



Weekly Special Report



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Fighting Human Trafficking a Critical Part of

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration views the fight against human trafficking, both at home and abroad, as a critical part of the U.S. foreign policy agenda, says Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. At a June 16 event at the State Department marking the release of the ninth annual Trafficking in Persons Report, Clinton emphasized the need for more public-private partnerships to fight the scourge of modern-day slavery.

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Marginalized immigrants like these Burmese laborers in Thailand are prey to traffickers.

Ethiopian American Wins 2009 World Food

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Washington — An acclaimed plant breeder and geneticist who was born and grew up in rural Ethiopia has won the 2009 World Food Prize for his major contributions in the production of sorghum, one of the world's five principal grains.

The announcement came during a June 11 cere-



Ethiopian-born crop breeder Gebisa Ejeta, winner of the 2009 World Food Prize

mony at the State Department.

The work of Gebisa Ejeta, a professor at Purdue University in Indiana and a U.S. citizen, has dramatically enhanced the food supply of hundreds of millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa, said Kenneth Quinn, president of the World Food Prize Foundation, which is based in Des Moines, Iowa.

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Fighting Human Trafficking a Critical Part of U.S. Foreign Policy . . .

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"The criminal network that enslaves millions of people crosses borders and spans continents," Clinton said, "so our response must do the same."

"We are committed to working with all nations collaboratively," the secretary said.

The trafficking of persons has been condemned by President Obama as "a debasement of our common humanity." According to the International Labor Organization, the United Nations agency that oversees labor standards and social-protection issues, at least 12.3 million adults and children are in forced labor, bonded labor or commercial sexual servitude at any given time.

Human trafficking, Clinton said, affects virtually every country, including the United States. To fight the problem, the U.S. government funds 140 anti-trafficking programs in nearly 70 countries, as well as 42 domestic task forces to address the problem within the borders of the United States.

UNITED STATES TO BE ADDED IN 2010

The U.S. Department of State is required by law to submit each year to the Congress a report on foreign governments' efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons. The report, the most comprehensive of its kind, this year assesses 175 countries. Countries are assigned ranks, based on standards set by the United States' Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA).

Countries that do not make significant efforts to comply with the minimum standards receive a Tier 3 ranking. Such an assessment could prompt the United States to withhold nonhumanitarian, nontrade-related foreign assistance. Seventeen countries are on the Tier 3 list this year, including Burma, Cuba, Iran, Syria and North Korea.

A "Tier 2 Watch List" is reserved for countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to do so. Watch List countries also have significant numbers of trafficking victims or those numbers are significantly increasing without government efforts to adequately address the problem. Recent amendments to U.S. law stipulate that countries that stay on the Tier 2 Watch List for two consecutive years will be automatically downgraded to Tier 3.

Clinton emphasized that the annual Trafficking in Persons report "is not an indictment of past failures but a guide to future progress."

"With this report, we hope to shine the light brightly on the scope and scale of modern slavery, so all governments can see where progress has been made and where more is needed," Clinton said.

The secretary also made the announcement that the State Department will rank the United States in its report to be released next year, even though the U.S. Department of Justice releases an annual report focused exclusively on the trafficking problem as it exists inside the United States.

"I believe when you shine a bright

light, you need to shine it on everyone," she said.

ECONOMIC WOES MAKE MORE PEOPLE VULNERABLE

According to this year's report, which covers April 2008 through March 2009, the onset of a global financial crisis "has raised the specter of increased human trafficking around the world."

"As a result of the crisis," the report says, "two concurrent trends — a shrinking global demand for labor and a growing supply of workers willing to take ever greater risks for economic opportunities — seem a recipe for increased forced labor cases of migrant workers and women in prostitution."

The financial crisis has also strained donor nations and philanthropists, and, as a result, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that help shelter and rehabilitate trafficking victims are suffering, according to Ambassador Luis CdeBaca, director of the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Although a majority of the world's countries now have criminal legislation prohibiting all forms of trafficking in persons, this year's Trafficking in Persons Report, along with a recent United Nations survey, found that many countries have not brought any cases under their trafficking statutes, and few labor-trafficking cases are being prosecuted.

CdeBaca, himself a federal prosecutor who has worked many trafficking cases, noted that the U.N. Of-

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Ethiopian American Wins 2009 World Food Prize . . .

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Ejeta will accept the prize during an international symposium in Des Moines on October 15.

The World Food Prize is awarded annually to individuals whose efforts significantly contribute to improving the quality, quantity and availability of food in the world.

Working in Sudan during the early 1980s, Ejeta developed Africa's first commercial hybrid variety of sorghum tolerant to drought. Later, with a Purdue colleague in Indiana, he discovered the chemical basis of the relationship between the deadly parasitic weed striga and sorghum, and was able to produce sorghum varieties resistant to both drought and striga.

In 1994, eight tons of drought- and striga-resistant sorghum seeds were distributed in Eastern Africa. They yielded four times more grain than traditional varieties, even in drought areas.

"By ridding Africa of the greatest biological impediment to food production, Ejeta has put himself in the company of some of the greatest researchers and scientists," U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said at the ceremony.

High in protein and easily digestible, sorghum is a staple food crop in Africa but is used mainly for livestock feed in the United States, Ejeta told America.gov. He said he is working to develop sorghum varieties that can be used in food products that will appeal to U.S. consumers.

"Ejeta's accomplishments in improving sorghum illustrate what can be achieved when cutting-edge technology and international cooperation in agriculture are used to uplift and empower the world's most vulnerable people," said Norman Borlaug, founder of the World Food Prize and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Borlaug is recognized around the world as "Father of the Green Revolution" and is credited with saving millions of lives from starvation during the 1960s and early 1970s.

Ejeta also has worked with national and local authorities and nongovernmental groups to improve the lives of subsistence farmers in Africa through the creation of agricultural enterprises.

"Even while he was making breakthroughs in the lab, Ejeta took his work to the field," said Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. "He knew that for his improved seeds to make a difference in people's lives, farmers would have to use them, which meant they would need access to a seed market and the credit to buy supplies."

THE MAKING OF A PLANT SCIENTIST

During primary school, Ejeta planned to study engineering when he reached college age, but his mother convinced him he could do more working in agriculture, Clinton said.

With aid from Oklahoma State University, he attended an agriculture and technical secondary school in Ethiopia. The university and the U.S. Agency for International Development helped him earn a doctorate

from Purdue.

This year's October symposium will focus on "Food, Agriculture and National Security in a Globalized World."

