USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# FRONTLINES

WWW. USAID.GOV AUGUST 2010

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New, low-cost inventions are helping the world's poor. See page 16.

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A woman demonstrates the "Life Straw," which instantly filters out impurities in water.

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Photo by Adek Berry, AFP

**Indonesian youth hold lanterns during a candle-light vigil to mark World AIDS Day in Jakarta Dec. 1, 2009. More than 30 million people have died from AIDS, and more than 2 million are infected each year worldwide. Last month, the results of a study were released showing that a microbicide gel reduces the transmission of HIV to women. See story, this page.**

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# USAID RESPONDS TO DEVASTATING FLOODS IN PAKISTAN

Photo by A. Majeed, AFP

**Pakistani residents evacuate to safety in a flood-hit area of Nowshera July 30.**

Heavy rains in late July and August have caused massive flooding across Pakistan. As of Aug. 16, the deadly flood waters had claimed the lives of a reported 1,400 people, washed away close to 900,000 homes, decimated crops, killed scores of livestock, and left billions of dollars worth of damage in their wake.

The United Nations estimates that more than 15 million people have been affected by the floods, and as the monsoon rains continue, there is a growing need to address critical health concerns for those without access to basic health care.

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# The Millennium Development Goals —10 Years Later

Ten years ago, 189 world leaders met at the United Nations Millennium Summit and agreed to make dramatic global development gains by 2015. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were borne out of that meeting—eight concrete targets that focus international efforts on areas such as reducing poverty and hunger, improving health and education, and combating major diseases. Summit participants vowed to make fulfilling these goals a global effort.

While the MDGs have served to rally domestic and international support for development programs worldwide, the United States has never before had a comprehensive strategy for tackling these goals. Late last month, the Obama administration unveiled its strategy for achieving the goals.

The U.S. strategy, crafted through an interagency process led by USAID, is based on four imperatives: innovation, sustainability, focusing on outcomes, and enhancing mutual accountability. The plan outlines the various ways in which government agencies and programs will be leveraged to

see **MILLENNIUM** on page 11 ▶

# Microbicide Gel Reduces HIV Transmission to Women

*By Kelly Ramundo*

For the first time, a microbicide has been shown to stem HIV transmission in women—news that has resonated throughout the scientific and development world.

On the day the CAPRISA trial results were unveiled at the International AIDS Conference in Vienna last month, Administrator Rajiv Shah emphasized the importance of the historic findings: "USAID is proud to be the major funder of the first-ever proof of concept that a microbicide can effectively and safely reduce the transmission of HIV from men to vulnerable women," he said.

The trial was conducted with 889 female volunteers in Durban, South Africa, providing evidence that a 1-percent vaginal gel of the antiretroviral drug Tenofovir, when used before and after intercourse by high-risk women, reduced the risk of HIV infection by 39 percent on average. Effectiveness rose to 54 percent in women who used it 80 percent of the time.

The CAPRISA 004 study, named for the Center for the AIDS Program of Research in South Africa which conducted the trial, marks the first time a woman-controlled prevention method has shown significant potential in preventing HIV transmission.

Widespread use of the gel could prevent over 1.3 million new HIV infections in South Africa alone over the next two decades, researchers estimate.

AIDS has killed more than 30 million people and continues to infect over two million a year throughout the

see **HIV** on page 6 ▶

## WHAT THEY ARE SAYING . . .

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

# Bringing the Diplomacy of 'Dignity Promotion' to the UN MDG Summit

*By Mark Goldberg*

In a March 2008 article in the American Prospect, the journalist Spencer Ackerman wrote the first serious attempt to understand the organizing principals of then-candidate Obama's foreign policy vision. Ackerman discovered that, should Obama assume the presidency, the "Obama doctrine" as he put it, would be premised on "an agenda of 'dignity promotion' to fix the conditions of misery that breed anti-Americanism and prevent liberty, justice, and prosperity from taking root."

Two years into the Obama presidency, the precise contours of a "dignity promotion" agenda are beginning to take shape. That agenda will be tested on the world stage next month for the first time when President Obama meets with other heads of state for a United Nations summit on the Millennium Development Goals. That summit will show just how far the United States has come in increasing the relevance of global development in its foreign policy strategy—but also how far the United States and the rest of the world still has to go if it is to live up the promise of the MDGs.

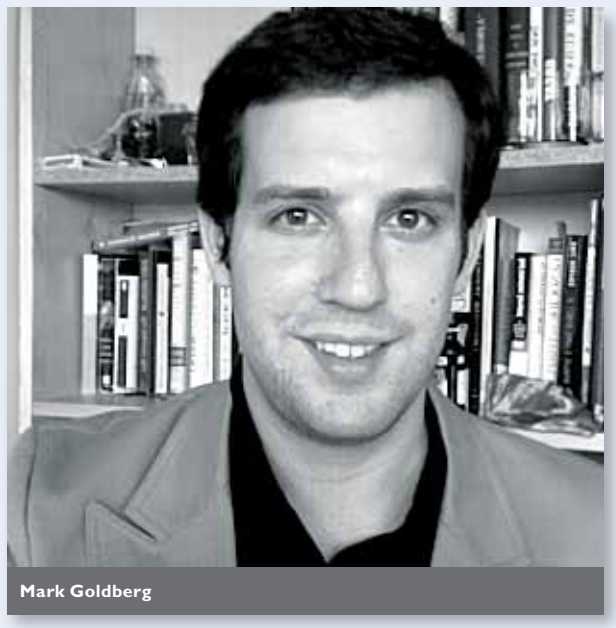
In May 2010, President Obama released his administration's first National Security Strategy—a quadrennial review of American national security priorities. Featured prominently was a section titled "promoting dignity by meeting basic needs," which articulated the ways in which the United States was working to eradicate extreme poverty and promote global health.

The strategy document tied these efforts directly to American values, namely "the freedom that America stands for." And, for the first time since 2000, when nearly 200 world leaders agreed to a set of poverty reduction and health promoting measures known as the Millennium Development Goals, those goals were mentioned, by name, in a U.S. National Security Strategy. "The United States has embraced the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals and is working with others in pursuit of the eradication of extreme poverty," the strategy read.

A few months later, that strategic level guidance was followed up by the release of a more narrowly focused agenda of the administration's strategy for reaching the MDGs titled "Celebrate, Innovate, and Sustain: Toward 2015 and Beyond." This document was the clearest manifestation yet of the administration's approach to extreme poverty and global health. With its release, the administration provided an insight into the nuts and bolts of how at least one part of its "dignity promoting agenda" would be implemented.

The theme of "innovation" runs throughout the document. The idea is to use American funds and expertise to fill discreet gaps in research, technology, and other needs. "Drawing on America's long tradition of development through innovation," the document says, "we will increase funding for applied research, expand access to effective existing technologies and practices, build learning partnerships and stimulate innovation in partner countries, and expand global access to knowledge."

I asked USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah how that will work, in practice. "Just like we are on the verge of eradicating polio because they invented a vaccine that allowed us to not have to provide everyone with treatment services using the iron lung," he said, "in the same way we have huge opportunities to transition from more costly and ineffective strategies to things that are more highly scalable and lower cost."


Mark Goldberg

The hope is that a renewed focus on innovation may yield significant technological breakthroughs in the near future. For example, one promising new tool in the fight against HIV/AIDS is the first vaginal microbicidal gel which women can apply themselves, pre-intercourse. [See story, page 1.] USAID largely funded the research that led to this breakthrough, which is yielding promising results in clinical trials. If this document delivers on its promises, we may see other important public health breakthroughs, including a new vaccine to fight childhood diarrhea, which kills 2 million children a year.

Of course, that is a big "if." When the president's latest budget was released earlier this year, some in the public health community expressed disappointment at what amounted to only marginal funding increases for these kinds of programs. Further, many advocates—while generally positive about the MDG plan—lament that a long promised Obama administration strategy on global development has not yet been released. "Until the U.S. has some kind of mission statement, all of these piecemeal reform efforts are like a ship without a compass," wrote Oxfam's Porter McConnell. "Why bother investing in 'game changing innovations' if we don't know what destination we're trying to get to?"

Still, the MDG strategy document provides a public demonstration of the administration's commitment to the MDGs at a crucial time. When world leaders meet at the U.N. in September, they are expected to sign onto a plan that spells out the specific ways in which donors and recipient countries alike will help make the MDGs a reality by the 2015 target date. Diplomats are now deep into negotiations so as to finalize that document before their presidents and prime ministers arrive.

The last time world leaders gathered for this kind of confab was 2005. Back then, the American commitment to the MDGs was in serious doubt. Just weeks before the 2005 U.N. summit, the American ambassador to the U.N. tried to scrub all mentions of the MDGs from an early draft of the outcome document, sending negotiations into a tailspin.

The United States has come a long way since then. Still, there is only so much that any one country can do on its own. These are, after all, a global effort. And while there has been progress in the aggregate since 2000, it has been uneven across regions, with sub-Saharan Africa still lagging behind. "Without a major push forward," warns the U.N., "many of the MDG targets are likely to be missed in most regions."

Closing that gap by 2015 is a key ambition of the summit. Whether that happens will, in part, be a test of how well a "dignity promotion" agenda is applied to traditional diplomacy at the U.N. For the sake of billions of people around the world living below subsistence levels, let us hope it translates well.

*Mark Goldberg is the managing editor of UN Dispatch. This article originally appeared at www.undispatch.com and is reprinted with the author's permission.*

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## Mission of the Month

Photo by USAID

**BOS Agro Food operates in Srebrenica and employs 80 people, mostly returnees to the war-stricken Srebrenica region. Employees were hired at the export-oriented company following USAID efforts to improve the economic environment in Srebrenica and to remove obstacles to business growth.**

B i H

# 15 Years After War, Bosnia and Herzegovina Moves Ahead

### Challenge

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was one of the six republics that made up the socialist Federation of the Republic of Yugoslavia. It suffered through a devastating war that destroyed vital infrastructure and bankrupted the country. Since the end of the war, it has had to not only recover from the effects of the war, but also transition from a command to a market-driven economy.

A devastating three-year war in Bosnia that began in 1992 led to genocide, displaced 2 million people, wrecked the economy, and involved international military intervention. In addition, BiH is currently divided into two entities: the Federation containing mostly Croats and Bosniaks (Muslims) and the Republika Srpska (RS) made up mostly of Serbs, while BiH's state-level government remains structurally weak. The self-governing Brcko District sits in the northern part of the country, belonging to neither entity. Harmonizing laws and regulations among these various elements is a constant challenge.

