



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

U.S. Government Launches HIV/AIDS Resource Fair

Keeping the Promise to Defeat AIDS in Ethiopia

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – The U.S. Embassy launched a National HIV/AIDS Resource Fair on November 30 at the Sheraton Hotel as part of this year's World AIDS Day celebration. The event was held in the presence of H.E. Ato Girma W. Giorgis, President of the Federal

Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Minister of

Health, Ato Nigatu Mereke, Head of the National HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control office, H.E. Mr. Brian Moran, Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, American Embassy, Mr. William Hamink, Director of US Agency



H.E. President Girma W/Giorgis (center), Mr. Brian Moran (second from right), Dr. Tedros Adhanom (second from left), Mr. Jason Heffner (far left) and Ato Nigatu Mereke (far right) at the launch ceremony.

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United States Will Spend \$3.2 Billion on AIDS Relief in 2006

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff
Writer

Washington – The United States will devote \$3.2 billion to international HIV/AIDS relief in 2006, in the third year of funding for the five-year, \$15 billion program first outlined by President Bush in 2003.

"We are absolutely keeping the promise the president made in terms of the financial commitment and also the results," said Dr. Mark Dybul, deputy global AIDS coordinator November 30 at a Washington briefing called in recognition of World AIDS Day.

Dybul said the U.S. bipartisan commitment to the international AIDS relief plan is strong, and the \$3.2 billion annual allocation for AIDS – the highest ever made by the United States or any nation -- is assured, although the Congress has yet to take final action

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US Government Launches HIV/AIDS Resource Fair . . .

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for International Development, Dr. Tadesse Wuhib, Director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, representatives of

Health (FMOH), the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office (HAPCO), and their regional equivalents in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia.

teraries, Music CDs, campaign materials, kits, etc. were produced in print, audio-visual, electronic, and web formats.



CDC Ethiopia

organizations working on HIV/AIDS, and other invited guests .

The Fair exhibited more than 150 materials on HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment produced by various organizations over the past few years under the support of President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Defense (DoD) and their respective partners have been supporting the Federal Ministry of



Aids Resource Center

DKT Ethiopia

The USG-Ethiopia partners, in collaboration with HAPCO and the FMOH, sponsored the Resource Fair to

provide all organizations working on HIV/AIDS a chance to view, learn, and collect samples of these materials for use in their respective areas of work. The event also signifies the continuing commitment of the United States Government in keeping the promise to continue the fight against HIV/AIDS -



UNICEF's Mr. Bjorn Ljungqvist DR. Tedros Adhanom, Ato Nigatu Mereke and Dr. Tadesse Wuhib at a press conference on November 30.

As part of this support to fight against the pandemic, various materials including publications, reports, job aids, manuals, documen-

the theme of this year's World AIDS Day. ♦

United States Will Spend \$3.2 Billion on AIDS Relief in 2006. . .

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on every element of the 2006 budget.

Dybul said the United States joins the rest of the world in recognition of World AIDS Day, an occasion to mark the progress against the disease, with the 2005 theme of "Keep the Promise."

"America has kept its promise, and is now working with 123 nations around the world," under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/43885.pdf>) (PDF, 127 pages), Dybul said. Of those nations, 15 are designated as focus countries because of their unusually high AIDS burden.

Together these 15 nations are home to about half of all the world's persons living with HIV/AIDS. They are Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guyana, Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia.

The U.S. strategy under PEPFAR is to help these nations build their own national strategies and infrastructure to provide better health care in the future.

"We believe strongly that it is nationally and locally owned responses that will be the only long-term effective and sustainable responses to HIV/AIDS," said Dybul. The deputy AIDS coordinator also commended the national and local officials for the leadership they have demonstrated in rising to the challenge of fighting the epidemic.

World AIDS Day is marked each year by release of World Epidemic Update, a comprehensive publication compiled by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) assessing the progress of the disease in all the world's regions.

Released on November 21, the report estimated that 40 million people worldwide are now living with HIV/AIDS, with 5 million new infections in 2005 alone. Even though those figures point to a still-expanding epidemic, the data showed another trend when analyzed country-to-country. The rate of disease is on a downward track in several nations, according to UNAIDS, a finding welcomed by U.S. AIDS officials. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Nov/22-629624.html>.)

"Kenya has reported a decreased prevalence rate from 10 percent to 7 percent. That's an extraordinary accomplishment, that's turning the tide of the epidemic," Dybul said.

Uganda and Zimbabwe also were found to be showing declines in HIV/AIDS prevalence. One reason for these declines is effective implementation of the "ABC" program developed in Africa. The acronym describes a three-pronged strategy of abstinence, be faithful to a partner and use condoms for high-risk sexual behavior. The program exemplifies the local-level leadership that Dybul said is so necessary in the enactment of successful strategies against the epidemic.

Several years ago, the international debate about how to attack

the AIDS epidemic placed prevention and treatment almost in opposition in the struggle for scarce resources. Dybul said the strategy for success pursued under PEPFAR incorporates prevention, treatment and care and support of HIV-affected persons. All these elements must be integrated, he says, to effectively address the epidemic.

The goals of the PEPFAR program are to support treatment for 2 million HIV-infected people; prevent 7 million new infections; and support care for 10 million people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, including orphans and vulnerable children.

In March, Global AIDS Coordinator Randall Tobias announced that 235,000 people had begun treatment in the first months that the programs had begun to function. It is anticipated that a more current, and higher, number of patients under treatment will be announced soon.

Additional information (<http://www.worldaidscampaign.info/index.php/wac/wac>) about World AIDS Day is available on the World AIDS Campaign Web site. For more information, see HIV/AIDS (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Communities Must Overcome Fear, Stigma to Halt HIV/AIDS Epidemic

Communities Must Overcome Fear, Stigma to Halt HIV/AIDS Epidemic



Linda H. Scruggs
(photo courtesy AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth and Families)

By Tim Re-
ceveur
Washing-
ton File
Staff
Writer

Washing-
ton – An
AIDS edu-
cator and
activist is
urging

communi-
ties around
the world
to address
the harmful

impact of discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS infections in order to halt the growing epidemic.

In a November 29 Internet chat on the social impact of HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination, Linda Scruggs -- an HIV-positive woman and deputy director of programs at the AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families, located in Washington -- discussed her extensive experience in working within communities to dispel misconceptions and assist those who are suffering from the disease.

"When dealing with HIV stigma, whether in the [United States] or abroad, history has taught us the only way to break down the barriers of stigma and discrimination is to address it face to face," she said. "Unfortunately, some have experienced violence, have been ostracized or even killed. Without these brave steps to change the minds and hearts of the public, we would not have come as far as we have."

Lynne Scheib, the moderator of the webchat and a reference specialist at the State Department, pointed out that "HIV stigma and the resulting actual or feared discrimination have proven to be perhaps the most difficult obstacles to effective HIV prevention," according to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

A joint UNAIDS/World Health Organization (WHO) fact sheet, released November 21, says stigma and discrimination undermine efforts to control the epidemic and create "an ideal climate for its continued growth." The fear of being discriminated against "prevents many people from negotiating safer sex, taking an HIV test, disclosing their status to their partners or seeking treatment, even when prevention services are made available." The fact sheet (http://www.unaids.org/epi2005/doc/docs/en/FS_Prevention_Nov05_en.pdf) is available on the WHO Web site.

