



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FRONTLINES

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Chhem Pe, a leadership competition winner, recently visited New York City and Washington.

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US RUSHES HAITI AID AS QUAKE TOLL RISES

By Ben Barber

A major earthquake struck the densely populated Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince just before 5 p.m., Jan. 12. As of Feb. 6, Haiti's government estimated 212,000 were killed, hundreds of thousands badly injured, and up to 3 million people in need of food, water, medical care, and shelter.

The disaster set off one of the world's largest emergency relief operations in recent memory.

Within one hour of the magnitude 7 earthquake, USAID activated its Response Management Team (RMT) at its headquarters in Washington and also told two emergency rescue teams to fly immediately to the Caribbean island nation.

President Barack Obama named the newly installed USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah to head



USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, left, visits a hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jan. 23.

up the U.S. emergency response and coordinate all U.S. aid. Obama initially pledged \$100 million in aid, but three weeks after the quake, USAID spending on the emergency had reached \$296

million; U.S. civilian and military aid together reached \$464 million; and other governments and the

see **HAITI** on page 14 and Haiti photo spread on page 16 ▶

African Diaspora Marketplace Gives \$1.4 Million to Winners

By John Waggoner

WASHINGTON—Fifty-eight entrepreneurs from the African diaspora—Africans living in the United States—stood before their booths at the Academy for Educational Development (AED) conference center Jan. 13 touting their ideas on how to bring businesses and jobs to their home countries.

They were finalists in the African Diaspora Marketplace, which seeks to boost economic opportunity in Africa by giving start-up companies and new ideas support in the sub-Saharan region.

They were competing for a share of \$1.4 million in grants—\$800,000 provided by Western Union and \$600,000 from USAID. Fourteen businesses were selected as winners after facing an extensive grilling by 16 development experts.

Discussion around the booths was animated, spurred by the competition and pride in the proposals

on display. The marketplace brought interest from a range of investors, including representatives from the World Bank.

"I'm really fired up," said one participant, who was exhilarated by meeting other African entrepreneurs, sharing ideas, and commiserating over earlier setbacks.

The marketplace is one of the first business competitions to harness the knowledge of the U.S.-based African diaspora with the know-how of local partners. The 58 finalists were selected from a field of 700 who applied.

Karen Turner, director of USAID's Office of Development Partners, called the potential entrepreneurs an "untapped" and "committed resource" with an "abiding interest" in the welfare of their home countries.

"USAID's contribution is attracting private investment interest in these promising enterprises," observed Michael Yates,

the Agency's senior deputy assistant administrator in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade.

The initiative is distinguished from other forms of development programming and holds promise as a new way to create public/private initiatives.

"This is a pilot," Turner said. Monitoring will follow with an eye to replicating successful projects elsewhere in Africa and other developing countries.

The business proposals on display were diverse. Among them: expanding fish farming in Nigeria; manufacturing solar cooking ovens in Uganda; improving waste management services in Liberia; producing solar-powered street lights and billboards for local governments in regions of Africa with poor public power service; and establishing alternative schooling for pre-school and elementary age children in Senegal.

USAID missions are encouraged to lend technical expertise to the competition winners to help them get their ideas successfully launched. ★



As one of the poorest countries in the world, Nepal is struggling to overcome huge development problems. But since 1951, life expectancy has doubled, literacy has increased, and diseases have been reduced. Find out how USAID has been helping the country over the years on pages 7-10. Pictured: A woman spins Tibetan prayer wheels at a temple in the capital city of Kathmandu.

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Interview with Nancy Birdsall

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton delivered a major speech on U.S. foreign aid and international development policies Jan. 6 (see article, this page). She was introduced by Nancy Birdsall, a founder and president at the Center for Global Development, a think tank focused on improving the economic development of poor countries. On Jan. 12, Birdsall sat down with FrontLines Editorial Director Ben Barber for an interview.

Q: What does the speech Hillary Clinton gave last week mean for USAID and for its role in the U.S. government?

BIRDSALL: The speech she gave is probably the most ambitious and strategically focused speech from a secretary of state on development that I can remember.

She waited to give the speech until there was a USAID administrator, Dr. Rajiv Shah. That signaled her view that USAID is the centerpiece within the State Department for development and that her own ambition is that USAID return to being the world's premiere development agency.

It's an elevation admittedly from really a kind of nadir in terms of reputation and I would say even effectiveness.

Q: What are the areas of USAID that have deteriorated over the years with budget and staff cuts?

BIRDSALL: In the 1960s, USAID produced some of the best and most strategic thinking on development. That's where the thought leadership was in the field.

So where has weakness come? Everywhere—policy, strategy, effectiveness in the field, flexibility, the loss of whatever animal spirits or incentives inside the bureaucracy led to innovation.

The problems come from outside, from congressional mandates and earmarks.

USAID is focused on compliance, on fears of waste and corruption, and thus on monitoring of all the inputs that make up a foreign assistance program, instead of working with the partner countries on the outcomes.

Q: So how are Hillary Clinton and Rajiv Shah going to change it?

BIRDSALL: Leadership is needed from the administration in working with the Congress on new legislation. The legislation that created USAID goes back to the 1960s. There's a lot of eagerness on the congressional side—from [Sen.] John Kerry [D-Mass.] from [Rep.] Howard Berman [D-Calif.] from [Sen.] Richard Lugar [R-Ind.]—to make progress. Secretary of State Clinton also spoke of the need to rethink the role of development in foreign policy beyond foreign assistance to trade policy, migration policy, climate strategy, and investment programs and policies.

Q: What are the areas in which USAID has unique value that can be rebuilt?

BIRDSALL: The staff of USAID have years of experience in the field. They have not had channels to feed their strategic vision and use their ground-truthing. They lack effective channels of communication between those who have experience on the ground and those who are doing the big thinking in Washington, in USAID itself, in the State Department, and in all the other agencies in federal government involved in development.

Also, USAID within the State Department is the agency that stands for what Secretary Clinton emphasized is the long haul, the lasting changes that take longer, the sustainability part. So the challenge inside the State Department is to preserve somehow, to ring-fence the budget and policy and provide enough autonomy to USAID as an agency, even inside the State Department, that it has a strong voice relative to diplomacy as well as to defense.

Human nature is that the short-term imperative of diplomacy will crowd out the longer-term imperative of development. We need an agency that stands for the long haul.

Q: What is the impact of having many different government agencies involved in development?

BIRDSALL: We have to have many different government agencies involved with development—we live in a complicated world. So it's not a bad thing, per se, to have what people call fragmentation.

What's important, however, is to have one strategic view. And that's why this presidential study directive that's been led in the White House is so important, because hopefully it is bringing together all of the agencies inside the federal government as well as outside government: the foundations, the private sector. The idea is to develop a strategic focus and direction that guides implementation of trade policy, of foreign assistance programs, of our approach to climate change as it affects people in developing countries, of our approach to security issues in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and so on.

Leadership should come from a development agency. It doesn't mean that the development agency or its leadership gets to tell everybody else what to do in other people's domains, but just as we have the U.S. trade representative present in discussions about security or the head of the Department of Commerce present, we need the development perspective in those larger discussions.

Q: How much of the policy speech is new and how much is a continuation of long-standing practices?

BIRDSALL: It must be frustrating for people in USAID to hear things and have the world think it's new when they've been living with these messages and these ideals and this mission for a long time.

I think what's important about the speech, frankly, is that it came from the secretary of state, who is clearly tremendously knowledgeable and tremendously passionate. She reflected in the speech and brought together ideas that may seem not entirely new, but it's still new for an official at the highest level in the U.S. to be repeating



Nancy Birdsall, president of the Center for Global Development

them in a very careful, intelligent, passionate way.

One thing that was also new in the speech was the references to innovation and to some programs at the global level like the advanced market commitment. For example, the United States with others might buy at a certain price vaccines which otherwise wouldn't get either researched and developed or produced in sufficient quantities. So it's to create an incentive to the private sector to put in the resources to develop or produce a certain product.

Q: Clinton says contractors have taken over too large a role in USAID; how can this be changed?

BIRDSALL: Contractors are not all bad. A lot of very good people work for the contractors. But it's very low value for money, for the American people, because the costs for the outcomes, and even for the inputs, say in Afghanistan or in Malawi or in Papua New Guinea, are just too high. But more important is inflexibility—that because of pre-existing contracts, it's very difficult for a USAID mission director to have resources to do something that needs to be done and makes sense to do now. The money is locked up in specific sectors. And there's been a reduction in the number of technically competent staff in USAID to interact with contractors. Some of that expertise needs to be internalized in the government itself, not contracted out. ★

CLINTON BACKS USAID

By Ben Barber

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton delivered a broad policy speech on the need for support and reform in U.S. foreign assistance on Jan. 6, a day before swearing in new USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah at the Ronald Reagan Building.

Speaking at the Petersen Institute for International Economics in Washington, Clinton said she has heard Americans question the need for foreign aid “when there is so much hardship here at home.”

She said the American people cannot be assured of security and prosperity “when one-third of humankind live in conditions that offer them little chance of building better lives for themselves or their children.”

And she noted that “Administrator Shah and I are united in our commitment” to improve coordination between defense, diplomacy, and development to secure U.S. national goals.

Violent extremism will be hard to stop until economic progress links poor countries to modern markets and technologies, Clinton said. And poor countries cannot advance towards democracy while poverty is rampant. Unstable countries, she added, are unable to stop conflicts, global criminal networks, and epidemics that reach across borders.

“Development...is a strategic, economic, and moral imperative—as central to advancing American interests and solving global problems as diplomacy or defense,” she said.

Development experts and advocates have been “riven by conflict and controversy...over where and how to pursue development,” Clinton said. She called for a new approach that would make development “a central pillar of our foreign policy” and would “rebuild USAID into the world's premier development agency.”

And she called for a greater emphasis on measurable results from aid programs that have proved difficult to monitor and evaluate over the years, adding: “We must share the proof of our progress with the public.”

However, in Haiti, Yemen, and some other situations “we will

see CLINTON on page 15 ▶

MISSION OF THE MONTH



Students visit an interactive booth on a local governance and decentralization program at the Youth Festival in Kampong Cham Province July 18-19, 2009.

CAMBODIA



two methods of contraception, a 13 percent increase over those not reached, while 51 percent of those reached knew the symptoms of sexually transmitted infections, a 36 percent increase.

