USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FRONTLINES

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Photo by Rebecca Dobbins, USAID

This musician heralds a new girls' school in Sudan.

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Photo by Bruce Huffman, USAID

Administrator Rajiv Shah visited Afghanistan and Pakistan in April, talking with government officials, farmers, teachers, and USAID staff. Here, he visits a pomegranate orchard in Arghandab district in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, April 10. For more on his trip, see story, this page.

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DEVELOPING COUNTRIES RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE

By Ben Barber

For two decades, a fierce battle raged in the media and public square pitting environmentalists against industry leaders as the world struggled to understand and react to the changing climate.

Today, overwhelming scientific evidence has led to a consensus among scientists that climate change is real, is caused by human activities, and demands immediate action.

Scientists report a rise in carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere and a subsequent rise in sea levels—caused by warming oceans that expand from absorbing carbon dioxide, not melting glaciers—as well as unusual swings in the global climate system. There have been droughts in some regions, bigger-than-usual storms in others.

Photo by Luis Massion, IDER

A USAID-supported program in Brazil trains youth for energy jobs. Here, youth in São João learn how to install solar panels to power a computer center.

The United States and other industrialized countries have begun to address climate change, but experts fear these actions may not be enough.

More than 90 percent of carbon dioxide emissions growth from now until 2030 will come

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$9.9 Billion Promised for Haiti

By Angela Rucker

A coalition of more than 150 countries, NGOs, and Haitian diaspora groups said they will contribute $5.3 billion to help rebuild earthquake-damaged Haiti over the next 18 months.

The money pledged at a donors' conference at the United Nations March 31 is a down payment, with the groups promising to up the sum to as much as $9.9 billion over the next three years. The aid announcement comes just over two months after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake reduced much of the capital city Port-au-Prince to rubble, killed an estimated 230,000 people, injured another 300,000, and left a million more homeless.

Since January, the United States has provided $1 billion in emergency aid to the country. At the U.N. conference, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced another $1.15 billion for reconstruction, which still must be approved by Congress.

The conference, Towards a New Future in Haiti, was "hugely successful in demonstrating the tremendous outpouring of support for Haiti and focusing attention on what is the most devastating natural disaster in the Western Hemisphere," said Paul E. Weisenfeld, who is the coordinator of the USAID Haiti Task Team.

The job will be daunting. Estimates are it will take many billions of dollars more and several years to carry out an ambitious reconstruction effort that Haitian and other government officials say will build the country back better and avoid the traps of many unsuccessful development efforts in past years.

USAID's Haiti Task Team includes representatives from the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Health and Human

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Shah Visits Afghan, Pakistani Aid Projects

LAHORE, Pakistan—When Dr. Rajiv Shah was sworn in as USAID administrator in January, he had hoped to go directly to visit major aid operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan—but the Haiti earthquake Jan. 12 put that trip on hold.

After leading the U.S. response to the Haiti quake—which has reached $1 billion in emergency aid—Shah flew to Afghanistan April 6 to meet with senior leaders, U.S. aid and military officials, and farmers, teachers, and health workers in those countries.

His visit came as the Obama administration announced it would request from Congress almost $5 billion for USAID civilian assistance programs in 2011 for the two countries, which are of critical strategic

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'Promoting Development Is a Risky Business'

Interview with John Sewell

John Sewell is an expert on foreign assistance and founder of the Overseas Development Council, a think tank in Washington, D.C. He was recently interviewed by FrontLines *Editorial Director Ben Barber.*

Q: Foreign assistance has had major achievements over the past 50 years. What are some examples?

SEWELL: There have been many but off the top of my head I can think of three. First, the Green Revolution where the combined efforts of American aid and private foundations revolutionized agriculture in Asia. As a result, many more people lived a much longer time. Second, the efforts put into improving education, particularly of women and girls. The third is population growth. When I started working on development, the best predictions said that global population would rise to over 20 billion at the end of the 20th century. Now we know it will not go much above 9 billion and perhaps lower. That wouldn't have happened without American leadership and funding.

Q: What are the major failures of foreign assistance?

SEWELL: Failures have occurred either because countries were not committed to development, or because aid agencies designed ineffective programs. But most major failures came about because aid was provided for political reasons—for Cold War purposes in Southeast Asia or the Middle East, not for economic and social development. And we should remember that promoting development is a risky business. If there were no failures, development agencies were being too cautious.

But the more important failures are at the strategic level. Assistance really is only effective when governments and leaders want to speed economic growth, improve health and education, and address poverty. When the government isn't committed to development, a lot of aid is wasted.

That's why the choice of countries is so important. Korea is one example. Korean leaders knew how to use

John Sewell

Photo by Ben Barber, USAID

foreign aid effectively to build agriculture and industry. Part of that assistance funded investments in health and education. We all know the result.

Egypt, on the other hand, also has received large amounts of American assistance since 1979. But its growth rates are low and they still have one of the highest rates of adult illiteracy in the world.

Perhaps the largest failure has been in Africa. Except for a small number of countries, Africa lags far behind other regions. The blame lies not just with African leaders but also with aid donors who have continued to provide assistance in ways that hinder development.

Q: In what ways can global poverty be reduced quickly in the next three to four years?

SEWELL: In the short term, it won't happen. The global financial crisis makes that a certainty. The best estimates are that up to 90 million people will fall back into poverty because they will have lost jobs and livelihoods.

The most important thing the U.S. can do in the near term is to continue to lead the reform of the international financial systems that are essential to restarting global economic growth, particularly in the developing world.

Q: That's the way to reduce poverty?

SEWELL: In the short term, yes. But the U.S. can target aid to build poor peoples' capacities and can make a great difference. That means aid for education, especially women, and to enable poor people to improve their health. And jobs are critical.

I think the right goal is to empower people to move into the middle class.

That means helping to provide technical assistance and in making low-cost credits for both farmers and small scale entrepreneurs. They will be the generators of jobs that enable men and women to move out of poverty.

Q: Why do you say in one of your papers that economic growth alone will not eliminate poverty?

SEWELL: Because it's true. Growth does not automatically diminish poverty; it has to be complemented by government actions to share the gains from growth by investing in better health and education. For this you also need a competent state. That's how the East Asian countries managed to develop so successfully. On the other hand, many Latin American countries have grown at decent rates but have lousy income distribution. But now countries like Brazil are starting to change. For instance, the Brazilian government now pays mothers to keep their children in school where they can get education and health care.

Q: USAID has restrictions that inhibit advertising. How can the public and Congress be informed about the successes and importance of development assistance?

SEWELL: USAID has been very timid about educating the public and Congress. I am not even sure that the earlier successful programs of development education exist anymore. Some steps are easy.

USAID staff knows a lot about development. Why not send them out to talk to public groups around the country? USAID staff doesn't even participate actively in the yeasty dialogue on development that goes on in the Washington policy community and they should be encouraged to do so. Other changes may require funding and perhaps legislation and the administration should work with the Congress to get them.

Informing the public is particularly important now when there are two major processes underway to modernize U.S. development programs and Congress is rewriting the development assistance legislation.

Q: Since China and Vietnam have both developed without democracy, how important is it to push for democracy and good governance? Are they really necessary?

SEWELL: We need to separate democracy and governance. Very few of the successful developing countries have started out as democracies; India is the big exception. On the other hand, all of the successful countries have had effective governments to do what governments should do: provide security and public goods like health and education, establish the rule of law, and encourage entrepreneurship.

We need to face the fact that no outsider, including the U.S., can "democratize" a country. But it can play an important role in helping to improve governance in committed poor countries. And one of the important parts of successful development is what a Harvard economist calls "conflict mediating institutions" that allow people to deal with the inevitable conflicts that arise within successful development.

Q: You have said that we need to make markets work. How can we help poor people begin to trade when Europe, Japan, and the United States either block imports or subsidize exports?

SEWELL: If you are serious about development, you have to give high priority to trade policy. Unfortunately, USAID seems to have very little voice in trade decisions.

The U.S. needs to focus its development trade policy on the poorest countries. The highest priority should be dropping the remaining subsidies for U.S. production of highly subsidized agricultural products like cotton that can be produced very competitively in very poor countries.

But many of these countries have difficulty selling goods in the U.S., not only because of subsidies, but also because they are not equipped to export. Transport costs are high as are the costs of meeting U.S. health and quality standards, and knowledge of marketing in America is scarce.

Here's where USAID can play an important complementary role. U.S. companies are already providing technical assistance, some with USAID support. But USAID can expand its trade capacity building programs and focus them on the poorer countries.

Q: What about microcredit?

SEWELL: Microcredit is a very important innovation, especially for empowering poor people, particularly poor women. It's part of the solution to ending poverty.

But there are other needs. In most poor countries, there are large groups of poor entrepreneurs who are not poor enough to get microcredit but who can't get commercial banks to lend to them. These are people who produce products for sale—handbags, for instance—that employ 10 to 20 people, but they need capital and advice in order to grow. In the U.S., small businessmen used to borrow money from local banks. That's how America grew. But similar institutions don't exist in many poor countries.

Q: We are involved in so many different programs—20 or 30 different federal agencies do some sort of foreign assistance—why not just invest in education and health and let each country figure out what their own development plan should be?

SEWELL: A very good idea. I have long advocated that the U.S. should focus its programs on a few major development issues but I would go beyond just health and education. I add climate change and dealing with global health threats. We dodged the bullet on SARS [severe acute respiratory syndrome] and avian flu but we may not be so lucky in the future. And strengthening governance and strengthening weak states is essential.