Fifteen years since the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, which brought an end to the hostilities, BiH is still struggling to overcome the political, economic, and social effects of the conflict. A sad remembrance of atrocities came on July 11, which marked the 15th anniversary of the killing of over 8,000 Bosniak men and boys captured in Srebrenica.

### Innovative Response

While Srebrenica and other cities and towns across BiH are still struggling to recover from the war, USAID's assistance programs have helped some of them overcome their violent past. From improving the transparency and efficiency of municipal citizen services to attracting private investment, U.S. assistance has promoted peace, security, democracy, governance, and economic growth.

Since the opening of the U.S. Embassy in BiH in 1994, USAID has spent nearly $1.5 billion to improve the lives of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and help lay the foundations for a bright future. Following are highlights of USAID's programs.

*Post-war Reintegration and Development.* Starting in 1996, USAID's infrastructure program targeted structures that would help restart businesses and assist citizens to return to normal living. USAID spent $372 million to carry out infrastructure repair projects and directly assisted over 100,000 minority refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes.

*Private Enterprise Development.* USAID's Business Development Program helped businesses restart operations and employ more than 16,000 Bosnians. Nearly 6,000 loans were made to Bosnian enterprises eager to expand business activity but lacking working capital and medium-term financing.

*Rule of Law.* USAID helped to change the laws in the country so administrative disputes can be more efficiently resolved. For example, as a result of USAID assistance, the Federation Supreme Court's backlog has been reduced from 12,000 to 3,000 cases.

*Media, Civil Society, and Election Support.* Through its civil society program, USAID has helped BiH NGOs to improve their supervisory skills and become better service providers. Over 130 NGOs have received grants, training, and technical assistance in the first eight years of the program. Training has been provided for all election administrators and up to 5,000 domestic observers provided in various elections.

USAID's media program has helped to create BiH's first private, independent television network.

*Donor Collaboration.* In addition, the United States is managing $61 million leveraged from other donor countries, including Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, and Germany, as well as in-kind donations from the private sector. Post-war projects have included improving the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises in the agricultural, wood, and tourism sectors; credit guarantees for productive enterprises; and making local governments more accountable.

### Results

USAID's 1,600 infrastructure repair projects have helped restart businesses and assisted citizens to return

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# INSIGHTS

## FROM ADMINISTRATOR DR. RAJIV SHAH

Some of the greatest development game-changers have originated through scientific and technological discovery and from innovative applications of existing technologies and solutions. USAID has a proud history of being behind many of the last century's breakthroughs—from oral rehydration, to polio eradication efforts, to the Green Revolution. One of my top priorities as Administrator is to restore the Agency's position as a global leader in integrating science, technology, and innovation into the practice of development.

I was thrilled to be able to invite 60 of the world's leading scientists (including Nobel prize winners such as Elinor Ostrom), innovators, engineers, and technologists, and the president's science advisors, along with the leadership of the federal science cabinet, to USAID headquarters this July. The two-day conference explored how modern knowledge and innovation tools can be used to address longstanding development challenges.

At the Transforming Development Conference, I asked participants to help map out a bold new strategy for transforming development through the lens of science, technology, and innovation. As a first step, the conference helped USAID to identify dozens of "grand challenges," major development obstacles for which large-scale and innovative breakthroughs are needed, and explored how we can leverage our resources, expertise, and partners to solve them.

Innovations are nothing new for USAID. Just last month we witnessed how bold investment in applied science can lay the foundation for tremendous advancements in health. With USAID funding, a South African research team, with the help of 889 female volunteers in Durban, South Africa, showed for the first time that an antiretroviral microbicide gel can reduce the risk of HIV infection in women effectively by half. The results of the CAPRISA trial may be a watershed moment in empowering women in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

From the time of its founding in 1961, USAID has worked to cultivate game-changing advancements and encourage their widespread use to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods around the world.

In its early days, the Agency pioneered many important developments in the fields of health, agriculture, and education. In the 1960s, USAID funded smallpox eradication programs in 20 West and Central African countries, and the World Health Organization eventually adapted these interventions to eliminate small pox in Asia and the rest of Africa.

In the mid 1980s, USAID provided around half of all donor assistance to polio eradication programs in the Latin America and Caribbean region. By 1994, the Western Hemisphere was declared polio free.

The Agency's dedication to embracing and proliferating groundbreaking agricultural technologies helped spur the Green Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s, when the combination of high-yield grain varieties with the proliferation of innovative farm practices set Asia on a path to sustainable development. It was the headstrong belief in science and innovation epitomized by Nobel Peace laureate Norman Borlaug that laid the foundations to save billions of lives across the globe. Without U.S. scientific leadership four decades ago, the Green Revolution would not have been possible.

There are many more examples of how USAID has cultivated cutting-edge policies and practices, all of which make it hard to

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# GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

## BRIEFS

### Pledges Still Out for Haiti Rebuilding

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Former President Bill Clinton said Aug. 6 that major international donors have yet to come through on billions of dollars pledged for reconstruction efforts in the struggling republic, according to the Associated Press.

Clinton hopes that the $300 million in projects he presented at a meeting of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission, co-chaired by Clinton and Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive, would encourage big nations to "open their wallets." The former president spoke with reporters from a town where thousands were still living under tarps and tents.

Seven months after the earthquake, frustrations are running high in the country where 1.6 million people are estimated homeless and only 10 percent of the funds pledged in March have been provided. The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance sent about a third of its total operating budget to Haiti in USAID's initial response to the disaster.

### Civilian Deaths Up in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan—Civilian deaths resulting from the war in Afghanistan rose by 6 percent over the same period last year, Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission told the Associated Press. Sixty-eight percent of the 1,325 recorded civilian deaths were caused by the Taliban and their allies while 23 percent were attributed to NATO or Afghan forces.

The modest size of the increase in civilian casualties suggests that U.S. and NATO efforts in the region may be having some success, but the news came as the bodies of 10 NGO workers were transported to Kabul from the area in which they were massacred earlier this month.

Most civilian deaths have occurred in the southern part of the country and are typically the result of insurgent bombings, which are usually on the rise during the summer months.

### Rwandan Elections Successful Amid Strife

KIGALI, Rwanda—President Paul Kagami was re-elected with 93 percent of the vote in a contest that saw a 97 percent voter participation despite reports of widespread voter disenfranchisement with the party in power, according to the Associated Press.

Kagami, an ethnic Tutsi who has tried to mitigate racial tensions in the post-genocide country, is accused of barring opposition party members from voting as well as other crackdowns on public dissent. Fears of a rise in violence were exacerbated on Aug. 11 when a grenade attack wounded at least seven people at a bus station in the nation's capital.

The Rwandan government denies any involvement in attacks and violence against the opposition which occurred in the days and weeks prior to the election, but did arrest several people before the vote.

### Doctors Leave Southern Sudan

KHARTOUM, Sudan—Doctors Without Borders will suspend aid work in Southern Sudan in response to a recent surge in violence between rival tribes in the area and subsequent attacks against staff members, according to the Associated Press. The group has lost medical equipment to armed robberies in the Jonglie State.

Scarce water and pasturage has forced area tribes into a competition over resources and has escalated violence.

According to the Agence France-Presse, Mission Chief Rob Mulder said that Doctors Without Borders serves a population of more than 30,000 people, including more than 160 malnourished children. The organization was ordered out of the country last year by the government of Sudan in anticipation of an inflammatory decision by the International Criminal Court, which issued an arrest warrant for President Omar al-Beshir.

### Climate Bill Disappoints Activists

WASHINGTON—The recent failure of a Senate climate bill brought disappointment to the table during international negotiations in Bonn on a new agreement to control global warming. The negotiations constitute one of the last meetings before a major climate conference in Cancun, Mexico, scheduled for Nov. 30, according to the Associated Press.

The gap between rich and poor nations regarding how to best address climate change has widened since talks began over two years ago, with a deepening distrust among poorer countries about U.S. intentions to curb greenhouse emissions. Industrialized countries are the biggest producers of the emissions; developing countries are the most affected victims.

Climate activists hope the Cancun conference will result in a new climate treaty that will press signatories to significantly reduce carbon emissions by 2020. The Kyoto Protocol, the last major treaty, also did not include U.S. participation because the Senate did not consider the regulations on rapidly industrializing China sufficient.

### Aid Groups Return to Somalia

NAIROBI, Kenya—After more than 17 years, international organizations, including the United Nations, will begin to return to Somalia within the next two months, according to the Voice of America.

According to U.N. Special Representative Augustine Mahiga, the U.N. will start to move its Somalia operations back from Kenya in the next 60 days to address serious humanitarian concerns in the country, increasingly dominated by al-Qaeda.

According to World Vision Somalia, 3.6 million people are in need of humanitarian aid, including more than 700,000 children. Christian aid workers were recently killed by terrorists and the insurgent group al-Shabab has banned three such groups from operating in the country.

### Death Toll Rises in China Mudslides

BEIJING, China—The death toll in China following the country's worst mudslides in decades has risen to over 1,500 over the last several weeks, with more than 600 still missing, the Agence France-Presse reported. The worst recent landslides have been in Zhouqu in Gansu province, where at least 1,287 people were killed as a mudslide crashed through the city Aug. 8.

The houses, cars, and debris swept away by the landslides have clogged up the Bailong River running through Zhouqu, setting off massive flooding in the mountainous area.

Despite the presence of some 10,000 rescue workers in the area, continued rainfall has made the situation worse and complicated relief efforts in the world's most populous country, which has been subject to a chain of serious natural disasters over the past several years.

### Rising Temperatures to Slow Asian Rice Yield

Climate change could inhibit the growth of rice production in Asia, according to a study published in the peer-reviewed journal of the National Academy of Sciences, the Associated Press reported.

The study, conducted by the International Rice Research Institute, also said rising temperatures during the last 25 years have already cut the rice yield growth rate by 10 percent to 20 percent in several parts of Asia. According to researchers, "a decline in rice production means that more people will slip into poverty and hunger."

The Agence France-Presse said that researchers from the United States, the Philippines, and the Food and Agriculture Organization observed the impact of rising daily temperatures on irrigated rice production over the course of five years in different east-Asian countries.

### WHO: Swine Flu Pandemic Over

More than a year after an outbreak of H1N1 swine flu cases caused a flurry of panic and prompted a global effort to stem the disease, the flu pandemic has officially been declared over by the World Health Organization (WHO), according to *USA Today*.