Real Theng, 25, became a peer volunteer in high school six years ago to meet new people and educate his classmates about the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. “I was so proud to be keeping my friends healthy,” Real said. In his three years as a volunteer, he gained confidence and learned how to advocate with adults in positions of authority as well as other skills that serve him well in his current career with the Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia, the Cambodian-run NGO that carries out the Peer Education program.

USAID’s Political Competition program is also building future leaders. Through the Youth Council of Cambodia, an organization with hundreds of volunteers across the country, the program has held youth festivals and democracy seminars that thus far have attracted 187,000 young people in nine provinces. The festivals promote political activism, voter registration, and involvement in local government. Carried out by the International Republican Institute, the Political Competition program also produces the “Youth Leadership Challenge,” a reality television show watched by millions (see related story on page 11).

Real, the former health volunteer, said programs like these are helping young Cambodians find their voice. “It’s important for us to be heard by policy makers so that we can play our part in shaping the country’s future,” he said. ★

Cambodia’s Youth Help Each Other with Health, Employment Challenges

Challenge

Cambodia has one of the youngest populations in the world. From 1976 to 1979, an estimated 1.7 million people—one in four Cambodians—died under Khmer Rouge rule. Hundreds of thousands more fled the country. As a result, 70 percent of the population today is less than 30 years old. Born after the fall of the Khmer Rouge, this young generation faces many challenges to develop the country, and USAID is working to help it overcome these obstacles.

Each year, 250,000 youth enter the work force, but the economy struggles to find employment for them. The education system is weak and does not prepare them for careers in the global economy. Many young people have poor nutrition or die from preventable diseases. Meanwhile, an entrenched system of patronage discourages youth involvement in government and civil society.

Innovative Response

Nearly all USAID programs in Cambodia have a youth component, whether in

health, education, economic growth, or governance. These programs have an impact on some of the biggest problems facing young people. They also encourage youth to get involved in their communities and civil society, so they become active participants in the long-term development of Cambodia.

Results

One such program is USAID’s Peer Education program, which uses a network of 11,800 unpaid volunteers aged 18 to 24 to educate other young people about issues such as reproductive health, nutrition, and drug use. Through group discussions, dance performances, and mobile videos, the program has taken its messages to 460,000 young people in over 1,000 villages, many of them in rural areas with little access to media and high illiteracy rates.

According to a 2008 survey, 71 percent of young people reached by peer volunteers knew the consequences of early pregnancy, a 19 percent increase over those not reached by the program. In addition, 50 percent of youth reached by the program could accurately name

INSIGHTS

FROM ADMINISTRATOR DR. RAJIV SHAH



Like many USAID staff, I have struggled to give words to the devastation we have seen in Haiti and the difficulty we have faced delivering aid under such challenging conditions. Even before the earthquake, Haiti lacked critical infra-

structure and service delivery capabilities. The little capacity the country did have was either buried or severely damaged on the evening of Jan. 12. What remained intact was a one-runway airport with no control tower. In the face of these challenges, USAID has led a massive, whole-of-government effort to open up distribution channels and deliver critical personnel and supplies to the people and places where they are needed.

Our personnel on the ground in Haiti are doing a heroic job. They have worked around the clock, digging through dust and rubble, navigating broken roads, and putting themselves in great danger. Whether it is USAID staff, including our incredible Foreign Service National colleagues, or our partners in the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, State, or Homeland Security, everyone across the federal family has worked in concert toward a common goal. We are all deeply proud of them, and grateful for their work.

In addition to those on the ground, nearly every one of us has found a way to pitch in and make a difference. I know many USAID staff here at home have gone beyond their normal responsibilities. The selflessness and dedication you have shown is further evidence that USAID employees treat their jobs as more than just a career but as a life’s calling.

Haiti will continue to be a major focus for months and years to come. I believe our effectiveness in coordinating this unified response will help advance our larger reform agenda at USAID. We have an historic opportunity to enhance USAID’s role as the world’s premier development agency—and we need to seize it. We have the potential to deploy more resources, build deeper partnerships, and utilize innovative technologies to achieve new progress on our mission.

Realizing this opportunity will require a sustained commitment across our entire government. And it will be informed by the important reviews underway with the QDDR [Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review] and PSD [Presidential Study Directive]. But the real change we seek will ultimately begin with us. Our ability to improve the way we do business is central to this revitalization effort.

There are three principles that I want all of us to keep in mind as we plan, execute, and evaluate our work: focus, scale, and impact.

Improving our business practices begins with reexamining our focus. While our goal must be to do the most good for the most people, this can often lead us to attempt to do too much, spreading ourselves too thin and compromising our effectiveness. Instead, we will focus on strategic areas where we can have a major impact.

Second, within these areas of strategic focus, we need to enhance the scale of our work. This means taking a comprehensive approach that addresses all of the factors that influence our success, investing intensively where we can speed up progress and benefit people the most.

And third, we must constantly consider the impact of our work. Simply put, we must be relentlessly focused on results. Our success won’t be measured by the dollars we spend or the programs we create, but on the tangible results we achieve for the people we serve. The smarter we work, the sooner we will create conditions where our assistance is no longer needed. Ultimately, this must be the goal of every project we undertake.

We kicked off February with the rollout of the Global Health Initiative (GHI), which was designed with these principles in mind. I believe GHI will take our health assistance to the next level and fully maximize the sustainable health impact for every dollar invested. I look forward to hearing the feedback we receive during this consultation period.

Whether it is in health, democracy and governance, agriculture and economic growth, or any other sector, the change we seek will

see **INSIGHTS** on page 5 ►

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

BRIEFS

Aid Groups Say Southern Sudan Peace Shaky

NAIROBI, Kenya—Southern Sudan could see a return to chaos and warfare if the international community does not strengthen the 2005 peace deal that ended more than 20 years of civil war, a group of aid agencies warned Jan. 7, the Associated Press reported.

The first multi-party elections in more than two decades are set for April, and the groups said in a report that a referendum on independence for the south in January 2011 also could re-ignite the war that killed 2 million people.

The 10 aid agencies—including Oxfam International, Save the Children, and World Vision—also worry about disputes between the south and north over oil.

The report, entitled “Rescuing the Peace in Southern Sudan,” said some 2,500 people were killed and 350,000 others were displaced in 2009.

Civilians Key to New Afghan-Pakistan Strategy

WASHINGTON—Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on Jan. 22 unveiled a strategy to stabilize Afghanistan and Pakistan that calls for sending more civilian experts to the region, AFP reported.

Clinton called for increases of experts in Afghanistan beyond the nearly 1,000 U.S. civilian

experts due to be deployed in the next few weeks. Plans call for rebuilding the Afghan farm sector, improving governance, and reintegrating extremists into society.

The strategy also calls for helping Pakistan fight an Islamist insurgency and enact political and economic reforms; and countering extremist voices in both countries.

“I believe this strategy offers the best prospect for stabilizing Afghanistan and Pakistan,” Clinton said.

The Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy was produced by the Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, who briefed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on it.

Zimbabwe Faces Food Shortages

HARARE, Zimbabwe—Nation Online, a local news source, reported Jan. 19 that Zimbabwe is facing massive food shortages again this year with crops already wilting in many parts of the country due to a prolonged dry spell.

The USAID-funded Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET) predicts that, as a result of the poor rainfall and the severe shortage of agriculture inputs, 2.2 million Zimbabweans will need food aid.

Close to half of Zimbabwe’s population has depended on donors for food in the last nine years.

In November, the United Nations reduced by almost 50 percent its request for donations to assist Zimbabwe’s poor, following positive changes in the

economic situation. Aid agencies now fear the cuts in funding will see more people going without food this year.

Middle East Faces Water Shortage

The Middle East is facing its worst water crisis in decades, National Public Radio reported Jan. 7.

For three summers, the annual rains failed to come. Farmland dried up across the region in Iraq, Syria, southeast Turkey, and Lebanon. Experts say the climate is warming in the Fertile Crescent, the area of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, contributing to the water shortage and helping to create a new phenomenon—water refugees.

Droughts for several consecutive years and the damming of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers have the Middle East facing its worst water crisis in decades.

This winter, rain has barely settled into the hard, cracked farmland in northern Syria. There was a time when the fields were green most of the year, but the summer droughts have taken a toll.

Child Soldiers Leave Nepal Maoist Camps

SINDHULI, Nepal—Thousands of former child soldiers who fought for the Maoists in Nepal’s decade-long civil war began leaving the U.N.-monitored camps where they have spent the past three years, AFP reported Jan. 7.

Most are now adults, but some were as young as 13 when they joined the rebels and have had little formal education.

“My hands have only been trained to use guns,” said

23-year-old Bhawana Chaudhary, who was just 17 when she joined the army.

More than 200 young men and women swapped their blue People’s Liberation Army (PLA) uniforms for civilian clothes and began their journey home after an official ceremony at the Sindhuli camp in central Nepal. They are the first of almost 24,000 former Maoist fighters confined to U.N.-supervised camps as part of the 2006 peace agreement to be formally discharged.

Polio Fight Goes On in Afghanistan

KABUL—Successful anti-polio action depends on vaccinators being able to reach and immunize every under-5 child in 13 volatile districts in the southern provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, and Farah, according to the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO).

“These 13 districts are high priority areas and if we succeed in fighting the virus there, we will eradicate polio in the country,” Tahir Pervaiz Mir, WHO’s polio eradication officer in Afghanistan, told the U.N. agency IRIN.

“The virus is localized and we want to finish the job at the earliest [opportunity] and not allow it to spread beyond the southern region,” he said.

About 84 percent of Afghanistan is polio-free but the disease remains virulent in the 13 districts, where health workers have little or no access.

Most of the 38 polio cases in 2009 were reported in the south, though one case each was reported in the provinces of

Kapisa, Ghor, Nangarhar, and Nuristan.

Gates Foundation Pledges \$10 Billion for Vaccines

DAVOS, Switzerland—The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will donate \$10 billion over the next decade to research new vaccines and bring them to the world’s poorest countries, the Microsoft co-founder and his wife said Jan. 29, the Associated Press reported.

Calling for government and business contributions, they said the money will raise immunization rates and make sure 90 percent of children are immunized against diseases such as diarrhea and pneumonia in poorer nations.

“We must make this the decade of vaccines,” Bill Gates said in a statement.

“Vaccines already save and improve millions of lives in developing countries.”

He said the commitment more than doubles the \$4.5 billion the foundation has given to vaccine research over the years.

The foundation said up to 7.6 million children under 5 could be saved through 2019 as a result of the donation. It also estimates that an additional 1.1 million kids would be saved if a malaria vaccine can be introduced by 2014. A tuberculosis vaccine would prevent even more deaths.