The real need now is for some mechanism that oversees and coordinates the multiplicity of agencies that have programs and expertise on these critical issues. Let's hope that emerges from the current administration's reviews of development policy. ★

Mission of the Month

Photo by Mador Credit Union

A small loan allowed Gairatjon Otajonov, right, to create a thriving bread-baking business.

Credit Unions Fuel Entrepreneurs Across Uzbekistan

By Virginija Morgan

Challenge

For centuries, Uzbekistan thrived on trade and commerce along the Great Silk Road that passed through the country. To this day, thousands of small merchants earn a living from tailoring, farming, trading, or selling homemade food.

Until recently, many of these businesses lacked capital. It was difficult to get small loans from the nation's banks, which were mostly state run. The collapse of the Soviet banking system in the early 1990s, just as Uzbekistan was gaining its independence from the USSR, drained savings accounts and left people distrusting the country's financial system.

The lack of confidence was increased by high inflation. As late as 2004, just 5 percent of Uzbekistan's population had savings accounts, while 75 percent socked away money in their homes.

Initiative

In 2002, USAID helped to launch a credit union movement to allow Uzbeks to build their savings, earn interest, and supply capital to small businesses.

The World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) had already spent more than a year working towards that objective, with funding from the Asian Development Bank. USAID provided an additional $5 million grant for WOCCU to support legislation and development of the credit union network.

In April 2002, the law permitting credit unions was passed, and within the next six months, the Central Bank of Uzbekistan had registered the country's first three credit unions.

USAID and WOCCU have since helped establish and strengthen 43 more credit unions in 12 regions of the country to provide savings and loan services to low-income members.

Some people use credit unions to finance their short-term needs, such as buying school supplies for their children at the beginning of the school year. Others, such as former flour salesman Gairatjon Otajonov of Kokand City in the Ferghana Valley take out loans to launch a small business. Otajonov's first loan from Mador Credit Union funded two traditional Uzbek bread ovens, or *tandirs*, for a bakery.

UZBEKISTAN

With USAID funding, WOCCU helped credit unions open up and solidify their operations through financial monitoring, credit collection, marketing, accounting, and auditing. Publicity helped grow membership.

Staff was also trained to work with the credit union members to ensure they were able to repay loans on time. Nearly 2,000 credit union staff, directors, and committee members have participated in these USAID-funded training programs.

In 2005, the Credit Union Association was formed with help from USAID and WOCCU, serving as a kind of "second-tier support structure," according to Nizomiddin Muradov, the association's executive director. The association oversees member compliance with national legislation as well as compliance with its own internal policies and procedures. By the end of 2007, the association operated with minimal subsidies from USAID.

Result

By the middle of 2009, Uzbekistan had 91 credit unions with 125,000 members and $103 million in assets. About 70 percent of the total loan portfolio volume goes to microenterprise and agricultural loans, and more than half of the loans are under $1,000.

Most creditors develop long-term relationships with credit unions. "We are growing and expanding the services along with the needs of our members," said Hulkar Alieva, executive director of Mador Credit Union.

As his business gained popularity, Otajonov returned for additional loans to finance more space and turnover capital. Today his bakery produces about 1,200 *lepeshkas* (loaves of bread) each day for five *chayhanas* (restaurants) in the city. ★

INSIGHTS

FROM ADMINISTRATOR DR. RAJIV SHAH

In the four months since a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti, and the president tasked USAID with directing America's assistance, we have had some notable successes.

Consider one: Because we asked Haitian truck drivers—whom we hired to dispense drinking water—to distribute chlorine purification tablets at each stop, more Haitians are drinking treated water today than were before the quake. And as a result, diarrheal illness in Port-au-Prince has dropped by 12 percent.

This small success demonstrates USAID at our best. We turned a need into an opportunity. We applied the latest learning in behavioral economics to the most pressing problem, found the resources we needed to get the job done, and worked around any red tape that stood in the way. We acted like entrepreneurs—development entrepreneurs.

My job as Administrator is to make sure USAID employees can operate that entrepreneurially every day.

I'd like to see us start approaching development in a new way—to provide what I think of as a "distinctly American" contribution to development.

Throughout our history, Americans have embraced a culture of entrepreneurship. We believe that dedication and innovation are all that is needed to bridge the gap between the inconceivable and the achievable. And we have backed up that belief with breakthroughs such as erasing smallpox from the face of the earth.

USAID has been the force behind many of those breakthroughs. For example, the oral rehydration therapy that USAID developed and distributed saved millions of children around the world.

To make similar progress in this new century, I am determined to give USAID staff members with bold ideas a chance to see what they can do, and to seek out local actors with the courage to transform their own communities.

We must also harness the power of private enterprise. The resources at our command are a blessing, but they are dwarfed by the enormous power of markets to extend products, services, and opportunities to people around the world.

And we must demand accountability, performance, and good governance from the public institutions in countries we serve.

Most importantly, it is critical that we transform the way we work. Ineffective and burdensome processes are holding USAID employees back.

I know each member of this Agency is here to save lives and improve livelihoods. I know that you need reforms to do your best day to day. I am committed to constructing an operational model that unleashes your creativity and encourages all of us to become development entrepreneurs.

Acting entrepreneurially entails taking risks, making course corrections along the way, and learning as much from failure as from success. Entrepreneurs are relentlessly focused on results—impact not outputs.

I am determined to cut back on the red tape so that Agency professionals have the freedom to do their best. To encourage Agency employees to act entrepreneurially, we will be instituting human resources reforms. To help our development professionals become more nimble problem-solvers, we will reform the way we procure goods and services. And to ensure our tax dollars are getting the most value for the money, we will put into place a significant package of monitoring, evaluation, and transparency improvements.

These reforms will be rolled out over the next six months, beginning with the launch of a new policy bureau and budget office. Restoring policy and resource planning capacity to our Agency is essential to our effectiveness and to rebuilding our reputation as development innovators.

I am moving quickly to reform the way we work because it is up to each of us to renew faith in this Agency and our time to do so is short.

One of our biggest champions, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), recently told me at a budget hearing: "USAID needs to change its culture, and change the way it does business."

That is what I am determined to do. And I need help from you. ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

BRIEFS

Congress Votes to Relieve Haiti Debt

WASHINGTON—The House of Representatives voted April 14 and sent to President Barack Obama a bill that instructs U.S. directors at the International Monetary Fund and other global development institutions to work to cancel Haiti's $828 million debt, the Associated Press reported.

Haiti lost an estimated 230,000 lives in a Jan. 12 earthquake.

Congress is also considering $2.8 billion in new aid. The United Nations recently hosted a donors' conference where nearly 50 nations pledged about $9.9 billion in assistance.

The House bill also recommends that for the next five years, aid to Haiti be provided as grants rather than loans.

"There are many of us who look at this earthquake as opportunity," said Rep. Maxine Waters (D., Calif.), sponsor of the measure. "We believe that there is now a real commitment by the world community to come to the aid of Haiti."

Maternal Deaths Show Sharp Decline

The number of women dying during pregnancy and childbirth has fallen sharply in recent years—from 526,000 in 1980 to 342,000 in 2008—according to a new report published in The Lancet and reported in *The New York Times* April 13.

"The overall message, for the first time in a generation, is one of persistent and welcome progress," wrote the journal's editor, Dr. Richard Horton.

The reduction in mortality came from lower pregnancy rates, higher income, improved nutrition, access to health care, women's education, and the increasing availability of "skilled attendants"—people with some medical training—to help women give birth.

USAID is a major supporter of training birth attendants or midwives in many countries.

Economic growth in large countries like India and China also helped reduce the death rates.

The new report cited by the Lancet article comes from the University of Washington and the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, and was paid for by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The researchers analyzed maternal mortality in 181 countries from 1980 to 2008.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest maternal death rates. Six countries accounted for more than half of all the maternal deaths in 2008: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Michelle Obama Makes Surprise Visit to Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—First lady Michelle Obama made a surprise visit to Haiti April 13 and when she spoke to workers at the United Nations, the crowds broke into applause and even tears at several points.

Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, joined her on the trip.

"It's a reminder that Haiti is still in crisis, and that rebuilding is going to take a long time," Krista Riddley, the director of humanitarian policy at Oxfam America, told a reporter.

While many celebrities have visited Haiti since the earthquake, the high profile of the U.S. first lady raised hopes that promises of billions in aid made at a U.N. international donors' conference on March 31 would come true. A million Haitians remain homeless.

Obama and Biden met Haitian President René Préval and they visited a children's center that tends to quake victims. The Associated Press reported that Obama danced and clapped with the children, and the women sat down to do some arts-and-crafts.

"It's powerful. The devastation is definitely powerful," Obama was quoted as saying after flying in a U.S. army helicopter over the destruction of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

The surprise visit was the first solo international trip by the first lady.

Vests Fail to Explode in Afghan Attack

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan—Two suicide attackers were shot dead March 17 as they attempted to enter the compound of a U.S.-linked aid organization in southern Afghanistan, Agence France-Presse reported.

The bombers were wearing explosives-packed vests but they failed to explode during a firefight with guards at the gates of International Relief & Development (IRD) in Lashkar Gah.

Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province, is 12 miles away from a major U.S.-led offensive in Marja testing a new counter-insurgency strategy aimed at wiping out the Taliban and drug-trafficking cartels.

IRD carries out projects for USAID helping farmers market their products, improving food security, and other agriculture-related projects.

Banderas Named Anti-poverty Ambassador

UNITED NATIONS—Spanish actor Antonio Banderas has been named a U.N. Goodwill Ambassador for the fight against poverty, the U.N. Development Program announced March 17.

In his new role as an advocate for the poor, Banderas will set his sights on the Millennium Development Goals, a set of eight globally agreed targets that seek to halve world poverty by 2015 by combating hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women.