At the announcement of Ejeta's honor, Clinton also announced a U.S. initiative to develop a new global approach to hunger. The approach would help countries carry out strategies to meet their specific food security needs, she said.

Secretary Clinton's remarks at the World Food Prize announcement ceremony (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/June/20090612091231eaifas0.7548944.html>) are available on America.gov.

More information about the World Food Prize (<http://worldfoodprize.org/>) is available on the World Food Prize Web site.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

United States Seeks to Encourage Democracy, Growth in Zimbabwe

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama welcomed Zimbabwe's prime minister, Morgan Tsvangirai, to the White House, praising the progress made "in very difficult circumstance" since he joined a unity government with political rival President Robert Mugabe.

Speaking after their June 12 meeting, Obama said Zimbabwe's power-sharing agreement "shows promise" and the United States is looking for ways to help Tsvangirai and the Zimbabwean people improve the country's democratic and economic future.

"We want to do everything we can to encourage the kinds of improvement not only on human rights and rule of law, freedom of the press and democracy that is so necessary, but also on the economic front," Obama said. "The people of Zimbabwe need very concrete things," such as having their schools reopened, getting improved health care, and creating an agricultural system that can feed its people.

"On all these fronts I think the prime minister is committed to significant concrete improvement in the day-to-day lives of the people of Zimbabwe," the president said.

Obama said he has committed \$73 million in assistance to Zimbabwe, but said it would not go directly to the government, which is led by

Mugabe, "because we continue to be concerned about consolidating democracy, human rights and the rule of law."

Referring to the political violence and intimidation that plagued Zimbabwe for much of 2008, Obama said Mugabe "has not acted often-times in the best interest of the



President Obama told Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai the United States is looking for ways to support Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwean people and has been resistant to the kinds of democratic changes that need to take place."

The president praised Tsvangirai and the provisional government for bringing inflation under control, and said Zimbabwe's industrial capacity is slowly beginning to recover. He added that the prime minister will continue to provide the United States with "direction in ways he thinks we can be helpful."

The prime minister told Obama that the power-sharing agreement is an effort to bring Zimbabwe out of its political and economic decay, but is still "a journey." "We want to institute those reforms that will ensure that in 18 months time, people of Zimbabwe are given an opportunity

to elect their own government," he said.

He acknowledge that gaps still exist in implementing Zimbabwe's own benchmarks for reform, but said, "We will strive to implement those benchmarks, not because they are for the international community, but because for ourselves, it gives people of Zimbabwe freedom and opportunity to grow."

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton met with Tsvangirai at the State Department June 11 and praised him as "a longtime advocate" for Zimbabwe, particularly with regard to human rights and economic opportunity. Tsvangirai's unity government is "attempting

to move Zimbabwe forward into a better future," and the United States is looking for ways "we appropriately can be supportive," Clinton said.

The prime minister also met with more than 120 U.S. private-sector and government leaders at a June 11 luncheon hosted by the non-profit Corporate Council on Africa (CCA), which seeks to encourage business partnerships and opportunities between the United States and Africa.

According to a CCA statement, the organization told Tsvangirai that "before investing in Zimbabwe, most American companies will need

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Fighting Human Trafficking a Critical Part of U.S. Foreign Policy . . .

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Office on Drugs and Crime recently released its own report on global human trafficking and found that two out of every five countries have yet to achieve a single conviction of a human trafficker.

"Prosecutions can be a blunt tool, but they do matter" in deterring traffickers, he said.

HEROES HONORED

In addition to a number of U.S. senators and House members, two anti-trafficking activists were present at the June 16 State Department event: Mariliana Morales Berrios of Costa Rica and Vera Lesko of Albania. Berrios founded a rehabilitation foundation in 1997 to help trafficking victims build a new life with their families. Lesko risked her life providing shelter to rescued trafficking victims.

Both women were among nine individuals from around the world honored by the State Department as heroes in the fight against traffick-

ing. The other seven are: Benjamin Perrin of Canada; George Vanikiotis of Greece; Sunitha Krishnan of India; Elly Anita of Indonesia; Aida Abu Ras of Jordan; Alice Nah of Malaysia; and Inacio Sebastiao Mussanhane of Mozambique.

Related stories:

U.S. Honors Anti-Trafficking "Heroes" from Indonesia, Malaysia
(<http://www.america.gov/st/democracyhr-english/2009/June/20090611090114byibiatola0.2088282.html?CP.rss=true>)

Lawyer Rescues Trafficking Victims in South Africa, Mozambique
(<http://www.america.gov/st/democracyhr-english/2009/June/20090609122418ajesrom0.383526.html?CP.rss=true>)

(<http://www.america.gov/st/democracyhr-english/2009/June/20090609155714ajesrom4.254657e-02.html?CP.rss=true>)

Innovative Activists Save Traffick-

ing Victims in Jordan and India
(<http://www.america.gov/st/democracyhr-english/2009/June/20090609155714ajesrom4.254657e-02.html?CP.rss=true>)

Public Awareness a Major Weapon in Fighting Human Trafficking
(<http://www.america.gov/st/democracyhr-english/2009/June/20090609094422byibiatola0.3264734.html?CP.rss=true>)

In Albania and Greece, Brave Individuals Fight Human Slavery
(<http://www.america.gov/st/democracyhr-english/2009/June/20090609094639byibiatola0.7989095.html?CP.rss=true>)

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United States Seeks to Encourage Democracy, Growth in Zimbabwe . . .

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to see a combination of political and economic reforms to create a sustainable investment climate." CCA President Stephen Hayes told a separate audience of Zimbabwean business leaders in Harare that American companies are looking forward to when Zimbabwe will be a "beacon of investment and a leader in addressing Africa's eco-

nomics development needs."

In his remarks at the luncheon, Prime Minister Tsvangirai called for U.S. private-sector support for Zimbabwe's reconstruction, saying "Zimbabwe cannot do it alone." He said that over the past three months his government has "reduced inflation rates from 500 million percent to minus 3 percent, increased government accountabil-

ity and addressed corruption," according to the CCA statement. He also said Zimbabwean authorities are working to establish the necessary stability and rule of law in the country that would protect private investments.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

African Countries Must Compete for Investment Capital

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington — Africa faces competition for U.S. investment capital in a highly competitive global marketplace, but the continent also is seen by many American business executives as a market that cannot be ignored — the “last frontier for growth.”

Those are two of the main conclusions in “A Conversation Behind Closed Doors: Inside the Boardroom. How Corporate America Really Views Africa,” a report recently released by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The report’s authors polled top decisionmakers in 30 leading multinational corporations in business sectors from aerospace and health care to media and transportation. Anonymity was guaranteed to all respondents. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world’s largest business federation, representing more than 3 million businesses and organizations of every size, sector and region, as well as 112 American chambers of commerce (American business groups) in 99 countries.