From news reports and other sources. ★

FRONTLINES: FEBRUARIES PAST

1970: Under a headline “President Calls for Changes in Aid,” *FrontLines* quoted President Richard Nixon as saying: “I expect a new approach to foreign assistance to be one of our major

foreign policy initiatives in the coming years.”

1980: *FrontLines* reported that Acting Mission Director Chester Bell closed the USAID Afghanistan mission Jan. 3, a week after the invasion of that

country by the Soviet Union. The article noted that the USAID building at that time was located next to the Soviet Embassy.

1990: The Agency entered the new year with a hiring freeze, reported the December

1989 issue of *FrontLines*. Acting Administrator Mark Edelman issued the order to conserve funds in the Agency’s operating expenses.

2000: The second season of *Alam Simsim* came to a

close, *FrontLines* reported. The USAID-financed Egyptian version of the popular children’s program “Sesame Street” aimed to address low literacy rates and low enrollment rates of girls in Egyptian schools. ★

Iraq or West Virginia? Training For Survival

By Margy Hanon

The threat of heavy rain, recent insurgent attacks, and potential loss of communications weighed heavily on the 24 inter-agency Civilian Response Corps (CRC) officers as their armored cars maneuvered along remote dirt roads.

The teams scanned the hilly terrain, putting into action their surveillance detection training, as each vehicle's navigator carefully monitored their GPS and map positioning.

Rounding a slight bend, their destination soon came into view—a small camp filled with refugees displaced by the recent war.

And although this scenario was only part of a training exercise in West Virginia, the teams carried out their assessment mission as though they were located in one of many places throughout the world dealing with conflict or civil strife.

The SNOE course, or Security for Non-traditional Operating Environments, prepares CRC civilians to live and work in remote, austere, and high-threat countries overseas. The course was developed jointly by the State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization.

SNOE's unique curriculum focuses on "survivability training" required to operate in regions that are hostile or semi-permissive—meaning that one can travel outside of protected bases but there is some, hopefully manageable, risk.

These locations include not only Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, but numerous other remote posts such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan

where reconstruction and stabilization is taking place.

The training weeks, spent mainly outdoors, will prepare CRC teams for travel in unconventional regions and teach them how to remain safe and carry out their assigned missions even as the field conditions worsen.

The morning of the final exercise, the USAID CRC officers reflected on the previous three weeks of arduous training in subjects such as: crafting a mission plan, hostage survival, and administering trauma first aid in the field.

As they made their final rounds of vehicle inspections, they said they felt prepared to encounter a simulated roadside improvised explosive device (IED) or roadblock during the day's exercise. Phrases such as "suspicious armed individual on left," "reverse out," "keep backing," and "prepare for Y-turn" were drilled into their heads during classes on high-threat, on- and off-road driving methods.

As the groups donned their body armor and gathered for their final intelligence brief before boarding the convoy, each team leader reviewed the alternate strategies again should something not go according to plan. The leaders reminded their teams to identify all potential



Civilian Response Corps members training in post-conflict stabilization learn to make fire from flint and steel.



Civilian Response Corps members cope with a simulated field injury during a course carried out at Quantico, Va.

helicopter landing zones in case they needed to request a casualty evacuation. The CRC members nodded as they remembered their training—wind direction, landing zone measurements, ground markers, obstructions, and signaling devices were all crucial

pieces of information they would need to relay.

With the clouds rolling in, the team leaders ordered their advance survey vehicles to head out. The CRC members climbed

into the armored SUVs armed with skills that would prepare them to save themselves and their fellow aid workers and complete their jobs in possibly dangerous conditions. ★

Letter to the Editor

I have read your article on Sierra Leone [*FrontLines*, August 2009, page 6] with great interest. I am a cassava processing expert and food scientist, with over 30 years of experience in technical assistance to developing tropical countries. Cassava is very poor in protein, unlike what is stated in the article. In fact, this is one of the big drawbacks, nutritionally. I have been working to find a solution.

Best regards,
Ramana R. "Ralph" Govin,
PhD

INSIGHTS from page 3

not come easily. But if we continue to unite behind a common purpose—as we have in assisting the people of Haiti in their greatest hour of need—I am certain that we will seize the opportunity to remake USAID and make new progress on our mission. ★

WEINSENFELD TO DIRECT HAITI RECONSTRUCTION



Administrator Rajiv Shah announced Feb. 5 that USAID's director in Peru, Paul Weisenfeld, will direct U.S. reconstruction efforts for Haiti from Washington. He will coordinate with Lewis Lucke, who was earlier named to direct U.S. government aid activities on the ground in Port-au-Prince, the capital city shattered by the Jan. 12 earthquake. Reconstruction funds pledged by donors, including the United States, have passed \$3 billion.

WHERE DOES USAID'S MONEY GO?

Top 20 FY 2009 Countries Benefitting from USAID Assistance

	COUNTRY	\$
1	Afghanistan	1,459,560,810
2	Pakistan	1,084,746,818
3	West Bank/Gaza	798,497,531
4	Jordan	515,749,676
5	Kenya	515,238,368
6	Sudan	467,960,516
7	Iraq	443,519,655
8	Egypt	435,155,600
9	Ethiopia	427,743,004
10	Georgia	331,343,446
11	South Africa Republic	324,356,642
12	Nigeria	290,736,554
13	Uganda	273,186,427
14	Colombia	225,890,663
15	Haiti	224,209,944
16	Tanzania	204,370,738
17	Zambia	182,166,338
18	Mozambique	178,096,420
19	Indonesia	177,123,304
20	Yemen—Republic of	152,320,444

Total USAID program funds
FY 2009: \$16.6 billion

For more information, go to
www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/money.

THE REGIONS



This group of Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian experts was authorized by the Jordanian army to environmentally assess the Lower Jordan River.

MIDDLE EAST

Jordanians, Israelis, and Palestinians Work Together to Save the Jordan River

By Eric Viala

Environmental disaster is propelling Jordanians, Israelis, and Palestinians to work together to save the Jordan River.

USAID is providing funding to carry out water sampling and a biodiversity assessment in the Lower Jordan River, a shared river system that flows along the Jordanian border with the West Bank and Israel to the Dead Sea. It is the first regional study of its kind to involve Israeli, Palestinian, and Jordanian experts.

“This assessment will provide data that will help us better understand the environmental threats facing the river and raise awareness for concrete actions,”

said Munqeth Mehyar, Jordanian director of EcoPeace/Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME), which is conducting the assessment.

The Lower Jordan River faces an acute environmental crisis. Diverting water upstream to irrigate agricultural fields and provide drinking water to Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians has reduced the historic river to nothing more than a sewage canal carrying less than 5 percent of its natural flows.

The water sampling and biodiversity assessment are an initial step in a larger USAID-funded project to quantify the extent of the environmental deterioration, understand

specific societal and political barriers, and identify reasonable, non-radical technology improvements and behavioral changes. These changes could include simple interventions such as installing rainwater catchment systems or increasing the use of treated wastewater for agricultural irrigation.

Building on the results of the studies, the project also includes an outreach and advocacy component to mobilize individual Jordanians, Israelis, and Palestinians—and their governments—to support a plan to rehabilitate the Lower Jordan River.

see **JORDAN** on page 15 ▶

LATIN AMERICA

Moot Court Helps Colombian Students Study Human Rights

By Katerine Castro

BOGOTÁ, Colombia—An academic competition among university students in Colombia is promoting an understanding of human rights and international humanitarian law while helping the students polish their research and advocacy skills.

In 2003, USAID’s office in Colombia funded research on the quality of human rights education provided by Colombian universities. The research, carried out in 23 national universities, concluded that there was a lack of awareness and academic focus on human rights issues. In response, USAID created the

National University Contest on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

The competition helps students improve research skills as well as oral and written argument abilities. Using the “moot court” role-play model, students representing either the defense or prosecution must argue a human rights violation case, in which the Colombian state is implicated, to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Each team, comprised of two students from the same university, must represent

see **COLOMBIA** on page 15 ▶



Luisa María Alvarado and Lina Marcela Múnera, winners from Universidad Libre of Pereira’s Law School, demonstrated command of the judicial system as well as the Inter-American system on human rights.

Photo by Katerine Castro, USAID

EUROPE & EURASIA

English, Computer Classes Improve Kosovo Schools

By Megan Falvey

PRISTINA, Kosovo—After-school English and computer classes have been launched for more than 1,000 students in 13 schools nationwide through a USAID program in the newly independent state of Kosovo.

The project began in late 2007 in two schools—Gymnasium Kuvendi i Lezhës in Viti/Vitina (municipalities in Kosovo have two names, one in Albanian and the other in Serbian) and Srednja Tehniška Škola in Vërboc/Vrbovac—and

grew to include 13 schools and communities.

The project is part of the initiative “Community Service through Extracurricular Activities,” also referred to as WHAM, which provides equipment and classes in English language and computer training for students in high schools throughout Kosovo.

The education sector in Kosovo is very weak, school buildings are old, teaching methods are outdated, classes are overcrowded, and no laboratories are

available. For many students, WHAM is their first experience with interactive education. With 50 percent of the population under 25 years old, improving education in Kosovo is extremely important to its future success as a nation.

The overall goal of the WHAM program is to engage youth in a productive way, modernize schools, and enable students to use the computers delivered to them for regular school hours. The

see **KOSOVO** on page 15 ▶



These high school students in Veliko Ropotovo/Ropotove e Madhe are part of the first after-school class held in a USAID-supported computer lab.

Photo by World Learning



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SPECIAL REPORT: NEPAL

WWW.USAID.GOV

FEBRUARY 2010

NEPAL'S BEAUTY AND GRACE HIDE POVERTY

KATHMANDU, Nepal—Nepal has long been loved for its beautiful Himalayas, its peaceful and easy-going people, its ancient culture, and the neatly groomed hillsides of rice paddies climbing thousands of feet into the sky.

And while for 40 years it was safe and free for visitors and Nepalese to walk in the cities or trek to villages far beyond the roads, the Nepalese people lacked any say in their government and lived a quasi-feudal life of hardship—a side of life that many visitors failed to see. It was a life of poverty, hunger, and illness caused by lack of jobs, food, and health care.

Since 1951, a decade before the creation of USAID, the United States has provided more than \$1 billion in foreign assistance to Nepal for education, farming, infrastructure, health, and government. USAID's budget in Nepal has remained about \$35 million to \$45 million per year for the last few years.

A quick visit to farms, villages, and cities from the steep Himalayan Mountains to the hot Terai plains bordering India reveals a country that has made great progress but is still struggling to overcome enormous development problems.