"Poverty robs us of our potential as a people, preventing us from being all that we can be," Banderas said in a statement. He will work to spur action at all levels of society with a particular focus on Africa and Latin America.

UNDP Administrator Helen Clark said she looks forward to Banderas raising awareness globally on issues related to combating poverty.

Toilet Use Increases But Sanitation Still a Risk

A report by international health agencies released March 15 says that more people are using toilets instead of the unsanitary practice of defecating in open fields and other places—a major cause of spreading disease.

The World Health Organization and the U.N. Children's Fund said in the report that open defecation is declining even though about 1.1 billion still practice it, *The New York Times* said.

The percentage of the world population who do not use latrines or toilets decreased to 17 percent in 2008 from 25 percent in 1990. But constant population growth and movement into crowded urban slums mean that the absolute number has grown by 36 million people.

Africa has the fewest toilets but is also very rural. The problem is at its worst in India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Afghanistan, where the rate is estimated at 44 percent. In many slums, where shanties are pressed together for miles on end, with no water pipes between them, and drinking water sold from passing carts, millions are forced to squat along railroad tracks, or to use bits of vacant land.

Sudan and Ex-rebels Accept Election Results

KHARTOUM, Sudan—The ruling National Congress Party in Sudan and former rebels in the south of Africa's largest country agreed April 20 to accept the results of elections held the previous week, according to Agence France-Presse.

Second Vice President Ali Osman Taha, a member of President Omar al-Beshir's NCP, consented to abide by electoral commission decisions at talks with Salva Kiir, head of the southern former rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Movement.

"We agreed to accept the results as announced by the National Election Commission and to respect [its] decisions," Taha said in a statement carried by state television.

It was Sudan's first multiparty electoral contest since 1986, and 16 million registered voters cast ballots for president and legislative and local representatives. Southerners also voted for the leader of their autonomous government. ★

Haiti Radio and TV Link Aid to People

By Sven Lindholm

In the immediate aftermath of the Jan. 12 earthquake, Haiti's president and prime minister—their offices destroyed—established temporary government operations in a local police station, the compound of the Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire.

Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue, Haiti's minister of culture and communication, assumed the role of spokeswoman.

"I came to the mango tree in our compound," Lassègue said. "It was important to be there where our center of government was operating. We had only a table, but we were talking."

To help the government reach citizens, USAID worked with Lassègue to establish an emergency outdoor media relations center—with staging, cover from the elements, a public address system, and office equipment—to conduct government press conferences, interviews with key government officials, and live broadcasts by local television and radio stations.

"Before we set up the center, I was giving perhaps up to 10 interviews each day. I now conduct anywhere from 20 to 40 interviews with international and Haitian media every day," Lassègue said. She added that the president holds between two and four press conferences or group interviews a day from the new center.

Lassègue and her staff work with Haitian media outlets to bolster communications with the Haitian people.

"We provide fuel to journalists so that they can come to our site," she said.

"We give them food so they can stay and report on our activities. We give journalists phone card units so they can communicate with their stations. From 50 to 80 journalists report from our center every day." She noted that 14 international and local camera crews were setting up for the day's press events in February.

The USAID program also includes aid for Haitian radio stations so they can increase news broadcasts about humanitarian assistance. ★

BREAKING INTO THE FUTURE

By Brenda Onyutta and Sven Lindholm

Dancers perform at a free-for-all, back-to-school breakdance concert at Uganda's Gulu Youth Center in January. The concert was organized by Denis Kilama and 15 friends.

GULU, Uganda—Sitting in the lobby of a hotel in northern Uganda—where conflict has lasted for years—17-year-old Denis Kilama, in a matter-of-fact voice and with a shrug of his shoulders, said, "I know what I want to be. I want to be a teacher. A breakdance teacher."

When he was 13, Kilama watched in awe as Abraham Tekya, founder of Breakdance Project Uganda!, executed a "baby freeze," one of the four main elements of breakdancing. Amazed, Kilama and several other young people signed up for free classes.

"We thought we could not do it, so Abraham started teaching us and now we can do something," Kilama said.

> The campaign used interactive breakdance performances in selected secondary schools to promote peace, recovery, and positive social change in northern Uganda.

Three years later, Kilama has become team leader of the Hip Hop Therapy Project, a collaborative effort between Breakdance Project Uganda! and the Straight Talk Foundation's Gulu Youth Center, which received support from USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives.

Kilama also holds free lessons every Saturday at the youth center. He and others believe that breakdance can be used as a tool to promote peace and positive social change in their lives and communities.

"Teaching young people to leave negative habits is very important to me," Kilama said, reminiscing about a breakdance campaign that took place in Gulu, Kitgum, Amuru, and Pader districts during fall 2009. With support from USAID, Kilama and 21 other members from the Hip Hop Therapy Project and Breakdance Project Uganda! participated in the "Breakdance for Peace and Positive Social Change" campaign in 12 schools and four communities.

The campaign used interactive breakdance performances in selected secondary schools to promote peace, recovery, and positive social change in northern Uganda.

In developing the campaign, project members identified problems faced by youth like themselves. The breakdance performances were created around issues including tolerance, discrimination, and the negative effects of peer pressure.

Tekya pointed out that the campaign was not just entertainment. It was education and entertainment—"edutainment" he called it.

Simple, easy to remember messages like "peace begins with me," "learn to forgive," and "respect to be respected," are some of what Kilama and his friends shared.

The Hip Hop Therapy Project has had a positive influence on Kilama's self-esteem after years of physical and social isolation due to the war.

"We are ready. We won't stop till we reach the top." With these words sung by Kilama and his friends, the campaign ended. But for Kilama, the dream of having a career in breakdance is just beginning. ★

FRONTLINES: APRILS PAST

1970: The April 8 edition of *FrontLines* reported on President Richard Nixon's annual report to Congress on foreign aid. Listed in the report were "five noteworthy achievements" by USAID, including an 18 percent increase in Korean economic growth, self-sufficiency in Philippine rice production, employing 16 million people through food-for-work programs, and "nutritious diets" to 50 million children.

1980: *FrontLines* reported on the renewed attention being given to the "poor relatives"—sorghum and millet—because of the ability of these crops to grow in less than optimal conditions.

1990: Reporting on the lifting of U.S. economic sanctions against Nicaragua by President George H. W. Bush, *FrontLines* said that the assistance to the newly elected government of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was aimed at efforts to "democratize, demilitarize and develop" the country.

2000: *FrontLines* ran a guest column from then Sen. Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) where he wrote about his "first experience with the silent apocalypse of AIDS in Africa" during a medical mission in southern Sudan. ★

THE REGIONS

EUROPE & EURASIA

After Conflict, North Caucasus Aid Projects Ease Poverty

By Andrei Muchnik

Photo by Andrei Muchnik

Abo Patiyev started a tile producing workshop in his backyard after receiving a program grant in 2009.

VLADIKAVKAZ, Russia —Abo Patiyev, 46, worked all across Russia in the construction industry for years, but his dream was always to return home to North Ossetia and start a company of his own. After receiving a small grant from USAID in 2009, Patiyev organized a tile workshop in his backyard.

Business is good. He already has a waiting list that will keep him busy through the spring. "I would not have been able to afford any of this without the grant," said Patiyev, pointing at the equipment for mixing cement.

USAID is working to assist people in Russia's mountainous North Ossetia through a small grants program for local entrepreneurs. The start-up funding for new business owners helps address pressing problems of the two predominant ethnic groups that live here in the Prigorodniy district—the Ossetian and the Ingush.

The two groups were in conflict in 1992. In the aftermath, most Ingush residents were uprooted from their homes. The Ossetian did not fare much better, with many falling into poverty.

That is where the small grants

see **RUSSIA** on page 15 ▶

ASIA

International Sting Nabs Ivory Traffickers

By Jan Cartwright

American and Thai officials recently smashed an ivory smuggling ring spanning three continents, resulting in the first arrest of an ivory dealer in Southeast Asia.

The joint investigations traced a Thai ivory dealer's eBay sale of four African elephant tusks to a California man. Both were arrested.

Evidence collected during the November 2009 arrests resulted in additional raids on ivory shops in Thailand in January, leading to the arrest of two more Thai ivory dealers. The original eBay sales were made in 2006. The eBay website banned ivory sales last year.

Seizures of endangered elephant ivory have increased dramatically in Southeast Asia during the past year. But until these cases, no ivory dealers had been arrested in the region.

The arrests are being hailed as a major victory in combating international ivory trade, which was banned worldwide by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in 1989.

Photo by Bussara Tirakalyanapan, FREELAND

A Royal Thai Customs Department official inspects African ivory seized at Bangkok's Suvanabhumi Airport in 2009. The shipment came from Kenya.

The investigations were supported by the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) Support Program and the FREELAND Foundation, which receive USAID funding to improve the capacity of member nations to combat illegal wildlife trade. (See article in *FrontLines*, July 2008, page 16.)

"These arrests are significant. They are the tip of the biggest

see **THAILAND** on page 11 ▶

LATIN AMERICA

Guatemala Teachers Learn to Make Classrooms Fun and Alive

By Wende DuFlon

Photo by Wende S. DuFlon, USAID

Two public school girls from Mixco, Guatemala, read books from the new CETT library in their classroom.

GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala —In 550 Guatemalan classrooms, students bypass the old-fashioned, regimented ways of learning. Instead, they are speaking up, interacting with their teachers, and ushering in a modern era of classroom instruction.

The change came through USAID's Centers for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT), which boosts student reading and writing skills by teaching teachers how to create interactive classrooms. The program trains teachers and supplies school materials suited to rural classrooms.

Interactive classrooms are key to reducing first grade failure and repetition rates in rural communities. Guatemala has some of the highest rates of repetition and failure among first, second, and third graders in the hemisphere.

