stand won first prize at the World Travel Market in London, the largest tourism fair in the world.

"The new stand really helped us to attract the attention of visitors," said Mili Bijavica from the Mostar-based Fortuna Travel Agency. "It provoked great interest in our cultural and historical tours and outdoor programs. We've already signed some new contracts. This is a true success."

In the last two years of the CCA project, tourist visitations to BiH increased by 17 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

That success has brought about a change in mindset within the country. In a public opinion survey conducted earlier this year, over one-third of respondents mentioned tourism as the economic sector with the highest potential.

"People have begun to understand that tourism brings jobs and profits," said Derviskadic. "So there's greater support to ensure the wheel keeps moving. And speaking as a BiH citizen myself, I really believe that tourism is a vehicle that can bring about change because it affects the little people as well as the big. If it's done right, it can bring back the way we used to live through local efforts and pride in our way of life."

And what about those tour operators in neighboring countries who didn't want to deal with Bosnia's negative image? "Now, we've got tour operators beating down our doors, seeking every opportunity they can for joint promotions and tours," said Milin. ★

USAID supported BiH's successful bid to host the 2009 Rafting World Championship.

Dutch tour operator Harry Braam plans excursions for his Dutch clients at one of the first joint exhibitions by BiH tourism firms. "I have been trying to put together an organized trip to BiH ever since 1996 and this year, thanks to the information I received at the Bosnian stand, I will finally do it," he said.

The "Days of Krajina Tourism" fair included events in four ski resorts to promote the Krajina region as a tourism destination rich in sport, cultural, and gastronomic riches.

USAID's Bosnia-Herzegovina Mission Director Jane Nandy prepares to don headphones to listen to a description of the sites depicted inside BiH's tourism stand.

CORRECTIONS

In the Oct. 2008 *FrontLines*, a page one dateline should have read Kabul, Afghanistan; and on page 12, a Navy aerial photo was a view of Gonaives, Haiti. ★