Roads link major cities and some towns, schools have opened, and health programs are reaching most rural communities.

But Nepal remains among the poorest and least developed countries in the world with almost 60 percent of its 28 million people living on less than \$1.25 a day, according to the World Bank. Less than three-quarters of the people can read. Nearly 40 percent of children under five are below normal weight. Nearly half the people are unemployed, leading many to seek jobs abroad in India, Malaysia, and the Gulf states. Poverty is linked in part to the rugged environment. Steep

mountains impede transport and use of farm machines. Monsoon rains often lead to flooding, landslides, and spoiled harvests.

Hydropower and tourism are most likely to bring cash into Nepal, but the country's political troubles have blocked progress in many areas. A protracted conflict from 1995-2006 reduced investment and drove some factory owners to flee to India. The peace process—strongly supported by USAID (see accompanying article on peace)—ended the fighting in 2006 and led to elections that chose a Constituent Assembly. In 2008, the 240-year-old monarchy was ousted, but political stability remains elusive.

Another damper on development has been the long, landlocked borders the country shares with rival Asian giants China and India.

Geographic isolation—along with Buddhist and Hindu teachings of acceptance and non-attachment—let Nepal retain its timeless ways as the world's only Hindu monarchy until 2006.

U.S. assistance—the focus of the articles in this special report—has already helped achieve important results.

Since 1951, with U.S. assistance, life expectancy has more than doubled to 65, literacy has grown, and many diseases have been reduced.

In the 1950s, U.S. assistance eliminated malaria from much of the country, founded the College of Education, trained the first public health nurses, and created the first telephone exchange.

In the 1960s, USAID backed administration reforms, set up



When the clouds lift, one sees the peaks of the Himalayan Mountains near Langtang Peak on the China border. The tall trees are part of community forests protected by USAID programs.

104 health units, added a surgery wing to Bir Hospital, helped boost air traffic from 25,000 to 210,000 flights per year, and opened an industrial park.

In the 1970s, USAID helped double primary school enrollment, built the Western Hills road to link the Terai to the hills, tripled the number of people getting health services, introduced family planning, and boosted use of fertilizer by 18 percent.

In the 1980s, USAID promoted the private sector and NGOs, female literacy rose to 18 percent, some food-short areas became surplus producers, and real income rose an average 62 percent.

In the 1990s, Nepal became a parliamentary democracy and U.S. aid helped improve government services, privatize some state-run businesses, get women to run for local and national offices, deliver Vitamin A to nearly 80 percent of districts, and handed over 123,000 hectares of forests to community forest user groups.

The aid program continues today. ★



A Nepalese woman and child in a village near Langtang National Park near the border with China.

FOCUS ON NEPAL

VOLUNTEER HEALTH WORKERS SAVE MANY LIVES

KAMDHI, Banke District, Nepal—Sarada Yadav is pregnant with her fifth child and she watches intently as a volunteer health worker tells her about sanitation, health, and preparation for delivery.

Sita Yadav, one of 50,000 female health volunteers trained in Nepal by USAID programs, turns the pages of a display book to show the pregnant woman how to assure a healthy delivery and infant.

“She will need iron tablets at the sixth month. She needs antenatal checkups and a tetanus injection,” said Sita Yadav. “We talk about food, bathing, rest, and keeping away from all alcohol. I tell her about danger signs—headaches, convulsion, lower abdominal pain.”

She also advises Sarada Yadav to save a bit of money each month so she has enough for an ambulance and blood donors if needed.

Asked where she plans to give birth, Sarada Yadav said “in the hospital.”

But in case she waits too long to go there, the volunteer explains the safe delivery kit she will give her. It has a sterile blade to cut the umbilical cord, sterile thread to tie the cord off, a plastic sheet to lie on, and soap. The pages she turns show pictures of all these activities—many women in the village cannot read.

The volunteer also talks about spacing of births through birth control.

Sita Yadav has been a volunteer for eight years, getting only 100 rupees (less than U.S. \$2) per month from the local government. She covers 90 households in this agricultural village where buffalo carts and flocks of goats compete with bicycles and horse carts in the dusty lanes.

“She comes right to our house and it is easy to approach her,” said the pregnant woman. “I think I feel safer. This service helps me and my child. I do routine checkups and know if I need to be worried.”

Sita Yadav, a Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV), has only an eighth grade education. Some FCHVs may be illiterate—yet they have been trained to use the picture books to explain proper health care to millions of Nepalese women.

Another FCHV said that she had saved lives through her service: “My own sister had a delayed labor and I thought the baby might be asphyxiated,” said Sarada Oli. “I called the ambulance and both survived—they gave the baby oxygen.”

The FCHVs also can diagnose and treat pneumonia—a major killer of small children in developing countries. A very rapid respiration rate indicates pneumonia and the volunteers give out oral antibiotics. The volunteers also give medicine to prevent hemorrhage after delivery.

Some men are also health workers. Tikaram Bohara has been a medic for 16 years. He

treated a male patient who came in with fever and stomach pains by giving out antibiotics and paracetamol (acetaminophen)—a pain and fever reducer.

USAID supported his training and the health materials at his small clinic. Seriously ill people don’t come to him but go directly to the hospital, he said. Still, he sees 60 to 70 people a day, providing free treatment and medicine. Aside from treating tuberculosis, seasonal fevers, and dysentery—the main problems—he also provides chlorine water purification and soap to all households.

“The FCHVs are like our right hand,” said Bohara. “They go to the houses, give out Vitamin A capsules. Before people did not take iron tabs but, due to the FCHVs, they take the iron.”

USAID-funded programs support Vitamin A distribution twice a year to 3.6 million Nepalese children, saving about 16,000 lives annually, said an aid worker.

But even with the good advice and help of the volunteers, about half of pregnant women in this village don’t have enough food to eat, said a local village leader. The problem is even worse since the price of rice increased 40 percent globally; and the October flooding caused by a late monsoon damaged perhaps 40 percent of the area’s rice harvest.

The men are forced to collect firewood in the forest for sale, seek jobs in the nearby city of Nepalgunj, pull rickshaws, make furniture, or go to India for work. ★



A Kathmandu cycle rickshaw driver waits for customers under a sign advertising cell phone cards.



Outside Bankatti Village, Nepalese walk along the earthen walls of rice paddies after visiting their new fishponds, created and stocked with USAID assistance. In the distance are the Himalayan foothills.

Landless Villagers Dig Fish Ponds to Improve Lives

BANKATTI VILLAGE, Nepal—After a hot walk between the lush, green rice paddies of the Terai plains near the city of Nepalgunj, one comes upon dozens of rectangular fishponds, each about 100 feet long and bursting with carp.

Sangeeta Jaiswal, 22, sits under a thatched awning with her friends and their children, watching over their silvery treasure. These landless Madhesi people of the flatlands had been planting rice for wealthy landowners, earning 150 rupees a day (U.S. \$2), barely enough to feed the family. And the work is seasonal, meaning most days, they have no income. USAID worked with Winrock International to rent swampy land and offer these poor villagers baby fish and the expertise to start their own fish ponds—if only they would dig out the pond.

Each family got rice from the World Food Program to help them during the 40 days it took to dig their pond.

“We dug this out—it was a lot of work,” said Jaiswal. “Then rain filled in the hole.” The fish eat bits of grass and cow dung and should bring in 35,000 rupees a year. Growing vegetables along the earth walls of the ponds brings another 10,000 rupees. Because the fish ponds are low-maintenance, the villagers are often able to hold down other jobs as well such as making furniture or laboring on farms.

“The Americans helped us because we are poor,” said Jaiswal. “If I get money from selling the fish, I can open a small shop and educate my children.” She’d like to fry up one of the fish to see how they taste but said: “They are still too small. I’ll wait.” ★



Tikaram Bohara, who has been a medic for 16 years, examines a sick patient in a health center funded by USAID in a village near the city of Nepalgunj.



A potter works at his wheel in Nepalgunj; nearby are many small oil lamps ready for a festival. Behind him is a charpoy, the simple roped bed that cools sleepers in the hot nights.



A large Buddha statue at the Monkey Temple just outside Kathmandu displays Tibetan cultural influence seen in the northern Nepalese tribes of the Himalayan foothills.

Late Monsoon Rains Trigger Fear of Landslides

TRISULI, Nepal—The rain beat down in torrents all night on Oct. 7—the latest the monsoon had lasted in Nepalese history, possibly due to climate change, which might also have accelerated melting of vast parts of the Himalayan glaciers lost in the mists above.

The rain flooded rivers and rice paddies across Nepal's flat Terai plains, causing destruction and ravaging agricultural land. And in the forests of the steep Himalayan Mountains rising all around this valley town, people feared the rain would unleash landslides that had already killed dozens of people this year.

But up several miles of steep roads, in the village of Kalikasthan, there is less fear these days thanks to a USAID-funded community forestry program that for some 20 years has helped local people control, protect, and improve the surrounding forests.

Now the thick groves of trees stand 50 to 60 feet tall, their roots keeping the rain water from eroding the mountainsides. Some 21 percent of Nepal's forests are now protected community forests, watched over by 145,000 elected representatives.

"Since we started the community forests, landslides are significantly reduced—we sleep better at night," said Jaman Singh, who has been chairman of the village's community forestry user group since 1992.

Back then, he brought in the first seedlings to restore the forest after years of logging for fuel and lumber. "Thirty years ago, there were no trees on this hill," said a forestry expert working for USAID.

When forests were owned by the state, loggers, poachers, and others simply took what they wanted. But since communities were given control, they planted seedlings and took only the dead lower branches for fuel as the trees grew. They also cut standing dead wood, collected grasses and herbs, and hunted wild animals.

CARE, the World Wildlife Fund, and USAID have been the main supporters of the community forest user groups—training Nepalis to manage their resources.

Even living in the steep mountain villages with the small terraces growing rice and wheat, by protecting the environment, landslides can be reduced, biodiversity can be preserved, and livelihoods can be created. ★

Warming Climate Melts Mighty Himalayan Glaciers

KATHMANDU, Nepal—Dawa Steven Sherpa is only 25 but has already climbed Mt. Everest twice. The last time he was on top of the Earth's highest point, he picked up a small stone for President Barack Obama.

The stone was given to Nepal's prime minister, who gave it to Obama at the United Nations in September to symbolize the growing problem of global warming, which threatens the world's highest mountain range—the Himalayas.