According to Director-General Margaret Chan, the new H1N1 virus has largely run its course, but she cautioned that the disease has not been completely eradicated and pointed out that certain countries are still dealing with local outbreaks.

"The world is no longer in phase 6 of influenza pandemic alert. We are now moving into the post-pandemic period. The new H1N1 virus has largely run its course," Chan told the *Financial Times*.

### Kenya: Constitution Will Boost Ties to US

NAIROBI, Kenya—Mwai Kibaki, the president of Kenya, and Raila Odinga, the prime minister, expressed their praise for Kenya's recent successful vote for a new constitution, what the two leaders call "a catalyst for closer relations with the United States," according to the Associated Press.

The two leaders were formerly at odds and fears had arisen about the possibility of recurring violence that the constitution was supposed to end. In the 2007 election, more than 1,000 people perished from violence.

Some controversy had come prior to the vote, but the State Department dismissed allegations that millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars were being sent to support the constitution, which allows abortion in some cases.

*From news reports and other sources.*★

# Mark Ward Returns to Agency from U.N. Post in Kabul

*By Ben Barber*

Mark Ward had switched hats from head of USAID's Bureau for Asia to U.N. aid coordinator in Afghanistan when the Oct. 28, 2009, attack took place on a U.N. guest house in Kabul.

Speaking in his new office back in USAID where he was recently named acting head of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Ward said the Taliban had become aware that U.N. residences were easier to target than the heavily protected USAID and embassy compounds—and they acted on that knowledge in a way that hit him personally.

"The U.N. did not see itself as the target of terrorists, so security was less strong than the embassies," said Ward. "Last year, U.N. staff lived in more than 90 guest houses."

Ward's personal body guard, Louis Maxwell, was in a U.N. guest house when it was attacked by a handful of Taliban suicide bombers.

"Maxwell heard the explosions and held them off while 25 people escaped," recalled Ward.

Photo by Ben Barber, USAID

Mark Ward

"He was killed but the three attackers were all dead. He was truly a hero. I'll never forget him."

Maxwell, 27, and a father of two, was a U.N. security guard and former Navy sailor.

Ward completed nearly two years with the United Nations in Kabul as special advisor on development for UNAMA—the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. He arrived in Kabul in 2008 as the U.N. got a mandate to take on donor coordination for development.

Back in Washington, Ward is working with Administrator Rajiv Shah and the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance to grow OFDA, which he said is an "organization that has taken on tremendous demands but whose staff has not grown for a long time."

He said he hopes to better integrate OFDA into the Agency, including bringing more Foreign Service Officers into the office and rotating Civil and Foreign Service Officers through OFDA.

Asked why OFDA work has expanded, he said it was in part due to the "CNN effect," which brings disasters into American living rooms, creating pressure for a U.S. response. Other reasons for increased disaster response seem to be the crowded nature of our planet and the U.S. leadership role in a troubled world.

Despite growth in the OFDA program budget to $1 billion, the operating expenses needed to manage those programs have remained flat, he said.

In Afghanistan, a country Ward had crisscrossed many times for USAID before taking on the U.N. role, Ward worked to build up the government's ability to accept and use foreign aid—more than 60 percent of which was American.

"The challenge of the job was to try to get big donors to support Afghan government priorities," Ward recalled. Since aid began to flow after 2002 and the ouster of the Taliban from power, "people fell into bad habits about how to spend their aid money," he said. "The government of Afghanistan did not know what donors were doing."

He said that only an international organization such as UNAMA is positioned to try to change the way aid is supplied to Afghanistan: "We made some progress but have a long way to go," he said.

Speaking just prior to the July 20 Kabul conference on aid donations—the first international conference organized and held inside Afghanistan—he said it would be a chance to get donors to "realign" aid behind Afghan priorities.

For example, the United States has been supporting the Afghan government's National Solidarity Program, which has been successful in many development activities. "One reason I took the [U.N.] job was the NSP success. A good national program can act like a magnet for donor money," Ward said.

The challenge donors face is that it is easier and safer to to take complete control of assistance efforts—to "do everything for the Afghans"—and be sure aid funds are not misspent. But it is better—even if it is slower—to do aid work through the Afghans and prepare them to manage the country once "we bring our troops home," Ward said.

He voiced confidence in the ministries of health, education, finance, mines, and agriculture, which were "led by very good ministers and good staff." He described his U.N. role as being a "behind the scenes 'coach' to the ministers." ★

## FRONTLINES: AUGUSTS PAST

**1970:** The chief public safety adviser in the Agency's mission in Uruguay, Dan Mitrione, was killed 10 days after he was kidnapped by a terrorist group known as the Tupamaros, reported the Aug. 13 *FrontLines*. The group had demanded that President Jorge Pacheco free 150 prisoners in exchange for the release of Mitrione and two other hostages. Mitrione was the seventh USAID public safety adviser to be killed on duty. An additional seven had been seriously wounded.

**1980:** The world is heading toward more pollution, population growth, and resource limitations over the next 20 years predicts a report titled "Global 2000," released by the Council on Environmental Quality and the State Department and reported in the Aug. 14 *FrontLines*. The article warns that unless nations take steps to address social, economic, and environmental problems, "the world must expect a troubled entry into the 21st century."

**1990:** The August *FrontLines* reports that the Caribbean Basin Initiative, a 12-year effort that began in 1984 to increase U.S. trade with 27 nations of the Caribbean and Central America, is having a dramatic effect. The annual growth rate in manufacturing exports has averaged 20 percent or more in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic. U.S. businesses are also benefiting from the initiative as U.S. exports to the region's USAID-assisted countries rose from $3.6 billion in 1983 to $5.1 billion in 1988.

**2000:** The August/September edition of *FrontLines* is devoted to preventing famine, with articles on droughts and water shortages in Africa, India, and the Middle East. The Famine Early Warning System and speedy delivery of food aid is credited with averting famine in the Horn of Africa, although a severe drought continues to threaten the population. "Seventy percent of the world's total water supply is used for agricultural irrigation," declares an article on dwindling water supplies.★

Photo by the Peace Corps

Children at a school in rural Guatemala share water at a faucet installed through the Small Project Assistance Program, a joint collaboration between USAID and the Peace Corps.

**HIV** from page 1

world. With 5.7 million people infected with HIV, South Africa has higher levels than any other country.

Although researchers spent the past two decades trying to develop a microbicide gel that was effective in blocking the virus, the CAPRISA study marks the first time that a gel using an antiviral drug, which prevents the virus from multiplying, was used in trial.

The results of the study kept the conference invigorated despite activists' concerns over perceived cutbacks on HIV/AIDS treatment funding by the international community.

Development experts said that this trial could open the door for women in sub-Saharan Africa to assume greater control over their health. Very often, women are unable to convince partners to wear condoms, rely on their fidelity, or avoid sexual coercion and violence. Women account for about 60 percent of all infections in the world.

"First, we all recognize and understand the importance of women, and particularly, young women, bearing the brunt of the HIV epidemic in Africa," said CAPRISA Director Dr. Salim S. Abdool Karim at a press conference.

"Tenofovir gel potentially adds a new approach to HIV prevention as the first that can be used and controlled by women. It can help empower women to take control of their own risk of HIV prevention."

In the trial, the volunteers were instructed to insert the microbicide gel up to 12 hours before having sex, again up to 12 hours afterwards, and not more than twice a day. Levels of HIV incidence in these women were compared to women who had received a placebo gel. All volunteers were provided condoms and frequent HIV-prevention counseling at the beginning of the trial and monthly thereafter.

### Funding, Risks, and More Trials

Microbicide research has been a long and frustrating road for scientists and donor agencies. Jeff Spieler, a senior technical advisor for science and technology in USAID's Bureau for Global Health, who was chief of research at the time the study began, said that USAID took a calculated risk in deciding to fund the trial. "There were controversies," he said, explaining that some researchers argued that there was not enough data on the antiretroviral gel to proceed. They were also concerned about the way that the gel was being used. "But ultimately, if you don't take risks, you may not have big wins," Spieler added.

USAID put up $16.5 million of the $18 million of the study's costs, with the remainder of the funding provided by the South African government's Technology Innovation Agency and CAPRISA. Technical assistance was provided by Family Health International and the product was provided by the CONRAD Program.

When the results were tallied, researchers discovered another unforeseen benefit—Tenofovir gel also protected against genital herpes (HSV-2).

"This was a huge added bonus," said Spieler. "Protecting against HSV-2 is also critical to the prevention of HIV/AIDS." Women with genital herpes are around 45 percent more likely to be infected with HIV if they are exposed to the virus than those who are not.

Because the CAPRISA findings will now have to be confirmed by additional trials to obtain regulatory approval, it could still be several years before this product is widely available.

"Additional studies are urgently needed to confirm and indeed to extend the findings of this trial both for safety and effectiveness," said Dr. Karim. "Once confirmed and implemented, Tenofovir gel has the potential to alter the course of the HIV epidemic."

USAID has vowed to be involved in a follow-up trial to CAPRISA 004, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) currently has a trial underway using a once-a-day dosage scheme with the same gel. It expects to announce results in 2013.

In Vulindlela, the rural site for the trial, the CAPRISA team is already designing a follow-up study. CONRAD, which manufactured the prefilled applicators of Tenofovir gel for the CAPRISA study, is working with the South African government to have the product manufactured locally. Gilead Sciences, which developed the drug, had previously given a free license for the use of the gel both to CONRAD and International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM). The goal is to eventually mass produce doses that cost just 25 cents each, or to bring down costs even more by developing a way to apply the drug without an applicator.

Lee Claypool, head of USAID's microbicide research team, said the Agency's end goal is to make this product affordable and available for women in developing countries worldwide, especially those most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. "Our commitment is to get this product to the women who need it most," he said.

Shah highlighted the CAPRISA trial as an example of USAID's renewed focus on scientific innovation.

"CAPRISA 004 is a model for future research studies in which clinical trials will be led by in-country investigators backed up by the scientific and operational expertise of their U.S. colleagues," Shah said.

"This approach builds the research capacity of the developing world, contributes to sustainable health systems, and exemplifies how President Obama's Global Health Initiative intends to leverage technology and innovation to improve health around the world." ★

*Jessica DiRocco contributed to this story.*

## Global Health Initiative to Focus on AIDS Prevention

In May of last year, President Barack Obama announced the $63 billion Global Health Initiative (GHI), a plan for the United States to develop an integrated global health program that focuses on coordination and sustainability and will be evaluated in terms of significant health improvements in the developing world.