In 2005, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS surpassed 40 million, up from 37.5 million in 2004, according to U.N. statistics. Over the past two years, the steepest increases in HIV infections have been in Eastern Europe and Central Asia with a combined 25 percent increase since 2003, but sub-Saharan Africa remains the hardest hit area with 65 percent of all new infections worldwide. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Nov/22-629624.html>)).

During the webchat, Scruggs said she works with communities to educate people about HIV/AIDS

"using various methods such as word of mouth, media and campaigns. The most important thing is for people to make HIV a part of general conversations. If we begin by teaching one person to reach one other person, we can address stigma in our local communities."

"Within my local church, I address HIV by including it in general conversations, whether talking to young people or senior citizens," she said. "When I first disclosed my [HIV-positive] status, I did it before the entire congregation after conducting a miniseries of HIV awareness workshops. We currently have an AIDS outreach which is part of our general mission work. We provide support and education to caregivers and families, as well as persons living with HIV."

In addition to her work in the Washington area, Scruggs has been involved with hundreds of similar organizations across the United States and in the Caribbean.

Asked about educating young people, she said programs in the United States and abroad are targeting teenagers and young adults through theater, music, literature and poetry.

"Capitalizing on the interests of youth in your community is what is most effective," Scruggs said. "As to encouraging safe sex behaviors among young people, this can only be effective if programs are willing to be open and honest with teenagers. Teenagers are constantly seeking information and knowledge, so the earlier we begin to address these issues, the more

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U.N. Reports AIDS Rates Decline Among Some African Nations

U.N. Reports AIDS Rates Decline Among Some African Nations

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- While HIV/AIDS is still robbing sub-Saharan Africa of potential economic gains by decimating whole populations, a recent United Nations report reveals that the pandemic is decreasing in intensity among adults in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda.

According to the report UNAIDS/WHO AIDS Epidemic Update: December 2005, sub-Saharan Africa is home to more than 60 percent of all HIV/AIDS victims -- around 25.8 million people, and growing. In 2005, an estimated 2.8 million to 3.9 million people in the region became newly infected. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Nov/22-629624.html>)).

The good news, however, is that in three African nations, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe, "declines in adult national HIV prevalence appear to be under way," the U.N. report states.

"East Africa continues to provide the most hopeful indications that serious AIDS epidemics can be reversed," it reported, with "the countrywide drop in HIV prevalence among pregnant women -- seen in Uganda since the mid-1990s -- now being mirrored in urban parts of Kenya, where infection levels are dropping, in some places quite steeply." Uganda's HIV prevalence rate now is estimated to be around 7 percent, one of the lowest in Africa.

The AIDS epidemic in Kenya

peaked in the late 1990s with an overall HIV prevalence of 10 percent in adults, which declined to 7 percent in 2003, the U.N. report said. The "most dramatic drops in prevalence have been among pregnant women in urban areas -- especially in Busia, Meru, Nakuru and Thika, where median HIV prevalence plummeted from approximately 28 percent in 1999 to 9 percent in 2003.

"This is only the second time in more than two decades that a sustained decline in national HIV infection levels has been seen in a sub-Saharan African country," the report added.

Significantly, the U.N. report emphasized that "In both countries, behavioral changes are likely to have contributed to the trend shifts."

Ironically, the U.N. report also noted a significant decline in infections in Zimbabwe, where social conditions have declined precipitously under the political and economic mismanagement of President Robert Mugabe.

The report says, "Recent data from Zimbabwe's national surveillance system show a decline in HIV prevalence among pregnant women from 26 percent in 2002 to 21 percent in 2004. In Harare, HIV prevalence in women attending antenatal or postnatal clinics fell from 35 percent in 1999 to 21 percent in 2004. In rural eastern Zimbabwe, declines in HIV prevalence in pregnant women were also reflected in declines among both men and women in the general population."

It adds that, "a significant decline

in HIV prevalence among pregnant young women (15-24 years) -- which fell from 29 percent to 20 percent in 2000-2004 -- suggests that the rate of new HIV infections [incidence] could be slowing, too."

On the less positive side, the report continues: "With the exception of Zimbabwe, countries of southern Africa show little evidence of declining epidemics. HIV prevalence levels remain exceptionally high (except for Angola), and might not yet have reached their peak in several countries -- as the expanding epidemics in Mozambique and Swaziland suggest."

PROGRESS ALSO SEEN IN WEST, CENTRAL AFRICA

The picture is brighter in West and Central Africa, where, the United Nations estimates, "national HIV prevalence is considerably lower than in the south and east of the region."

Attempting to dispel misconceptions about the disease's spread in Africa, the U.N. report said: "It is inaccurate to speak of a single 'African' AIDS epidemic. National-level HIV prevalence data can sometimes prompt incomplete pictures of the actual state of affairs." For example, "In most countries, HIV prevalence observed among pregnant women attending antenatal clinics ... differs by wide margins, depending on the location."

The difference in rates might also be prompted by "the social and socioeconomic status of women, who remain disproportionately affected by HIV in this region [Africa] and, at the same time,

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Zinc Supplements Safe for HIV-Infected Children, Study Says

Zinc Supplements Safe for HIV-Infected Children, Study Says

Researchers funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) say zinc-deficient children living in communities where they do not receive adequate amounts of zinc from their diet should be given supplements, even if they are HIV-infected.

According to a November 24 press release from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Maryland, it was not known previously whether zinc supplements would speed up HIV disease progression in children by increasing the concentration of the virus in their blood, called a viral load.

Zinc supplementation is known to decrease the frequency of diarrhea and pneumonia in sick children not infected with HIV.

The study was funded by the Johns Hopkins Family Health and Child Survival Cooperative Agreement with USAID.

"We set out to look at the safety and impact of zinc supplements in children with HIV," said Dr. William Moss, senior author of the study.

"Not only did we learn that zinc is safe for these children," he added, "but we also realized that this may be a low-cost intervention to reduce morbidity [the incidence of disease] in HIV-infected children who don't have access to antiretroviral therapy or are not eligible for treatment."

The researchers completed a clinical trial of zinc supplementation, using 10 milligram dosages, with 96 children at an urban hospital in

Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

The study authors found no increase in plasma HIV-1 viral load measurements in the children receiving zinc, meaning that zinc supplementation is safe for HIV-infected children.

HIV-infected children who received zinc supplementation also were less likely to get watery diarrhea.

For additional information on U.S. programs and initiatives to combat the disease, see HIV/AIDS (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids.html).

Text of the Johns Hopkins press release follows:

Zinc Supplements Safe for HIV-Infected Children

Supplements Reduce Frequency of Diarrhea Without Adverse Impact on Viral Load

Zinc-deficient children living in communities where they do not receive adequate amounts of zinc from their diet should be given supplements, even if they are HIV-infected, according to researchers from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and other institutions. Previously, it was not known if zinc would speed up HIV disease progression in children by increasing their viral load. Zinc supplementation is known to decrease the frequency of diarrhea and pneumonia in uninfected children. The study is published in the November 26, 2005, issue of *The Lancet*.

"We set out to look at the safety and impact of zinc supplements in children with HIV. Not only did we



learn that zinc is safe for these children, but we also realized that this may be a low-cost intervention to reduce morbidity in HIV-infected children who don't have access to antiretroviral therapy or are not eligible for treatment," said William J. Moss, MD, MPH, senior author of the study and an assistant professor in the Bloomberg School of Public Health's Department of Epidemiology.