"Everest is changing," said Dawa Steven, as he is called. "A few years ago, the summit was a large icy area where 50 people might fit. Now only 20 can be there—the cornice [of snow] is slowly breaking off and more rock is exposed. It may be global warming."

Climate change might also be affecting his Sherpa village of Khumjung, where two streams that used to flow off Everest's glaciers have dried up as the glaciers have retreated. People must walk for two hours to fetch water now.

Between 5,000 and 6,000 meters (16,400 and 19,700 feet) in altitude, the glaciers have disappeared, said Dawa Steven in an interview in October, just prior to leading an expedition of British Royal Marines up Ama Dabalam Mountain (22,500 feet) near Everest.

He is worried about the creation of many glacial lakes high in the mountains. Once glaciers of solid ice 100 feet thick flowed slowly along, a few feet a year. In their place there are now lakes such as Imja Glacial Lake—more than a mile long and up to 300 feet deep.

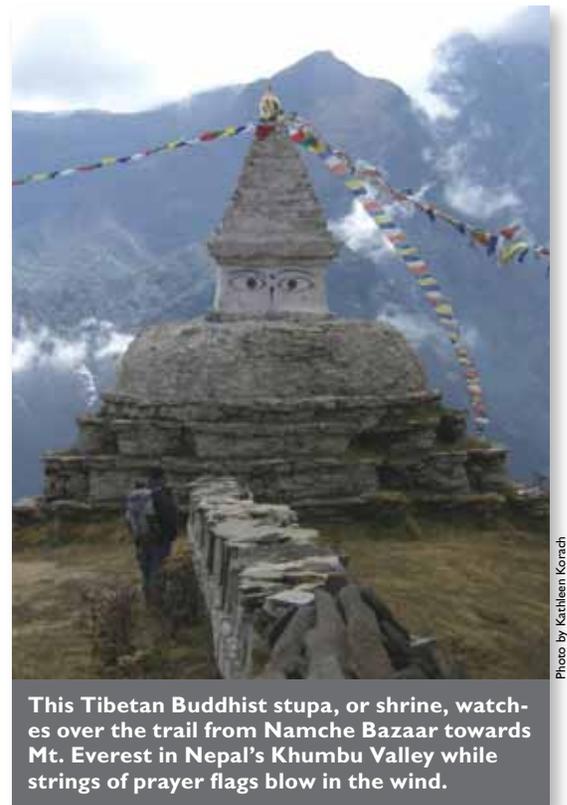
These lakes could burst over their boundaries at any moment due to erosion or the many earthquakes that hit this region. In 1985, one of the new glacial lakes burst, killed 19 people, and destroyed 30 houses, 14 bridges, and a hydroelectric plant.

To show how dangerous a glacial lake collapse might be, on June 18, 2009, marathon runners took off from Imja Lake, at 16,000 feet, to Dawa Steven's home village down at 12,400 feet. Fast as the Sherpa runners raced over the trails, a raging flood would have beat them.

"We wanted to show that if Imja Lake burst out, it will not only kill people and destroy property but can make an entire mountain culture disappear in its aftermath," wrote Ang Tshering Sherpa, founder and chairman of Asian Trekking, the company Dawa Steven works with.

Asian Trekking has removed tons of trash from the upper mountains and seeks solutions to climate change problems with the World Wildlife Fund—which receives USAID funds—and with the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development.

The glacial lakes, for example, might be drained by siphoning or cutting drainage holes.



This Tibetan Buddhist stupa, or shrine, watches over the trail from Namche Bazaar towards Mt. Everest in Nepal's Khumbu Valley while strings of prayer flags blow in the wind.

Photo by Kathleen Korach

Threatened villages could create shelters uphill from potential floods. Farmers could also shift to crops that need less water. And early warning systems could be installed to sound the alert if the lakes collapse.

Dawa Steven recalled that he was recently stunned to find a garbage fly at 17,000 feet at Everest Base Camp. He'd never seen insects at that altitude before and thinks it's another sign of global warming.

The fate of the Himalayas has impact far beyond the steep valleys of Nepal. Water off the Himalayas flows into the mighty rivers of Asia—the Ganges, the Indus, the Brahmaputra, the Mekong, the Irrawaddy, the Yangtze, and the Yellow. More than 2 billion people depend upon those rivers for life. ★

FOCUS ON NEPAL

U.S. Helps Peace Talks End Conflict

Nepal seems peaceful today, but only a few years ago it was hard to travel outside the main cities without experiencing the effects of the 10-year guerrilla war that left 15,000 people dead and tore apart the government—leading to the ouster of the monarchy in 2008.

In one village in the Terai—the plains near the Indian frontier—an aid worker on a USAID-funded project said “Maoists stopped USAID workers four years ago and asked us, ‘What money goes to your salary?’ I told them 12 percent. Some 88 percent went to the project—65 percent to farmers and 25 percent for input supplies such as seeds, fertilizer, pesticide, and insecticide.”

The unarmed Maoists detained him for two hours, interrogated him, and read through his project’s computer printouts to assure they agreed with his assertions. They also checked the facts with the local farmers. Once satisfied, he released the aid workers with a warning “not to wear flashy clothes.”

During the conflict, the Nepal government also failed to provide adequate services to the population and questioned aid workers trying to access areas of the country where government forces were fighting insurgents.

The Maoists eventually joined the political process, participated in elections, and became the largest party in the Constituent Assembly. Afterwards, the Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, known as Prachanda, became prime minister. But in May 2008 he abruptly resigned when the country’s

president blocked his decision to remove the army chief from his post. In protest to the president’s controversial move, the Maoists blocked parliamentary sessions, including passage of the annual budget, but continued to participate in the drafting of the country’s new constitution.

Up to 19,600 Maoist guerrilla fighters remain in camps under U.N. supervision, hoping to either join the Nepali army or be trained for new jobs. The Maoists have threatened to continue their protests unless the parliament discusses the override of the prime minister’s removal of the army chief.

Throughout this tumult, USAID, which has funded Nepal peace projects since 2003, has been supporting informal, political talks between the three main parliamentary parties: the Maoists, the Nepali Congress, and the United Marxist-Leninist Party.

“We created in 2003 a space for informal dialogue between second and third level party people—even the Maoists participated,” said a USAID Nepali staff member. “Now we are trying to help the parties clear the [parliamentary] deadlock.”

U.S. help has proved critical in ending the conflict and moving toward reconciliation according to the Nepali government Chief Secretary Madhav Ghimire.

“USAID and the U.S. government helped us create a conducive environment to resolve armed conflict in the country,” said Ghimire in an interview.

“The government was not in a position to deal with the Maoists. The USAID initiative created space for both players—the government and the Maoists—to share their expectations and for government feedback.”

Leaders of seven political parties were involved and used the process “to share how the conflict could be resolved.”

USAID funded meetings between the Maoists,



A woman of Nepal’s Tamang ethnic group is walking on a trail near Langtang mountain and wearing jewelry typical of Tibetan culture.

other political parties, the Nepali government, and two facilitators to help the different sides work together to resolve conflicts.

“This sort of help was really instrumental for the peace process,” said Ghimire.

The peace process helped by sharing the experience of other countries and giving the Nepalis access to literature and knowledge of peace building, he said.

The U.S. aid team is currently helping Nepal create a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to promote reconciliation between the civilians who suffered or had loved ones die during the conflict and the combatants on both sides. USAID is also helping the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction strengthen local peace committees to move the peace process out of the center into local levels.

But despite progress, there is rising tension and turmoil outside the capital. In the countryside, ethnic groups are demanding their rights under a new constitution, political party youth groups compete for support—sometimes violently—from a disenchanted population, and criminal groups are taking advantage of the inadequate or non-existent police presence.

The May 28 deadline for the Constituent Assembly to promulgate a new constitution looms large as the parties continue to negotiate elements of the new statute while attempting to carry out the peace agreement signed in 2006.

Nepalese anxiously await the outcome, remaining hopeful the parties can consolidate the country’s gains toward a peaceful and prosperous democracy. ★

Lemon Grass Oil Rebuilds Forests After Conflict Ends

CHISAPANI, Nepal—In this community of 1,000 people on the flat Terai plains of Nepal near the Indian border, Kokila Chaudhary, 29, swings her sickle at the tough stems of lemon grass, planted through a USAID-funded project to boost income and prevent erosion.

“USAID [offered to] trained me. I thought, ‘Why should I come?’ and then decided that this was barren land and if I cultivate it I will make some money,” she said.

The spicy-smelling grass is bundled into sheaves and trucked to a small factory where the essential oils in the grass are extracted and distilled for use in cosmetics.

The land had been logged over the years. Now the lemon grass allows new Sal trees to

grow up and restore the forest.

Chaudhary and a half-dozen other women harvesting the grass on a recent visit said they knew that U.S. funds had helped build the new crop and set up the extraction factory. Today, in fact, USAID signs are posted on projects—after many years of conflict when it was safer not to mention the U.S. connection.

Chaudhary, who finished the 10th grade in school and has two sons, said she used to do housework and sell vegetables, but last year earned 12,000 rupees in the lemon grass project—about \$160 U.S.—and she expects to earn the same or more this year.

Asked if cutting the tough grass was as hard as it appeared, she laughed and said, “You have to be strong. I am.” ★

Trekkers Help Mountain Villages Develop

You are panting in the thin air 10,000 feet above sea level as the rocky trail climbs steeply towards the white Himalayan giants up the valley ahead. Suddenly you hear the dull chimes of the cowbells.

The foreign trekkers and the Nepali porters all scramble to the edge of the trail as the sharp horns of long-haired yaks or hairless “dzo”—a mix of yak and cow—appear, laden with tents, sleeping bags, cooking equipment, and bottles of beer.

The gentle animals pass and you resume the climb.

A porter is easily hired at the start of the trail for \$10 a day—\$20 if they speak English. Most are Sherpas, Tamang, Rai, or from other hill tribes.

Each day in October, when the monsoon rains end, hundreds of trekkers start out for Everest Base Camp at 17,000 feet, higher passes or peaks, or simply Namche Bazaar at 12,000 feet, the largest village in the Sherpa region.

Namche is full of small shops selling handicrafts and warm clothing. Small hotels and guest houses offer hot showers, warm bedding, and decent meals. Around the crowded tables, trekkers and climbers discuss how to avoid altitude sickness, what routes are best to take, and where they’ve been in the past.

Along the trails, community forests protected and managed by USAID-supported programs continue to grow tall and stave off erosion and landslides. Aid programs also support schools, improve agriculture on the terraced fields, and offer health care such as condom distribution to prevent disease.

