



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

USAID/ETHIOPIA BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM (BESO) REFLECTS ON IMPACT OF 10-YEAR PROJECT

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) -- On June 14 USAID and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education celebrated the ten-year anniversary of the Basic Education Support Objective (BESO) Program at the Addis Ababa Hilton in the presence of U.S. Embassy Charge d'Affaires Vicki Huddleston and H.E. Dr. Sentayehu Woldemichael, Minister of Education. The day was a time to reflect on the achievements and impact of the BESO program and to look toward the future.



Ambassador Vicki Huddleston (center) viewing the pictorial display on BESO's activities with Education Minister Dr. Sentayehu Woldemichael (far left) and USAID's A/Director Rick Scott (second from right)

BESO provided assistance to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education in eleven regions; for professional development, strengthening the capacity of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and local government, increasing the access and equity of education, particularly for girls and other

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U.S. President Arrives in Baghdad for Surprise Trip



President Bush and Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki

Washington -- President Bush made an unannounced five-hour visit to Baghdad June 13 for talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, President Jalal Talabani, and other Iraqi leaders, and paid a visit to U.S. troops serving in Iraq.

In remarks with the Iraqi prime minister, Bush said they had discussed al-Maliki's security, economic and construction strategies, "and all of it made sense to me."

"It's an impressive group of men and women," the U.S. president said of

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Agriculture Secretary To Lead Africa Trade Mission

By Elisa Walton
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced June 7 that he will lead a trade and investment mission to East Africa in late fall.

The trip is meant to build on the success of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Johanns told the fifth AGOA Forum, and invited U.S. agribusiness firms to accompany him. The goal of the mission is to promote U.S.-Africa agribusiness cooperation, trade and investment, he said.

"I'm confident this mission will help advance our goals to reduce trade barriers and increase trade between the United States and East Africa, creating new job opportunities for all our citizens," Johanns said.

The countries the delegation will visit all are at different stages of development, Johanns said. However, all are extremely interested in cultivating U.S. investment and involvement in their agricultural sectors, he added. U.S. agribusiness also could benefit, with increased exposure in the region resulting from direct marketing or cooperation with local distributors.

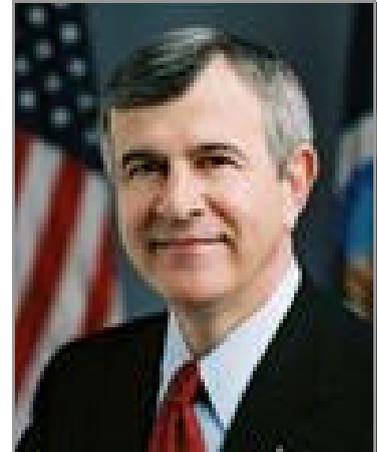
Businesses will be able to form partnerships with African entrepreneurs from Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, Johanns said.

The mission will emphasize trade and investment in dry grocery products, food-processing equipment, beer and spirits, seafood, livestock genetics, production inputs and equipment sectors.

Johanns last visited Africa in July 2005. He headed the U.S. delegation at that year's AGOA Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2005/Jul/19-87728.html>)).

On that trip, he spent two days in Madagascar, the first Millennium Challenge Corporation recipient country. He signed a memorandum of understanding with Madagascar's minister of agriculture, livestock and fisheries, as a step toward greater cooperation between the two countries. He also met with President Marc Ravalomanana to discuss how to enhance U.S. economic ties with Madagascar.

For more information, see African Growth and Opportunity Act (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/trade_economic_development/agoa.html).



Mike Johanns
U.S. Agriculture Secretary

[trade_economic_development/agoa.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/trade_economic_development/agoa.html)), Millennium Challenge Account (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/mca.html) and Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>).

The full text (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_10B?contentid=2006/06/0194.xml) of a press release announcing the trip is available on the Department of Agriculture Web site.

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Educated, Healthy People. . .

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of this conference," Hadley said, adding that even though aid "can create better conditions for development" trade is the engine that lifts people out of poverty.

For additional information, see African Growth and Opportunity Act (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/trade_economic_development/agoa.html).

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USAID/ETHIOPIA BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM (BESO) . . .



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disadvantaged populations. The program also included efforts to strengthen education administration through improved systems for planning and management.

Describing BESO as “a quintessential USAID basic education project,” Ambassador Vicki Huddleston noted in her opening remarks that the BESO program “is integrally linked to USAID’s strategic

objectives for Ethiopia, and firmly based on the education policies of the Ethiopian government.” “Its activities,” the Ambassador said, “are thoroughly integrated into government plans and institutions at national, regional and local levels.”

With an investment of nearly US \$150 million over the last ten years, BESO helped to enhance the capacity of 80,000 teachers and school directors, built the capacity of 3,256 Woreda education officers in educational planning and management, provided grants to 5,100 schools and strengthened more than 14,000 members of PTAs and Kebele Education and Training Boards. The Girls’ Education Advisory Committees (GEACs) introduced by BESO, now function

in all schools and have helped prevent thousands of girls from sexual harassment, early marriage, and incomplete education.