The researchers completed a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of zinc supplementation at an urban hospital in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. The 96 children in the study were cared for on a monthly outpatient basis by a team of medical doctors and nurses. Parents were taught how and when to give the 10-mg zinc or placebo tablets to their child every day for six months. The children were seen at the hospital every two weeks for the first month,

(Continued on page 22)

U.S. Works to Advance Doha Trade Round, Official Tells Africans

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- There is no disagreement between African nations and the United States on the need to end trade policies that hinder economic growth in less-developed countries, says William Jackson, director for African affairs in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

Speaking at an African Union (AU) ministerial meeting on World Trade Organization (WTO) issues held in Arusha, Tanzania, November 23, Jackson said of Africa, "Perhaps no other region of the world has more to gain from a successful Doha outcome, or more to lose if the round fails to produce an ambitious result."

Launched in 2001 and formally called the Doha Development Agenda, the WTO talks have stalled repeatedly over politically difficult agriculture issues. The next round of formal talks is scheduled for mid-December in Hong Kong.

At Arusha, Jackson said it was in the interest of all WTO members -- European, American and developing world -- "to help break the current impasse in the agricultural negotiations," according to a copy of his speech provided by USTR.

He added: "African leaders have indicated that they want to harness the power of trade to accelerate economic development and reduce poverty. The Doha Development Agenda presents the best opportunity to do that, by opening up global trade and helping Africa to reap the benefits of free markets."

Jackson warned that failure to make progress in Hong Kong would be a "major setback" to the shared objectives of opening global markets, boosting to the world economy and extending the benefits of trade to poor countries.

The United States stands willing to work with the African Union and other African groups to achieve these objectives, he said.

U.S. TRADE PROPOSALS

The United States has put "bold and detailed proposals on the table that would slash tariffs, subsidies and other barriers to trade in farm and manufactured products in the near term while keeping the focus on the ultimate elimination of all such barriers to trade," Jackson said.

The agriculture negotiations have made progress on export competition and domestic support but not on the issue of market access, he said.

As for export competition and domestic support of agriculture, he pointed out: "The U.S. has [presented] the only proposal that foresees the elimination of both export subsidies -- by 2010 -- and trade-distorting farm support. The U.S. agriculture proposal would require some difficult changes for many American farmers. The U.S. agricultural community is willing to undertake this difficult transition, but only if others match our effort."

In the critical area of cotton production, Jackson said the United States "appreciates the importance of cotton to many African countries and is committed to working

with the Africa Group and the West African 'Cotton-4' countries to find a means in the Doha negotiations and beyond to address the challenges that African cotton producers face."

USTR Rob Portman traveled to Burkina Faso November 9 specifically to focus on this issue, and U.S. negotiators continue to explore concrete ways to address cotton within the agriculture negotiations. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2005/Nov/11-796543.html>).

Ultimately, said Jackson, "the prospects for an ambitious Doha result on cotton are directly linked to the prospects for an ambitious overall package on agriculture."

The official said the United States has "closely followed the Africa Group's statements, including its recent letter to WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy, indicating your concerns that the development promise of Doha has not yet been realized."

For additional information on the trade negotiations, see WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/wto/wto_hong_kong.html).

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Sudan's Darfur Conflict Shown Through the Eyes of Children

By Christine A. Terada
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- An exhibition of drawings by children from Sudan's war-torn Darfur region presents a novel view of the ongoing strife there.

"Darfur Drawn: The Conflict of Darfur Through Children's Eyes," is sponsored by Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life and Human Rights Watch, two organizations that are seeking to raise public awareness of the continuing conflict. The exhibition is on display from November 28 to January 20 at the Ann Loeb Bronfman Arts Pavilion at Hillel headquarters in Washington.

"Hillel is working with groups like Human Rights Watch to raise awareness about the ongoing atrocities in Darfur not only because it is a humanitarian outrage, but because the Jewish people are all too familiar with the effects of genocide," said Hillel International President Avraham Infeld in a press release on the exhibition. "We cannot say 'never again' in reference to the Holocaust if we sit on the sidelines today."

Conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region has resulted in as many as 180,000 deaths and has displaced millions in the past three years.

The project began in February, when Human Rights Watch researchers visited several refugee camps in Chad and the Chadian-Sudene border town of Tine to conduct interviews on the conflict. To keep children occupied while interviewing their parents,



Drawing by nine year old artist Leila depicts a villager being shot while a hut burns (Human Rights Watch photo)

researchers Annie Sparrow and Olivier Bercault handed out crayons and notebook paper.

The 27 drawings that resulted, collected from 8- to 17-year-olds, depict the heartbreaking violence in the region through the children's eyes. The children received no instruction from the researchers; the drawings they produced portrayed helicopters raiding villages and people dying on the streets. Accompanying the drawings in the exhibition are narratives given by the artists.

Taha, age 13 or 14, drew a picture of helicopters bombing the village after school was finished for the day. The child recalls in the narrative watching a mother carrying her baby before she is shot and killed. "Now my nights are hard because I feel frightened," the child told Human Rights Watch. "I cannot forget the bad images of the burning houses and fleeing at night because our village was burned."

Another young artist portrayed a sibling holding a book, explaining that he was sad because he would not be able to learn because the school building had been destroyed.

Leila, age 9, drew her hut burning after it was bombed and a dead woman, explaining that she colored the woman's face red because she had been shot in the face.

Thirteen-year-old Ala portrayed a rebel soldier being executed by the armed marauders known as the Jingaweit.

Though the drawings might be just stick figures, they portray personal accounts of tragedy and serve as a reminder that violence is ingrained in the memories of the children of Darfur.

Hillel, the largest Jewish student organization in the world, is among the leading college organizations raising awareness about the violence in Sudan and lobbying for government action.

Human Rights Watch, an organization dedicated to protecting human rights worldwide, conducts fact-finding investigations into human rights abuses in all regions of the world.

For additional information on the conflict, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

U.S. Blocks Property of Those Impeding Democracy in Zimbabwe

The United States announced November 23 that President Bush has authorized the blocking of property of an additional number of persons involved in undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe.

The executive order, signed by the president on November 22, also can apply to the immediate family members of such persons and anyone assisting them, according to a White House statement.

In addition, the president blocked the assets of 128 persons and 33 entities.

"The United States has repeatedly called upon the government of Zimbabwe to abandon its harassment of civil society, the press, and the political opposition; to restore the rule of law; to negotiate in good faith to resolve the impasse created by the flawed 2002 elections; and to hold free and fair parliamentary elections in 2005. Such efforts have yielded insufficient results," the statement said.

"There is still time for the government of Zimbabwe to avoid a further expansion of the sanctions list should it begin serious efforts to restore democratic norms and the rule of law," the statement also said.

Bush's action follows a similar measure taken in March 2003, which imposed targeted economic sanctions against 77 persons who

were hindering democratic reform in Zimbabwe.

For additional information on U.S. policy, see Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>).