When Everest was first conquered by Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay in 1952, climbers and trekkers stayed in tents or in village homes where people lived a simple and hard life without education, medical care, or electricity. Today, thanks to perseverance, aid programs, and income from trekkers, people are better fed and have warm clothing to endure the frosty nights. Many guides have graduated from a high school built by Hillary.

But along the trail, with the black and white stony summit of Everest looming close by, school children perform Nepali dances to flute and drum music as they seek contributions from trekkers for a school library. And sacks of USAID food are carried over ice and stone to hungry settlements by yak caravans. It reminds a visitor that whatever has been achieved in 40 years since his last visit, much remains to be done. ★



At the Monkey Temple outside Kathmandu, a monkey eats offerings left to a carved stone image of Hanuman, the Hindu monkey god.

AFRICA

Kenyan Mothers Choose Hospitals for Births

By Elizabeth Walsh

When 18-year-old Salma Akéno gave birth earlier this year, she made a choice many other mothers in rural Kenya don't make—she decided to deliver her first-born in a hospital, not at home.

Now she is encouraging other women to do the same as part of a new “Mothers Club” at the Kendu Bay Sub-district Hospital in western Kenya's Nyanza province.

The club is the idea of Jane Owaka, the hospital's chief nursing officer. Owaka was one of 365 health workers from across the country that completed the six-month Leadership Development Program (LDP), which teaches leadership and management skills and helps to address challenges in health facilities.

Owaka and her team were facing the fact that one in three women in the area give birth at home and not in a health facility. Women who deliver at home face greater risk of complications and infections, and their babies are less likely to be fully vaccinated.

The program, funded by USAID's office in Kenya, is offered through Management Sciences for Health.

Eager to put her new management skills to use, Owaka rallied her colleagues to nearly double the hospital delivery rate to 60 percent. They created the Mothers Club, which recruits women attending the hospital's prenatal clinic.

Women are asked to deliver their next child at the hospital, and to meet in a group twice a month to receive health education, including safe motherhood practices. They also are asked to educate other women in their villages about safe motherhood and the risks of delivering at home.

Owaka got contributions from the community to fund the program which pays mothers a small stipend for their travel to and from the hospital. It also covers the cost of amenities such as warm water and hot tea for the women after they give birth.

In January, prior to the creation of the club, only 20 women had given birth in the hospital. By May, just half-way through the program, 36 women had

in-hospital deliveries. Today, there are more than 40 club members, and Owaka is seeing fewer complications and an increase in infant immunizations.

“Now we are able to monitor pregnancies earlier, more mothers are having safe deliveries, and their babies are healthier, too,” said Owaka. “We also use the opportunity to talk to the women about family planning, paternal involvement in the family, and the risks of HIV/AIDS.”

Akéno is now the secretary for the Mothers Club, her first leadership role in her young lifetime. She is using her post to raise awareness of the importance of hospital deliveries.



Members of the Mothers Club in western Kenya

“Every day, whether I'm in church, or fetching water, whenever I meet other mothers, I tell them why it is important to deliver

their babies in the hospital,” Akéno said. “By doing this, we can be sure we are not taking risks with our own health, and that our

babies will be well monitored.”

Elizabeth Walsh is a communications advisor with Management Sciences for Health. ★

ASIA

TV Show Inspires Future Cambodian Leaders

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—A reality show based loosely on America's “Apprentice” and “American Idol” is testing the leadership and debating skills of promising young Cambodians.

The USAID-funded “Youth Leadership Challenge” is giving Cambodian youth new opportunities to develop the next generation of leaders in a country where the median age is 22.

With 2.1 million viewers, the show recently completed its sixth season and airs nationally on CTN, Cambodia's most popular TV station.

Each season begins with 16 contestants. During weekly episodes, contestants are divided into two teams that compete in challenges such as organizing a petition campaign or a book drive. At the end of each episode, contestants vote off two fellow cast members. In the final episode each season, two finalists compete in a debate and the audience chooses the winner by texting in their votes.

Each season's winner has the opportunity to visit the United

States, an incentive that is highly prized by Cambodian youth and helps attract strong contestants.

The private sector is capitalizing on the show's popularity through sponsorship deals, which currently account for 23 percent of its budget, up from 7 percent during the first season.

Many former contestants have used the show to further their studies and careers. Kong Sorita, a 22-year-old international relations major, used the skills she learned on the show to win an election for student body president at Pannassasstra University, Cambodia's most prestigious university.

During the 15-day campaign period, she formed a committee that polled students about their concerns and expectations and used the data to develop a platform. Kong won three times as many votes as her competitor.

After graduation, Kong plans to pursue a career in Cambodia's diplomatic corps and eventually run for political office, perhaps even prime minister.

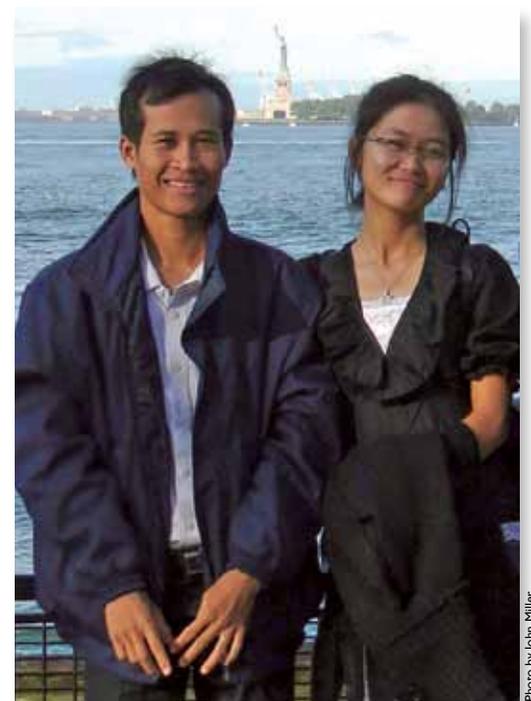
“International relations is not a very popular choice for women

students in Cambodia, because they are afraid of getting involved in politics,” she said. “Competing in the ‘Youth Leadership Challenge’ has given me the confidence and skills I need to pursue a career in this field.”

In September 2009, Sophal Yun, the winner of season four, and Chhem Pe, the winner of season five, visited New York City and Washington. Their two-week study tour combined sightseeing in both cities with educational enrichment. In Washington, they toured the U.S. Capitol and attended a congressional hearing, enabling them to see firsthand how an open, democratic government functions.

“My parents are very proud that I earned my way through the program—and especially the trip to the U.S.,” said Chhem.

At age 19, Chhem was the



Chhem Pe and Sophal Yun at Battery Park in New York City

competition's youngest winner and came from a poor family in rural Cambodia. After gaining national prominence in the competition, he is making plans to attend university and study international relations and rural development.

“This program will help shape the skills that I will bring [to my career],” said Chhem. ★

For more on Cambodia, see the Mission of the Month on page 3.

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

Indonesian and U.S. Laws Aim to Block Illegal Logging

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia—It is no secret that Indonesia is quickly losing its forests: since 1950, half its 150 million hectares of woodlands have been cut.

In 2007, Indonesia exported \$6.9 billion in wood-based products. Today, it continues to lose about 1.2 million hectares of woodlands a year and its greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation could amount to 5 percent of the world's total emissions. A good portion of those losses come from the illegal harvest of timber.

To help Indonesia and other countries fight illegal logging, the U.S. recently amended the Lacey Act, a law that requires U.S. companies to ensure that all timber and other plant products for import into the U.S. are legally harvested. The new U.S. law coincides with a new Indonesian timber law.

USAID is working with Indonesia's Ministry of Forestry and national trade associations to help Indonesian timber companies understand the Lacey Act, control global trade in illegal timber, and save Indonesia's quickly dwindling forests. The program includes an effort to save the habitat of the endangered orangutan.

The Lacey Act makes U.S. importers legally liable for breaking the laws of source countries and importing illegally harvested plant products such as timber, paper, or wood furniture.

"It's really quite simple," explained Jajak Putro, manager of Java Furni, a small furniture producer with a modest manufacturing operation on the outskirts of Yogyakarta. "This not only assures that companies like ours have a sustainable

supply of lumber, it will help to save the planet, too."

Some in the timber industry, however, have complained that misinformation threatens to block timber sales to the United States.

"Many companies still don't know what the Lacey Act is. They need training on how to complete the documents and what they need to show to prove the legality of their supplies," explained Lee Yuen Chak, executive director of Sumalindo, one of Indonesia's largest lumber companies.

Indonesia also has a new timber verification law requiring all wood produce to be tracked from the time it is cut until it is exported. All trees and stumps that are left after the harvest must have identification numbers stamped on them to identify the wood through the manufacturing process and on to export. USAID has supported the development of such log tracking systems.

To help Indonesia and other countries fight illegal logging, the U.S. recently amended the Lacey Act, a law that requires U.S. companies to ensure that all timber and other plant products for import into the U.S. are legally harvested.

When the Indonesian system is in place and the Lacey Act is fully functioning, it is expected that the large illegal deforestation rate in Indonesia will be significantly reduced. ★

Kenya's Parliament Learns to Listen to Voters

By Sven Lindholm

NAIROBI, Kenya—In Kenya's universities, bus stations, can- teens, rural markets, and homes, the air is constantly abuzz with talk of politics. Citizens debate political issues and complain that members of parliament (MPs) fail to follow through on electoral promises to represent constituent interests.

This situation began to shift on Sept. 17, 2009, when Kenyans watched a broadcast from the floor of the Kenyan legislature as parliament rejected the president's nominations for the directors of the Anti-Corruption Commission by a vote of 86 to 45.

The vote sent a message that the parliament intended to exercise its authority independent of the president, and the broadcast was momentous because it gave average Kenyans an opportunity to see—in real time—what was happening in Nairobi.

The broadcast came directly from the parliament's floor in the capital. While the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation has aired live broadcasts, the newly equipped production studio has enabled the Parliamentary Broadcasting Unit to produce TV and radio programs from the parliament's floor and air the proceedings live throughout the county.

Support for the media center came from USAID, which worked with the parliament to help it improve its legislative and oversight functions. USAID is also giving attention to the other end, helping Kenyans to better connect with the MPs.

"Many Kenyans believe it takes courage and special access to hold MPs accountable; they are unsure how to best interact with their MPs," said John Langlois, country representative of USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives. "Democratic governance comes from a partnership between the politicians and the people."

Since Kenya's independence, the Kiswahili word for an elected official has changed from *Mjumbe* (messenger) to *Mheshimiwa* (the respected one), implying greater deference to officials.