The CETT program trains teachers to think of themselves as guides rather than supervisors and to organize the classroom in ways that children can learn from each other and from books as much as from the teacher.

"This is a total change in my career," said Violeta Corado, a teacher at one of the CETT schools. "The children are creators and the teacher is a motivator."

Previously, students sat in tidy rows in the 147 CETT classrooms. But their desks have been turned to face each other, which encourages discussion. Youngsters now speak up in class without being prodded. And there are story books where shelves were once bare.

Teachers are urged to avoid long rows of desks, to get used to noisy classrooms, to move around and interact with students, to adapt indigenous materials as learning tools, and to present reading and writing as pleasurable activities.

"These children are much more lively and aware. They are protagonists who do not have that fear that children used to have of talking in class or in the presence of adults," said Edgar Simón Chalí, director of a rural school in the outskirts of Guatemala City.

CETT started out at the 2001 Summit of the Americas as a presidential initiative to improve the quality of teacher training and student learning in Central American countries. After seven years, the program was transferred to the country's Ministry of Education.

Recent findings show that 70 percent of CETT third graders achieved a satisfactory level in the national reading test. USAID's Education Reform in the Classroom project and the Ministry of Education plan to take successful elements of the CETT model to national scale.

Moreover, *Nuestro Diario*, a tabloid newspaper with a 300,000 circulation, the largest in Central America, began distributing CETT material in a regular weekend supplement designed to popularize reading and writing among parents, students, and teachers in the general population. ★

AFRICA

Radio Classes Reach Somali Children

MOGADISHU, Somalia — Decades of civil war in Somalia have taken a toll on education, with primary schools shattered or closed, textbooks and other supplies ruined, and illiteracy soaring. Many young Somalis have joined street gangs and extremist groups.

So when the opportunity for a free education arrived, children were ready to attend. Hamda Mohamed, an 8-year-old girl attending Daami Learning Center in Hargeisa, is one example.

"Before joining this learning center, I did not know how to read and write," she said. "I used to stay at home to help with housework. Today I can write a letter to someone.

"I like learning from the radio. It's fun and helps me memorize educational songs."

At the learning center, Hamda participates in lessons supported by the Somali Interactive Radio Instruction Program (SIRIP), a USAID initiative begun in 2009 to support those forced from their homes by war or drought.

Carried out by Education Development Center Inc., SIRIP provides basic education for children who have been out of school. They learn to read, do math, and tackle life skills. SIRIP has established 245 learning centers and enrolled more than 24,000 out-of-school children among displaced people and other needy communities.

An important feature is the radio component, which allows Hamda and many others to take part in daily lessons that use games, songs, and drama. The benefits aim to reach teachers as well as students.

"Personally, as a teacher, the radio programs have strengthened my teaching skills," says Kaltoum Hassan Abdilahi of Daami Learning Center. "I gain a variety of teaching techniques from each lesson. These include classroom management, ways to improve student motivation, questioning techniques, etc."

SIRIP also provided education to 300 Gaboye children in the Daami neighborhood center in Hargeisa. The Gaboye people are a marginalized group that has historically been labeled as untouchable by other Somali clans. They have been subject to mistreatment and degrading conditions for years, resulting in widespread poverty. Their children's basic rights to education have been denied.

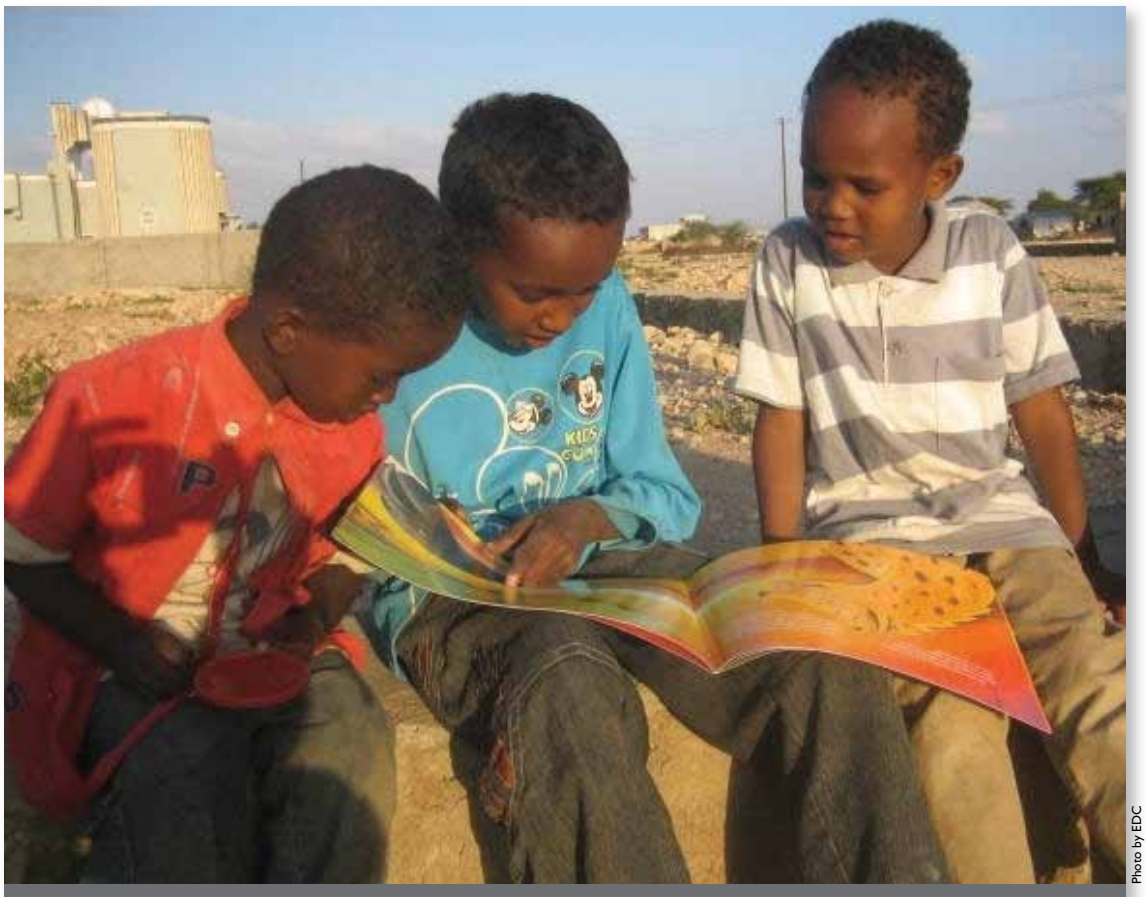

Photo by EDC

Somali children read from the USAID-supported Somalia Reader Series.

The Gaboye and other communities have embraced SIRIP, and parents have expressed their appreciation. Beneficiaries are required to establish a community education committee to help maintain the learning center and support the teacher.

Hassan Isse Dubad is the chairperson of the Daami committee. "We are very proud for these learning centers. I believe that these learning centers will transform the lifestyle of our communities," Dubad said.

"Before these learning centers were established, our children used to play on the streets without doing anything," he said. "But now, thanks to Allah and to the donor, our children are benefiting from the free education. They are busy with their studies all day."

Though her parents are illiterate and her father is unemployed, Hamda understands the importance of education.

"When I grow up," she said, "I want to be a teacher, to teach children." ★

This article was written by staff from the Education Development Center Inc. in Hargeisa.

MIDDLE EAST

Photo by Thikra Sarsam

Jafar Nema, center, stands with two other instructors at a class in Karbala.

Voter Education Prepared Iraqis for March 7 Election

By Jordan Sellman

BAGHDAD—In the weeks leading up to the March 7 national elections, Iraqi voters attended grassroots voter education workshops to learn about the election process and how to make their votes count.

The workshops were led by 200 civil society groups and NGOs trained through USAID. Groups held 13,000 voter education classes in school classrooms, village squares, and individual homes—reaching 500,000 Iraqis in all 18 provinces.

"It was wonderful to see Iraqis from all walks of life and all ages, 18 to 80," said Jafar Shereaf Nema, a USAID development specialist who monitored the voter education activities.

"At some of the sessions which I attended in Karbala, women brought their children. At others, a group of Sadrists came together at a local leader's house. And another was just a mix of many different community members."

Classes addressed: conditions of voting; documents required on election day; the difference between the open list (which shows candidate's names) and closed list (which shows only parties); how to use a paper ballot; corruption issues; rights of internally displaced persons; what to do if names are not found on the ballots; and polling station locations.

"Regardless of the topics covered, the people were excited to vote and really wanted to know all about the process of voting so that their vote would count," said Nema.

In addition to workshops, the civil society groups and NGOs

see **BAGHDAD** on page 15 ▶

FOCUS ON CRIMEA

Crimea Is Focus of U.S. Aid in Ukraine

Since the Ukraine voted to leave the Soviet Union in 1991, USAID has helped it to develop a market economy and—especially prior to the 2005 Orange Revolution—to develop a professional media, judicial system, and civil society groups dedicated to the rule of law.

The second free election in an independent Ukraine took place in February.