Competition for America foreign direct investment is high, the report says. “Countries from all regions showcase their advantages, align their offers to U.S. needs, clamor for attention, and invest in their own countries to attract additional investment. Consequently, U.S. corporations do not lack investment choices, and rarely consider African nations.”

The report states that news media reports about Africa often focus on chaos and unrest, and “Africa is not



Barnabus Ossai arranges boxes of imported computer-printer paper for sale in his small shop in Lagos, Nigeria.

active or aggressive enough about attracting investment; the voices of the few countries that are making an effort get lost in the surrounding negative noise.”

However, the report credits some African countries for making special efforts to assist foreign countries that invest in Africa and particularly praises Nigeria’s government for regularly engaging local leaders of foreign companies to help cut through cumbersome and sometimes meaningless bureaucratic requirements imposed by local governments.

“U.S. corporations need a strong and specific draw from Africa to make investment worthwhile,” according to the report. “This can be the lure of a robust market, or a belief that there is a competitive advantage to early entry into African markets. The survey data show that few of these pulls exist or are

not sufficiently enticing to be effective in the near term.”

ACCENTUATING THE POSITIVES, OVERCOMING THE NEGATIVES

The survey identifies several key factors for influencing and attracting foreign direct investment:

- a strong rule of law with an independent judiciary that can arbitrate any disputes in an unbiased manner;

- a pro-investment environment that breaks down trade barriers and promotes the free movement of people and goods;

- a promise of rewards that outweigh the risks undertaken by investors; and

- a supportive business framework

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Obama's Cairo Speech Resonates with Africans, State's Carson Says

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington — There was widespread interest across sub-Saharan Africa in President Obama's speech June 4 from Cairo to Muslims worldwide because many of the speech themes resonated directly with Africans who look forward to participating in a "new dialogue" with the United States, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson said June 5.

Carson was among a group of U.S. officials who briefed reporters in Washington on reaction to the speech in their region of responsibility.

Offering input from his region, Africa, Carson told reporters, "There was widespread interest throughout sub-Saharan Africa about the president's speech not only because of the president's father having been a Kenyan but also because one-third of the 800 million people who live in sub-Saharan Africa today are of Muslim religion and faith — one-third."

Some 11 of the 48 states in sub-Saharan Africa have Muslim majority populations and three of the largest nations in Africa have substantial Muslim populations, Carson told reporters. Nigeria, with a population of 150 million people, has a Muslim population of some 70 million people, "which makes that population substantially larger than any Arab state in the Middle East," Carson said.

Ethiopia, with a population of roughly 70 million people, has a Muslim population of roughly 33 million, comparable to that of large nations in the Arab world, he added.

SPEECH'S THEMES RESONATED IN AFRICA

Carson told reporters there was a "very positive reaction" to the president's message and themes expressed in the speech. Four themes in particular resonated "very, very strongly throughout Africa," Carson said. "One is the call and respect for democracy. Many African countries are increasingly embracing democratic reform and respect for rule of law. This theme resonates with civil society and throughout Africa where democracy is taking deeper root.

"The president's talk about respect and rights and empowerment for women also resonates throughout the continent," he added, "where African women are also trying to take their rightful role as responsible citizens in the development of their own countries, becoming more active in both the political and economic life."

President Obama's message about economic opportunity is also important throughout Africa, Carson said. "Africa remains one of the poorest continents in the world and the need for more investment in that part of the world, particularly to jump-start the economy, is important. His comments on economic empowerment, economic opportunity resonated around the continent."

The fourth theme, one increasingly important to Africa, is combating violent extremism, Carson said. "Although we associate this with many other parts of the world, Africa has also experienced violent extremism. We have seen it in the destruction of our embassies in Nairobi [Kenya] and Dar es Salaam [Tanzania] in August of 1998, the

al-Qaida terrorist attack against Israeli interests in Kenya in November of 2002, and we saw it on May 31 just several days ago when al-Qaida in the Islamic lands of the Maghreb executed a British national who had been held hostage for some six months. Africans are also fighting against this extremism."

President Obama's speech was "applauded, respected. News coverage and media attention to this from South Africa up to Ethiopia and across to Abuja and Lagos was very intense and very interested," Carson said. "Africans are also interested in seeing how they could take advantage of some of the programs the president outlined, particularly the expansion of educational exchange programs with Muslims around the world, particularly in Africa."

Africans "were interested in seeing how they could benefit from the support for technological development and, of course, they were particularly interested when the president said that he was going to initiate centers for scientific excellence, including in Africa."

Carson said Africans already have "enormous respect" for President Obama, and the United States is held in high regard on the continent. Obama's speech, he added, "will encourage all of those who support and are fighting for greater democratization across the continent."

"We hope his words will inspire those who are seeking to promote economic development and greater opportunity. We hope his words will encourage greater opportunity and respect for women's rights and op-

(Continued on page 11)

United States Seeks Early Conclusion of Mideast Peace Talks

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama's special envoy for Middle East peace, George Mitchell, says he believes there is a realistic chance of accommodating Israel's desire for security with the Palestinian desire for an independent state, and says the United States is currently focused on the resumption and "early conclusion" of meaningful negotiations.

Speaking to reporters at the State Department June 16, Mitchell said Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton clearly have stated that "the only viable resolution to this conflict is for the aspirations of both sides to be met through two states."

The Obama administration is "working vigorously" toward a solution and will "use all of the tools at our disposal" to move toward that objective, he said.

"Our focus right now is to create the context for the resumption and early conclusion of meaningful negotiation. To help achieve this, we're asking all parties to take meaningful steps," Mitchell said. He later added, "We hope to conclude the discussions in which we are now engaged very soon. To me it's a matter of weeks, not many months."

Israel and the Palestinians not only have a responsibility to meet their obligations under the 2003 road map plan for peace, "it's in their interests as well," he said. "For the Israelis, that means a stop to settlements and other actions. For the Palestinians, that means continuing

their efforts to take responsibility for security and to end incitement."

Asked about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's June 14 speech in which he endorsed the prospect of a Palestinian state, but listed conditions that drew criticism from Palestinian leaders, Mitchell said the important part of the speech was that Netanyahu "included in his objective a Palestinian state. So there now is a common objective, which was not the case until that speech was made." (See "U.S. Welcomes Israeli Leader's Endorsement of Palestinian State (<http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2009/June/20090615154811esnamfuak0.9312555.html&distid=ucs>).")