While the plan has been widely hailed by development experts, some HIV/AIDS activists have protested the ideological shift from a disease-specific approach to health to a comprehensive model. They fear the levels of funding for treatment under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) could be sacrificed in a strategy that moves away from emergency response to a sustainable, country-owned effort.

At a Town Hall meeting earlier this month, Obama addressed these concerns, explaining that, if his appropriations requests are fulfilled, PEPFAR funding would actually increase under the GHI framework. He added that the funds were now "couched" better in a structure that would improve health across the board.

"Even as we're battling HIV/AIDS, we want to make sure that we are thinking not only in terms of treatment, but also in terms of prevention and preventing transmission," Obama explained. "We're never going to have enough money to simply treat people who are constantly getting infected. We've got to have a mechanism to stop the transmission rate," he said.

The president explained that the GHI will focus on building public health structures and identifying successful prevention programs for institutionalization. "[We need to] make them culturally specific," he said, "because not every program is going to be appropriate for every country."

"I will say that in Africa, in particular, one thing we do know is that empowering women is going to be critical to reducing the transmission rate. So often, women—not having any control over sexual practices and their own bodies—end up having extremely high transmission rates. The bottom line is we're going to focus on prevention, and building a public health infrastructure," he said.

One promising development has been the results of the CAPRISA 004 trial that demonstrated the first proof of concept for a women-controlled antiretroviral-based gel. (See story on page 1.)

USAID's Jeff Spieler said that the GHI goal of empowering women was just one of several ways the CAPRISA trial fulfills the U.S. government's new health strategy. "It is remarkable how the CAPRISA 004 trial exemplifies and executes the fundamental and cross-cutting principles of President Obama's Global Health Initiative," he said. ★ — *K.R.*

## How CAPRISA Fulfills the GHI

The CAPRISA study focused on:

- Research, development, and innovation as the first-ever effectiveness and safety trial of an antiretroviral-based microbicidal gel
- Women-centered programming in addressing the needs of women and girls
- Country ownership as it was conducted by South African investigators and co-funded in country
- Strategic coordination as it was designed and conducted collaboratively with multiple partners including academia, NGOs, governments, multilateral agencies, and industry
- Sustainability and health systems strengthening. The capacity building, training, lessons learned, and support of the government will position CAPRISA to continue making ground-breaking advances in research and service delivery.
- Monitoring and evaluation. The study was conducted with the highest standards of research and evaluation. The publication of the primary results in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal Science is testimony to the level of excellence demonstrated.

For more information on the GHI, go to www.usaid.gov/ghi/factsheet.html.

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# SPECIAL REPORT: THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

WWW. USAID.GOV AUGUST 2010

## Cycle of Conflict Challenges Progress in the DRC

At the end of June, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) celebrated 50 years of independence from Belgium with the country's recently installed president, Joseph Kabila, calling for a "moral revolution" among its 68 million citizens.

Those 50 years of independence have been marked by multiple wars, human rights abuses, and an assortment of suffering for the people who call the country home.

Sitting in the middle of the African continent, DRC is huge—about 2.3 million square kilometers, or just under one-quarter the size of the United States—and touches borders with nine other nations. It is rich in minerals, including a key ingredient in cell phones and laptop computers, and an ecological goldmine, with everything from active volcanoes to the endangered mountain gorilla.

But conflict persists, particularly in the east of the country. Recent economic gains—the GDP increased in 2008 and 2009—have not yet reversed earlier decades of economic losses due to armed conflict and all that results from it, including large numbers of displaced persons, malnutrition, and disease. By some estimates, more than 5 million people died as a result of the fighting in the country in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

The advent of a democratically elected government, say USAID officials, presents the greatest opportunity since independence for a stable, representative democracy in the DRC. The new government is now working to build institutions that can meet citizens' needs, while dealing with a laundry list of challenges—rampant corruption, poor infrastructure, and a lack of skilled workers. There is progress, but it is coming slower than anyone would like.

The series of stories that follow cover some of the ways USAID is partnering with Congolese people, their government, and other organizations to build up the country. ★

*For more stories, photos, and videos of the DRC, go to the online version of* FrontLines *at www.usaid.gov/frontlines.*

The conflicts over the past several decades in the Democratic Republic of Congo are complex and involve a number of players. To get more details about the fighting and the main combatants, go to www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/congo.htm.

Photo by Angela Rucker, USAID

**In the Democratic Republic of Congo, women often bring their pre-school-age children with them to work in the fields as did this mother who is standing amid a cassava project. Agriculture employs 84 percent of the women in the country. Read more about a successful effort to develop disease-resistant cassava on page 8.**

Photo by Alain Mukeba, USAID

**Members of a community cooperative build stoves that are energy efficient with tin and clay. Each stove will sell for between $5 and $9.**

## Efficient Wood Stoves Aim to Preserve Virunga Park Forests

*By Angela Rucker*

**GOMA, Congo**—Eighty percent of the charcoal and wood used for cooking fuel in this region around Goma comes from the nearby Virunga National Park—Africa's first national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site that has been on the endangered list since 1994.

The fuel is a necessity for Goma residents. But cutting down trees denudes the forest. And burning charcoal and wood releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which contributes to climate change.

So can a new type of cooking stove really turn the tide in the environment's favor?

Officials with USAID's Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) and its partner in a stove venture, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), say yes.

"Our vision is to reduce deforestation, but also to make people's lives better," said WWF's Roy Buhendwa, who is responsible for the program's Virunga office.

see **STOVES** on page 8 ▶

FrontLines *writer-editor Angela Rucker wrote this series of articles following a trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo in June.*

**STOVES** from page 7

Photo by Angela Rucker, USAID

**Huge bags of charcoal are biked into Goma every day. The charcoal was most likely made from trees growing in the Virunga National Park, a World Heritage Site that is in environmental danger.**

CARPE is a USAID-funded conservation effort in the Congo Basin, which holds the largest tropical forest in the world after the Amazon.

Like other parts of the Congo Basin, Virunga is a biological mother lode of plant and animal life. It has also been a longtime home to many Congolese and a resource for others who live within biking or driving distance. The ecological balance, however, is shifting quickly as people use the resources faster than they can be replaced.

"You can't talk abut protecting the national park without addressing the needs of the people. You will miss your target," explained Thierry Bodson, program manager with the WWF's Virunga Environmental Program.

Thus, the idea to promote the stoves was born in 2009. Each style—there are two models, selected after holding focus groups with potential users—uses half as much charcoal than their predecessors, Buhendwa explained.

One style consists of a clay insert and tin exterior. The other is made entirely of tin. Each weighs about 10 pounds and costs between $5 and $9.

In addition to being safer and cleaner than the stove most Goma residents now use, the new stoves save money. Each 35-kilogram bag of charcoal costs $25 to $30. Cutting costs in half leaves money for school fees, medical care, and food purchases, says the WWF's Consolee Kavira Semengo, who is in charge of energy-saving efforts in Goma.

"So it's really economical," she said.

And, added Buhendwa: "It is really reducing the number of trees that are cut down. The community wins by having these [stoves]."

The stoves are manufactured by neighborhood cooperatives whose members receive local materials, training to build the stoves, and other technical assistance from WWF. Money from sales of the stoves is reinvested in the cooperatives.

Right now, Semengo said, just 5 percent of households have purchased a new model.

This city of 250,000 cannot provide energy for all, Bodson said. So the project supports 104 tree nurseries that will help replenish the park, growing trees for charcoal, wood fires, and medicine.

When Rwandan refugees began returning to their homes in 1997, there were no trees left, said Bihenura Kalemira, who manages one of the tree nurseries just outside Goma. "It's not hard work," said Kalemira, as he lifted one of the small saplings for an inspection. "It's in the interest of the community." ★

# DISEASE-RESISTANT CASSAVA REVIVES DRC AGRICULTURE

*By Angela Rucker*

**MBANZA-NGUNGU, Congo**—Several new varieties of disease-resistant cassava appear to be thriving just outside this western city in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), providing a lifeline to farmers fighting a disease that was destroying their crops.

Beginning in the mid 1990s, cassava mosaic disease spread from plant to plant via the white fly, destroying its leaves and roots. Production collapsed by as much as 70 percent, said agronomist Stefan Hauser, the country representative for the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), a member of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, which is managed by the World Bank.

"Cassava being the backbone of the rural economy, it needed immediate action," Hauser said.

The apparent success of disease-resistant varieties of cassava is putting more money in the pockets of farmers and more food on the tables of Congolese, said Nzola Meso Mahungu, coordinator of a project to revive cassava.

"Cassava is the most important staple crop in Congo," said Mahungu. "It has more than 70 percent of the population depending on it as a source of calories."

Although not native to the African continent, cassava thrives there. It is easy to grow, drought tolerant, and requires little maintenance. Every part of the plant is consumed: the leaves are simmered into stews, and the roots are the primary ingredient in the traditional regional dish *fufu* and other dishes.

All that began to vanish, however, in the 1990s. Pests and disease began to attack cassava.

"These started having a negative impact on many crops," Mahungu said.

"Due to civil unrest, there was no longer an extension service."

Annual production fell from 19 million tons to 14 million tons. The country soon began importing rice from Thailand and Vietnam to replace cassava.

The cassava decline came as agricultural production fell 40 percent since 1990 due to armed conflicts that displaced thousands of farmers. Malnutrition grew as a result.

In 2000, USAID, the European Union, France, Belgium, Sweden, and several universities began to rehabilitate cassava. They focused not only on creating disease-resistant strains, but improving the value chain so farmers could earn more for their cassava.

"We are trying to put in some equity so that when a farmer produces cassava, the middle man will give a premium," Mahungu said.

Photo by Alain Mukeba, USAID

**This young boy stands amid a thriving cassava field in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This field includes several disease-resistant varieties of the country's staple food.**

**► Go to www.usaid.gov/frontllines to read about how USAID is providing humanitarian assistance—including emergency food aid—in the Democratic Republic of Congo.**

To date, researchers and farmers together have produced 11 varieties of improved cassava. Four of the new varieties contain high levels of vitamin A, an important nutrient for children.

Farmers like 32-year-old Hortense Lutina say the new varieties of cassava bring as much as three times the money as older varieties. It is money she uses to pay school fees for her children, cover the costs of health care, buy clothing, and send a few dollars to relatives in Kinshasa.