The one-day celebration brought together approximately one hundred major stakeholders who participated in BESO. Participants shared stories, and lessons learned. Attendees included education officials from the Ministry of Education and Regional and Woreda education offices, representatives of PTAs, GEACs, staff of teacher education institutions, donors, staff of USAID and BESO implementing partners.?

U.S. Trade Official Sees . . .

(Continued from page 7)

Both the United States and Africa are benefiting from AGOA, she said, by creating healthier and more stable economies, by strengthening democratic governments in sub-Saharan Africa and by expanding markets for African and U.S. exports.

Trade and investment are “intrinsically linked,” she said, noting that U.S. firms are leading investors in Africa. By the end of 2004, she said, U.S. direct investment in Africa had risen 23 percent from the previous year to

\$13.5 billion. U.S. investors in Africa, she added, also are enjoying healthy returns on their money – an annual average of 29 percent since 1990.

AGOA offers the opportunity for more diverse investment outside the usual petroleum, mining and mineral sectors, Schwab said. She called on African governments to continue to nurture and improve their investment climates. Creating such an environment, she said, is something a country does for itself, for its own entrepreneurs and its own people.

For additional information on U.S. policy, see Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/index.html>) and African Growth and Opportunity Act (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/trade_economic_development/agoa.html).

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"Body of Evidence" African Art Exhibit Speaks of Identity, Spirit

By Elisa Walton
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A new exhibit at the National Museum of African Art showcases contemporary artists who use representations of the body -- either explicit or implied -- to communicate meaning. The exhibit, "Body of Evidence," runs from June 14 until April 6, 2008.

"The works of art selected for the exhibit use the body to explore themes that touch upon common experiences and concerns throughout the world -- equality, oppression, identity, history, memory and spirituality," said curator Christine Mullen Kreamer.

This show, as described in a museum press release, represents an attempt by the museum to increase and display its collection of contemporary art. All of the pieces come from the museum's permanent collection.

The art will be displayed in several rotations. The first two will present more than 40 works by 20 artists from eight African countries. Many of them have never been shown before, according to Kreamer.

"The Ancestors Converge Again," by El Anatsui of Nigeria, shows a group of fanciful figures carved out of rough wood. They represent, according to Kreamer, the ancestors -- important and powerful spiritual beings who gather to show their concern over the current state of affairs in Nigeria.

However, Kreamer emphasized, there is no one interpretation for any of these works. "[The exhibit] is designed to make people think about how the body or notion of

human presence is reflected in the art."

Not all of the works show the body directly. This ambiguity is partly the point of the exhibit. "By very consciously selecting works where the body is not evident, I'm asking visitors to get into that process of engagement with the work, to try to figure out how the body is implied," said Kreamer.

Rudzani Nemasetoni, an artist from South Africa, recreated pages from his father's passbook in "Apartheid Scrolls." The passbook symbolizes the body because black South Africans had to carry it with them all the time to gain entry to otherwise forbidden spaces.

The exhibit showcases works by several other South African artists as well. Many of them explore issues of identity and violence under apartheid or empowerment and history in post-apartheid politics.

"Can't Forget, Can't Remember," by Sue Williamson, deals with the work of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission by focusing on the moment when victims were able to confront the accused. However, she also examines the difficulty of remembering past injuries, as expressed in the title.

The body is present in Williamson's piece through viewer participation. Viewers move a cursor to cue words spoken at the commission. The actions of the viewer determine the amount of speech and written text that are projected, and when the video moves on.

Viewer involvement is not always so extensive, but the body of the

viewer is nonetheless present in all other pieces, through their interpretation.

The body of the artist is also present in the works, through the process of creation. The artists use political, social, economic and religious bodies to explore issues that concern them most deeply.

Although the show focuses on the body, it reflects themes present in traditional African art, said Kreamer. This might help the viewer better understand both this exhibit and other works in the museum.



Additional information (<http://africa.si.edu/exhibits/upcoming.html>) on the exhibit is available on the National Museum of African Art 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>)?

Educated, Healthy People Africa's "Greatest Untapped Resource"

By Susan Ellis
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- "The greatest untapped resource of many African nations is their own people. Africa needs educated, healthy people in order to move forward and the United States is helping African governments meet the education and health needs of their people," according to National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley.

"Partnership, not paternalism, defines our Africa strategy," Hadley told representatives from more than 36 African nations and many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at the close of the three-day African Growth and Opportunity (AGOA) Forum in Washington June 7.

AGOA is a U.S. law that provides duty-free access to a wide range of more than 6,400 items -- including textile products -- into the U.S. market for African nations willing to reform their economies along free-market lines. The landmark trade legislation -- the first of its kind with Africa -- was passed by Congress in 2000 and since has been amended and reauthorized.