To develop the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, a large but remote region in the southeast of the country, Ukraine is working with USAID to improve health, education, agriculture, and other areas. American aid programs aim to train Ukrainians to raise living and health standards. Some of these programs are the topics of the accompanying articles. ★

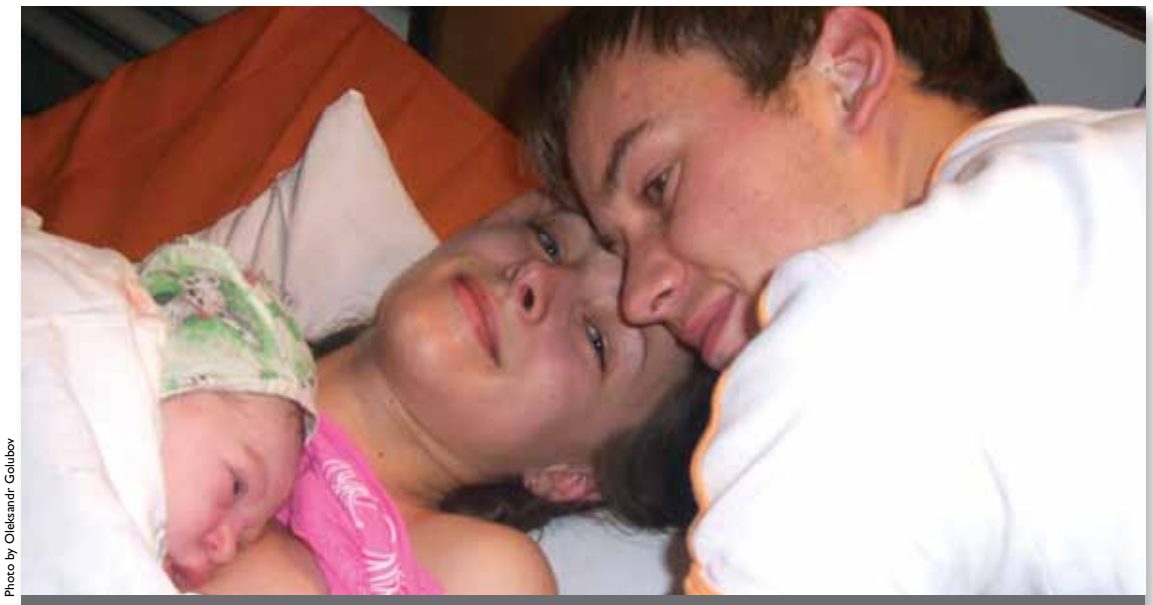

Photo by Oleksandr Golubov

A woman warms her baby on her chest after the delivery with her husband.

HOSPITAL HELPS SPREAD MODERN BIRTH PRACTICES IN CRIMEA

Dr. Oleh Tikholaz, head physician of the Kerch Maternity Hospital, had always strongly believed in traditional Soviet birthing practices and did not favor the Ministry of Health's adoption of maternal and child care procedures recommended by the World Health Organization.

"I was convinced that traditional maternity practices, including Rakhmanov beds, a husband-free environment in a delivery room, and separate nurseries for newborns were the most correct practices to implement, and I was positive that this is the way it should be in every Ukrainian maternity," Tikholaz said. Rakhmanov beds have metal brackets for women to place their feet, which limit birthing positions.

His views quickly changed, however, when Tikholaz attended a USAID-supported training course at Simferopol Maternity Hospital #2.

"I was dumbfounded by what I saw," Tikholaz said. "Husbands and relatives were in delivery rooms while women were in labor, infants and mothers were together in the postpartum department, and there were no Rakhmanov beds. Instead, women were choosing positions in which to deliver."

USAID's Maternal and Infant Health Project has significantly helped to improve maternal and infant health in Ukraine since 2003. Simferopol Maternity Hospital #2, the first in Crimea to participate in the project, today provides high quality care and has trained 650 Crimean health professionals in new clinical guidelines since 2004.

During the training course, Tikholaz realized that the ideas that had seemed outrageous at first started to make sense. He found especially interesting the story of a trainer who had experienced a complete shift in attitude, evolving from a non-believer to a strong supporter of modern birthing technologies. By the end of the course, Tikholaz's attitude had completely changed, too.

"Thanks to my colleagues in Simferopol, I understand the importance of these new practices. Now I'm certain that upon my return from training, I will do my best to introduce these technologies in my maternity, and I will establish individual delivery rooms and throw away Rakhmanov beds," Tikholaz said.

Over five years, the Simferopol Maternity Hospital reduced unnecessary medical interventions during delivery such as postpartum anesthesia. And deliveries in which a husband or other companion assists increased from 17 percent in 2004 to 61 percent by the end of 2008.

see **CRIMEA** on page 9 ▶

Photo by V. Matyukhin

Irina Alekseenko examines a smear sample for mycobacterium tuberculosis.

TB Labs Raise Standards and Increase Detection

The bacteriologist Irina Alekseenko has been head of the tuberculosis lab in Feodosia, Crimea, for 10 years and recalls the time when a chest X-ray was the primary method for diagnosing TB.

"This method had questionable efficacy for TB case detection," she said. "In addition, resources associated with mass photo-fluorography [a technique using photos of x-rays of the chest to detect TB] were far from cost-effective."

When USAID support for TB control got underway in Crimea in 2005, Alekseenko took a course on international standards for diagnosis of TB —a major public health problem in Ukraine today. She learned laboratory quality control and smear microscopy testing, one of the most effective methods available today for early diagnosis and confirmation of TB.

"I learned that though an abnormality on a chest X-ray may lead a clinician to suspect TB, he or she cannot confirm whether a person has TB without laboratory confirmation," said Alekseenko.

In addition to smear microscopy and drug susceptibility testing, lab specialists must improve detection of new TB cases as well as cases of drug resistant TB, which is spreading rapidly in Ukraine.

Following her training, Alekseenko reorganized her laboratory to meet the new standards. With the assistance of the chief doctor of Feodosia City TB Hospital # 2, she created areas for collecting sputum and showed staff how to prepare smears correctly to ensure reliable diagnostic results.

USAID, working with the NGO PATH, invited Alekseenko to be an assistant trainer in courses conducted by bacteriologists for laboratory specialists in primary health care in Feodosia, where quality smear microscopy practices have since been established in all of the facilities' TB laboratories.

"Building the skills of doctors and laboratory specialists in primary health care is extremely important, as they are the first line resource for a patient with any symptoms," Alekseenko said. "Strengthening their knowledge and expertise leads to timely TB diagnosis and referral of a patient with a smear-positive result to a TB dispensary, which, in turn, helps break the epidemiological chain of the disease."

Improved smear microscopy has meant a tenfold increase in detection of smear-positive TB cases in Feodosia.

see **TB LABS** on page 9 ▶

Photo by Olena Shevchenko

Mira Sirotina of the Solnechnoye village in Simferopol raion demonstrates proper poultry handling, which she introduced after watching a documentary produced by Fauna, an NGO working on ecological issues.

Film Helps Save Birds from Avian Flu in Ukraine

Although avian influenza (AI) has disappeared from the headlines, it remains a very real threat in Crimea, Ukraine, a poultry production region at the crossroads of bird migratory routes.

To motivate poultry farmers and others to use safe poultry handling practices, USAID and other groups carried out a public awareness campaign to prevent the spread of AI.

In 2009, Fauna, an NGO working on ecological issues, produced a short film and TV program to raise awareness of AI among the rural residents of Dzhankoy district, an area at high risk for outbreaks.

The film showed how the residents of the village of Zavet-Leninsky dealt with AI outbreaks during 2006. It demonstrated how to build wire coops to protect domestic birds from contact with wild birds and how to separate poultry from other animals to minimize the risk of AI infection.

The film featured local expert Mykola Arsievych, director of the Naturalist and Environmental Protection Center, who described how his team preserved the center's exotic birds during the outbreak.

"By sticking to biosafety rules and practices, not a single bird perished in our park during the avian influenza outbreak in 2006," Arsievych said in the film interview.

In the film, Mykola Betyn, head of the Zavet-Leninsky village council, also recalled the 2006 situation.

"We were really frightened then. And though there have not been any cases registered for the last few years, we continue to remind residents about AI risks," Betyn said.

The film and TV program were broadcast by a local television channel, reaching as many as 30,000 residents of Dzhankoy district. The film was shown to 15,000 children in 52 village schools before the autumn bird migration.

Valentina Pyshkina, a teacher from Dzhankoy, described the potential impact of the film.

"Our school children are extremely active. In the past, they participated in a youth team competition on AI prevention. I'm sure that after watching the film they will remind their parents and neighbors about AI and its risks," Pyshkina said.

Fauna worked with veterinary and emergency services specialists and USAID partner International Relief & Development to produce the film.

Lyudmila Yatsishina, the head of the Dzhankoy district veterinary department, said the film was "very timely indeed, as avian influenza is a real threat and it exists all the time."

"Every year, more and more households are turning to safe poultry handling practices." ★

Photo by Vladimir Danilov

Mykolai Melnyk and his son Andriy read flyers distributed in their village of Prydi in Kirovskiy as part of an avian influenza awareness campaign.

Photo by Olena Shevchenko

Mykola Arievych and his team at the Naturalist and Environmental Protection Center were able to save all the center's birds during a 2006 outbreak of avian influenza in the region.

CRIMEA from page 8

The hospital also cut mother-to-child HIV transmission to less than 2 percent by offering Caesarean section to HIV-positive women. And warm chain technology, which keeps babies warm through either the mother's body heat or warm clothing, has reduced hypothermia.

In Crimea, the project currently works with eight maternities, 11 women's clinics, and 15 pediatric polyclinics. These facilities support approximately 12,500 births, or 44 percent of the estimated 27,000 deliveries that occur in the Crimean Republic each year. ★

TB LABS from page 8

USAID has supported a TB control program in Ukraine since 2000. Its current project, TB Control Partnerships in Ukraine, covers 10 administrative areas, including Crimea. The project works with the Ministry of Health to improve TB prevention, diagnosis, and treatment practices; strengthen laboratory services; and prevent increases in drug resistant TB.