Introducing the new varieties to farmers was not simple. Farmers, who were provided materials and lessons on improved farming methods as part of the project, had to be convinced.

"We had to show them a demonstration field," explained Sylvain Bidiaka, another food scientist working with the project. "After a season, they can see, 'Now we can go with this technology.'"

While the primary aims of the cassava effort are to improve the agricultural base and to eradicate poverty, IITA's Hauser said the country must rebuild its network of extension agents and its agricultural expertise.

There are challenges to surmount on the consumer side of the equation as well. Congolese have grown accustomed to cheaper rice and will need to be convinced to spend a little more for cassava.

Nonetheless, Mahungu is confident the people will return to buying cassava. He says the plant is the African farmer's best kept secret, with great potential in both agriculture and industries where there are opportunities to produce and export cassava-based products.

USAID officials agree with Mahungu that the agricultural sector in DRC can be a key leader in the country's economic growth, and are backing that assertion up with aid. Agency funding for agriculture in DRC jumped from $2 million in 2007 to $21 million in 2009. ★

# FOCUS ON THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Photo by Angela Rucker, USAID

A Congolese mother gazes proudly at the newborn she delivered without complications at the Kaziba General Hospital, in Kaziba, South Kivu. USAID supports the AXxes project in this region of the Democratic Republic of Congo in an effort to improve maternal and child health.

## Hospital Deliveries Improve Maternal and Infant Health

*By Angela Rucker*

**KAZIBA, SOUTH KIVU, Congo**—Nearly every day at 3:00 p.m., Kiriza Assani, 27, closes his music store and begins his second job.

With illustrated health guides and flip charts in tow, Assani travels around the Kaziba health district encouraging residents, particularly pregnant women, to take better care of their health.

Assani, who knows just about everybody around this town 34 miles from Bukavu in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), takes the assignment seriously. "Sometimes I will go twice or three times to the house," he said, describing how he prods the most reticent.

"My strategy is to tell them they will get really sick … and, that I will accompany them to the hospital."

Community health workers like Assani are on the front line in a fight to improve the health of new mothers and babies in this country.

Standing inside the 37-bed maternity building of Kaziba General Hospital, Dr. Nessy Basimike, the physician in charge of the hospital and the nearly 100,000-population Kaziba health zone, says the needle is moving in the right direction—more women coming to the hospital to deliver, and more healthy babies surviving to their first birthdays. Before him are rows of hospital beds, each occupied by a colorfully dressed mother and newborn resting under mosquito nets.

A USAID-backed project spent over $70 million over four years to improve health in 80 health zones in the country, including 28 in South Kivu.

The challenges are daunting in the DRC. Nearly one in five deaths of women ages 15 to 49 years is related to pregnancy.

In 2007, for every 100,000 births, there were 549 maternal deaths; infant mortality rates were at 92 for every 1,000 live births. The estimated figures for 2010 have improved, but the country is still among the bottom 20 in the world for maternal and child health.

One program, called AXxes, is working on several fronts to address the issue, including at the Kaziba hospital. While new mothers are a particular emphasis, the program also focuses on nutrition, vaccination, handwashing, and other prevention strategies. Training staff and improving health facilities—both managerially and structurally—are also among the measures.

Figures for access to prenatal care, assisted deliveries, and use of contraceptives all show improvement over the last year, said Dr. Janvier Barhobagayana, the AXxes medical coordinator with implementing partner Catholic Relief Services. But there is something less tangible as well—a change for the better in attitudes. The successes in the program, he said, are encouraging more people in the community to seek out health services.

Some health centers and hospitals have purchased motor bikes to transport people and supplies. And at the Kaziba hospital, high-risk pregnant women now can stay in guest houses on the meticulously landscaped hospital campus instead of staying home or chancing the treacherous roads that lead to the hospital.

Every month, Dr. Basimike said, about 250 healthy babies are born at Kaziba General Hospital.

That is not to say there aren't still many challenges. Ongoing conflicts in the region can mean interrupted health care if patients have to flee their homes. Roads are so poorly maintained that health supplies must be flown in, adding to the cost of health care and limiting how much can be spent on medical services. In some locations, there is no place to warehouse supplies. Remote locations also make overseeing health providers difficult.

Dr. Basimike says paying for care is a constant battle—a modern health care complaint common among even the richest countries. Congolese in the region had become accustomed to free health care at the hospital when it was run by missionaries. But now the Kaziba hospital is charging about $5 for an in-hospital delivery from people with limited income. Close to 40 percent don't pay their hospital bills, Dr. Basimike said. ★

## Kinshasa Street Children Get a Second Chance

*By Angela Rucker*

**KINSHASA, Congo**—It has been two weeks since Francina came to stay at a center for girls who are turned out of their homes by their parents.

"Here it is better than being outside. Here they guard us," said the poised 14-year-old who is enrolled in high school and wants to be a lawyer when she grows up. "Sometimes outside people even get killed, you can get raped."

Outside are the teeming streets of Kinshasa, where one survey taken a couple of years ago estimated there are 14,000 street children living on their own. They are sometimes disheveled and often aggressive in demanding money from people on the street. So prevalent are the children here and in other Congolese cities that they have their own nickname—*shegué*, and are featured in popular Congolese music.

In the majority of cases—about 70 percent—the parents throw the children out because they believe they are witches or are possessed. They cite as proof claims like the child wets the bed or eats too much or has nightmares. At the root of the problem, says a UNICEF study published this year, is urbanization, conflict, and the economic burdens of caring for children. The average income in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is $120 per year, and families typically have about six children.

According to UNICEF, there are more than 4 million orphans in the DRC and more than a quarter of children in the country work, some as young as age 5. More than 4.4 million children, or nearly half the school-age population, are not in school.

Moreover, the country has by some estimates 30,000 boys and girls who are child soldiers or are assigned other tasks within armed groups. Reintegrating former child soldiers, who are one of the legacies of the DRC's past conflicts, presents its own set of challenges.

In 2009, the DRC passed a child protection law to protect vulnerable youngsters, including *shegué*, child soldiers, and others who fall between the cracks.

USAID and Save the Children worked with state and regional officials in Kinshasa, Bukavu, and Mbuji Mayi to train magistrates, social workers, and others to identify children at risk and get them services they need. Copies of the law have been distributed to police officers.

"There is a law, but it is not enough," said Kinshasa Chief Magistrate Jean Paul Owanga Kabue, who said the new rules—among the first significant changes to the child-focused laws since the 1950s—must be applied vigorously. "If we stop today [without enforcing the law], we will have the same situation."

The law is "a big change" for police officers and court officials,

see **CHILDREN** on page 10 ▶

Photo by Angela Rucker, USAID

Former child soldier Riziki Basubi, now 22, was 16 when he shot and killed a man who refused to cooperate when he pulled up to the checkpoint that Basubi was manning. In 2004, he was tried as an adult in a military court and sentenced to life in prison. Avocats Sans Frontieres, an organization that USAID supports, helped get Basubi a new trial, where his sentence was reduced to six years. He has already been locked up in a Bukavu jail for five. Officials hope to win his release before the six years is up. "Home is not here," says Basubi, who wants to be a tailor when he is released. "It's outside in Mwenga," a town in South Kivu. He also said he hopes no other child soldier follows his path to prison.

# Rape Survivors Are Evidence of Violent Crime's Reach in DRC

*By Angela Rucker*

**KALEHE, SOUTH KIVU, Congo**—A U.N. official called the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) the rape capital of the world this year.

According to groups who work with rape survivors, the problem is only getting worse. Though a war pitting DRC against several neighboring countries, rebel groups, and local militia ended in 2003, fighting still continues off and on in eastern Congo. And rape here is a weapon of war.

Equally disturbing, however, is the increasing domestic violence in parts of the DRC—both within and outside areas affected by the eastern conflict.

Estimates are that more than 200,000 women and girls have been raped over the last decade. Women describe extremely violent assaults filled with torture, brutality, and inhuman behavior. They are left with physical and emotional scars. They are frequently ostracized from husbands and communities. And they are often left destitute, with no means to make money and, often, several children to support.

In addition, according to Congolese law, women must get permission from the male head of household to bring a case to court; this is often very difficult to do.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced last year the United States would spend $17 million to combat sexual and gender-based violence in DRC, training health care workers and providing counseling, economic assistance, and legal support to survivors.

USAID already has spent more than $33 million on sexual and gender-based violence programs in the country since 2002, including medical care, counseling, and legal assistance to victims, said Sara Rasmussen-Tall, USAID's social protection team leader in DRC.

"I think that real success is [figuring out] how to end impunity," Rasmussen-Tall said. "It's not just healing the sick bodies of sick women. It's healing the sick minds of sick men."

The country passed a law against sexual and gender-based violence in 2006, which made men only modestly afraid of arrest, said Jessy Kapesa, who oversees legal services for survivors through the NGO International Rescue Committee (IRC).

Photo by Angela Rucker, USAID

**Germaine Riziki, left, and Judith Iragi, both psychosocial workers with International Rescue Committee (IRC), help rape survivors in South Kivu access the services they need to begin to restore their physical and mental health. They are speaking with Sandra Sotelo Reyes, facing away from camera, IRC's gender-based violence program coordinator. USAID supports more than 90 NGOs in DRC—most in the east of the country—that provide services to rape survivors.**

**► Go to www.usaid.gov/frontlines to read about how the Heal Africa Hospital in Goma, North Kivu, works to heal the physical and emotional scars of women who are left with a debilitating condition after being brutally raped.**

Even if a woman pursues legal action against her rapists, he said, there are several obstacles. There are only a few courts in South Kivu where many rapes occur. Cases that should take four months could take up to two years. Judges can be bought off if a case makes it to their bench. And medical evidence of a rape is often missing, either because women are not able to report it soon enough after an assault or because medical personnel don't adequately compile the evidence.

What has improved, however, is awareness of the problem and access to treatment. More people know that seeking health care is critical and more women are accessing services within 72 hours of an assault. Rape kits are now available at more health centers as well.

"The community knows how to react and how to take [someone] to a medical center," said Claudine Rusasura, IRC's psychosocial supervisor.

And community members are now accepting of therapy. "This was a big step," said Rusasura.

In Kalehe, a town in South Kivu, rape survivors know they can find medical and psychosocial care, guidance on legal action against their rapists, and training they can use to generate an income, such as soap making.