The Israeli leader stated his objectives in the negotiations, just as the Palestinians have, he said. These are not preconditions, but desires in a final agreement, Mitchell said.

Mitchell, a former U.S. senator, chaired discussions between parties in Northern Ireland that led to the 1999 Good Friday agreement.

"In every negotiation which I've been involved, parties have taken seemingly irreconcilable positions at the outset," he said. "I categorically reject the notion that because there is a disagreement between the parties on one or more positions, that there can never be an agreement. If you accept that argument, then no dispute would ever be resolved."



George Mitchell, says he believes there is a "realistic" chance for peace.

He said the U.S. objective is to "get a process going to encourage parties to take steps necessary to move that process forward," and in order to get the two sides to take meaningful steps, "there has to be assurance on all sides that steps will be reciprocal and will proceed in a manner that best ensures that result."

The two sides will need to make difficult compromises, but they will be "justified by the ultimate goal of peace, security and prosperity," he said.

"In the interest of the Palestinian people to obtain a state, the security of the people of Israel must be central. For the people of Israel, in order to gain security, the need for a Palestinian state must be central," he said.

Despite the tremendous challenges, Mitchell said, a solution is possible. "I assure you I would not have taken this position if I did not believe that there is a realistic chance of reaching those objectives," he told reporters.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Iran Must Respect the Right of Its People to Peaceful Expression

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration is “deeply troubled” by news reports from Iran of violence and possible voting irregularities in the aftermath of the June 12 presidential election. The State Department says it is still assessing whether irregularities occurred, but spokesman Ian Kelly acknowledged that U.S. officials have doubts about the results.

“There has been doubt cast on the outcome of the elections. We see a real desire of the Iranian people to express themselves, to be involved in the political process, and that right needs to be respected,” Kelly told reporters June 15. The United States is also concerned over reports of “violent responses to peaceful protests,” he added.

The spokesman said it is difficult to develop a picture of what happened during the election because Iran did not allow international monitors to participate and the United States does not have diplomats in Iran. The Obama administration is currently consulting with others in the international community, especially the European Union (EU), over the developments inside Iran, he said.

EU officials reportedly have called for an inquiry into the conduct of the vote, and Kelly said Obama administration officials “have doubts about the election results.”

He said Iran “needs to take seriously these allegations and needs to examine these accusations very thoroughly.”

The official results were announced June 13, and they declared incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad the winner with 63 percent of the vote. His nearest challenger, Mir Hossein Mousavi, received 34 percent. Since the results were announced, Iran has seen violent



Many Iranians in the United States, such as these demonstrators in Los Angeles, have joined protests against the election results.

clashes between its security forces and opposition demonstrators, as well as huge public gatherings despite a government ban on protests.

According to Kelly, much of the information U.S. officials have has come through news reports that have shown “the reaction of some of the law enforcement authorities, news of access to the Internet being blocked and certain newspapers being closed.” Iran gained global attention for “the enthusiasm and robust debate these elections engendered,” and the spokesman said “the essential right of people to express themselves peacefully needs to be respected.”

He said the United States continues to have long-standing concerns over whether Iran will live up to its international obligations, particularly regarding its support for terrorism and its nuclear program.

The concerns over the nuclear program “are very serious concerns and get to the very heart of this administration’s priorities in terms of nonproliferation, concerns about the possibility of an arms race in that part of the world,” Kelly said.

Vice President Biden said the Obama administration will continue to pursue direct diplomacy with Iran, particularly within the context of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany, collectively known as the P5 + 1.

Speaking June 14 on NBC’s Meet the Press, Biden said U.S. interests with Iran remain the same as before the election. The Obama administration wants Iran to “cease and desist from seeking a nuclear weapon and having one in its possession and, secondly, to stop supporting terrorists.”

Biden said President Obama has decided it is in the national security interests of the United States to talk with Iran’s leaders. “We are ready to participate, we are ready to talk,” but “talks with Iran are not a reward for good behavior.”

The vice president added that any discussion is “something that is going to be done with the regime. It’s not being done with a single person,” and he doubted that anything “of consequence” can be done without the approval of Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

U.S. and Europeans Agree on Resettling Guantánamo Detainees

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Members of the European Union (EU) have agreed to help the United States in its effort to close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, by accepting some detainees and sharing information on the former detainees once they have arrived in an EU country.

The EU and the United States released a joint statement June 15 that outlines a framework for the 27 individual European Union states to accept detainees, as well as other cooperation on counterterrorism.

In his June 15 meeting with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi at the White House, President Obama thanked Berlusconi for Italy's agreement to accept three Guantánamo detainees. He also said he was very appreciative of the joint statement.

"It will give us an opportunity to create a lasting and durable international legal framework for dealing with terrorism that I think is very important on both sides of the Atlantic," the president said.

State Department spokesman Ian Kelly also welcomed the adoption of the statement by the EU's Council of Ministers.

"We thank our European colleagues, particularly the Czech presidency, the EU counterterrorism coordinator and the [EU] Commission, for their help and willingness to join with us in closing the Guantánamo facility and deepening trans-Atlantic cooperation in counterterrorism. We look forward to the

EU's continuing partnership on this challenging issue," Kelly said in a June 15 statement.

The U.S.-EU joint statement noted President Obama's order to close Guantánamo by January 22, 2010, and said the EU and its member



Bermuda has resettled four former Guantánamo detainees. Above, one of the four looks out the window of a restaurant on Bermuda

states "wish to help the U.S. turn the page" as it develops a new security approach and conducts a review of its security policies, including those on the detention, transfer, trial and interrogation of detainees, transparency about past detainee practices and the elimination of secret detention facilities.

"In this context, certain Member States of the European Union have expressed their readiness to assist with the reception of certain former Guantánamo detainees, on a case-by-case basis," the joint statement said.

Drawing on shared U.S. and EU values of "freedom, democracy, and respect for international law, the rule of law and human rights," the statement said joint efforts against terrorism should also reflect those values. "We consider that efforts to

combat terrorism conducted in this manner make us stronger and more secure."

Both the EU and United States agree that the United States has the "primary responsibility" for closing the Guantánamo facility and finding new residences for the detainees. The Obama administration has asked the Europeans for assistance in resettling detainees who have been cleared for release but "for compelling reasons cannot return to their countries of origin" and have expressed a desire to live in an EU state.

The joint statement also notes that the United States will share all available intelligence and information with the EU member state on the detainee that is being considered for resettlement, and both parties will keep each other informed of any relevant information that emerges later. The United States will also consider contributing to costs that EU states incur related to receiving individual ex-detainees.