"Africa and America are building strong partnerships to accomplish five strategic goals," Hadley said, and listed those goals as:

- Seeking democracy and good governance in Africa to ensure enduring progress and "lay the foundation for sustained economic growth;"
- Strengthening regional organizations and institutions like the African Union (AU) and Africa's

subregional organizations that bring African nations together to take effective action;

- Fostering peace and stability;
- Seeking to stimulate economic development and growth; and
- Continuing to offer humanitarian and development assistance that will help African nations invest in their people.

"These five strategic goals reinforce each other and we keep them in mind as we develop strategies to confront challenges in Africa," Hadley said, offering Liberia and Darfur as two examples.

After years of atrocities and corruption in Liberia, in 2003 the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) and the AU, with U.S. support, worked to return stability. As a result, free and fair elections took place in Liberia and in early 2006, "Liberia inaugurated the first woman in Africa's history to be democratically elected as a head of state, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf," Hadley said, adding she met with President Bush and addressed the Congress of the United States. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2006/Mar/16-300883.html>).

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo "demonstrated bold leadership by handing over [exiled Liberian President] Charles Taylor to Liberia's democratically elected government and today Taylor is behind bars awaiting justice before the Special Court for Sierra Leone," Hadley said.

"President Sirleaf's administration is now addressing the issues that will help Liberians succeed. The government is repairing roads, rebuilding the military, providing basic education. President Sirleaf is working hard to attract international investors to promote trade and investment in her country.

"She has the right formula for success. And the United States, joined by many in the international community, is assisting in her efforts. For we believe that Liberia can be a model for progress and an inspiration to other nations, not just in Africa but around the world."

Darfur, Hadley said, "represents an ongoing challenge and yet we have made progress because the same principles guide our collective strategy in this part of Africa. In Darfur we are working with African partners and regional organizations; we are fostering peace and long-term stability; we are meeting humanitarian needs and promoting economic development and trade and laying the foundation for democracy and good governance."

Hadley added that the United States supports the development of "an African standby force under the auspices of the African Union. This will strengthen regional security capacity and give the African Union the ability to protect people when fragile or weak states are unable to do so. ... We also appreciate cooperation with African nations to defeat terrorists and deny them safe havens in Africa."

The success of the AGOA legislation and the importance of private investment "have been the themes

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U.S. President Arrives in Baghdad . . .

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the new government. "And if given the right help I'm convinced that you will succeed and so will the world."

Bush said he had come in order to meet face-to-face and to "tell you that when America gives its word, it will keep its word."

Describing Iraq as a "central front" in the War on Terror, he said it is in the interests of the United States and the international community, as well as the Iraqi people, that the new democratic government succeeds.

The success of democracy in Iraq deals "a serious blow to those who have a vision of darkness, who don't believe in liberty," Bush said to the Iraqi leaders.

After his meeting with the Iraqi government, the president made remarks (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/06/20060613-2.html>) to U.S. troops in Baghdad, where he said that he had come away from his meetings "with the distinct impression that they are unified in serving the people of Iraq," despite belonging to different religious and ethnic communities in the country.

The new government respects human rights and human dignity and will respond to the will of the Iraqi people, the president said.

"I ... come away from here believing that the will is strong and the desire to meet the needs of the people is real and tangible," he said.

The role of the United States will

be to help Prime Minister al-Maliki and his government "implement his strategy and his plan to restore infrastructure and education and health and agricultural society so that people have the confidence in their new government," Bush said.

Reporters traveling with the president were told by White House Communications Director Dan Bartlett that the trip was designed to allow Bush and Prime Minister al-Maliki to meet face-to-face and for the president to get a clearer sense of al-Maliki's priorities, as well as specific ways the United States can help him meet his goals.

"[I]t's critically important that you're able to meet with the new leader, confer with the leader who you're going to be making those decisions with," Bartlett was quoted as saying. "We are committed to the success of the new government and the Maliki plan that he is outlining."

The communications director also said the face-to-face meeting allowed the two leaders to "establish a closer relationship than you can just over a telephone."

The trip remained secret until the last moment, including from most U.S. officials and the Iraqi government. Bush originally was scheduled to participate in a videoconference with the Iraqi government from the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland.

Bartlett said the president had wanted to come to Iraq once the final Cabinet positions in the country's new government had been chosen.

He said that Prime Minister al-Maliki also has been invited to visit President Bush at the White House, but added the timing of the trip has not yet been finalized.

Transcripts of the Bush's remarks (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/06/20060613.html>) with the prime minister and his speech to U.S. troops (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/06/20060613-2.html>) in Iraq later in the day are available on the White House Web site.

For additional information, see Iraq Update (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html).

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

U.S. Trade Official Sees "New Era" in U.S.-Africa Trade

By Charles W. Corey
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- While there are encouraging signs that "a new era" of trade, investment and prosperity is beginning in Africa, there is still much to be done to ensure long-term economic growth and development.

U.S. Trade Representative-designate Susan Schwab made that point in an address to the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Investment Summit in Washington June 7.

The event was held in conjunction with the fifth annual AGOA Forum and parallel civil-society and private-sector forums held under theme: "The Private Sector and Trade, Powering Africa's Growth." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2006/Jun/06-237947.html>).