Following is the text of the White House statement:

(begin text)

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
(Crawford, Texas)
November 23, 2005

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY
PRESS SECRETARY

Blocking Property of Additional
Persons
Undermining Democratic Processes
in Zimbabwe

In March 2003, the United States applied targeted economic sanctions against a list of 77 persons hindering democratic reform in Zimbabwe. On November 22, 2005, the President signed an Executive Order that allows the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to go beyond previous authority and block the property of additional persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe, their immediate family members, and any persons assisting them. The President also designated and blocked the assets of 128 persons and 33 entities. There is still time for the Government of Zimbabwe to avoid a further expansion of the sanc-

tions list should it begin serious efforts to restore democratic norms and the rule of law.

This action is not aimed at the people of Zimbabwe, but rather at those most responsible for their plight. The failed political and economic policies of the Robert Mugabe regime have succeeded in devastating Zimbabwe. The United States has repeatedly called upon the Government of Zimbabwe to abandon its harassment of civil society, the press, and the political opposition; to restore the rule of law; to negotiate in good faith to resolve the impasse created by the flawed 2002 elections; and to hold free and fair parliamentary elections in 2005. Such efforts have yielded insufficient results. The parliamentary elections in March 2005 were neither free nor fair. Recent demolitions of housing and informal markets have displaced 700,000 people at a time when Zimbabwe is already in the grip of a humanitarian crisis.

The United States calls on all political actors in Zimbabwe to embrace democratic reforms, to engage in meaningful dialogue to resolve the current impasse, and to once again place the country on a path toward development and prosperity.

(end text)

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Empowerment of Women Integral to U.S. Foreign Policy

The United States is committed to empowering women throughout the world by supporting initiatives that increase women's political and economic participation, according to a State Department fact sheet released November 29.

In Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States is working to ensure the integration of women's political and economic rights into the reconstruction and transition to democracy in those countries. (See *Afghan Women* (http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/rebuilding_afghanistan/afghan_women.html) and *Women in Iraq* (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq/iraq_women.html).)

Through the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) -- a program aimed at building partnerships and improving the lives of people throughout the Mideast -- the United States hopes to reduce cultural, legal and political barriers to women's full participation in society, according to the fact sheet.

Worldwide initiatives include working to support refugees and to combat HIV/AIDS, and to combat trafficking in persons, a problem that disproportionately threatens women.

For additional information, *Human Trafficking* (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/human_trafficking.html) and *Humanitarian Assistance and Refugees* (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/refugees.html).

Following is the fact sheet:

(begin fact sheet)



U.S. International Women's Issues Initiatives

The United States is deeply committed to promoting global respect for women. Because the United States considers the rights and freedom of women to be fundamental human rights, the Bush Administration has made the empowerment of women integral to U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. Government is helping women become full participants in their societies through various initiatives and programs that increase women's political and economic participation. Major U.S. initiatives include the following:

Afghanistan -- Overview. The U.S. commitment to accelerated success in rebuilding Afghanistan includes major women's components in the areas of political participation, economic opportunity,

health, education, and overall reconstruction. Since the fall of the Taliban, the United States has implemented over 200 projects directly in support of Afghan women. Of the over 4.8 million children in school, more than 40% are girls by far the highest number in Afghan history. Women comprised over 40% of total voter turnout for the October 2004 presidential election and from 34-75% of registered women voters exercised their rights for the September 18, 2005 Parliamentary and Provincial Council elections. Over 27% of seats in the Lower House of Parliament and almost 17% of seats in the Upper House are reserved for women. In fact, returns indicated that out of 68 reserved seats for women in the Lower House (or Wolesi Jirga), 19 women won seats without the quota benefit. Fact Sheet: < <http://www.state.gov/g/wi/rls/54325.htm> > .

The U.S. -Afghan Women's Council (USAWC). This innovative public-private partnership initiative links U.S. and Afghan governments, private sectors, and NGOs to practical projects benefiting women. Example: The Council provided \$1 million seed funding for literacy and job training programs in new Women's Resource Centers in over half of Afghanistan's provinces. The Council also supports microfinance programs to help women establish small businesses. Fact Sheet: < <http://www.state.gov/g/wi/rls/55088.htm> > .

Iraq. The United States is supporting several major initiatives to ensure the integration of women's rights and opportunities into Iraq's reconstruction and transition to de-

(Continued on page 11)

Empowerment of Women Integral to U.S. . . .

(Continued from page 10)

mocracy. Example: Drawing from the \$27 million that Congress set aside for special programs targeted for Iraqi women, Secretary Powell established in March 2004 a \$10 million Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative, along with a new public-private partnership, the U.S.-Iraq Women's Network. As a result of this Initiative, grantees are actively working in Iraq to assist women in political organization and participation, election preparation, coalition building, leadership training, entrepreneurship and media outreach. Fact Sheet: < <http://www.state.gov/g/wi/rls/51046.htm> > .

Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). This forward-looking program aimed at building partnerships and improving the lives of people throughout the Mideast, with a total of \$293 million budgeted to date. MEPI includes a specific Women's Empowerment Pillar dedicated to reducing cultural, legal, regulatory, economic and political barriers to women's full participation in society. Examples: a Women and the Law workshop resulting in a regional association for women in the legal profession and a public legal education campaign on women's rights and equality; a regional "campaign school" for women candidates; and a new Middle East Entrepreneurs Training in the U.S. (MEET US) initiative. Fact Sheet: < <http://www.state.gov/g/wi/rls/52487.htm> > . MEPI Website: < <http://mepi.state.gov/mepi/c10127.htm> > .

Poverty Reduction. The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), a major new U.S. development assistance program, will increase current levels of core assistance by 50 percent over the next 3

years, providing an annual increase of \$5 billion by fiscal year 2006. Countries will be selected to receive MCA assistance based on their performance in governing justly, investing in their citizens, and encouraging economic freedom. The treatment of women is a factor in determining each country's eligibility for funding. Girls' primary school completion rates are included in selection criteria for fiscal year 2005. MCC website: < <http://www.mca.gov/> > and Press Release: < http://www.mca.gov/public_affairs/press_releases/FY05_Selection_Process.pdf (http://www.mca.gov/public_affairs/press_releases/FY05_Selection_Process.pdf) > .

Economic and Microenterprise Development. U.S. support for microenterprise development has exceeded \$150 million each year for the past five years. A large proportion of this assistance is provided for micro-credits, for which 70% of the clients are women. Brochure: Women, Men and Development: < http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/pubs/usaidbook.pdf > ; USAID Microenterprise Website: < http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/economic_growth_and_trade/poverty_reduction/microenterprise_development.html > .

Trafficking in Persons. President Bush is committed to eradicating the modern day slavery of human trafficking, which disproportionately threatens women, and poses a threat to international security, human rights and public health. In FY 2004, the U.S. devoted \$82 million for 271 programs to combat trafficking in persons worldwide. The Office to Monitor and

Combat Trafficking in Persons engages foreign governments, private organizations, and others working in the region to ensure that people are protected and that traffickers are prosecuted. At the 2005 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the U.S. presented a resolution, "Eliminating Demand for Trafficked Women and Girls for All Forms of Exploitation," which attracted more than 50 co-sponsoring nations and was adopted on March 11. The resolution highlights the parallel goals of elimination of supply and demand. Department of State Website: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/>.

HIV/AIDS. The United States is committing \$15 billion over five years to combat HIV/AIDS, which increasingly poses a greater threat to women, particularly in the poorer nations of the world. In 2002, President Bush announced a new \$500 million International Mother and Child HIV Prevention Initiative that seeks to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS from mothers to infants and to improve health care delivery in Africa and the Caribbean. One key element in the U.S. efforts to reduce women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS is to promote property rights for women. When women have control over their economic assets, they are better able to avoid risky sexual and abusive relationships. Department of State Website: < <http://www.state.gov/s/gac> > .