Ukraine has 106 TB cases per 100,000 people, the eighth highest rate in Europe and Eurasia. Mortality rates are particularly high, with 10,000 Ukrainians dying of TB each year. Crimea is among the regions with the highest mortality rates, with alarming growth in TB-related deaths during recent years. There has also been high growth in the number of new cases of TB during the past decade—from 38.2 new cases per 100,000 people in 1997, to 85.2 cases per 100,000 people in 2007. ★

Sudan School Honors Fallen USAID Staff

By Rebecca Dobbins and Angela Stephens

Two years after USAID staff members John Granville and Abdelrahman Abbas Rahama were murdered in Khartoum, the Granville-Abbas Girls' Secondary School was dedicated in Kurmuk, Sudan. It is the first girls' secondary school in Blue Nile state.

The dedication took place March 8 on International Women's Day to highlight the importance of educating girls.

The school can accommodate 120 students and serves as a model for girls' education in the region. Besides classrooms, it has a library, theater, cafeteria, dormitories, and teacher offices. Students will have Internet access and computer training.

The school is part of USAID support for Sudan's primary and secondary education for boys and girls.

Blue Nile state is one of three areas that received special consideration in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended Sudan's long and bloody north-south civil war. Due to their location along the divide between northern and southern Sudan, the Three Areas of Abyei, Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan were heavily affected by fighting during the war, which displaced huge numbers of people.

In negotiations over the CPA, citizens of these areas were guaranteed special political processes to determine their future—a process of "popular consultation" for Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, and for Abyei, a referendum scheduled for January 2011 that will allow citizens to decide whether they will be part of northern or southern Sudan.

The governor of Blue Nile state, Malik Agar, has agreed to provide teacher salaries and other operational costs of the Granville-Abbas school.

Agar met Granville when he lived in Kurmuk and worked as a USAID democracy and governance officer. Granville's work included helping to distribute thousands of solar-powered radios in southern Sudan and the Three Areas to inform citizens of their rights and help them prepare for elections.

> The school can accommodate 120 students and serves as a model for girls' education in the region.

At the school dedication ceremony, Agar said that when a friend asked Granville to explain the five ways to eliminate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, Granville replied that there was only one answer to that question—educating women.

Ka Vang, who represented the Granville family at the event, said, "I know that today John is looking down on us all and is both honored and humbled that this secondary school for girls has been built in his and A.R.'s [Abdelrahman's] memory."

Rahama was born in Juba, Sudan, and began his USAID career in 2004 as one of the original members of the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team for Darfur, after which he was hired as a chauffeur for the USAID office in Khartoum. His widow, young son, and brother attended the dedication.

Born near Buffalo, N.Y., Granville served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cameroon from 1997 to 1999 and subsequently received a Fulbright fellowship to conduct independent research in the country. He and Rahama were killed in Khartoum on Jan. 1, 2008, by four gunmen who last year were found guilty of the murders by a Sudanese court.

Establishment of a girls' secondary school in Kurmuk addresses a critical gap in Sudan's educational infrastructure. Some Kurmuk residents who fled to Ethiopia during Sudan's civil war were able to receive basic schooling at refugee camps. However, they were often unable to continue their studies after returning home, where the schools were reduced to rubble during the war. The Granville-Abbas Girls' Secondary School now provides the opportunity for more girls to continue their education. ★

Photo by Rebecca Dobbins, USAID

A local music group celebrates at the opening of the Granville-Abbas Girls' Secondary School in Kurmuk, Blue Nile state, Sudan.

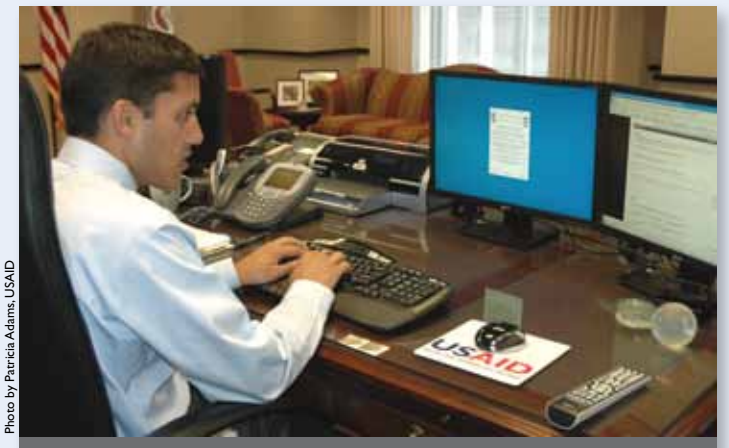

Photo by Patricia Adams, USAID

Administrator Rajiv Shah takes part in Global Pulse 2010.

7,000 People Share Ideas in Global Pulse 2010

By Brittany Jackson

In an effort to drum up new ideas for solving the world's toughest development challenges, USAID, in partnership with four other government agencies, launched Global Pulse 2010 on March 29. The three-day, online brainstorming session drew nearly 7,000 participants from 156 countries who posted their opinions and ideas on how to improve life for people across the planet.

"We want to hear from individuals who are not normally seated at the table with key decision makers," said USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah before the event.

The global interactive discussion focused on central themes such as: women and girls, education, political and civil rights, global health, economic opportunity, science and technology.

The following are some suggestions made during the online session:

▶ "All relief and post-crisis development efforts must take into consideration the impact of the crisis on women and design the activities in such a manner so that maximum benefit is brought to women. Local cultural elements must be taken into account while designing and delivering relief. To the maximum extent possible, local partners must be identified to ensure effective targeting." Saad Paracha, Pakistan

▶ "I'd love to see a worldwide, well-advertised symposium of spiritual/political leaders come together on a staged venue and address the entire world, covered by every media outlet on the globe. Leaders from across disciplines, from diverse religious, political, and ethnic backgrounds." Joan Carpenter, Canada

▶ "Pastoral communities live in the Sahel or in arid lands. Thus, they have developed strategies for centuries to cope with the fragile environment. Any strategy regarding climate change has to put them and their knowledge in the center of the process….A good answer would combine support to communities to document their knowledge about nature and create space for public dialogue on their contribution to nature conservation." Awa Faly Ba, Senegal

Featured guests included Africa's best selling pop musician, Youssou N'Dour; Melanne Verveer, ambassador-at-large for global women's issues; and Zainab Salbi, co-founder and chief executive officer of Women for Women International.

Global Pulse 2010, co-sponsored by the departments of State, Education, Commerce, and Health and Human Services, was launched in response to President Barack Obama's call "to listen to each other, to learn from one another, and to seek common ground" in his June 2009 Cairo speech.

USAID is currently looking for ways to move forward with the more than 15,000 ideas generated by the event.

"We will take many of these ideas and change the way we work based on what we hear," Shah said.

For more information on Global Pulse 2010, go to www.globalpulse2010.gov. ★

THAILAND from page 6

Photo by Bussara Tirakalyanapan, FREELAND

Long tail marques in Pramuka Market, the largest bird and wildlife market in Indonesia.

iceberg," said Steve Galster, director of the FREELAND Foundation, referring to the scale of international ivory trade. "I believe there will be more arrests and convictions."

Illegal wildlife trafficking is believed to generate between $10 billion and $20 billion in Southeast Asia annually. Wildlife trade is particularly appealing to organized crime syndicates due to its high profits and relatively low risk.

"A forest without wildlife is dead," said Galster. "Wildlife is the blood of a healthy forest, and endangered species are an indicator of the health of the ecosystems that we all depend on."

Wildlife trafficking, if allowed to continue at its current rate, could eradicate the region's wildlife in just a few years, said Winston Bowman, environment director for USAID's Regional Development Mission for Asia.

"ASEAN-WEN promotes biodiversity conservation and regional cooperation among the ASEAN countries," Bowman said. "Through the program, we are establishing the building blocks for rule of law and regional security."

Since 2005, USAID has provided $7 million to help ASEAN-WEN shut down traffickers by improving enforcement of international and domestic laws against the illegal wildlife trade. ASEAN-WEN brings together the governments of Southeast Asian countries to combat wildlife crime.

Activities include training for police and customs officers, rangers, and airport officials, as well as efforts to increase political will.

During 2009, more than 150 arrests and seizures of contraband worth an estimated $35 million took place in Southeast Asia. More than 18,500 live animals were recovered, including pangolins, exotic birds, and slow lorises, and more than 292 tons of wildlife and derivative products were confiscated in these operations.

ASEAN-WEN's success is attracting interest among countries in other regions keen to replicate its model. Discussions to use the Wildlife Enforcement Network's approach are underway in South Asia and Central America. ★

Photo by Tassanee Vejpongsa, FREELAND

Thai police catalogue animal parts discovered in the Bangkok home of a suspected wildlife trafficker who allegedly sold animal parts on the Internet. Authorities confiscated hornbill beaks, serow horns, gaur horns, a baby elephant skull, skulls believed to be from orangutans, as well as eight endangered arowana fish.

CONTINUED. . .

Attacks Fail to Derail Afghan Aid

After a series of attacks killed and injured several USAID expatriate and Afghan contractors in Afghanistan's troubled southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand, Agency officials reassured Afghan officials that U.S. aid programs would not be curtailed and that reconstruction and development assistance would continue in both the Afghan and American national interests.

"We owe it to our development implementing partners to work with them and our Afghan, U.S., and other NATO security agencies to work even harder to help protect against such attacks. But we and our partners are not walking away from this just because there are risks," said Jim Bever, head of the USAID Afghanistan/Pakistan Task Force. "These are heinous attacks on highly committed development aid workers. Such attacks are equally condemned by both the Afghan government and the Afghan people."