Judith Iragi and Germaine Riziki, both psychosocial workers with IRC, work out of a small building here that has become a therapy hub for the women.

"This is where they come to listen," Iragi explains during a tour of the small structure that includes a room for women if they need to spend the night.

Iragi and Riziki say they explain the services of the center and then allow the women to tell their story. They look for the telltale signs—crying, fearfulness, fast pulse, anger, depression, indifference—and begin counseling when a woman is ready.

"It's very difficult because they do have stress," said Riziki, who has been a counselor for three years and has taken some of the survivors into her home when they and their children have no place else to go.

Their stories are heartbreakingly similar.

One woman, 45, said she was approached and then attacked by three men in military uniform while she was out in a field gathering wood. "I didn't move for a long time. Then I walked out of the field to get help," she said. It was four days before she received any medical care.

It was around midnight when two army soldiers knocked on the door of a 25-year-old mother. The soldiers raped her inside her own house and then took all of her clothes. Women in the neighborhood discovered what had happened and saw that she got to the Kalehe center the next day. The woman's husband accepted her back, perhaps, she says, because she received health care and other services immediately after the assault. Few women are so fortunate.

Janet's husband rejected her after she was assaulted. Her attackers didn't care that she was nine months pregnant during the assault, she said while cradling her infant. Janet's last name is being withheld for privacy reasons.

Close to 70 percent of the rapists in this region are fighters, says Sandra Sotelo Reyes of IRC. The other 30 percent are civilians, but that can be misleading because there are so many former combatants among their ranks.

The U.S. Institute of Peace said in a report released in June that fighters have a "repertoire of rape." Some use guns to penetrate their victims after gang raping them or fire the weapon into the woman. Others force relatives to watch or participate in the assault. Seemingly ritualistic practices are also becoming more common, said Reyes, who recounted an instance where women are mutilated in the course of assaults. Soldiers will also say they are simply following the orders of their commander when they rape. Others say they are seeking personal gratification.

Clinton has called for "zero tolerance" to the crime, but entrenched attitudes about gender inequality will be hard to reverse quickly, most experts say.

The first step to permanently end the epidemic of rapes in the East, they say, is an end to fighting. Or, as one rape survivor said, "peace." ★

**CHILDREN** from page 9

and the training is critical, said Kabue. A mass media campaign followed passage of the child protection laws, making it easier today, he said, to publicly talk about children's rights. Before, people were not interested.

"If we had a special policy and courts for the children, I don't think that we would have a problem for children," Kabue added.

While the new law is slowly coming to bear, a variety of organizations have stepped into the gap to protect street children.

Francina, whose last name is being withheld, is one of about 50 girls cared for by a program funded by USAID and run by Save the Children at a safe house in Kinshasa. The center provides a place to stay, food, therapy, recreation, and vocational training such as tailoring, hair dressing, and cooking. At the conclusion of training (exams included), children attend a formal ceremony where they are honored for their accomplishments.

"We're trying to encircle them with this kind of support to protect them from abuse," said Susanne Kambia, the center's director.

"The biggest joy for me are kids who are transformed by the process," she said. "When they come in, they are depressed and dirty. When they have confidence, they are transformed."

There is also a center for boys in Kinshasa as well as mobile units that travel the city in the evenings to provide services to street kids. In all cases, the initial aim is to improve their living conditions; ultimately the goal is to return the child to his or her family. That is not always possible.

"Sometimes you find the family, but the parents refuse to take them back," said Theodore Ubole, the director of investigations at the center. ★

**MILLENNIUM** from page 1

achieve the MDGs—how the U.S. government plans to foster partnerships with developing countries and the international development community to achieve sustained development progress.

As outlined in President Barack Obama's National Security Strategy, embracing the MDGs is not just a moral imperative, but is also critical to protecting national interests.

"The United States has an interest in working with our allies to help the world's poorest countries grow into productive and prosperous economies governed by capable, democratic, and accountable state institutions," the plan reads.

USAID's Thomas Beck, who was involved in crafting the U.S. MDG strategy, explained how the new plan will drive fulfilling these time-bound targets.

"While enormous progress has been made since the MDGs were endorsed in 2000, historic gains in human development will be required as we approach 2015," he said. "This calls for a more determined, strategic, and innovative approach. The U.S. MDG strategy provides a framework for such an approach. It places innovation and sustainability at the heart of our efforts, and it will help focus U.S. efforts on our overall goal: sustainable progress towards higher standards of living in the developing world."

U.S. representatives will convene with other partner nations in New York in mid-September for the U.N.-sponsored MDG summit. There participants will gather to measure progress and to agree on an expedited plan of action to meet these ambitious targets.

"USAID looks forward to engaging with advocates, implementers, donors, and partner countries on how to translate these imperatives into projects, programs, and policies to make historic leaps in human development," said Administrator Rajiv Shah. "Working together, we will create partnerships that build sustainable systems to support healthy and productive lives for millions of people."★–*K.R.*

## The MDGs

- eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- achieve universal primary education
- promote gender equality and empower women
- reduce child mortality
- improve maternal health
- combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- ensure environmental sustainability
- develop a global partnership for development

www.usaid.gov/our_work/mdg/

## Healing the wounds of rape survivors and helping to resolve disputes in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Photos by Angela Rucker, USAID

**At Heal Africa Hospital's Healing Arts Center, rape survivors create colorful crafts—both traditional items like dolls and trendy pieces like bags to hold yoga mats—as part of their therapy.**

Photos by Angela Rucker, USAID

**Mwenga Eskem Songa is a local lawyer who volunteers his time and expertise at *la boutique de droit*, a free legal clinic in Bagira Commune, a suburb of Bukavu in South Kivu. He says he enjoys getting into the community to help residents resolve disputes.**

For more on the DRC, see pages 7-10, with additional stories and photos online at www.usaid.gov/frontlines.

**INSIGHTS** from page 3

imagine a world without these important breakthroughs. But there is still far to go.

We think science, technology, and innovation (STI) can level the playing field, and, when coupled with USAID's decades of knowledge in development best practices, can unlock real development gains.

Under President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, our goal is to build on USAID's legacy as one of the world's premiere development agencies. Our focus on STI will be a key part of this effort. We have already created and staffed a Science and Technology Office in the newly established Bureau of Policy, Planning, and Learning to inform policy and strategic planning. For the first time in 20 years, we have a science and technology adviser.

We will also harness creativity, talent, and resources in the United States and in the developing world to tackle common challenges, and we must be willing to experiment and take risks. This includes working with the entire federal science community to confront challenges that affect farms in Omaha as well as Ouagadougou.

President Obama understands the importance of STI for global development, and he has provided much-needed leadership in this area. His National Security Strategy calls for stronger relationships among American scientists, universities, and researchers, and their counterparts abroad.

What's more, the president's forthcoming global development policy directive will support investment in game-changing innovation for health, green energy, agriculture, and other development applications; and the USAID-State Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) will support USAID's leadership in promoting a strong STI agenda.

This administration's signature development initiatives—the Global Health Initiative and the Feed the Future food security initiative—include strong applied research and innovation components. These components must be effectively harnessed as we seek to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Our approach will be in real partnership with developing countries, helping them to build their own STI capacity to solve major challenges. This must happen by creating enabling environments for innovation, developing higher education and research systems, and by connecting institutions and people with resources in new ways.

The results of the CAPRISA trial in South Africa not only underscore the role that STI can play in addressing vexing global challenges, but also exemplify how real development partnerships can and should function.

There are great expectations for an innovation-led future in other sectors as well. Applied research in insect- and disease-resistant crop varieties are showing real promise in responding to the pests that severely harm the staple crops on which so many developing countries rely.

In Haiti, USAID recently launched an initiative with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to enable Haitians to save and borrow money securely on their cell phones. This investment could help make Haiti—a country where fewer than 10 percent of people have ever used a commercial bank—a hub for a global "m-banking" revolution.

So as the summer winds down and we enter into fall, we will keep the momentum going. In September, USAID will co-host an event on science and technology as the world gathers to take part in the U.N. General Assembly. There, following up on the Transforming Development Conference, we will announce some of the development "grand challenges" we want the world to rally around.

Just as USAID helped create the last Green Revolution, we must pioneer the next major breakthrough: one that is transformative, inclusive, and sustainable. Game-changing innovations abound: mobile phones, solar water heaters, low-cost portable computers, combined solar-powered wireless routers and street-lighting systems, low-cost water purification, and key health and agriculture technologies. Our approach must be about building off of these innovations and others and ensuring their dissemination, use, and application to local challenges in the hardest to reach places. ★

# THE REGIONS

## AFRICA

# Rainwater Harvesting Systems Prevent Disease in Zimbabwe

*By Cary R. Jimenez*

**MABVUKU, Zimbabwe**—For years, Bizallere Mofu and his extended family of 15 have depended on water drawn from unprotected, shallow neighborhood wells and carried home bucket by bucket by his grandchildren.

The Mofu house, located in the high-density suburb of Mabvuku about 20 kilometers east of Harare, has no running water. In the street, young women carry large buckets towards the unprotected well across a nearby field. Drinking the untreated water brings risk of cholera, typhoid, and other diseases.

In 2008-2009, a cholera outbreak raged throughout Zimbabwe, killing nearly 4,300 people and particularly affecting Harare's high-density suburbs. In 2010, the Harare area has seen nearly 450 cases of typhoid, with eight deaths; Mabvuku and adjacent Tafara account for 82 percent of the entire Zimbabwe caseload.

For the Mofu family, though, life has just become a little easier. The family recently received a rooftop rainwater harvesting system that, with careful attention, will provide clean water year-round.

Photo by USAID

The Mofu home with USAID-supplied water tank, Mabvuku, Zimbabwe

Photo by USAID

Headmaster of Mwanandishe Primary School, Reuben Moyana, with students

Local authorities identified the Mofu family as vulnerable to waterborne diseases because of age and health issues, allowing them to participate in the USAID-supported Peri-Urban Rooftop Rainwater Harvesting (PROOF) program.

The rainwater harvesting system consists of roof gutters that direct water into a 10,000-liter metal storage tank. During the rainy season from November to March, the tank fills regularly, allowing families to use the clean water for all household needs. During the drier months, families can use the small amount of clean water for drinking only.

Each tank has a minimum 5-year life span, and the system requires little maintenance—simply a thorough cleaning of the roof once a year and regular dusting afterwards.