AGOA provides duty-free access to a wide range of more than 6,400 items -- including textile products -- into the U.S. market for African nations willing to reform their economies along free-market lines. The landmark trade legislation -- the first of its kind with Africa -- was passed by Congress in 2000 and since has been amended and reauthorized.

Schwab, who lived eight years in Africa during her childhood, said that in spite of positive trends, "we must acknowledge that we have a lot of work to do" to make those trends permanent.

She said trade, spurred by AGOA and other Bush administration initiatives, has helped Africa become

more prosperous, but Africa needs investment, which she called a "critical component" for stimulating growth and development. The continent still lags far behind on investment flows as compared to other regions of the world, Schwab said.

For that reason, she said, the challenge is how to increase capital flows to the continent, which is rich in natural resources and human potential. She called on everyone to "continue to think creatively so that three quarters of a billion people who live in Africa can look forward to higher standards of living and ever-expanding economic opportunities."

Quantifying the "signs of a new era," Schwab said strong global economic growth, rising commodity prices, and economic and political reforms on the continent are supporting "relatively robust growth" in sub-Saharan Africa.

Real growth in gross domestic product (GDP) for the region reached an eight-year high of 5.6 percent in 2004, while inflation touched an historic low at 9.8 percent in the same year, she said.

Today's Africa is a much different place from that encountered by investors just a few years ago, she said. "We are seeing less and less of the old Africa that was suspicious or closed to business and more and more of the new Africa that is open to investment, eager to trade, actively seeking inroads and linkages with the United States, with businesses and their own entrepreneurs."

One of the significant developments that has come out of the

Doha round of World Trade Organization negotiations over the past five years, she said, is the emergence of a more "solid consensus" among all nations, including developing nations, that trade is an important path to economic growth and development.

In fact, she said, trade is a much clearer path to prosperity than traditional aid. Many African leaders have shown that they understand this by working with the United States and other developed and developing countries to advance comprehensive trade liberalization efforts through the WTO's Doha Development Agenda. (See USA and the WTO (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/WTO.html).

AGOA BROADENING, DEEPENING TRADE AND INVESTMENT RELATIONS

In many ways, she said, AGOA is helping to usher in a new era by "broadening and deepening" trade and investment relations with the countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

Schwab, who is a development economist, called the implementation of AGOA a central element of the Bush administration's trade and investment policy toward sub-Saharan Africa and said it is part of a U.S. effort to help reinforce Africa's own economic and political reform efforts. "We are trying to provide greater African access to U.S. technical assistance and trade finance facilities and trying to promote high level U.S.-African dialogue on trade and investment issues such as the AGOA Forum discussions," she added.

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World Bank President Says Africa Must Remain Bank's Top Priority

By Charles W. Corey
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Even though Africa is moving toward greater economic growth and development, it must remain the first priority of the World Bank if it is to fully prosper long-term, said World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz.

In remarks at the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Investment Summit June 7, Wolfowitz said Africa, despite some progress, lags far behind the rest of the developing world in reducing poverty.

"Twenty years ago we had 150 million people in extreme poverty. Today that number is doubled and it is roughly 50 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa. That has to be a concern not just of Africans. It has to be a concern of all human beings." Numbers like that, he said, do not point to a healthy world "when a major part of the world is falling behind."

Despite such statistics however, Wolfowitz said he agrees with Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo that "'Africa is a continent on the move.'"

Wolfowitz cautioned, however, that the economic progress now taking place across Africa is not uniform. "You can still find many pockets of misery," he said, adding that there is not enough attention being paid to African success stories like Rwanda.

"Rwanda is amazing," he told his audience. "Nine hundred and fifty thousand people were slaughtered in the genocide a little over 10 years ago. In the intervening pe-

riod," he said, that country's economy has been enjoying a very good 10 percent growth rate.

In addition to Rwanda, Wolfowitz said, improved performance is also apparent in the governance of other parts of Africa, including Nigeria "where a former chief of police is in jail for corruption." He also cited a case in South Africa, where "the country's deputy president was dismissed not because he took a bribe but because he was held accountable for one of his aides taking a bribe."

Those who watch Africa on a regular basis, he said, are "seeing a difference" in performance levels. "You are seeing it in 15 African countries that have had median growth rates over the past 10 years of better than 5 percent -- from Ghana at 4 percent to Mozambique at 8 percent and Rwanda at 10 percent."

Clearly the key to economic success is creating jobs, he said, adding that job creation should be one of the Millennium Development Goals along with health, education and poverty reduction. He also credited Africa's economic progress in part to the increased number of Africans successful in business.

OBSTACLES TO DEVELOPMENT REMAIN

Wolfowitz told his audience that Africans still face an enormous set of obstacles with regard to development -- "some of them avoidable ... some of them totally unnecessary and many of them ... manmade such as the regulations" inherited from years back that govern businesses.

"Somebody thought 30 or 40 years ago that it made sense to have to have 55 different licenses to start a business in any number of African countries," he lamented.