In mid-April, USAID's director in Afghanistan, William Frej, flew on the day after one of the attacks to meet with Kandahar

see **AID** on page 14 ▶

Marja Farmers Clean Canals and Get Pumps After Fighting Ends

MARJA, Hilmand Province, Afghanistan—Only a month after the end of Operation Moshtarak, the U.S. and Afghan military push to evict Taliban fighters from this southern region, new District Governor Hajji Zaher has already met with elders.

Zaher invited them to join a USAID program that aims to stabilize the region, now that the Taliban have been defeated, by providing jobs, irrigation, and better seeds.

The governor explained to the local elders how the program—Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture (AVIPA) Plus—works.

see **MARJA** on page 14 ▶

SHAH from page 1

Administrator Rajiv Shah visited the Afghan Technical Vocational Institute in Kabul, Afghanistan, April 10. Here he watches as women learn to tie rebar for a career in the construction trade.

Photo by Bruce Huffman, USAID

importance to the United States.

In Kabul, Shah met with U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, Afghan President Hamid Karzai, and top U.S. military and aid officials. He also held "all hands" meetings with USAID staff in Kabul and Islamabad, according to USAID's senior deputy director of the Afghanistan/Pakistan Task Force, Charles North, who accompanied Shah.

From Kabul, Shah flew April 9 to the volatile southern city of Kandahar to meet U.S. and local officials. He then flew to a forward operating base at Arghandab that was the scene of intense fighting last year before a change in U.S. tactics.

Previously, the U.S., NATO, and Afghan military had attacked and driven out Taliban insurgents, leaving the civilian aid team to follow up. Now, the transition from military to civilian stabilization activities are coordinated earlier on, North said.

Shah then went by armored vehicle to visit a USAID-funded project called AVIPA Plus, which is operated by International Relief & Development. It gives farmers vouchers for agriculture products, provides cash-for-work projects, and awards small grants to agribusinesses and community associations. (See article, "Marja Farmers Clean Canals and Get Pumps After Fighting Ends," this page.)

"Shah spent a lot of time talking directly to the farmers about seed varieties, pricing, and agriculture practices," North recalled.

Shah talked to other Afghans about the AVIPA Plus program, especially the cash-for-work component that created hundreds of jobs clearing canals and building roads. He also spoke with farmers about the project spraying a soapy solution on pomegranates to kill harmful insects.

Back in Kabul, Shah visited a vocational training institute and a government media center to meet journalists.

In Islamabad April 11, Shah met with the U.S. Ambassador Anne Patterson, Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari, Punjab Gov. Salmaan Taseer, and Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif. He spoke of a long-term strategy for a U.S.-Pakistan partnership to develop the country, which has been beset with violence in recent months in tribal areas on the Afghan border as well as attacks in its major cities.

Some Pakistani officials raised concerns that U.S. drone attacks had killed civilians or violated Pakistani sovereignty. They also accused U.S. aid programs of spending too much money on U.S. consultants. However, Shah assuaged their concerns by focusing on the need for a long-term strategic partnership to address Pakistan's priorities in energy, water, agriculture, and social services.

"Dr. Shah emphasized that USAID needs to change the way we work, to be a more effective and better partner with Pakistan, and do more with and through the Pakistani government—and to do so accountably," North said.

The Administrator also spoke about the importance of technology and innovation and how to rebuild the Agency. In addition, during his "all hands" meeting with mission staff in Islamabad, he stressed the importance of the Foreign Service Nationals or FSNs, saying that they are a major asset to USAID.

Shah told Pakistani reporters that U.S. aid would create jobs, especially in tribal areas. He noted that the quality of education would be improved through teachers' training in Southern Punjab and other critical areas.

Shah, a medical doctor and former leader of health programs at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, said USAID would assist the health sector by building up professional institutions and by training women health workers, paramedical staff, and physicians. He also said that the Agency would invest in research at key agricultural universities and improve training of farmers.

The Administrator said that "President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton have launched a new strategic dialogue with Pakistan to make sure that our relationship is a broad and deep partnership defined by mutual respect and cooperation in a broad range of areas, especially energy, water, agriculture, education, and health sectors that are very important for development."★ —*B.B.*

CONTINUED. . .

CLIMATE from page 1

Photo by Heather Sullivan, USAID

Indian women trained through a USAID program prepare mango bars using a solar-powered dryer unit. Solar dryers in India enable farmers to efficiently use energy to turn excess produce into food and income off-season.

from the developing world, according to the International Energy Agency.

As the world's largest aid donor to developing countries, the United States has worked for decades to boost economic growth and help these countries cope with the effects of climate change such as floods, famine, storms, drought, and the loss of grazing land and wildlife.

USAID also helps countries develop and adapt to climate change without emitting large amounts of greenhouse gases.

Political leaders, government delegates, scientists, and activists gathered in Copenhagen in December 2009 for annual international negotiations on climate change—a follow up to the 1997 Kyoto meeting that produced the first global effort to rein in greenhouse gases.

As part of the Copenhagen Accord, most countries agreed to scale back greenhouse gas emissions. A few refused, arguing that poor countries would be blocked from growth if they were forced to reduce greenhouse gases.

Into this cauldron of opinions and interests—involving scientists, economists, activists, developing countries, and industrial powers—USAID has contributed expertise and served as a voice for what works in poor countries. USAID is helping countries prepare for climate change while seeking new ways to grow.

Developing countries are especially affected by changes in climate because their economies are vulnerable, they are less able to change, and climate variability was already a challenge to them, said Bill Breed, USAID's top climate change specialist.

"The chemistry of the ocean is changing—it is becoming more acidic" from absorbing increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, Breed said. Acidic oceans disrupt food chains, which could reduce fish numbers.

Children in southern Kazakhstan play near a water pump. USAID responded to water scarcity tensions in the country by increasing access to drinking water and irrigation.

USAID is helping countries prepare for climate change while seeking new ways to grow.

There has been a change in precipitation patterns, he added—some places get more rain, others get less, and the timing and volume matter.

For example, in Kenya the seasonal rains that usually come like clockwork are becoming unpredictable. Droughts from 2003 to 2006 led to a 90 percent loss of livestock in some areas. As a result, nearly 11 million people required food aid.

"Such changes exacerbate existing development challenges," said Breed. "In the tropics, they affect countries already operating at the margins."

see **CLIMATE** on page 14 ▶

CONTINUED. . .

AID from page 12

"Development projects have always been soft targets for insurgents throughout Afghanistan," said deputy director Rebecca Black.

Provincial Gov. Tooryalai Wesa who said he was pleased the Agency would continue its development programs. New security measures would be put in place, Frej said.

"Development projects have always been soft targets for insurgents throughout Afghanistan," said deputy director Rebecca Black. "We join President Karzai in condemning these senseless acts of violence, and extend our condolences to the victims and their families."

The attacks come as U.S., NATO, and Afghan leaders agree that an expanded civilian aid program—paired with military success on the ground—is critical to prevent Taliban insurgents from reasserting control over the south, near the Pakistan border.

Attacks on civilian aid workers have become a hallmark of the Al Qaeda and Taliban insurgencies since 9/11. But the spate of recent attacks appears to signal an effort to target the aid community, which works most closely with Afghans, and to isolate foreign aid efforts.

"It's reflective of the viciousness of the anti-government and anti-democratic forces in the country and those who do not respect the rule of law and the constitution," said Bever.

"As a result of the attacks, USAID is working diligently with other U.S. and Afghan government agencies to coordinate better and prevent such attacks in the future on our development partners.

"This also shows the real-world pragmatic need for our contractors and grantees to have, when necessary, their own security services until the Afghan national army and police can provide it."

He said that contractors and grantees needing access to funds for security should ask USAID and "we will help them." ★ —*B.B.*

MARJA from page 12

AVIPA promotes cooperation between farmers and government representatives, using agriculture to stabilize conflict-ridden areas.

Marja's farmland is divided by canals—built by USAID in the 1950s—into areas that each have their own local council, or *shura*, and a community leader.

At the first meeting, the district governor told the elders that USAID will soon deliver 4,000 mobile water pumps through the program. The elders were asked to meet with their communities and to sign up participants.

"We are happy with the government," said one of the elders as he sat in the shura tent outside the Marja District Center after the meeting. "We need these pumps to increase irrigation capacity. The district governor is asking us to take responsibility for this process."

The 4,000 mobile water pumps will help farmers irrigate their fields using water from existing canals. The first distribution is set to begin towards the end of April once all registration lists have been vetted by the district governor and the elders' shura.

The governor also approved a number of AVIPA canal cleaning projects that will employ up to 4,000 laborers over the next several weeks.

"The security situation is still difficult," said the governor. "But if we start with 100 laborers in a few blocks, other people will see this and they'll want to participate. More and more will join each day."

"In Marja, we have canals. We need to get them opened and water flowing. The pumps will ensure we are able to flood our fields more efficiently. Providing employment, seed, and fertilizer is the right way to start," a shura member said.

Farmers are also being encouraged to form cooperatives through the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock to receive grants of farm tools.

"The fact that we are willing to come to the district center to listen to the governor," an elder said, "shows we already feel things are getting better." ★

CLIMATE from page 13

Photo by Louis Stippel, USAID

A farmer fetches corn from a mud silo at Janjori-Kukuo in Ghana. With USAID support, farmers in Ghana have improved their crop production as climate change puts additional stress on agricultural systems in Africa.

The Agency provides information to help prepare for the effects of climate change such as rising seas, storm surges, droughts, and unpredictable rain patterns.

"We are making our projects and activities more resilient to climate change," Breed said.

Some crops, for example, may no longer be able to get the rain they need, or the rain may fall during flowering periods, which reduces fertilization. So experts are helping farmers breed crops that can thrive in new conditions such as heat, drought, and flooding. They also show farmers how to harvest water by building small structures to catch and hold water.