As of June, 450 rainwater harvesting systems had been installed in the Harare suburbs, reaching more than 1,300 families, since

see **ZIMBABWE** on page 14 ▶

## MIDDLE EAST

# Yemen Gets Help to Disburse Loans

*By Elias Alhaddad*

**SANAA, Yemen**—Yemen's inability to disburse funds costs the country money. The country's government paid $5 million in commitment fees between 2005 and 2008 for undisbursed loans, according to the Ministry of Finance. Lenders charge the fees to hold credit open for borrowers.

Donors pledged $5 billion in aid to Yemen in November 2006. However, the government was able to disburse only 20 percent of the pledged funds due to a number of challenges, including weak capacity, low pay, poor training, and inadequate policies among government ministries.

USAID is funding the Enhancing Government Effectiveness (EGE) project to help the government improve its record in this area.

Starting in December 2008, the EGE project conducted assessments of the institutional effectiveness of Yemen's Ministries of Finance, Health, Agriculture, and Education. The assessments identified critical problems, including delays and inadequate information in the disbursement process of development loans and grants, high operating costs for carrying out donor-funded projects, high fees paid by Yemen's government on unused development loans, and weak capacity and lack of incentives for staff to manage development projects.

"[T]he USAID assessment in 2008 helped us pinpoint the bottlenecks in our disbursement system. It helped us prioritize and focus on the key factors that would allow us to be a good steward of the assistance given to Yemen," said Hani Enan, director general of external grants at the Ministry of Finance.

Since then, the project, which is carried out by Management Systems International, has been working to reverse many of the problems that contributed to the aid bottlenecks.

One major achievement of the EGE program has been the design and installation of the Loans and Grants Management Information System (LGMIS), which helps Yemeni officials manage multilateral and bilateral aid, improving efficiency, transparency, and accountability. In two months of using LGMIS, the time required for disbursing assistance was reduced from a range of 35 to 40 days down to five to seven days.

The World Bank is allocating $3.5 million over three years to scale up the system to cover all sectors proposed by the Ministry of Finance.

LGMIS is complemented by the internationally secure financial transaction and interbank system SWIFT, making Yemen only the third country in the Middle East and North Africa region to use this service. The SWIFT system is also supported by USAID.

The LGMIS-SWIFT integration reduces paperwork, eliminates the time required for the document to travel between the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank, and avoids human errors in settling government payables.

Photo by EGE project

Yemen officially launched a new disbursement system during a ceremony May 10. It was attended by more than 80 guests from various government ministries and agencies as well as donor representatives from USAID, the World Bank, the United Nations, the Netherlands, and Japan.

As Yemen's financial crisis deepens and the country seeks additional donor support, LGMIS and SWIFT can help address donors' concerns about corruption and loan disbursement. ★

*This article was written by staff from the EGE Yemen project.*

## EUROPE & EURASIA

Photo by Maka Japaridze, USAID

Breast cancer survivors tell their stories in Tbilisi, Georgia.

# Breast Cancer Walk/Run in Georgia Stresses Survival

*By Michael O'Brien*

**TBILISI, Georgia**—Talking about breast cancer is still taboo in Georgia. But not discussing the disease is having deadly consequences here: Breast cancer is now the leading cause of death for women ages 15 to 49.

USAID is working to educate women about the disease through programs like Survive, a public-private partnership that promotes early testing and detection and supports activities like the Georgia Race for the Cure.

The Georgia walk, held in Tbilisi May 29, is a carbon copy of 5-kilometer walks and runs sponsored by the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure that are held in cities throughout the world to raise money for breast cancer research and services.

This was the sixth race in Georgia, but the second race in Tbilisi. USAID helped organize the first breast cancer walk in Kutaisi in 2005 under the Healthy Women in Georgia project, carried out by the John Snow Inc. Research and Training Institute. The Agency has co-sponsored the race each year.

This year over 3,000 people came to Turtle Lake, one of Tbilisi's family friendly parks, to celebrate life and inspire women to get tested and treated early. The message of the day was that early detection saves lives.

"Breast cancer is needlessly taking the lives of many Georgian women each year," said Marika Davituliani, director and co-founder of Women Wellness Care Alliance HERA.

"In Georgia, women don't have access to quality information, are afraid to come forward, and assume that cancer is a death sentence. The Georgia Race for the Cure will show the public that breast cancer is a real problem in Georgia and that we need to support women battling the disease. These women need to know that they are not alone."

The day was filled with family oriented activities, including handing out T-shirts and face painting for children. Many women wore their pink T-shirts, identifying them as breast cancer survivors. Then there was a 5-kilometer race and a 2-kilometer walk. Georgia

see **GEORGIA** on page 14 ▶

## LATIN AMERICA

# Colombian Island Steers Its Own Course with Housing and Sanitation

*By Katerine Castro*

**ISLA GRANDE, Colombia**—The "ecological" walls of 52 refurbished homes on Colombia's Isla Grande in the Caribbean Sea are lined with biodegradable waste left behind by tourists, dry leaves, and plastic bottles as part of a single solution for two major problems on the island: sanitation and shelter. The houses and clean-up efforts are the result of a local project funded by USAID.

"I give thanks to God for this project. It has improved our homes and our children's lives. I feel I have become a better person," said Elsida Villalobos, a 43-year-old artisan.

Isla Grande has the largest population in the Rosario archipelago. It is located an

see **COLOMBIA** on page 14 ▶

Photo by PADF/Colombia

Fourteen new businesses in Isla Grande, Colombia, market crafts; another 15 offer tours of the island.

## ASIA

# Supreme Court Portal Goes Live in Vietnam

*By Richard Nyberg*

**HANOI**—Vietnam took another step to strengthen transparency in its judicial system by launching the first Web portal for the Supreme People's Court (SPC).

Supported by USAID, the Vietnamese-language portal—http://www.toaan.gov.vn—will provide the Vietnamese public greater access to the judicial system through the legal information hosted on the site. The portal features all legal procedures and a manual for judges. Over 240 cases submitted for SPC review and judgment between 2002 and 2006 are currently online, with more to come. Portal visitors can also comment on draft court rulings and pose questions that are answered online.

"I would like to stress the special and effective assistance from USAID in legislative development, publication of court decisions, implementation of intellectual property rights laws, and completion of the portal," said Deputy Chief Justice Dang Quang Phuong. He added that the "first online interface" of the Supreme Court with the public is a "milestone in the cooperation of USAID and the Supreme Court."

At an April 22 event, one of many marking the 15th anniversary of normalized diplomatic relations between the United

see **VIETNAM** on page 15 ▶

Photo by Richard Nyberg, USAID

Gone are the days when Tran Ngoc Nga in Ho Chi Minh City had to sift through stacks of old documents to answer public queries on regulations. With USAID-supported software, it takes seconds to locate records.

# CONTINUED. . .

**GEORGIA** from page 13

Photo by Maka Japaridze, USAID

**A group of breast cancer survivors gets treats following a walk in Tbilisi, Georgia.**

first lady Sandra Roelofs and U.S. Ambassador to Georgia John R. Bass were among the walkers and speakers.

Breast cancer screening sites and informational booths were active throughout the day. A post-race concert by a local Georgian folk group wrapped up the event.

The highlight of the day, however, was the inspiring words from several courageous women who took the stage to talk about their battle with breast cancer.

Not only do many Georgian women not talk about breast cancer, but they often postpone testing because they believe a positive diagnosis automatically means radical surgery, or worse, death.

"If I could tell other women something, I would say to pay attention to your health, and especially to breast health, because you can be cured if you catch it in time," said Tsiala Rostiashvili, a breast cancer survivor. ★

**ZIMBABWE** from page 12

one tank will generally be shared between two or three households.

The PROOF program, which is carried out by International Relief and Development (IRD), also provides area schools with clean water for drinking and for the washrooms. The 1,400-student Mwanandishe Primary School in Mabvuku is the first school to receive a rainwater catchment system under the program, and four more schools in high-risk areas are slated to receive systems in the near future.

"We are going to benefit when the rains come," said Headmaster Reuben Moyana. "It will be a relief to get a new system," he remarked, since city water rarely flows from the taps, and school maintenance staff struggle to keep the toilets clean.

Teachers have been trained in waterborne disease prevention through regular access to water. The teachers, in turn, will pass the knowledge to students and parents.

As Zimbabwe's economy struggles to revive after years of hyperinflation, the PROOF program also has a beneficial effect on local manufacturers who supply the water tanks and laborers who install the tanks and gutters and build the concrete bases.

"The main goal of the PROOF program is, of course, to protect the health and welfare of the people of Zimbabwe," said IRD Country Director Themos Ntasis. "[But] we know that the program has been extremely helpful to local businesses and to the economy."

Local manufacturer R. McDiarmid & Co. has made 250 tanks for PROOF, and at one point added 33 people to its staff as contract workers—including a plumber who now no longer needs to have six people on hand to help push-start his car, since he can now afford a car battery.

The program "enabled us to obtain U.S. dollars and get back on our feet," said the company's Ken McDiarmid. Last year, when the company bid on the program, "we had absolutely no working capital," following the conversion of the country's economy from Zimbabwean dollars to U.S. currency to stem hyperinflation, he said.

Since 2007, USAID has provided more than $633 million in humanitarian assistance to Zimbabwe. ★

**BIH** from page 3

to normal living. Loan and credit guarantee programs offered 6,000 commercial enterprise and micro loans worth $200 million to BiH enterprises, including farmers.

To promote agriculture, new market linkages were created for over 250 traders, agriculture processors, and producers worth $11 million. In democracy and governance, assistance has improved the transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of more than half of BiH's 148 municipalities, with funding not only from the governments of Sweden and the Netherlands, but a collective cost-share of 69 percent from municipal governments.

Half of BiH's courts have also been reconstructed into modern, efficient, client-oriented, rule of law institutions.

Looking ahead to the country's elections this fall, USAID is working through state institutions to improve election administration and implementation of the country's electoral laws. Projects are also encouraging media and civil society organizations to take an assertive stance when questioning and extracting promises from government officials and candidates.

A new energy efficiency project focuses on private sector expansion and foreign investment, both of which are critical for the country's economic sustainability and political stability.★

**COLOMBIA** from page 13

hour from Cartagena by motorboat, the only way to access the island. Despite the beautiful beaches, it is not easy for the natives to live isolated from the city, without potable water, sewage systems, or electricity, and with temperatures of around 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

The 182 families on the island are Afro-Colombian, whose ancestors arrived several generations ago. Traditionally, raising the quality of life on Isla Grande has been difficult.