Women in Post-Conflict Situations. The U.S. Government has been a strong supporter of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security,

(Continued on page 19)

United States Seeks New Powers to Control Disease at Borders

Responding to the threat of pandemic influenza, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is proposing new regulations to expand its powers to act rapidly when passengers arriving in the United States might be carrying communicable diseases.

The CDC announced the proposed changes in communicable disease regulations November 29. If adopted, they would constitute the first revision of those regulations in 25 years. The expanded powers could be applied at major domestic hub airports in the United States.

"These regulations are an important step in one of many steps that CDC is taking to enhance our preparedness to respond to global emerging infectious disease threats and the globalization of infectious diseases and its translocation across borders," said Dr. Marty Cetron, director of CDC's Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, at a teleconference from CDC's Atlanta headquarters.

The proposed regulations are an outgrowth of the CDC experience during the spread of severe acute

respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003. The agency experienced difficulties locating and contacting airline passengers who might have been exposed to the SARS virus during travel.

The proposed changes would expand reporting requirements for ill passengers on board flights and ships arriving from foreign countries. They would also require that air and ocean liner companies maintain passenger and crew lists with detailed contact information.

These changes would allow public health officials to notify passengers of their suspected exposure if a sick person is not identified until after travelers have dispersed from an arriving carrier.

At the same time, the proposed regulations address the due-process rights of passengers who might be subjected to quarantine after suspected exposure to disease.

Public health officials use quarantine for passengers with possible exposure who might be in a disease's incubation period and not

showing symptoms. Isolation refers to the separation or restricted movement of a person who is ill with a communicable disease.

The CDC and its parent agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, are empowered to put forth such regulations under the Public Health Service Act.

The proposal will be published in the Federal Register within days; public comments will be accepted by the agency for 60 days after publication. Any changes would take effect only after the agency has reviewed and addressed any comments submitted, and then issued a final rule.

The proposed regulation changes (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/nprm/index.htm>) and a transcript (<http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/transcripts/t051122.htm>) of the CDC briefing on the regulations are available on the CDC Web site.

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U.S. Shares International Aim of Protecting Civilians from Mines . . .

(Continued from page 16)
proven that a world that is free from the humanitarian impact of landmines is attainable within years. But to achieve that goal, the larger anti-vehicle landmines that are not covered by the Ottawa Convention, and the issues of persistence and detectability in all landmines must be confronted.

Therefore the United States encourages its fellow states that are party to the Amended Mines Protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and states that are party to the Ottawa Convention, to: ban the use of all non-detectable landmines; revise their policies on the continued use of persistent anti-vehicle mines; negotiate a ban on the sale or export of all persistent mines, including

anti-vehicle mines; and increase their funding for mine action.

(end text)

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Updated Outline of U.S. History Now Available



The 2005 edition of the International Information Programs' (IIP's) popular print publication, Outline of U.S. History (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/histryotln/index.htm>), is now available on the State Department Web site.

The "Outline" takes a chronological look at how the United States took shape -- from its origins as an obscure set of colonies on the Atlantic coast a little more than 200 years ago into what one political analyst today calls "the first universal nation."

This edition has been completely revised and updated by Alonzo L. Hamby, distinguished professor of history at Ohio University. Professor Hamby has written extensively on American politics and society. Among his books are *Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman* and *For the Survival of Democracy: Franklin Roosevelt and the World Crisis of the 1930s*.

In addition to maps and double-spread black-and-white photos introducing each of the 15 chap-



Pilgrims signing the Mayflower Compact aboard ship, 1620. (Library of Congress)



The protest against British taxes known as the "Boston Tea Party," 1773. (Library of Congress)



George Washington addressing the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, 1787. (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch.)

ters, the publication includes five photo essays. One photo essay consists of full-color photographs of American monuments and memorials, from pre-historic Native American structures to present-day sites like the World War II Memorial in Washington.

Outline of U.S. History also has 11 short essays providing additional background on topics ranging from "The Witches of Salem" and "The Significance of the American Revolution" to "J.P. Morgan and Finance Capitalism" and "Third Party and Independent Candidates." It also includes a bibliography.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

U.N. Reform Judged Vital to Hearing Concerns of Poorest Nations

By Rebecca Mitchell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Disappointment and resolve were the emotions expressed by members of a bipartisan U.S. task force on U.N. reform in reaction to the lack of progress on their recommendations at the September summit of the United Nations General Assembly.

At a press conference November 22, five months after the release of its initial, congressionally mandated study, the task force made public a follow-up report assessing how their reform initiatives had fared in the outcome document issued following General Assembly debate on various reform proposals in September.

The U.S. reform proposals were submitted to a closed session of the U.N. General Assembly June 22 by Ambassador Anne Patterson. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2005/Jun/24-466269.html>).

"I think it's fair to say that there was a good deal of disappointment that the ... summit did not come to grips with many of the needed reforms that were identified and, indeed, reforms that had been proposed by [U.N. Secretary-General] Kofi Annan himself some months earlier," said Richard Solomon, former ambassador and current president of the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), which directed the task force's efforts. "It will take considerable concerted leadership by the United States, acting together with other countries who see the need for an effective United Nations, to ensure that the opportunities for reform that may have been missed or not given enough weight

at the September summit are not lost."

Former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich, who shared chairmanship of the task force with former Senate majority leader George Mitchell, said that a reformed and respected United Nations is in the interest of the world's poorest nations. However, "to the degree that their defense of corruption, their defense of inefficiency, their defense of a bureaucracy that's not accountable, their defense of hiding behind a lack of transparency weakens the respect of the United Nations, it weakens the one venue in which they have a genuinely effective opportunity to be represented," he said. In the long run, he said, corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness prevent the United Nations from implementing programs to help the world's poor with health care, development and humanitarian aid.

Gingrich said that other study groups, including those international commissions appointed by Annan to investigate scandals and the need for change to meet future challenges, found "deep-seated, systemic problems in United Nations administration." The USIP task force, therefore, called for the appointment of a chief operating officer and an oversight board within the next year as benchmarks of U.N. action toward correcting these documented problems.

The issue, Gingrich said, is not about wasting U.S. taxpayers' money but instead about "wasting the money which should be available to directly help the poorest people in the world."

Mitchell said there had been "disappointment and even frustration" in the United States with the world body's apparent lack of will to make the management changes necessary to more effectively confront such current threats as failed states, terrorism, crimes against humanity and non-democratic governments.

"Management reform is not a favor to the United States," Mitchell said. "It is essential to the vitality and integrity of the United Nations. Without it, other reforms are much more difficult to implement and to sustain."

Improved efforts to increase protection of global human rights is another priority for the task force. "The great, vast majority of the American people," Gingrich said, "would like to see an effective United Nations actually representing human rights and the interest of the poorest and weakest people of the world, and would like to see the U.S. playing a leading role within that framework, not against that framework."

The United States, Mitchell said, must realize that its position in the world means that it will be repeatedly called upon to assist in conflicts, so it must persevere in pushing for reforms that will minimize the conditions that breed conflict.

"Not just the United States, but, perhaps even more so, others in the world need a United Nations that works," Mitchell said.