The full text of the joint statement (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/June/20090615180045xjsnommis8.939326e-02.html>) is available on America.gov.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

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Four Uighur Guantánamo Detainees Resettled in Bermuda

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration says it is “extremely grateful” to the government of Bermuda for accepting four Chinese Uighur detainees who had been cleared for release after being held at the Guantánamo Bay detention facility in Cuba.

In a June 11 statement by the U.S. Department of Justice, Attorney General Eric Holder praised Bermuda’s government for its assistance in successfully resettling the four detainees, adding, “We commend the leadership they have demonstrated on this important issue.”

The Uighurs, who are a Turkic Muslim minority from western China, were apprehended in Pakistan in 2001 after U.S. forces fighting the Taliban and al-Qaida bombed their camp in Afghanistan. The Justice Department has since concluded that “these individuals did not travel to Afghanistan with the intent to take any hostile action against the United States,” and the Obama administration has been discussing resettlement options with a number of countries.

Before the announcement of the Bermuda resettlements, the government of Palau said it would accept 17 Uighur detainees “as a humanitarian gesture” that would be “subject to periodic review.”

The transfer of the four detainees to Bermuda marks the first resettlement of Uighurs from Guantánamo since 2006, when Albania agreed to accept five. A Justice Department report on the five Uighurs resettled to Albania found no reports of any criminal or terrorist activity

by those men since their release.

On January 22, his second full day in office, President Obama signed a presidential order to close the Guantánamo detention facility within one year. Before the resettlement of the Uighurs in Bermuda, the Guantánamo Review Task Force conducted a comprehensive review of the four detainees, including a threat evaluation.

State Department spokesman Ian Kelly told reporters June 11 that the closure of the Guantánamo facility is “a top priority” for President Obama and his administration is “working very hard to reach that goal of closing it within the time period the president has set.” He described it as “a complicated process involving negotiations with many different countries,” as well as various U.S. government agencies.

Kelly said the United States is involved in ongoing discussions with a number of governments, including Palau, over where to resettle the remaining Uighurs, and welcomes any offer to resettle the detainees. He said an agreement with Palau is “not finalized.”

The spokesman also acknowledged that the Chinese government, which wants the Uighurs to be repatriated to China, consistently has expressed its concerns over any resettlements into other countries.

“We’ve taken those concerns on board, but we’ve made it quite clear to them that we are not going to transfer them back to China,” he said.

As a general principle, not only concerning China, the United States

has said it will not “transfer prisoners to countries in which they would have a well-founded fear of persecution,” Kelly said.

China has insisted the Uighurs are part of a separatist movement it accuses of carrying out terroristic acts in its Xinjiang province bordering Central Asia.

The full text of the Justice Department announcement (<http://justice.gov/opa/pr/2009/June/09-ag-574.html>) is available on the department Web site.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Obama’s Cairo Speech Resonates with Africans, . . .

(Continued from page 7)
portunities across the country. And we hope his words will also be heard by those in several parts of the continent who are engaged in conflict and who need to seek peaceful solutions to the answers to the problems that they face. His words and the trust that they inspire, we hope, will lead and serve as a catalyst to others to follow them, not just listen to them, act on them, not just applaud them.”

A transcript of the June 5 briefing (<http://fpc.state.gov/124392.htm>) is available on the State Department’s Web site.

A transcript of Obama’s speech in Cairo (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/June/20090603171549eaifas0.6576807.html>) is available on America.gov. ♦

Blogs Help Put a Human Face on Government Bureaucracy

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. government agencies are finding that blogging can put a “human face” on what can sometimes seem like a sterile bureaucracy.

For example, when the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA), the agency responsible for airport security in the United States, launched its blog in January 2008, it recruited employees with on-the-ground experience working in various TSA jobs around the United States to author blog posts.

“We didn’t want people to think they were talking to a nameless TSA bureaucrat, so we got ‘real’ people,” Lynn Dean, one of the founders of the blog, called *Evolution of Security*, explained to *America.gov*. And that continues today, she said, with TSA employees both writing and commenting on blog posts.

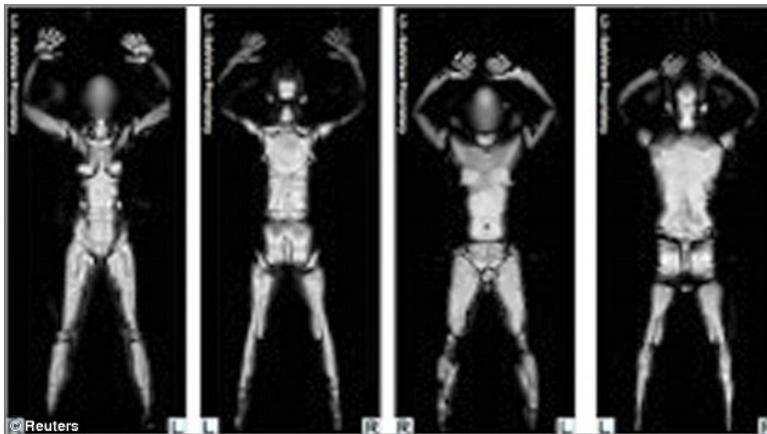
Dean said the TSA decided to try blogging to combat misinformation spread throughout the Internet about security requirements at the nations’ airports.

The results were surprising, Dean said. “In the first three days, we had more than 2,000 comments,” she said.

Public interest remains high. “We get about 3,000 views per blog post,” she said. And in the 18 months the blog has been in operation, the TSA has had 642,845 unique visitors and 16,468 com-

ments, Dean said.

The comments aren’t always flattering to TSA’s security operations, Dean conceded. “We expect venting,” she said. Many people don’t like having to take their shoes and



The “body scanner” being tested for airport security created a lively discussion on the Transportation Security Administration’s blog.

coats off for screening or pulling out their computers for inspection, she said. They can’t understand why they might be “patted down” or why a person in a wheelchair should be subject to rigorous security measures.

“For our officers,” Dean explained, the September 11 terrorist attacks are “in the forefront of their minds, and not letting it happen again.” But for many passengers, September 11 is history, she said, “and it is often a bad clash of perceptions.” But TSA officers’ blog posts, which include their actual on-the-job experiences, explain their caution. For example, one wheelchair passenger, TSA officers found, had bags of cocaine strapped to his stomach; the metal bone pin one passenger claimed to have in his leg was actually a knife.

The goal of TSA’s blog, she said, is

to explain to readers what they need to understand about the screening process so they can get through security as quickly as possible. But occasionally their comments lead to changes in TSA practices. One commenter complained of being made to take every cord and electronic item out of his bags. TSA officials contacted the airport, where security officers were trying a pilot program, and that test was ended, Dean said.