As a direct result, he said, Africa does poorly when ranked with other regions in terms of which countries have the most nurturing business climates. Of 155 countries ranked worldwide, seven of the bottom 10 (those with the most inhospitable business climates) are African countries, he said.

"That is bad news on one hand, and on the other hand ... it is good news. It says that there's a lot that African countries could do fairly quickly, fairly easily like clearing away some of that regulatory underbrush."

Other things that are harder to fix such as infrastructure, he said, will take longer. The World Bank is now "coming back in a very determined way" to help Africa tackle after some years of ramping down infrastructure projects.

Burkina Faso, he said, is one of the 15 countries that are performing well, despite the fact it costs 1.5 times the average per-capita annual income just to open a business. That figure is more than it costs to start a business in the United States, Wolfowitz said.

The World Bank president also cited as evidence of Africa's progress a drastic drop in the number of active African wars, from 16 in 2002 to six currently.

"Six is still too many and every one of those conflicts is ... a trag-

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Chertoff To Discuss Passenger Name Records at G8 Conference

By Anita N. Wadhvani
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff plans to discuss security cooperation with his counterparts from the Group of Eight (G8) nations during the week of June 12, including the exchange of aircraft passenger name records (PNR) with European Union countries.

Speaking in Washington June 9, Chertoff said that at the G8 Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Conference he will discuss the European Court of Justice's recent decision that the current exchange of PNR data between the EU and the United States is "legally flawed." Chertoff said the Bush administration is "studying the decision ... and we want to work with our European counterparts on the way forward."

Since 2004, airlines based in the European Union have been providing information on passengers flying to the United States to U.S. authorities as directed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security under its Secure Flight Program. The United States warned that failure to comply would result in fines assessed per passenger on board as well as revocation of landing rights within the United States. The passenger information supplied included up to 34 pieces of data on each passenger, including name, reservation date, travel agent, itinerary, form of payment, flight number and seating information.

The European Court of Justice has ruled that the deal violates European Community law, and has concluded it should be voided, but also ruled that data transfers can

continue until September 30. At that time, passengers on EU-based airlines coming into the United States likely will be subject to prolonged or extensive security checks. These airlines now fear they will lose passengers to their U.S. competitors, which will continue transferring passenger data.

The secretary said the current goal is to continue to expand the Secure Flight Program but also to handle any concerns expressed by those "who feel they are unfairly being impeded."

"[T]his kind of information, while not particularly private, is critical for law enforcement authorities and immigration authorities to detect people who should not be allowed to enter the country or who pose a risk to others," he said. "Without this data, in effect, we're without our radar. We have no way of determining in advance who is coming into the country" and might pose a risk.

He added that the European Court's ruling ensures that there will be no lowering of data-protection standards and no effect on any passengers, and that a high level of security will be maintained.

Chertoff said he also plans to discuss avian flu preparedness and efforts to combat human trafficking, promote cybersecurity, mitigate terrorism recruitment and adopt new technologies for detecting explosives.

"We are more secure as Americans when we are working to elevate the general level of security around the world," said Chertoff as to why homeland security issues would be discussed overseas.

"Terrorism itself, of course is global; it knows no boundaries," he added.

UNITED STATES WELCOMES VISITORS

Chertoff added he wants to make it clear that the United States welcomes visitors. "We don't want our security measures to impede legitimate travel and legitimate tourism," he said.

The Department of Homeland Security will be working with the State Department to greet international guests by expediting the visa process, retooling airports to make them more welcoming and creating ways to develop smarter screening that will raise security as well as increase efficiency. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/17-781544.html>).

When asked about allowing citizens of the 25 European Union countries to enter the United States without a visa, a benefit that all U.S. passport holders receive when visiting the EU states, Chertoff responded that to comply with the Visa Waiver Program certain legal requirements must be met.

"[T]his is not an issue of setting a deadline, because whether the standards are met is really a function of the performance having been accomplished," he said.

The Visa Waiver Program enables citizens of 27 countries to visit the United States for tourism or trade for up to 90 days without obtaining visas.

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Chertoff To Discuss Passenger . . .

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WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE

Chertoff also discussed implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, which would require visitors to and from North America to have a passport or other accepted document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States.

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative stipulates that anyone applying for admission to the United States, including U.S. citizens, must present secure travel documents that denote citizenship and serve as proof of identity. Other forms of identification, less secure than a passport, historically have been accepted for citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico and Bermuda. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/09-163633.html>).

Homeland Security and State formally proposed regulations to im-

plement the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative September 1, 2005. If adopted, those regulations would take effect in phases, applying the new passport or secure document requirement to air and sea travel to or from Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean and Bermuda as of December 31, 2006. By December 31, 2007, the passport requirement would extend to all land border crossings.

Chertoff said he wants to use an efficient means of identification that meets the standards of the law that does not have to be a passport but would be inexpensive and accessible.

"What we're eager to do is work with the Canadian government on any alternative that will be easy for Canadians to meet this security standard," said the secretary.