Their concerns mirrored those recently expressed by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John

(Continued on page 17)

Reform of Agricultural Trade Needed, Agriculture's Johanns Says

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- World poverty could be significantly reduced by "fundamental reform of agricultural trade," says Mike Johanns, secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

More private-sector involvement also is needed to boost the economies of developing countries, Johanns said.

The secretary spoke November 21 at an annual meeting of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome.

Agricultural reform is expected to be a major topic of discussion at a World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meeting in December in Hong Kong. (See WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/wto/wto_hong_kong.html).

The current round of WTO negotiations, scheduled to end in 2006, are a "once-in-a-generation opportunity ... [to] determine whether developing countries will gain the opportunity to share in the benefits of expanded global trade, the primary engine for more robust development," Johanns said at a news conference in Rome November 22.

The Institute for International Economics, a Washington-based research organization, reports that more open trade would boost the incomes of developing countries by as much as \$200 billion a year, he said said.

The agriculture secretary added that the United States remains committed to helping countries participate in a liberalized trading regime by promoting the development of worldwide, science-based standards for agriculture.



Mike Johanns
Agriculture Secretary

Economic growth, investment in agriculture, good governance, rule of law, improvements in rural infrastructure, agricultural research, better education and improvements in the situation of women are all essential for increasing agricultural production and reducing hunger and poverty, according to an FAO report issued November 22. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/wh/Archive/2005/Nov/22-368836.html>).

Hunger and malnutrition are among the root causes of poverty, illiteracy, disease and mortality of millions of people in developing countries, the annual report on the state of food insecurity in the world said.

RESPONSE TO POTENTIAL BIRD FLU PANDEMIC DISCUSSED

Also at the FAO meeting in Rome, the U.S. delegation said the United States will continue to coordinate its response to a potential avian influenza (bird flu) pandemic with other countries and international agencies.

The United States in 2005 provided \$38 million to control the spread of bird flu in Southeast Asia and to help FAO strengthen community-based early warning

and reaction systems to outbreaks, the delegation said in a November 23 statement.

President Bush recently proposed an emergency funding request for fiscal year 2006 that includes significant financial support for a further international response to detect and contain outbreaks of bird flu, according to the statement. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Nov/01-163590.html>).

For more information on U.S. and international efforts to combat avian influenza, see Bird Flu (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html).

Johanns' November 21 prepared remarks (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_10B?contentid-only=true&contentid=2005/11/0497.xml) and a transcript (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_10B?contentid-only=true&contentid=2005/11/0503.xml) of his November 22 press conference are available on the USDA web site.

The U.N. report (http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/docrep/008/a0200e/a0200e00.htm) (PDF, 40 pages) on the state of food insecurity in the world is available on the FAO Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)◆

U.S. Shares International Aim of Protecting Civilians from Mines

Even though the United States is not sending a delegation to attend a conference in Croatia reviewing a 1997 anti-mine treaty known as the Ottawa Convention, it "does share common cause" with those seeking to protect civilians from indiscriminate use of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle land mines, according to a State Department advisory issued at the start of sixth treaty review.

The Ottawa Convention, also known as the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, is formally titled "the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer or Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction."

The United States is not a party to the Ottawa Convention, but it has been a major donor to causes associated with humanitarian mine-removal efforts all over the world. Since 1993, the United States has provided more than \$1 billion to nearly 50 countries for humanitarian mine removal, mine risk education, mine survivors assistance, research and development on better ways to find and clear land mines and training for foreign mine action managers so they can run their nation's programs more effectively. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Nov/10-769081.html>).

As the November 28 to December 2 conference opened, the State Department advisory said "the United States encourages its fellow states that are party to the Amended Mines Protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and states that

are party to the Ottawa Convention to:

Ban the use of all non-detectable landmines;

Revise their policies on the continued use of persistent anti-vehicle mines;

Negotiate a ban on the sale or export of all persistent mines (including anti-vehicle mines); and

Increase their funding for mine action."



Landmines victims

For information on U.S. efforts to remove land mines, see the State Department electronic journal, Protecting Lives, Restoring Livelihoods: The U.S. Program To Remove Landmines (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0104/ijpe/ijpe0104.htm>).

Following is the text of the November 28 advisory:

(begin text)

Sixth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention Ban on Anti-Personnel Landmines

The Sixth Meeting of States Par-

ties to the 1997 "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction," commonly referred to as the Ottawa Convention, is taking place in Zagreb, Croatia from November 28 to December 2, 2005. The United States is not a party to this particular landmine treaty and is not attending the conference, but does share common cause with all who seek to protect innocent civilians from indiscriminately-used landmines, both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle.

The United States has had a major role in contributing to the progress that will be discussed in Zagreb. Since 1993 alone, the U.S. has provided over \$1 billion dollars to nearly 50 countries around the world for humanitarian demining, mine risk education, mine survivors assistance, national landmine surveys, research and development on better ways to find and clear landmines, and training for foreign mine action managers so that they can run their nation's programs more effectively.

United States contributions, along with those of other donors, have made a significant difference. Landmine casualties have been halved, millions have returned to their homes and lands, and many thousands of landmine survivors have received treatment. Landmine surveys have better defined the scope of the problem, enabled mine action assistance to be more focused, and

(Continued on page 12)

U.S. Trade Official Rebuts French Minister on WTO Farm Issues



Peter Allgeier

The following letter by Deputy U. S. Trade Representative Peter Allgeier was published in the November 23 issue of the Financial Times of London.

There are no republication restrictions.

(begin byliner)

The US is the most open to developing countries

By Peter Allgeier
Deputy U.S. Trade Representative

From Mr. Peter Allgeier.

Sir, Christine LaGarde, the French trade minister, says that trade-distorting subsidies in agriculture must be dismantled ("Big cuts in

farm tariffs are no solution to poverty", November 21). Frankly, we agree and we are pleased France is ready to push the other European Union member states to be more aggressive on agriculture.

What Ms. LaGarde fails to tell readers is that the EU spends three times what the U.S. does on trade-distorting domestic subsidies and still the EU has not offered cuts on par with ours. She also omits to say that the U.S. proposed 2010 as a date certain for the elimination of export subsidies -- we are still waiting for the EU to meet this challenge.

We also agree that the focus of the Doha Development Agenda should be development. But France is blocking the very market access that is key to generating growth and alleviating poverty in the developing world. Just in agriculture, the World Bank forecasts market access will yield 93 per cent of all the benefits in that sector.

The U.S. agriculture proposal provides for deep tariff cuts and sub-

stantial improvement in market access for all products. By contrast, the EU's tariff cut is small -- as so many have observed -- and it includes numerous exceptions that further weaken its impact.

According to the 2005 World Bank Global Monitoring Report, the U.S. is the most open market for low-income developing countries. This report shows the index of restrictiveness against imports from low-income countries was 6 for the U.S., 7 for Canada, 15 for the EU and 24 for Japan -- demonstrating that the U.S. is the most open to developing countries.

Peter Allgeier,
Deputy US Trade Representative

(end byliner)

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U.N. Reform Judged Vital to Hearing Concerns . . .

(Continued from page 14)

Bolton. Speaking at U.N. headquarters November 22, Bolton said that with two months gone, the assembly is "not two-thirds of the way toward successful launching of those reform efforts" by the time delegates leave for holiday break December 20. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Nov/23-409804.html>).