Outside Nairobi, particularly in areas of the Rift Valley hit by post-electoral violence in early 2008, there is scant evidence of government in people's day-to-day lives; and little information about political developments in Nairobi.

To overcome this, USAID provided eight community centers in Nandi District, near Eldoret in the Rift Valley, with televisions so residents could watch and discuss parliament sessions. The centers—which in some

areas have brought people together for the first time since the 2008 violence—also provide daily newspapers, books, and recordings of parliament.

"The violence erupted because we did not have other alternative ways to respond to anger and frustration over the poll results," said David Birech, the community group secretary for Lol Keringet. "If we continue to have such meetings, the knowledge will change this community."

Each center now hosts more than 200 community members three times a week when parliament is in session. And residents have begun to share ideas and information.

USAID also supported a Kenyan NGO that hosted forums of constituents and MPs in the Rift Valley region.

The forums helped people view MPs as "messengers," while MPs agreed to consult more frequently to learn the messages their voters want to send to parliament. MPs also agreed to keep constituents informed about the activities and decisions of parliament. One MP has even opened a hotline number to facilitate this communication.

The steps by USAID aim to prevent violence as an expression of political frustration in the future. ★



Thousands marked World AIDS Day 2009 on Dec. 1 with commemorations and other special events. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) showcased the work of young artists who designed separate posters to capture the message of youth awareness and engagement in the fight against HIV/AIDS. PEPFAR kicked off a competition for the poster designs on World AIDS Day 2008, and people between ages 5 and 20 from five continents entered with their designs. The posters are now part of the exhibit "Celebrate Life," which launched on World AIDS Day at USAID and will travel around the world this year. The above poster was submitted by S. Varsha, age 13, India.

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS



Photo by David Kahrmann, USAID

A donkey struggles against a veterinarian's injection in Jijiga.

ETHIOPIA MARKS 25 YEARS SINCE BAND AID

By David Kahrmann

Television newscasts beamed the human suffering of the 1984 famine in Ethiopia to living rooms around the world.

Global outcry helped trigger a massive relief effort with donor countries and humanitarian organizations mobilizing to get food to Ethiopia. Irish singer-songwriter Bob Geldof helped raise over \$100 million by bringing together high-profile musicians to create the charity supergroup "Band Aid."

Eventually, the efforts ended the famine, but not before 1 million people died. The question now is: How much has changed?

Geldof returned to Ethiopia in December for the 25th anniversary of the release of the single "Do They Know It's Christmas?" And, while some critics claim that assistance to Ethiopia has accomplished little since that famine, Geldof strongly disagreed.

"So it was all a waste of time," he sarcastically told *The Independent* after seeing schools, clinics, and healthy children. "The nay-sayers make me puke."

Indeed, the Ethiopian government is investing in roads and major infrastructure projects. Shops are full, and much of the capital Addis Ababa is a huge construction zone.

Yet, as Ertharin Cousin, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Agencies in Rome, witnessed on a recent visit, Ethiopia is still far from being food secure. Ethiopians are not starving these days, but



Photo by Lillian deValcour-Ayala

Lunch is served through a USAID-supported school feeding program.

in many areas that is because of massive amounts of international food assistance coming into the country.

To ensure that the 1984 famine never be repeated, USAID funds the government's food and cash for work initiative, which provides aid to 7.5 million chronically food insecure people.

On an earlier return visit here in 2003, Geldof asked why people were still starving in Ethiopia after so many years. Today, in good years, Ethiopia can almost meet its own food needs. But 2010 is not predicted to be one of those good years.

FEWSNET—the USAID-supported famine early warning system—reports below normal rains between June and September 2009 will hurt crops and livestock this year. USAID and U.N. agencies

are taking action to ensure that sufficient stocks are in place, with USAID recently committing an additional \$70 million.

USAID also introduced a program to link the most vulnerable farmers and herders to markets and to help them diversify their incomes. USAID runs a modest agricultural program to increase productivity, support livestock, and improve the business environment.

The Agency also works to link entrepreneurs to markets and reduce costs. For example, in coffee production, USAID helps producers by introducing improved growing, processing, and marketing techniques.

After speaking with women at a USAID constructed livestock market, Cousin said: "The women told me that because they are earning incomes, they are no longer worried about where their food will come from and, as such, they are now able to send their children to school."

In July 2009, President Barack Obama pledged to invest \$3.5 billion in agriculture as part of the Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative.

Cousin said this pledge "...is not just about seed and fertilizer but includes education and market development and, in particular, support to women." ★



Photo by David Kahrmann, USAID

A young student in Ethiopia's Somali region

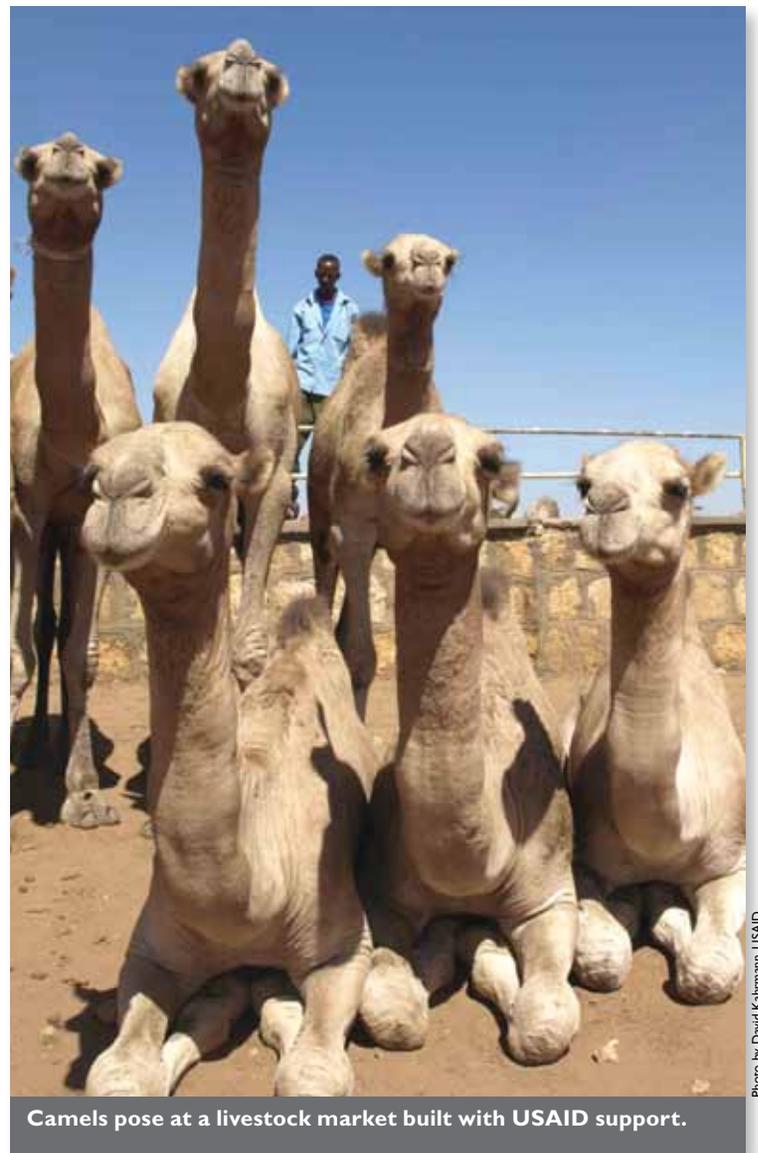


Photo by David Kahrmann, USAID

Camels pose at a livestock market built with USAID support.

CONTINUED...

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public pledged many millions more.

Shah won praise from senior administration officials for his unflappable focus and work during the crisis, according to *The Washington Post*.

"Dr. Shah has been excellent," said Denis McDonough, National Security Council chief of staff, who *The Post* said worked closely with Shah since the earthquake struck. "Focused. Calm. Facts-based."

Speaking to reporters the day after the quake, Shah said, "The goal of the relief effort in the first 72 hours will be very focused on saving lives. That is the president's top priority and is what the president has directed us to do."

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton cut short a trip to Asia and returned to Washington to help handle the crisis. She and Shah visited Haiti a few days after the quake and met with Haitian President René Préval, who was attempting to run a government out of a small police station near the airport. Many key officials had been lost in the wreckage.

Los Angeles County fire captain Bryan Wells, sent by USAID to save people from collapsed buildings, told a reporter that "being here on behalf of USAID in support of the Haitian government is great."

"And when we pull people off a rubble pile and spontaneously people start chanting 'USA, USA,' it gives you a great sense of pride. And the guys really feel it. They feel proud to represent the American people here in Haiti."

Some 47 people were pulled alive from the wrecked city by Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams deployed by USAID from Los Angeles County, Calif., and Fairfax County, Va., as well as four other teams sent by USAID in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) from Miami-Dade, Miami City, Virginia Beach, and New York City.

Another 87 people were saved by dozens of other rescue teams sent by other countries. Together, according to the United Nations, a record number of people were saved in a modern disaster, said James Fleming, director of the RMT.

The U.S. military sent more than 10,000 troops to protect and deliver aid, and oversee operations at the damaged airport,

ramping up landings from 30 to 150 a day. Since the seaport was damaged, the airport became the major route for relief. Some flights were diverted to the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. Aid was then trucked overland to quake survivors.

The U.S. Navy sent the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vincent to anchor off Port-au-Prince so its helicopters could lift water, food, and other supplies to distribution points. The Navy also sent the hospital ship USNS Comfort from Baltimore.

USAID physician Robert Ferris was on the Comfort and reported to *FrontLines* that hundreds of Haitians are being treated daily for fractures, lacerations, and other injuries. He said that the huge ship was fairly stable except for the occasional bump from a quake aftershock.

On the ground, the 31 members of the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) landed soon after the quake and began traveling around the city assessing damage and needs; and coordinating the deliveries of food, water, and medical care to survivors.

The DART team was sleeping on the floor in offices at the U.S. Embassy, which survived the quake intact, or under tents and hangars at the airport, which became the hub for emergency relief.

Two weeks after the quake hit, some 863 emergency workers were in Haiti carrying out USAID assistance. This included over 500 search and rescue workers and 348 staff from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which set up five emergency clinics and other medical aid services.

USAID also gave funds to other groups to carry out emergency assistance including: \$36 million to FEMA; \$33 million to HHS; \$7 million to the International Organization for Migration; \$10 million to the World Food Program; and \$5 million to the World Health Organization.