Chertoff also discussed U.S. immigration reform efforts. "We are looking for a solution and we'll welcome people through a comprehensive program where they register themselves, where it fits with

our labor market, and where we have real control of who comes across the border," he commented. (See Immigration Reform (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/immigration.html).

A transcript (<http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/67759.htm>) of Chertoff's remarks is available on the State Department Foreign Press Center 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>)?

World Bank President Says . . .

(Continued from page 8)

edy in itself and a huge obstacle to development." But he quickly added, the fact that number has gone down so much in the past five years is a "very hopeful sign."

Wolfowitz also acknowledged that Africa's past colonial legacy left terrible scars on the continent, but

he told his audience "You won't make progress dwelling on it!"

For additional information, see Global Development and Foreign Aid (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/global_development.html) and African Growth and Opportunity Act ([\[trade_economic_development/agoa.html\]\(http://usinfo.state.gov/trade_economic_development/agoa.html\)\).](http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/</p></div><div data-bbox=)

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

Terrorist's Identity Confirmed: Death Caused by Bomb Blast

Washington -- DNA testing and an autopsy confirm that the man killed by a June 7 coalition air strike was indeed al-Qaida in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, U.S. military officials say.

FBI forensics experts positively matched Zarqawi's DNA with the body visually identified as the terrorist leader's, according to Army Major General William Caldwell, spokesman for Multi-National Force - Iraq, in a June 12 briefing from Baghdad, Iraq.

Army Colonel Steve Jones, the U.S. military's chief medical official in Iraq, joined Caldwell to answer questions about the autopsy performed on Zarqawi's body. The Army doctor said there was clear evidence that Zarqawi died of severe internal injuries sustained in the F-16 air strike against the safe house he was using near Baquba. Abd al-Rahman, described as Zarqawi's spiritual adviser, also died in the destruction generated by two 500-pound aerial bombs.

Iraqi police were first to reach the site of the attack on June 7, according to Caldwell, who added that coalition forces arrived less than 30 minutes later. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Jun/09-279813.html>).

Zarqawi was still alive though mortally wounded; a U.S. military medic ensured that he could breathe. The medic reported, however, that Zarqawi's breathing was "shallow and labored" with a weak and deteriorating pulse, Caldwell said. Zarqawi died less than an hour after the strike and only 24 minutes after coalition forces arrived, according to Caldwell.

Rahman's body also was autopsied, Jones said, adding that medical examiners determined that he was killed instantly. Two senior U.S. military pathologists conducted each autopsy, he said, "to ensure it was thorough and there were no questions about the findings.

"Throughout the process, all personnel have treated these remains with the same high degree of dignity and respect that we treat our own casualties," Jones said.

Caldwell said the final disposition of Zarqawi's and Rahman's remains is a subject being discussed with the Iraqi government. The body of a third, unidentified male is being turned over to the Iraqi Ministry of Health, he said, while the bodies of three unidentified women were transferred to a local hospital for identification and notification of next of kin.

The transcript (<http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/>) of the briefing will be available on the Defense Department Web site.

For additional information, see Iraq Update (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html).

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

U.S. Expresses Regret on Civilian Casualties in Gaza

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
June 9, 2006

Statement by Sean McCormack,
Spokesman

The United States expresses its regret for the killing and wounding of innocent Palestinians in Gaza today as a result of artillery fire by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). We note that the Israeli government has issued statements of re-

gret for these civilian casualties and that the IDF states that it has launched an immediate investigation into the incident. We welcome Israel's announcement that it has suspended artillery fire while that investigation continues. We call on the Palestinian Authority to prevent all acts of terrorism, including the firing of missiles and rockets from Gaza.

The United States has been in contact with PA President Mahmoud

Abbas and the Government of Israel and will continue to monitor the situation closely. The United States calls for mutual restraint and urges Israelis and Palestinians to avoid all actions that could exacerbate tensions further.

(end text)

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

Three Guantanamo Bay Detainees Die of Apparent Suicide

By Sgt. Sara Wood
American Forces Press Service

Washington -- Three detainees at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, died of apparent suicides early this morning, military officials reported today.

Two Saudis and one Yemeni, all located in Camp 1 of the detention center, were found unresponsive and not breathing in their cells, Navy Rear Adm. Harry B. Harris, commander of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, said in a news conference. The first detainee was found shortly after midnight, and the other detainees were found within minutes, Harris said.

Medical teams responded quickly and all three detainees were provided immediate emergency medical treatment in attempts to revive them, Harris said. The three detainees were pronounced dead by a physician after all lifesaving measures had been exhausted, he said.

Harris, who arrived on the scene shortly after the detainees were pronounced dead, said the guard force and medical personnel acted in a professional manner and did everything they could to save the detainees' lives.

"I could see on the faces of the doctors, nurses and corpsmen that they were mourning the loss of a patient," Harris said. "They did exactly what they were trained to do."

The names of the deceased are not being released pending an investigation, said Army Gen. Bantz J. Craddock, commander of U.S.