For more information on U.S. activities

at the United Nations, see The United Nations at 60 (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/UNGA_2005.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Press Freedom Group Honors Journalists from Cuba, Brazil

By Eric Green
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Journalists from Cuba and Brazil have been honored by an international press freedom advocacy group for "defending the free flow of vital information" despite threats, beatings, intimidation and imprisonment.

In a November 23 statement, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said it is honoring journalist Manuel Vázquez Portal of Cuba, who won the group's International Press Freedom Award in 2003 but was unable to accept the honor at that time because he was imprisoned by the regime of Cuban dictator Fidel Castro.

Now freed from jail due in part to an intensive advocacy campaign, Portal accepted his award November 22 at a New York ceremony, where he said: "Those who restrict, limit, and curtail freedom of expression are infringing upon the most sacred of human rights. Preventing the free flow of ideas is a hideous crime."

Vázquez Portal, who lives in Miami and works as a columnist for *El Nuevo Herald*, urged the organization to "rescue from loneliness, obscurity, and imprisonment more than 20 journalists who are still locked up in Cuban jails."

"It is on their behalf, and for them, that I accept this award. They need it. May it reach them and set them free," Vázquez Portal said.

The repression being waged by the Castro regime against Cuba's independent journalists has been reported in the U.S. State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices -- 2004. That document, released February 28, says the Castro regime strictly censors news and information and limits



Manuel Vázquez Portal

the distribution of foreign publications. (See the Cuba section (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41756.htm>) of report on the State Department Web site.)

The CPJ said the Brazilian winner of its press freedom award for 2005, Lúcio Flávio Pinto, publisher and editor of the semimonthly paper *Jornal Povo*, has "courageously reported on drug trafficking, environmental devastation, and political and corporate corruption in a vast, remote region of Brazil's Amazon."

The CPJ said Pinto has been physically assaulted and threatened with death, and also "faces a constant barrage of civil and criminal lawsuits aimed at silencing him."

Other winners of the CPJ 2005 press freedom awards are Galima Bukharbaeva of Uzbekistan, Beatrice Mtetwa of Zimbabwe, and Shi Tao, currently imprisoned in China.

The CPJ said that "in the face of grave dangers," the award-winners have shown "extraordinary bravery, tenacity, and dedication" in performing their jobs.

CPJ Executive Director Ann Cooper said: "All of the awardees have risked their lives and their freedom to report the truth about politicians, policies, businesses, and crime. For their work, these journalists have been attacked in various ways by powerful people determined to hide their actions."

The CPJ also honored the late ABC television news anchor Peter Jennings with the Burton Benjamin Memorial Award for a lifetime of distinguished achievement. The award is named after a CBS television news senior producer and former CPJ chairman, who died in 1988.



Lúcio Flávio Pinto

"These individuals inspire us all," said Paul Steiger, CPJ board chairman and managing editor of *The Wall Street*

Journal. "In the face of grave dangers, they have shown extraordinary bravery, tenacity, and dedication in defending the free flow of vital information."

More information (<http://www.cpj.org/>) about the CPJ awards is available on the group's Web site.

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Communities Must Overcome Fear, Stigma to Halt HIV/AIDS . . .

(Continued from page 4)

opportunity to reach more youth.”

She also said the National Association of People with AIDS conducts a campaign on June 27 of each year to encourage HIV testing that “has been very successful, with audio and video messages.”

“Communities must embrace and educate their own,” she said.

The United States currently is fighting HIV/AIDS around the world by “providing education, funding, medication, training opportunities of health care workers and physicians” as well as educating foreign governments, Scruggs said. (See related article ([\[usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Jun/14-848140.html\]\(http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Jun/14-848140.html\)\) and President Bush’s HIV/AIDS Initiatives \(\[http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/HIV_AIDS/hiv_aids_initiative.html\]\(http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/HIV_AIDS/hiv_aids_initiative.html\)\) Web page.\)](http://</p></div><div data-bbox=)

For the latest developments, see HIV/AIDS (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids.html).

More information also is available on the World Aids Day 2005 (<http://www.unaids.org/en/events/world%2Baids%2Bday%2B2005.asp>) Web site of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to highlight December 1 (World Aids Day 2005) activities.

More information on the AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families (http://www.aids-alliance.org/aids_alliance/index.html) is available on the group’s Web site.

The State Department has sponsored a number of webchats in the past few months. See also “Human Contraction of Bird Flu Rare, Public Health Expert Says. (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Nov/25-866450.html>)”

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Empowerment of Women Integral to U.S. . . .

(Continued from page 11)

which highlights the important role of women in helping their societies recover and rebuild after devastating civil conflict. U.S.-supported programs aimed at increasing women’s access to education and strengthening their leadership, advocacy, political, and entrepreneurial skills help ensure that women are able to take their rightful place at the peace table and in society. The Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration funded the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Women and War Project, which addresses the specific protection, health and assistance needs of women in situations of armed conflict. Department of

State website: < <http://www.state.prm/> > . Related link: < <http://www.icrc.org/web> > .

Refugees. The majority of refugees and displaced persons today are women and children, and the U.S. Government provides major funding and technical support for their humanitarian, resettlement, and rehabilitation requirements. In FY 2004, the United States contributed \$2.3 million to gender-based violence prevention programs targeting refugee women. Department of State website: < <http://www.state.gov/g/prm/> > .

International Cooperation. In the 10 years since the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women, the U.S.

has made significant progress towards implementing many areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Beijing + 5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document. Department of State website: < <http://www.state.gov/p/io/45510.htm> > .

(end fact sheet)

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United States Praises Global Collaboration on Bird Flu

The U.S. delegation to a conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) November 23 expressed the world's mutual concern about the broad spread of avian influenza and the possibility that a human influenza pandemic could emerge from the animal disease.

The U.S. delegates praised the work done by international organizations in Asia to stamp out bird flu, calling the FAO's work, "solid and extensive." The delegation also noted the United States' efforts to increase its work with international partners.

Responding to earlier entreaties from FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf about the need for increased funding to escalate anti-pandemic efforts, the delegation said the United States has contributed \$38 million to the cause in 2005. President Bush has asked the Congress to consider a \$251 million investment in international prevention in the year ahead.

Following is the delegation's statement:

[Side event on Avian Influenza Delivered November 23, 2005]

Background

FAO and its collaborating partners, the World Health Organization (WHO) and Office International des Epizooties (OIE, or World Organization for Animal Health), have been actively involved in a campaign to contain and stamp out Avian Influenza (AI) in Asia. The three agencies took collaborative immediate action at the onset of the outbreaks. Among their many efforts, joint guidelines

and recommendations were issued on the control of AI, and a global framework was launched [FAO/OIE Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Trans-boundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs)].

Since June 2005, the USG has led one high level and several technical level missions to Southeast Asia to review the situation on the ground and raise political awareness with affected country governments. During a joint mission by USAID/HHS/USDA in July, the USG team found FAO's work in the field to be solid and extensive. As a result, USAID granted the first tranche of \$6 million to FAO to strengthen community-based early warning and reaction to outbreaks in the five endemic countries of Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, PRC and Viet Nam.

U.S. Statement

The United States shares the same concern over the growing threat this virus poses to humans and animals as well as the significant economic and social impacts it has made globally. We are encouraged to hear that FAO is working collaboratively with other competent agencies to control and stamp out the disease at its animal source supporting efforts to prevent a possible human pandemic. We recognize the important groundwork already laid by the FAO, WHO and OIE -- each with their own special comparative advantage -- and we are working in greater partnership with them.