To improve conditions for island dwellers, USAID financed a project carried out by the Afro-Colombian Community Council of the Islas del Rosario and the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF). The project strengthened the council's ability to autonomously administer the community's affairs and improved the island's sanitation systems.

To complement the improvement of some homes, the project installed solar panels to provide energy for 34 families that did not have electricity and set up 28 businesses on the island to improve family incomes.

The initiative has allowed Isla Grande to drive its own development.

"This project made it possible for us to strengthen our community as a whole," said Ever de la Rosa, a Community Council leader. "We were trained in organization and business management as well as human development and self-esteem. It has helped us to change our vision of life." ★

## Cell Phones and Internet Leapfrog Repression

*By Troy Etulain*

In one particularly repressive African country* where there have been no independent broadcasters for the past 30 years, the majority of its citizens are fed a steady diet of propaganda from government-controlled media.

In January, a tiny journalistic crack opened with the aid of some technological know-how, cell phones, and a new USAID program.

With Agency help, a local organization set up text messaging and IVR (interactive voice response) information systems that even residents in the country's most remote areas could use to receive information via mobile phone about human rights violations and other topics they might otherwise miss from mainstream media sources. Close to 60 percent of people in Africa have access to a cell phone.

The technology also worked in reverse, allowing residents to report information back to the organization.

More than 3,000 calls came in within the first two days the service went live. By June, country officials began threatening the three cellular service providers with closure if they did not block the nascent news services.

The harshness of the threat demonstrated the power of mobile phones to overcome a stranglehold on information. It was a grand introduction for the Media Assistance utilizing Technological Advancements and Direct Online Response (MATADOR) program.

MATADOR, run out of USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance, exploits technology to aid civil society organizations.

The program reviews the communications strategies of a civil society organization and helps identify specific technologies—mostly Internet and mobile phones—that could boost impact.

The aim is to take advantage of the Internet, the ubiquity of mobile phones, and the fact that much of the software involved is free and open-sourced.

MATADOR also embraces the trend of civil society organizations playing a larger journalistic role, reporting on events ignored by mainstream media.

While the technological tools are readily available, expertise in software adaptation and use of digital media among pro-democracy groups is not widespread.

In Bosnia, a MATADOR consultant worked with the Center for Civic Initiatives, a long-time USAID partner, to develop a website that presents information about key social and economic issues in a clear and engaging way.

The site includes a virtual "dashboard," or customized display of information, that allows for easy visual comparison of the performance of government institutions across all levels—from local to national. The assistance led to the "Votemeter," a questionnaire on the website that helps visitors identify candidates whose positions most closely align with their own.

In Peru, a MATADOR consultant worked with Transparencia, a local civic organization, to improve its website's ability to carry out outreach activities. The group began running analytical tools on its website, increasing navigability, speed, and engagement with mainstream social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

The consultant also set up the organization with a special mobile phone-based SMS (texting) parsing tool to monitor elections. The phone will receive polling station information via text and route the information directly to the Transparencia website for display.

USAID staff in Peru said the assistance was "exactly the type of program that USAID [headquarters] should be offering to missions."

MATADOR is implemented by New York-based MobileActive.org. ★

**The country is unidentified due to security reasons.*

# CONTINUED. . .

**PAKISTAN** from page 1

Photo by World Food Program

**A Pakistani man collects whatever belongings he can find after his house is destroyed by the massive August 2010 flooding.**

Amid the chaos and destruction, USAID immediately responded to the Pakistan National Disaster Management Authority's call to provide crucial assistance to flood victims.

"The need for response to this disaster is urgent, and even as we triple our financial commitment, we remain flexible so we can meet new needs as they arise," said Administrator Rajiv Shah. "We are committed to support the government of Pakistan to identify gaps where USAID can provide assistance."

USAID's response has come in several stages, reflecting the changing needs as the disaster progresses. Part of USAID's initial response was to send rescue boats and airlift emergency relief supplies.

During the first weeks of the crisis, the U.S. government announced more than $90 million in assistance.

The contribution will go towards expanding emergency programs, and to the international organizations and NGOs that will carry out relief efforts. In an effort to thwart growing food insecurity, USAID provided $15 million to the U.N. World Food Program to procure food locally, and to dispatch food from a USAID warehouse in Djibouti.

The Agency dispatched a Disaster Assistance Response Team to Pakistan that is supported by a Washington-based Response Management Team to coordinate humanitarian assistance with the government of Pakistan, U.N. agencies, NGOs, and other donors.

Given the flood's impact, USAID/Pakistan is looking for ways to adapt current programs to the changing development needs in Pakistan once the level of destruction becomes clearer.

The floods will prove to be a formidable obstacle to progress in a country already struggling with religious extremism, terrorism, poverty, illiteracy, corruption, overpopulation, and inflation.

The American people have a history of responding generously to the people of Pakistan in times of need. In 2005, a devastating 7.6 magnitude earthquake struck Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), killing 75,000 people and leaving hundreds of thousands without food and shelter. USAID was among the first to respond, and remains in the AJK region to this day to follow through on a $200 million multi-sectoral reconstruction program.

USAID will remain committed to emergency relief efforts; and when the flood waters recede, the Agency will play a critical role in rebuilding what was lost.

For individuals and organizations who wish to help those affected by the floods, USAID encourages cash donations to humanitarian organizations already working in the affected areas. Americans are contributing to Pakistan flood relief by texting the word "SWAT" to 50555. Each text will result in a donation of $10 to the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees' Pakistan flood relief effort, helping to provide emergency aid to displaced families.

For more information about USAID's flood response efforts, please visit www.usaid.gov/pakistanflooding. ★

A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for flood response efforts in Pakistan can be found at **www.interaction.org**.

**VIETNAM** from page 13

States and Vietnam, U.S. Ambassador Michael W. Michalak commended the court for "ensuring that all relevant Vietnamese parties, including Vietnamese citizens, have the right and responsibility to comment on laws and regulations that will have a direct bearing on Vietnam's social and economic development."

The portal is part of the court's commitment to the U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement and World Trade Organization requirements that draft laws and regulations be published 60 days before becoming effective.

Since 2001, USAID has supported Vietnam's efforts to develop a transparent legal framework. Prior to 2002, no Vietnamese government agency had a website to publish laws and regulations. Today, all agencies publish regulations on their websites.

"Our policy is to use the portal for judicial reform," Phuong said. "Everyone can see that this portal represents access to justice and access to the court."

In addition to the SPC portal, USAID helped to develop e-official gazette software to manage the editing, approval, and publishing steps for each document. The software has been installed in 18 provinces, racking up more than 8 million hits so far.

Gazette software for the central government is currently being installed and is likely to be online by the end of this year.

According to Tran Ngoc Nga, director of the online gazette for Ho Chi Minh City, before the software was installed, a manual paper search used to take several minutes. With the e-official gazette, it takes seconds.

"The way we receive, edit, and publicize documents has changed completely," she said. "Every step is now computerized and the software makes editing and processing documents easier. We now stay on top of things instead of running after documents."

Another site promoting 60-day comment on draft laws and regulations is Vibonline—www.vibonline.com.vn. Supported by USAID, it is the first online site in Vietnam for public comment on draft laws. It has become the most active legal forum on draft laws and regulations for businesses since its inception in 2004 even though a dozen other sites have appeared since then. ★


## 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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# SPOTLIGHT ON LOW-COST INVENTIONS

**BAMBOO TREADLE PUMP**
**Designer: Gunnar Barnes of Rangpur/Dinajpur Rural Service and International Development Enterprises, Nepal**
**© 2002 International Development Enterprises**

**GLOBAL VILLAGE SHELTER**
**Designer: Ferrara Design, Inc., with Architecture for Humanity**
**© 2005 Architecture for Humanity and Grenada Relief, Recovery, and Reconstruction**

## Affordable Products Meet Needs of World's Poor

*By Steven Gale*

The National Geographic Society is currently showcasing a wide range of low-cost products aimed to improve the lives of the 3 billion people who live in the poorest countries of the world.

The products are designed by a new wave of inventors, engineers, and social entrepreneurs seeking to divert some of the creative forces of the wealthy world toward meeting the urgent needs of the poor.

More than 3 billion people live on less than $2.50 per day and mostly lack basic services like shelter, water, education, transportation, and health care. But the majority of the world's designers invent products for 10 percent of the world's richest populations.

The new products highlighted in the Geographic exhibit are low-cost items invented by a savvy group of development-minded professionals. Many of the products are also designed to help people increase their incomes.

"Design for the Other 90%," the traveling exhibit now at the National Geographic Museum in Washington, D.C., will close on Sept. 6 and is available on the Web at: http://events.nationalgeographic.com/events/exhibits/2010/04/28/design-other-90.

Among the 30 life-transforming products is a simple "pot-in-pot cooler" that consists of two closely sized clay pots in which food requiring refrigeration is kept cool by sand and water. As water evaporates from the larger vessel, heat is pulled from the smaller one that holds the food.

Another simple device is called the Big Boda Bike, which, according to its builders, can carry hundreds of pounds of cargo—or two additional passengers—over rough terrain.

The exhibit also features solar cookers that can heat food quickly with the sun's rays.

Other innovations on display include solar-powered street lighting, wireless hubs for rural areas lacking Internet access, a wireless home-lighting system for remote villages, and a solar-powered hearing aid. The solar devices make it possible to study or work at home at night; and replace dangerous and noxious fuels like kerosene, gasoline, and candles typically used to generate light.

Some designs focus on water. One is a donut-shaped water container that can be easily rolled over long distances by a rope threaded through the donut's "hole." Another is a low-cost drip irrigation system for small-scale farmers.

One of the most dramatic innovations on display is called "LifeStraw," which allows an individual to drink water from contaminated sources like puddles, rivers, lakes, and streams. The 10-inch long, 1-inch wide straw instantaneously filters out impurities.

The exhibit also features a number of next-generation laptops, priced at or under $100, designed for children as both computing and educational tools.

"Design for the Other 90%" highlights science, technology, and innovation used to solve today's development challenges with a mix of high- and low-tech solutions.

USAID marked its continual promotion of science and technology with a conference July 13 in Washington at which Administrator Rajiv Shah and dozens of experts on science and development discussed how to transform the lives of millions using these and similar innovations. ★

**SOLAR HOME LIGHTING SYSTEM**
**Designer/Manufacturer: SELCO-India**
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