Southern Command. The U.S. State Department is in ongoing discussions with the governments of Saudi Arabia and Yemen in regards to the handling of the detainees' remains and notification of next of kin, he said.

A cultural advisor is assisting Joint Task Force Guantanamo to ensure that the remains are handled in an appropriate cultural and religious manner, Harris said. The bodies will not be buried within 24 hours, as per normal Islamic law, because autopsies must be performed, he said, but Joint Task Force Guantanamo has a religious fatwah, or law, from a reputable imam allowing for delays when the cause of death is uncertain.

The U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service has initiated an independent investigation to determine the cause and manner of death, Craddock said.

The detainees appear to have hanged themselves with nooses made from clothing and bed sheets, Harris said. The three detainees' cells were on the same cell block and were near each other, but not next to each other, he said.

Harris said the joint suicides were clearly planned by the detainees as a way to advance their cause in the war on terror.

"I believe this was not an act of desperation, but an act of asymmetric warfare aimed at us here at Guantanamo," he said. "We have men here who are committed jihadists. They are dangerous men and they will do anything they can to advance their cause."

The three detainees who died had all participated in a hunger strike at one time, Harris said. The Yemeni detainee was a long-term hunger striker who had begun his strike in 2005 and just ended it last month, he said. The other two detainees participated in one hunger strike in 2005 and another short one this year, he said.

The three detainees were not charged under military commissions and were not being actively interrogated, Harris said.

None of the three detainees had attempted suicide before, Harris said. Craddock added that all three had gone through combatant status review boards and administrative review boards, and none were on medication or had any indication of mental illness.

Harris said he believes the detainees were acting on a rumor circulating in the camps at Guantanamo that says three detainees must die for all the detainees to be released. This rumor has no basis and is not encouraged by the guard force, he said.

The suicides are not thought to be linked to the June 8 death of terrorist leader Abu Musab al Zarqawi, Harris said, because the detainees at Guantanamo do not yet know of his death.

All three detainees left suicide notes in Arabic, which are being included in the investigation, Craddock said.

The servicemembers at Guantanamo Bay are dedicated and, together with Joint Task Force Guantanamo leaders, have worked

(Continued on page 13)

U.S. Foreign Aid Will Focus on Sustainable Growth

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – A results-oriented approach to foreign aid will help recipient countries build on past successes to achieve sustainable economic and social progress, says Randall Tobias, U.S. foreign assistance director and administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

This "transformational" approach also will help U.S. government agencies coordinate assistance efforts to achieve greater results, Tobias told a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACFA) in Washington June 7.

He said the new approach is providing the "right setting" for countries to use aid responsibly and focus on achieving a "well-functioning and accountable state that responds to the needs of its people."

The approach also will identify the foreign-aid goals so that a country

eventually can "graduate" from reliance on outside aid, he said.

Even though the host government's role is "crucial" in using aid effectively, it also is important that citizens understand their governments are responsible for achieving sustainable development, Tobias said. The new aid approach groups recipient countries into categories based on shared characteristics and allows planners in the field to develop a combination of programs intended to help countries progress, he said.

For instance, he said, in "emerging" countries recovering from conflict, efforts would focus on achieving peace and stability.

"A country can't progress without peace, security and stability, and economic growth," Tobias said.

In "developing" countries where government accountability may be weak, efforts would be directed to governance and democracy along with support for health, education and poverty alleviation, he said.

In "transforming" countries that have made progress in governance, continued aid for health, education and economic development programs would be provided until they are on a solid path to sustainability, Tobias said.

"Progress is essential," the director said. "The challenges of our time demand this change."

ACFA is a 24-member group of private citizens with expertise in international development. The committee was established by presidential directive after World War II to serve as a link between the U.S. government and private groups active in humanitarian assistance and development work in other countries.

The full text (<http://www.usaid.gov/press/speeches/2006/sp060607.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>)?

Three Guantanamo Bay. . .

(Continued from page 12)

hard to ensure the conditions don't exist to allow for suicides, Harris said. However, the enemy combatants at Guantanamo are a determined group that will do anything they can to advance their cause, he said.

"These are dangerous men, and they're not here by accident or happenstance," he said.

Joint Task Force Guantanamo leaders are already reviewing procedures to look for ways to ensure things like this won't happen in the future, Harris said. For example, the guards have begun taking bed sheets away from detainees in the morning and giving them back at night, he said.

"We remain focused on our mission; it's a vital mission in the

global war on terror," he said.

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

Cold Storage for HIV/AIDS Drugs

Improper storage renders drugs ineffective and unsafe

Many HIV/AIDS drugs for children, as well as laboratory reagents and test kits, require cold storage or refrigeration. With shortages of cold chain equipment, existing equipment is filled beyond capacity, making refrigeration ineffective. Products that are not kept at the right temperature can become ineffective.

With USAID funding, Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus is providing technical assistance to anti-retroviral therapy facilities to improve drug management, including the provision of refrigerators and other supplies to ensure safe handling of sensitive drugs.