This year, the United States provided \$38 million in assistance: \$25 million to control the spread of bird flu in Southeast Asia, including \$6 million to FAO to

strengthen community-based early warning and reaction to outbreaks; and the remaining \$13 million in technical assistance and grants to affected countries and WHO.

In response to Director General Diouf's plea to double efforts:

The U.S. is more than doubling its assistance. Two weeks ago, President Bush proposed a substantial emergency funding request for fiscal year 2006 that includes \$251 million for a continued international response to contain and detect outbreaks before they spread around the world.

Efforts to prevent a pandemic require coordinated action by all sectors of government and society, which is why President Bush launched the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI) at the UN General Assembly in September. IPAPI aims to elevate the issue on national agendas, coordinating efforts between donor and affected nations. The first IPAPI Senior Officials Meeting in early October successfully brought together 96 nations and international organizations, affirming their commitment to this endeavor. And, as Director General Diouf duly noted that partnerships play a critical role, we thank all of our partners for this dedication and look forward to continued cooperation to tackle this global threat.

Thank you

(
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China, Vietnam Report More Human Cases of Bird Flu

By Charlene Porter
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Vietnam, which has experienced more human cases of bird flu than any other nation, has reported the occurrence of disease in a 15-year-old boy, according to a November 25 announcement from WHO.

The boy has been released from the hospital and is recovering from the disease, which has caused severe respiratory symptoms and organ damage in some of the people infected.

On November 24, WHO affirmed a report from China's national health agency of another human death from the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus that has led to the deaths or culling of more than 150 million birds across Asia.

China has detected a total of three human cases of the disease, resulting in two deaths, both in women who had direct contact with poultry. The dangerous H5N1 virus can be transmitted to humans through contact with the birds, their excretions, or surfaces touched by those excretions.

Vietnam has experienced 93 human cases of the disease with a total of 42 deaths since the H5N1 virus began appearing among Asian flocks about two years ago. Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia are the other nations where human disease has been reported.

The WHO accounting puts the total of human cases at 132 with 68 deaths.

Along with new human disease being reported in China November

24, more animal disease is reported in western provinces and authorities are continuing measures to eradicate exposed flocks and prevent the virus from spreading.

According to Chinese official reports to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), almost 67,000 birds were destroyed in the Ningxia region and more than 99,000 in the Yunnan province.

No evidence has emerged that H5N1 is transmitted efficiently among humans, but international health experts warn that H5N1 could mutate into a viral strain that is contagious, creating the conditions for an international influenza pandemic.

International concern about this possibility has mounted considerably in recent months with new attention focused on the need for stronger actions to stop the disease in animal populations to avert further mutation of the virus and transmission into human populations. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Nov/25-880824.html>).)

WATCHING FOR DISEASE IN MIGRATORY BIRDS

The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) has adopted a plan to design a system to monitor migratory flocks for disease and warn nations of the potential for the arrival of disease in seasonal movements of birds.

The convention met November 21-25 in Nairobi, Kenya, and agreed to develop an international wildlife warning system with support and funding from the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP).

"Precise information on the places where migratory birds go including their resting sites and finally destinations is currently scattered across a myriad of organizations, bodies and groups," said UNEP Executive Director Klaus Toepfer in a press release. "It is absolutely vital that this is brought together in a way that is useful to those dealing with the threat of this pandemic backed up by high quality, precision mapping."

A CMS official said it might take two years to develop the appropriate monitoring system, but the system would have both short- and long-term value because the potential for flocks of wild birds to be transcontinental carriers of infection will be an ongoing problem.

Migratory birds are suspected of transporting H5N1 from Southeast Asia to North and Central Asia and on to Europe. International organizations have issued warnings about the possibility that cases will start appearing in Africa as migratory flocks make their seasonal journeys escaping the Northern European winter.

Though the role of wild birds in transmitting disease is assumed widely, it has not been proven scientifically. It is also possible that the virus could be transported great distances in shipments of birds in agricultural commerce, or on vehicles that travel from virus-ridden areas.

For additional information on the avian influenza and efforts to combat it, see Bird Flu (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html). ♦

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Zinc Supplements Safe for HIV-Infected Children, . . .

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monthly for five months and, as a final visit, nine months after zinc or placebo supplementation began. At each follow-up visit, parents were asked about illnesses since the last visit. In addition, HIV-1 RNA in plasma and CD4+ T lymphocyte cell counts were measured one month before the study, at the first study visit and three, six and nine months after the start of supplementation.

The study authors found no increase in plasma HIV-1 viral load measurements in the children receiving zinc, meaning that zinc supplementation is safe for HIV-infected children. The CD4+ T lymphocytes and hemoglobin concentrations also were similar between the two study groups. Importantly, HIV-infected children who received zinc supplementation were less likely to get watery diarrhea.

"Programs to increase zinc supplementation in populations with a high prevalence of HIV infection can and

should be implemented, and can be done so now that we know zinc does not have an adverse effect on HIV replication. Also, in light of the fact that zinc is known to reduce episodes of diarrhea and pneumonia, zinc supplementation should be used as an adjunct therapy for children with HIV infection," said Moss.

The study was funded by the Johns Hopkins Family Health and Child Survival Cooperative Agreement with the Office of Health, Infectious Diseases and Nutrition Global Health Bureau at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Robert E. Black, MD, MPH, chair of the Bloomberg School of Public Health's Department of International Health, co-authored the study. Additional co-authors are Raziya Bobat, Hoosen Coovadia, Cindy Stephen, Kimesh L. Naidoo and Neil McKerrow. ♦

U.N. Reports AIDS Rates Decline Among Some African Nations. . .

(Continued from page 5)

poorly informed about the epidemics," it said.

The report explained: "Generally, women are less well-informed about HIV than are men; this is also true of [people living in] rural areas compared with those living in cities and towns. Data from 35 of the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa show that, on average, young men were 20 percent more likely to have correct knowledge of HIV than young women."

Education levels also "make a huge difference," the U.N. report stated. For example, "young women in Rwanda with secondary or higher education were 7 times as likely to know the main HIV transmission routes than were young women with no formal education."

According to U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Randall Tobias, President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a \$15 billion worldwide initiative launched in 2003, is on track, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

Tobias told reporters at a State Department news conference in June that "as results are reported from the field, it is increasingly clear that the launch of the Emergency Plan marked a turning point in the fight against HIV/AIDS. On the ground, the reality is changing -- rapidly."

Tobias said: "As of March 31 of this year, the Emergency Plan has supported antiretroviral treatment for approximately 235,000 men, women and children through bilateral programs in 15 of the most afflicted countries in Africa, Asia

and the Caribbean. Of that number, more than 230,000 of those being supported live in sub-Saharan Africa."

Looking ahead, the U.S. AIDS official said, "These results indicate that the Emergency Plan remains on track, scaling up to meet the president's ambitious goal of supporting treatment for two million people in five years." Additional information (<http://www.state.gov/s/gac/>) is available on the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Web site.

The U.N. report (http://www.unaids.org/epi2005/doc/report_pdf.html), available on the UNAIDS Web site in English, French, German, Russian and Spanish, was released November 21 in advance of World AIDS Day, December 1. ♦