Fleming said that USAID was working with other aid groups and the Haitian government to determine how to shelter the hundreds of thousands of people made homeless by the disaster—especially as the rainy season begins in May and hurricane season begins in June.

Since hundreds of thousands left the city for smaller cities and villages untouched by the quake, USAID hoped to establish a system of support for host families who take in relatives and friends from Port-au-Prince—a system that worked well in the Swat Valley, Pakistan, displacement a year earlier.

Cluster teams of foreign aid agencies formed to tackle shelter and other issues such as: agriculture; early recovery (including

creating jobs to clean up rubble); education; telecommunications; environment (including mudslides and drainage); food; health; protection (especially orphans and vulnerable children); water; sanitation; and hygiene.

"If there is an unsung hero in the response to the quake," said Fleming, "it is having the response teams ready—it is all the systems we built before the disaster."

Since Hurricane Mitch caused widespread damage and loss of life in the region in 1998, USAID has focused on having a standby RMT and DART ready to swing into action. After major responses like the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004 and the Pakistan earthquake in 2005, "we tried to refine the system," Fleming said.

"During an emergency is not the time to plan. We needed to be ready. That's what the newspapers don't see." ★

Your Voice

By Maxine Hillary

Your Voice, a continuing **FRONTLINES** feature, offers personal observations from USAID employees. Maxine Hillary is the public affairs officer for the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Dominican Republic: *Que Aperidá*

There's a saying in the Dominican Republic, *Que aperidá*, or "How amazing." And so I thought as I looked out the window as the plane banked over the island on the way to Las Américas International Airport.

This was more than a chance to meet the development outreach coordinators (DOCs) from the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Eastern Caribbean, and Jamaica. It was my first trip as part of my work for the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean. How apropos that it is also the place where the written history of our region began.

I exited the baggage claim area to a flag-waving crowd, a band playing, television cameras, and a trio of girls dancing in colorful flowing shirts. My local counterpart and the driver grinned and cheered. Ms. Dominican Republic was on my flight coming from Miami and I'd basked in the shadow of her spotlight. Still, it was an exciting few seconds while I thought it was for me and I thought, *Que aperidá*.

The Dominican Republic holds treasures that signify importance historically, spiritually, and politically. A walk around the *Zona Colonial* (Colonial Zone) in the capital city of Santo Domingo is like a trek through a history book of the Americas.

It's not all pretty. This is where famous *conquistadores* including Cortés, Ponce de León, and

Velázquez launched campaigns that ended life as they knew it for the indigenous peoples of the region and the beginning of the African slave trade. Here is where indigenous, African, and Spanish cultures survived and blended to make the Dominican Republic truly unique.

The *Cathedral de Santa María*, built in the early 1500s, is the first cathedral in the Americas and reputed to have been the final resting place of Christopher Columbus before his remains were moved to Spain. Along with the carved animals, mahogany altar, stained glass, and vaulted ceilings, you get a sense of history and of faith.

On *Calle El Conde* or Street of the Count, local color abounds in everything from vendors hawking art and souvenirs, to restaurants, homes, and businesses. Character is etched in the cobblestone walkways and in the locals you meet such as the child serenading with his guitar, the impromptu domino players, and the street dog who wanted a stroke on the head more than the scraps saved from my lunch.

There's another saying in the Dominican Republic. *Probando e que se guisa*, or "By trying is



Maxine Hillary

Photo by Patricia Adams, USAID

how you will know." There was a lot to try.

I enjoyed some of the best coffee I've ever had—grown with assistance from a USAID coffee farmer project. I walked on *Calle Las Damas*, the oldest paved street in the Americas. I celebrated my birthday across from *Alcázar de Colón*, built in 1512 by Columbus' son Diego. I visited the remains of Captain Kidd's shipwreck which USAID is helping to transform into a living museum. And to bring me back to the 21st century, I took a trip on Santo Domingo's newly completed subway line.

Today, the USAID office in the Dominican Republic implements a \$41.8 million development program to advance the CAFTA-DR [Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement]. This contributes to sustainable economic growth, strengthens democratic institutions, and protects the country's fragile ecosystems. The USAID Sustainable Tourism Alliance for the Dominican Republic, for example, promotes eco-friendly tourism, so that everything I experienced will be there for generations to come.

When I bid farewell to my DR colleagues, I was reminded that the Dominican Republic has become one of the largest economies in the region. As I used the last of my Dominican pesos at the airport for yet more packages of that delicious coffee, I thought to myself, *Que aperidá!* ★

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Another USAID-supported project, the Good Water Neighbors Project, brings together youth, adults, and mayors from 25 Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian communities to develop new ways to address environmental threats.

Each community developed a “neighbors’ path” to highlight environmental challenges and success stories. The paths end at the borders between the communities to highlight the need for and benefits of cooperation.

“The sharing of air and water requires cooperation between the two sides,” said Moayed Hussein, the Palestinian mayor of Baqa a-Sharqiya.

Working together through the project, mayors address shared concerns. In one case, three mayors—one Jordanian and two Israeli—are leading an effort to establish a transboundary peace park known as the Jordan River Peace Park.

The three mayors have declared that the Peace Park represents “the start of a larger rehabilitation project of the Jordan River, as a symbol for sustainable regional development.” The Peace Park will showcase and protect the shared cultural and natural heritage of the Jordan River Valley while creating job opportunities through ecotourism. ★

COLOMBIA from page 6

either the state or the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

In 2009, 146 students in fields such as social sciences and law at 73 universities nationwide signed up for the competition—nearly twice as many as in 2008.

After seven years, the contest has had a significant impact on higher education programs in Colombia. Public and private universities have incorporated specific coursework on human rights and international humanitarian law into their curricula. Additionally, research groups have been established to discuss human rights issues among college students. The National Ombudsman’s Office now co-sponsors the moot court and has been promoting it since 2007.

After a five-day oral competition among dozens of universities,

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program is focused mostly in rural areas and poorer towns.

At the technical school in Veliko Ropotovo/Ropotove e Madhe in Kamenica/ë/a municipality, about 80 students are using a new computer lab outfitted for after-school classes. The lab includes 11 networked computers with Internet access and a multimedia projector.

The computer lab and after-school classes result from a partnership between the school, the municipality, and USAID. The Agency also supports teachers leading the after-school English and computer classes.

Many students have praised the program as their first chance to learn basic computer skills. Said one student: “I love the U.S. and I love learning about computers. I thank you for this opportunity.”

School principals have also expressed gratitude for help in bringing the schools into the computer age.

Because the training is free, students who cannot afford to pay for such courses have access to the program.

The computer lab is the sixth to open in schools with Serbian-speaking students as part of the program. Computer labs also opened in several Kosovo Albanian schools.

Megan Falvey is the former World Learning country director for Kosovo. ★

EAFIT University (*Escuela de Administración, Finanzas e Instituto Tecnológico*) of Medellin and the *Universidad Libre* of Pereira were selected as finalists; the latter was declared the winner on Sept. 18, 2009.

Students were awarded an internship in a regional ombudsman office, a complete book collection on human rights and international humanitarian law, and travel expenses for participation in the 2010 Annual Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition in Washington. This competition aims to strengthen understanding of human rights and humanitarian law around the world and has trained more than 1,700 students and faculty from roughly 160 universities in 35 countries on the Inter-American human rights legal system. ★

CLINTON from page 2

invest in places that are strategically critical but where we are not guaranteed success,” she said.

Clinton also called for shifting decision-making power on aid programs from foreign experts to local people, calling this approach “partnership, not patronage.” She said developing nations should adopt “sound economic policies.... The American taxpayer cannot pick up the tab for those who are able but unwilling to help themselves.”

Clinton said there are early indications of success in U.S. aid programs delivered through the Millennium Challenge Corporation to countries with responsible governments.

While U.S. foreign aid would continue to respond to humanitarian needs such as emergencies and hunger, Clinton said we can “break the cycle

“We hope to one day put ourselves out of the aid business, because countries will no longer need this kind of help.”

of dependence that aid can create by helping countries build their own institutions and their own capacity to deliver essential services.”

“We hope to one day put ourselves out of the aid business, because countries will no longer need this kind of help,” she said.

She also said that the Obama administration will continue to integrate development more closely with defense and diplomacy in the field, rejecting concerns that the development role might be turned over to diplomats or defense experts.

“The experience and technical knowledge that our development experts bring to their work are irreplaceable,” she said. “Whether trained in agriculture, public health, education, or economics, our experts are the face, brains, heart, and soul of U.S. development worldwide.”

Clinton also noted a new emphasis on aiding agriculture in the developing world, using new technologies such as cell phones and the Internet to assist economic growth, and focusing on education and micro credits for women and girls. ★—B.B.

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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

Joseph A. Fredericks

Director of Public Information

FRONTLINES STAFF

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SPOTLIGHT: RESCUING HAITI

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE



Photo by Paul J. Richards, AFP

Rescue workers carry student Mikila Foster, who was trapped for 72 hours in rubble at the University of Port-au-Prince.



USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, center, is briefed by USAID and Fairfax County, Va., Urban Search and Rescue workers at the site of the Hotel Montana in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jan. 23.



Members of the Fairfax County, Va., Urban Search and Rescue Team and others remove a body from a collapsed building in Port-au-Prince.

Photo by Paul J. Richards, AFP

As of Feb. 16

- ▶ The Haitian government reports 467,000 displaced persons left Port-au-Prince for the Artibonite, Anse, and other departments.
- ▶ USAID officials told President René Prével there is a need for a broad shelter approach, including tents, host family support, transitional shelter, and planned settlements within and outside Port-au-Prince.
- ▶ USAID has provided \$346 million in earthquake response funding.
- ▶ USAID has sent dozens of relief flights into Haiti. One flight brought 366 hygiene kits; 110 rolls of plastic sheeting for 5,500 people; and four 10,000-liter water bladders.
- ▶ Since the earthquake, U.S. emergency food has reached 3.4 million people through the U.N. World Food Program, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, ACDI/VOCA, and other relief agencies.
- ▶ 16 sites established for large-scale food distribution of a 15-day ration of rice per family.



Clocks from USAID's Disaster Response Operations Center in the days following the Haiti earthquake

Photo by Abby Sigrue, USAID



A K-9 member of the Fairfax County, Va., Urban Search and Rescue Team searches for survivors at a collapsed building at the Hotel Montana, Jan. 17, in Port-au-Prince.



Photo by Paul J. Richards, AFP

A Haitian man reacts to passing search and rescue teams.

See article, "US RUSHES Haiti Aid As Quake Toll Rises," page 1.