"The question one asks is if a place is going to be habitable in 10 or 15 years," said Breed. A community may require a change in crops or practices, or even that people move away to survive.

Breed suggested looking at Phoenix, Ariz., in the southwestern United States where the water table fell from 6 feet to 400 feet below the surface in some areas as aquifers were tapped to supply a growing population. In the U.S. case, ample power allows lifting of water to meet needs, but even here limits are increasingly apparent.

To help anticipate climate changes, USAID has set up geospatial observation centers with NASA and developing country institutions in Africa and Central America. The centers analyze satellite observations, historical data, local environmental information, and forecasts to help figure out how to adapt, manage the environment, and prepare for disasters.

The centers monitor changes in forests and land cover, greenhouse gas emissions, and red tides. They give advance warnings of thunderstorms, and identify places likely to be flooded.

The climate change experts also see an opportunity to "build settlements better" with improved drainage that can prevent flooding and water damage.

USAID also helps countries promote clean energy and make their utility sectors more profitable. Electricity is often subsidized in developing countries, which doesn't make economic sense since it is typically the rich, with the highest rate of consumption, who reap the benefits.

"Over the next 50 years we need to cut emissions [of greenhouse gases] by 50 percent from current levels," said Breed. "We need …clean technology. Although we need electricity, efficiency and conservation are part of the picture."

USAID plans to help countries attract investment for clean development and enable their participation in carbon markets. The Agency is also working on pilot projects on carbon finance—paying people to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or increase carbon storage.

Protecting forests is a major factor in reducing climate change. In East Africa, USAID worked with 35,000 small-scale farmers to plant 4 million trees for carbon trapping, environmental benefits, and personal use. Farmers are paid for the carbon their trees take in and store.

U.S. funding for core international climate change efforts has grown from $316 million in 2009 to more than $1 billion in 2010 and reaches nearly $1.4 billion in the administration request for 2011. USAID, the State Department, and the Treasury Department use this money to meet the challenges that come with a changing climate. ★

CONTINUED. . .

HAITI from page 1

Services, Homeland Security, and State; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and the United Nations.

The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission—co-chaired by Haiti President René Préval and former U.S. President Bill Clinton, who is serving as U.N. Special Envoy to Haiti—will oversee the next 18 months of reconstruction on behalf of the Haitian government. Preval presented a 53-page action plan detailing his vision for a future Haiti and said the country will be out front in the rebuilding—addressing persistent concerns that the United States, the United Nations, and others would lead those efforts.

"The leaders of Haiti must take responsibility for their country's reconstruction," Hillary Clinton told the conference. "And we in the global community must also do things differently. It will be tempting to fall back on old habits—to work around the government rather than to work with them as partners, or to fund a scattered array of well-meaning projects rather than making the deeper, long-term investments that Haiti needs now."

Weisenfeld said the key areas where USAID and others will focus their reconstruction efforts—and dollars—are health care, economic growth and agriculture, infrastructure, and government functions.

"It's going to be key for us to find ways to tap into the energy and technical expertise of the diaspora to make this reconstruction successful," he said, noting Haitians living in the United States were well represented at the donor's conference as was the NGO community.

USAID and other organizations are transitioning from the emergency response to recovery efforts in Haiti. Currently, aid includes food, health care, water, sanitation, and other basic needs. A top priority now is helping Haitians prepare for the rainy season, which could renew misery for the thousands of people living in tents that are too flimsy to withstand strong wind, rain, and flooding. ★

Want to learn how to help Haiti?
Go to www.usaid.gov/helphaiti for details.

BAGHDAD from page 7

educated voters through the media, reaching 4 million Iraqis.

Approximately 12 million out of 19 million eligible voters, or 62 percent, participated in the elections. That so many Iraqis cast their votes despite the ever-present dangers of violence demonstrated the popular support for democratic politics in Iraq, USAID officials said.

"The public outreach campaign related to the March 7, 2010, parliamentary elections was critical to the election's success and promotion of positive public perceptions about the fairness and transparency of the government of Iraq election bodies and the election process," Nema said. "The involvement of civil society in USAID voter education programs was crucial for the success of a free and fair election."

USAID spent $12 million and provided 315 grants for voter education activities. The United Nations and the U.S. State Department also provided grants to civil society organizations to promote voter awareness.

"We are delighted to have played a supporting role in which the government of Iraq, its Council of Representatives, and the IHEC [Independent High Electoral Commission] took the lead and administered the parliamentary elections," said Tamra Halmrast-Sanchez, director of USAID's Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) Office.

"USAID PRT representatives throughout the country were engaged in elections and monitoring activities and were pleased with the conduct of the vote and the evident enthusiasm for the elections among the different Iraqi communities."

Since 2003, the Agency has spent $6 billion on programs designed to stabilize communities; foster economic and agricultural growth; and build the capacity of the national, local, and provincial governments to respond to the needs of the Iraqi people. ★

RUSSIA from page 6

program came in. Under the World Vision-run project, residents here have received 40 grants, averaging $6,000 each. These grants helped to create over 100 jobs in sectors including agriculture and trade. The project also helped establish a business education center at the Kurtat Community Center where courses about starting and improving businesses, certified by the International Labor Organization, are now available to local residents.

Marem Katiyeva, 50, who lives in the predominantly Ingush village of Dachnoye, raises sheep both for sale and for shearing.

"Most of them were purchased with the grant from USAID," Katiyeva said in Russian, standing in a large shed where several dozen sheep milled about. She plans to start producing blankets and mattresses.

Denis Baziyev, 21, attends college in North Ossetia's capital, Vladikavkaz, while providing for his parents who are both disabled. Running a small farm at his home in the Kurtat village might provide enough income to help his family and continue his education, he said.

Baziyev walked across a spacious courtyard to the barn in the back and opened the door to show off three cows chewing on some of the best fodder available. Both the cows and the fodder were purchased with the help of a grant from the project.

One of the cows has already started giving milk and Baziyev's mother helps make cheese that they can sell to a local café. As the main ingredient in Ossetian pies, cheese is in demand.

USAID, through World Vision, has been working in Prigorodniy since 2006 as part of its $8 million per year North Caucasus program. ★

Photo by Andrei Muchnik

Marem Katiyeva raises and sells sheep with the help of a USAID small grants program for entrepreneurs in Russia.

FrontLines

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"I realize that there are among us those who are weary of sustaining this continual effort to help other nations. But I would ask them to look at a map and recognize that many of those whom we help live on the 'front lines' of the long twilight struggle for freedom—that others are new nations posed between order and chaos—and the rest are older nations now undergoing a turbulent transition of new expectations. Our efforts to help them help themselves, to demonstrate and to strengthen the vitality of free institutions, are small in cost compared to our military outlays for the defense of freedom."
—John F. Kennedy, Special Message to the Congress on Foreign Aid, March 13, 1962

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EARTH DAY AT USAID

Earth Day, observed on April 22, celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. USAID's first Earth Day photo contest recognizes the United Nations' proclamation of 2010 as the International Year of Diversity. The contest resulted in six winners in five categories as well as 18 honorable mentions. Winning photos and categories are presented below.

Biodiversity Program in Action

Photo by Julie Larsen Maher, Wildlife Conservation Society

The eggs of the charapas, a river turtle in Amazonian Ecuador, are a local delicacy, but overharvesting threatens the turtle with extinction. USAID works with conservationists and the Waorani indigenous community to reverse this trend. In 2008 and 2009, community member Roque Alvarado and his children Renata, Orlando, and Annabelle (pictured) gathered 1,000 eggs and carefully tended 700 hatchlings before releasing them back to the wild.

Forestry Program in Action

Photo by Charlie Watson, Rainforest Alliance

Coffee plants grow under the protective shade of native trees at a certified farm in Guatemala. USAID supports certification of a number of forest products, leveraging markets to improve prices for growers, conditions for workers, and habitat for birds and other species.

Conservation Improves Lives (co-winner)

Photo by Klaus Hartung

In Bweleo Village, Zanzibar, women spend hours bent at the waist collecting cockles for food. Women now play a key role in a USAID-supported community-based conservation initiative that establishes and manages "no-take" zones, which allow depleted stocks of cockles to grow back while securing a good supply of oysters for half-pearl farming and jewelry making. The result is higher income, less time spent collecting bivalves, and reduced pressure on the marine environment.

Bear Catches Salmon
Kamchatka, Russia ►

In Time for Turtles
Yasuni National Park, ◄ Ecuador

Fire in Kutai National Park
East Kalimantan, Indonesia ►

Fresh Coffee… Plants
◄ Guatemala

For more information on USAID's environmental projects, go to www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/index.html.

Fishing for Living
Hail Haor, Srimongol, Bangladesh ►

Collecting Cockles
◄ Zanzibar, Tanzania

Wildlife, Plants, and Landscapes

Photo by Igor Shpilenok

Salmon is a critical seasonal food source for thousands of brown bears in Kamchatka, Russia. The USAID-supported Wild Salmon Center establishes watershed councils to involve communities in salmon conservation and habitat restoration.

Threats to Biodiversity

Photo by Donald Bason, Orangutan Conservation Services Program

Although devastated by fires in the late 1990's, Kutai National Park in Indonesia is still an important refuge for orangutans, supporting up to 2,500 animals. USAID's Orangutan Conservation Services Program works to reduce threats to this endangered primate including forest fires resulting from burns to clear agricultural land.

Conservation Improves Lives (co-winner)

Photo by Sirajul Hossain

USAID has played a pioneering role in advancing co-management of natural resources by communities and government in Bangladesh. Building upon successes with forests and inland fisheries, USAID is now working to scale up the approach to all ecosystems.