“Sometimes the blog helps operationally, identify a problem somewhere,” said Dean, who is now the deputy director for TSA’s Information

Center.

GREENVERSATIONS DEMONSTRATES EPA’S MANY ROLES

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees the nation’s environmental science, research, education and regulatory efforts. “We wanted to show [the public] the breadth of what we do,” Jeffrey Levy, director of Web communication at EPA’s Office of Public Affairs, told *America.gov*.

EPA’s blog, *Greenversations*, helps do just that.

“We’re doing it as a group blog; having people from all over the agency sharing their different experiences,” Levy said. Those experiences can be job related or not and range from “green” gardening to

(Continued on page 19)

Spotlight on Muslim Americans: Shahed Amanullah

By Ahmed Mohamed
Staff Writer

Washington — “If we are to have partners for peace, then we must first be partners in sympathetic recognition that all mankind possesses in common like aspirations and hungers, like ideals and appetites, like purposes and frailties, a like demand for economic advancement. The divisions between us are artificial and transient. Our common humanity is God-made and enduring.” President Dwight Eisenhower, July 11, 1955.

The United States is home to one of the most diverse Muslim communities in the world, with a total population estimated between 3 million and 6 million people.

“The Muslim-American population is largely middle class, mostly mainstream, assimilated, happy with their lives and moderate on many of the issues that have divided Muslims and Westerners around the world,” says Andrew Kohut, president of the Pew Research Center.

One example is Shahed Amanullah, an engineer and editor-in-chief of the Web site altmuslim.com, who says, “American values are, by and large, very consistent with Islamic values, with a focus on family, faith, hard work and an obligation to better self and society.”

Most Muslims living in the United States said they do not perceive a conflict between practicing their religion and living in a modern society, and they believe hard work is rewarded in America, according to the Pew Global Attitudes Project survey, which was conducted by the Pew Research Center, an inde-

pendent, nonpartisan opinion-research group.

Amanullah pointed out that the challenges facing young Muslim Americans today revolve around embracing who they are and how they fit into the larger fabric of America: “Many are more observant than their parents, yet they are searching for a Muslim identity that allows them to integrate American culture while being true to Islam.”

Amanullah long has been a practitioner of his own “obligation to better self and society.” Along with altmuslim.com, Amanullah is also the founder of the company Halal-fire Media, a network of Islamic-themed Web sites with more than 6 million annual visitors.

He also founded zabihah.com, described as the world’s largest database of halal restaurants and markets, as well as salatomatic.com, an extensive list of reviewed mosques and schools in Muslim-minority countries. He started unitemuslims.org, a resource for civic engagement, as well as halalapa-looza.com, a comprehensive guide to Islamic commerce.

Public service plays a huge role in Amanullah’s life, as he has served as a board member of the United Muslims of America, the Muslim Public Service Network and the Muslim Youth Camp of California. He is also a general partner in Zakat Community Ventures, the first “venture philanthropy” fund dedicated to promoting Islamic charitable values.

He launched his new Web site, altmuslim.com, “to develop a professional, authoritative outlet for a

Muslim’s voice to be in line with the mainstream media, and highlight ... what it means to be a Muslim in the West.”

Amanullah added that he wanted to change the dialogue about Muslims, especially after 2001, because he believes that non-Muslims stereotyped Muslims in the West and Muslims did not understand the concerns of non-Muslims.

Amanullah described the challenges of the American-Muslim community as “a blessed community in terms of education and economy ... and we have the opportunity to contribute. We need to find our place in the community and how to be fully Muslims at the same time [we are] fully Americans.”

He offered a solution as well: “We shouldn’t isolate ourselves, as some people think, to protect their identity. ... It is very wrong,” he said. “The Muslim-American identity will be strengthened when it is exposed to people, when [we are] involved in every sphere in community life. It helps to develop identity — in America the Muslims benefited more because they are not isolated. There is something unique about being an American; it is easy to assimilate because America is an immigration nation, and it is easier that people accept Muslims as American, which helps to protect their identities.”

“In America, we have the most diverse Muslim community,” Amanullah said. “They come from different origins, which enriches the community; [they] give and take from each other, and create a more interactive

(Continued on page 15)

Access to Government Information Going Digital

By Danielle Zielinski
Special Correspondent

Washington — These days, it seems you can find almost anything online.

New apartment? Yes.
(craigslist.com, apartments.com, rent.com)

Long-lost high school sweetheart? Yes. (google.com, facebook.com)

Pictures of cats with crazy captions? Yes.
(icanhascheezburger.com)

Safety reports on your child's school? Maybe not.

For today's Internet-savvy population, the expectation is that everything is available online, but in reality, governments are still leaving a lot of empty architecture in cyberspace.

A survey conducted in March as part of national "Sunshine Week" found that while increasing numbers of U.S. state government documents are being posted to the Web, some of the most basic and important records — like death certificates, gas pump overcharge records and school bus inspection reports — aren't there. Sunshine Week is an annual event focused on open government and freedom of information.

A separate survey conducted by Openthegovernment.org identified the 10 most wanted federal government documents, which included records about the use of economic stimulus funds, court settlements involving federal agencies, and current federal contracts and subcontracts.



FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2009

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Welcome to Data.gov

The purpose of Data.gov is to increase public access to high value, machine readable datasets generated by the Executive Branch of the Federal Government. Although the initial launch of Data.gov

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State Dept

Government Web sites like Data.gov aim to make information accessible to citizens, but much work remains, activists say.

Advocates for freedom of information are looking at online access to records as the next battleground in the movement for more transparent and democratic government.

"Digital technologies can be a great catalyst for democracy, but the state of access today is quite uneven," said Charles Davis, executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition, in announcing the Sunshine Week survey results. "The future of freedom of information is online access, and states have a long way to go to fulfill the promise of electronic self-governance."

President Obama issued an Open Government Directive on his second day in office that promised greater openness and transparency would be one of the themes of his administration. On May 21, he rolled out the first of a series of initiatives designed to give citizens more access to government via the Inter-

net. The launch included the debut of a site called Data.gov, where federal agencies will post data that can be used by software developers to make new Internet and cell phone applications. (See "Obama Administration Breaks New Ground on the Internet (<http://www.america.gov/st/usg-english/2009/May/20090529110008ajesrom0.4316522.html?CP.rss=true>).")

Historically, public participation has been limited to submitting comments on proposed regulations for federal programs and sending letters to federal officials. Advocates say providing online access to more information can help citizens to become more engaged in federal, state and local government.

"The benefits all around are tremendous," said Debra Gersh Hernandez, coordinator of Sunshine Week. "For citizens, it's huge. We are a partici-

(Continued on page 15)

Access to Government Information Going Digital . . .

(Continued from page 14)

patory democracy. If you want to know if your kid's school building has asbestos in it or when the next council meeting is ... having things online is a given in this technology era."

Posting government records and documents online is not only convenient for citizens, but greatly reduces the time and expense associated with government employees processing Freedom of Information Act requests, photocopying documents and mailing records, Gersh Hernandez said.

But there are challenges. For starters, many government agencies accumulated years of records before computers and the Internet became available, and the task of moving these older records from folders and file cabinets to the Web can be difficult and time-consuming. It is also important that once online, the information be organized well.

"They want to do it. They under-

stand it's important," Gersh Hernandez said. "The trick is not just having it up there, but having it up there in a way that is user-friendly."

With some records, such as court documents, divorce files and financial records, there are privacy concerns. But in almost all cases, there is a way to put some of the information online while ensuring that private information — such as Social Security numbers — isn't compromised.

For both President Obama's initiatives and state and local government transparency efforts, the greatest challenge may be changing attitudes and promoting a culture of openness. Some advocates have pointed out that the president's Open Government Directive was itself slow in soliciting public input. But across the country, small steps are being made.

In the wake of the March resignation of a state Cabinet official over income from speaking fees, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger issued an order to increase

transparency and accountability of his staff by requiring that their financial forms be posted on the governor's Web site.

In South Dakota, the state legislature recently completed a thorough overhaul of public records laws, which included requirements for information to be posted and searchable online.

Open-government proponents hope that Obama's promise to make the federal government more transparent will also improve the practices of state and local governments.

"Certainly, in terms of effort and movement, he's very much moved things along," Gersh Hernandez said. "It does start at the top."

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Spotlight on Muslim Americans: Shahed Amanullah . . .

(Continued from page 13)

community, giving a great example to the rest of the Muslim world, who lives in a homogeneous society."

"With the new administration and the message of President Obama, which gave hope to Muslim Americans, which has opened the doors

to hear our voices, I say it is a good opportunity to serve," Amanullah said. "I am very optimistic, because of the talented people in the Muslim-American community, that they can be a big help to the country. That is why I want to tell those stories on altmuslim.com."

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs,

U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Lawyer Rescues Trafficking Victims in South Africa, Mozambique

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington — A casual conversation in a Pretoria, South Africa, café launched a dangerous investigation by Inácio Sebastião Mussanhane, a lawyer from Mozambique who was studying in South Africa.

It was there in 2008 that he heard that Mozambican girls were being kept as sex slaves at a nearby upscale condominium being used as a brothel. Mussanhane decided to investigate. He went to the brothel, and pretending to be a client, he was able to meet with the girls. After assuring them he was not there for sex but to help rescue them, he was able to gain the girls' confidence.

Mussanhane then contacted the alleged trafficker, a fellow native of Mozambique, who had tricked the girls into coming to Pretoria. His aim, he said, was to dissuade her from continuing this activity and return the girls to Mozambique. Instead, the trafficker attempted to bribe him for his silence. But Mussanhane began working with the South African police, a local trafficking shelter, the Mozambican embassy and the South African Ministry of Justice. The trafficking ring threatened to kill Mussanhane and attempted to kidnap him. But police were able to free the girls

and arrested the trafficking network's organizer. The case went to court in October 2008 and is ongoing.



Inácio Sebastião Mussanhane of Mozambique

Throughout the case, Mussanhane has been educating the Mozambican and South African governments, police and courts on the nature of human trafficking. He continues to work to protect trafficked girls, ensure the prosecution of traffickers and bring international attention to the issue.

Mussanhane's bravery earned him recognition from the United States. He is being honored as a hero working to end modern-day slavery in this year's Trafficking in Persons Report. Since 2001, the U.S. State Department has published the report annually. It is the most comprehensive report on government efforts around the world to stop trafficking.

HUMAN SLAVERY A WORLDWIDE SCOURGE

An estimated 800,000 men, women and children are trafficked across international borders each year. Millions more are trafficked within their own countries. In Africa the problem is especially acute, but progress is being made to protect the vulnerable and crack down on the traffickers.

In Mozambique, for example, the National Assembly passed the final version of a comprehensive human trafficking law in April 2008, and it was signed into law by the president in June. The law provides penalties of 16 to 20 years' imprisonment for those recruiting or facilitating exploitation of people for the purposes of prostitution or forced labor. The Mozambican police have created an anti-trafficking unit to enforce the new law. The police reportedly rescued more than 200 Mozambican children being trafficked to South Africa in the first half of 2008 alone. Media stories, such as those featuring Mussanhane's efforts, have raised public awareness of the problem.

In South Africa, a significant increase in the level of anti-trafficking training for social workers, police, prosecutors and border officials has led to improved recognition of trafficking victims, the referral of more cases to authorities, and improved care for victims.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Public Awareness a Major Weapon in Fighting Human Trafficking

By Yasmine Alotaibi
Staff Writer

Washington — Around the world, people desperate for employment often find themselves tricked by human traffickers. An estimated 800,000 men, women and children are trafficked across international borders each year. Millions more are trafficked within their own countries.

This problem does not go overlooked by everyone, as some everyday heroes from a variety of nations take steps to end modern-day slavery.

For example, Canadian Benjamin Perrin founded The Future Group, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) committed to fighting human trafficking and the child-sex trade. By bringing together a team from across Canada, The Future Group works with foreign governments, other NGOs and businesses to address human trafficking and other global issues such as HIV/AIDS.

Perrin has focused his work on urging the Canadian government to provide more effective victim services. In 2006, he released a report on Canada's treatment of trafficking victims, which led to a provision of temporary residence permits and medical services to such victims.

Last year, Perrin released his latest research project, which involved immigration documents collected since 2006 when the Citizen and

Immigration Canada department began flagging suspect cases. His research identified 31 instances of human trafficking in Canada and constituted Canada's first national statistics on the problem.

Today, Perrin continues to promote awareness of the crime and encourages governments to protect victims. He has testified before the Canadian Parliament on the issue, serves as the chair of the University of British Columbia's human trafficking working group and has helped identify a nationwide sex trafficking ring.

COSTA RICAN WOMAN A PIONEER IN ANTI-TRAFFICKING PROGRAMS

Similar efforts are under way in other parts of the globe. Over the last year, the Costa Rican government has made progress in addressing human trafficking crimes and helping victims. The government recently launched prevention campaigns as well as training efforts for government and law enforcement officials. Also, the government has begun to provide more victim assistance, although prosecution of human traffickers remains lacking.

Before the government began such efforts, Mariliana Morales Berrios was already fighting to protect traf-

ficking victims. In 1997, she created the Rahab Foundation to help victims and their families find a new life, keeping the program running despite limited resources. Although she and her staff frequently face threats and attacks, they continue to help trafficking victims escape from their captors. In fact, since its founding, the Rahab Foundation has helped more than 3,000 victims and also trained more than 5,000 government leaders, law enforcement officials and tourism workers on human trafficking issues.



*Benjamin Perrin of
Canada*

For these efforts, Perrin and Morales are being recognized by the U.S. Department of State in its annual report on human trafficking. Since 2001, the Department of State has published the Trafficking in Persons Report, a comprehensive report on governments' efforts to stop trafficking. Since 2004, the report also recognizes "Heroes Acting to End Modern-Day Slavery," those who show enormous courage in fighting a widespread, dangerous problem.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

United States Supports New Approach to Tackling Global Hunger

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in coming weeks will begin reaching out to other aid donors, nonprofit groups, universities and businesses for best practices that can be used in a new approach to ending global hunger.

At a June 11 ceremony at the State Department to announce the winner of the 2009 World Food Prize, Clinton said an example of a group with which the United States will work is the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, an African-led initiative to boost agricultural productivity.

For too long the primary response to hunger has been to send emergency aid “when the crisis is at its worst,” she said. “This saves lives but doesn’t address hunger’s root causes.”

Clinton said the United States supports creating effective and sustainable farming systems in regions and countries where current methods are not working.

A new approach to hunger will also benefit the United States, Clinton said. By helping to enhance agricultural productivity — “the right thing to do” — the United States will improve its ability “to affect extremism and violence and conflict.”

Anti-hunger advocacy groups have been calling for a new approach and more funding for food aid.

“We are very encouraged to hear

Secretary Clinton’s call for a new, more demand-driven approach to food security and agricultural development that emphasizes deep engagement with stakeholders. We have a tremendous opportunity to try this out in sub-Saharan Africa, where a number of countries are now completing agricultural strategies under the African Union’s Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme,” Julie Howard, executive director of



At the June 11 World Food Prize ceremony, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton said a new approach to tackling global hunger is needed.

Washington’s Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa, told America.gov.

Aid agreements between the United States and other countries will help partners achieve priority objectives and “mutually defined and monitored target outcomes,” Howard said.

A more efficient foreign assistance system with better coordination and better accountability “means that people get help faster and more effectively,” Washington-based Bread for the World said in a public letter.

Clinton laid out strategies that will

guide the United States in supporting sustainable agricultural systems:

Expanding access to quality seeds, fertilizers, irrigation tools, credit and training.

Helping farmers get their products to market by improving food storage and processing and rural roads.

Maintaining natural resources to preserve land for future generations and help countries adapt to climate change.

Expanding research and development to cultivate the next generation of plant scientists.

Supporting policy reform and good governance.

Increasing trade so small-scale farmers can sell their products in more markets.

Supporting women — who are the vast majority of the world’s farmers — and their families.

See “Ethiopian American Wins 2009 World Food Prize (<http://www.america.gov/st/development-english/2009/June/20090611155143akllennoccm0.1905634.html>)” and the “One Table: Advancing Agriculture to End Hunger (<http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/fs/2009/113991.htm>)” fact sheet.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

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See also

[http://www.america.gov/](http://www.america.gov)
Telling America's story

African Countries Must Compete for Investment . . .

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with transportation and communication infrastructure, trained or trainable human resources, and equitable trade, investment and employment practices.

Impediments to investment cited by the report include an image that many African countries are fraught with difficulties such as poor investment climates and corruption, with "the apparent lack of political will to curb it." Additionally, "executives do not believe that they are at a competitive disadvantage because they are not investing in African countries" and therefore are reluctant to invest.

The report, based on polling of private sector entities, is the first of two planned on Africa's investment climate. A second will be based on a survey of the public sector, which will be conducted over the next several months.

Africa is home to 14 percent of the world's population. More than 1,000 languages are spoken in Africa, and the continent encompasses some 53 countries, covers 20 percent of Earth's total land area and contains about 30 percent of its mineral reserves.

Yet U.S. investment in sub-Saharan Africa stands at a "very small percentage" of worldwide total U.S. investment, according to a Congressional Research Service report to Congress published in 2008. At the end of 2006, the report says, U.S. investment in sub-Saharan Africa stood at \$13.75 billion, or less than 1 percent of total U.S. investment abroad.

U.S. investment in Africa is heavily weighted toward natural resources, with 47 percent (excluding Egypt) in the mining and petroleum sector, compared to 13 percent in manufacturing, 22 percent in holding companies and 5 percent in wholesale

Blogs Help Put a Human Face on Government Bureaucracy . . .

(Continued from page 12)

renovating a home. "The idea is to connect in a more human way to our readers than the standard, bureaucratic news release or fact sheet," he said.

Launched on Earth Day, April 22, 2008, Greenversations now is read between 600 and 1,000 times per day and has accumulated approximately 7,000 reader comments. And EPA's Twitter account now has more than 4,000 followers.

Greenversations received a big boost when the White House joined Twitter and started to follow Greenversations. White House followers began to follow Greenversations' Twitter feed as well — doubling the number of subscribers, Levy said.

Levy said their most popular blog material is the weekly "Question of the Week," which invites discussions around questions such as: Why or why not do you bike to work? The questions, presented each Monday, generate between 50 to 100 comments each and sometimes as many as 200 to 300, he said.

EPA also produces a blog entry every Wednesday called "Science Wednesday," which is managed by the Office of Research and Development. And each Thursday, EPA's Hispanic liaison, Lina Younes, writes in Spanish on topics she feels are relevant to her audience.

EPA's blogs, Levy acknowledged, get their share of negative com-

ments, but such comments get posted as well.

"I think it's a bigger problem when agencies try to run a blog and will never post anything that's negative," Levy said. "People will sense that you're only looking to promote yourself, and you're not looking for an honest engagement with the public. I think you gain credibility by showing you're willing to take some criticism. And, ideally, you would respond to the criticism."

"We welcome everybody's comments," Levy said.

Evolution of Security blog (<http://www.tsa.gov/blog/>) and EPA's Greenversations blog (<http://blog.epa.gov/blog/>) can be viewed on the TSA and EPA Web sites.