BEFORE In dilapidated pharmacies lacking proper equipment for temperature-sensitive drugs storage, medications were placed on the floor with cold packs.



AFTER Refrigerators, provided by Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus, properly store temperature-sensitive medical supplies

Basketball Star Dikembe Mutombo Joins Fight Against HIV/AIDS

Professional basketball star Dikembe Mutombo first became aware of HIV/AIDS when he was a high school student in his native Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Not much was known about the disease then.

Mutombo, who plays with the Houston, Texas Rockets, came to the United States to study medicine, with the goal of returning home to help correct health problems.

While attending college at Georgetown University in Washington, the tall student was invited to try out for the university's basketball team. He not only was accepted onto the team, he later became a leading professional basketball player, a career that made him a star in the United States.

Having played basketball in the U. S. National Basketball Association (NBA) for the better part of a decade, Mutombo has accumulated the celebrity and wealth to allow him to engage in charitable activities. While playing for a team in Atlanta, he visited hospitals, worked with the Special Olympics athletic program for young persons with cognitive disabilities, and supported the Zambian women's basketball and track teams' attendance at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

Mutombo is active in the organization Basketball Without Borders and travels throughout Africa on behalf of the NBA. He is a spokesman for the international relief agency CARE, and he was the first youth emissary for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).



He also works with the UNDP partner organization UNICEF, for which he and several other professional basketball stars have filmed televised public-service announcements

In 1997, Mutombo created the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation, which is dedicated to the eradication of childhood diseases that are now rare in the developed world but that still threaten life in DRC.

Perhaps Mutombo's most impressive work has been to build into his basketball programs in Africa extensive community outreach and educational seminars addressing such important issues as HIV/AIDS.

The newspaper USA Weekend named Mutombo the 1999 Most Caring Athlete for his efforts to raise money to help support HIV/AIDS efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Those efforts continue -- in 2006 Mutombo convinced the U.S. Congress to promise \$2 million to fund clinics and

health centers in his homeland.

The NBA was honored in May by the Global Business Alliance on HIV/AIDS for its role in promoting AIDS awareness and prevention in communities all around the world.

More information (<http://www.dmf.org/>) on the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation is available on the foundation's 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. Spent \$27 Million To Destroy Small Arms, Light Weapons

Illicit trade in small arms contributes to conflicts, lawlessness and instability in regions around the world.

For that reason, the United States has provided more than \$27 million to help various nations destroy surplus stockpiles of small arms and light weapons.

It also offers regular technical assistance to countries seeking to produce stronger export/import controls on these weapons.

The topics of illegal trafficking in arms, ineffective national controls and related issues will be considered during a June 26 to July 7 U.N. Small Arms Review Conference in New York. A U.S. delegation will attend along with delegations from other U.N. member states as well as representatives from international and regional organizations.

A June 9 State Department fact sheet reviews the U.S. commitment to stemming the flow of illicit arms and provides answers to fre-

quently asked questions about the problem and the programs available to counter it.

(Full text of the fact sheet is available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/products/washfile.html>)

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

President's Malaria Plan Expanded After Recent Success

By Rachel J. King
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A U.S. program to reduce malaria deaths by 50 percent in targeted African countries by 2010 will be expanded to include Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda and Senegal, first lady Laura Bush announced June 8 at a Washington event sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), announced in 2005, is a \$1.2 billion, five-year collaboration of several government agencies, led by USAID in conjunction with the departments of State, Health and Human Services and others. The initiative attempts to take a comprehensive approach to preventing and treating malaria, including activities such as spraying insecticide in communities, using insecticide-treated bed nets and providing medication programs and treatment to pregnant women.

(See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2005/Jul/01-739276.html>)).

When announced by President Bush in June 2005, PMI targeted Angola, Tanzania and Uganda. As the first lady announced, four countries are being added for 2006 and the initiative will be expanded to another eight countries in 2007, ultimately aiding 15 nations.

"The partnership will also include education and evaluation programs to make sure that what we're doing is effective and that it reaches the largest number of people," the first lady said at the June 8 USAID event.

Although malaria has been eradicated in the United States, she said, "The challenge now is to make sure that this progress benefits people still at risk."

Part of what making the fight against malaria so urgent, she

said, is that the disease is "largely preventable."

To eradicate malaria, the first lady said, more people must be "educated because life-saving nets, sprays and medicines work better when people know how to use them. Too few people know how malaria is transmitted. Every country has the obligation to educate its citizens."

Malaria is especially devastating for children, pregnant women and people living with HIV/AIDS, she added.

According to a USAID fact sheet, approximately 1.2 million people die from the disease each year worldwide, but the greatest death toll is among children in Africa, where malaria kills a child every 30 seconds.

USAID predicts that an estimated 4 million people will benefit from PMI-supported activities by the

(Continued on page 17)

President's Malaria Plan . . .

(Continued from page 16)
end of September.

"For the first time, millions of people in malaria-devastated countries have hope," Mrs. Bush said.

"Throughout Africa, millions of mothers can now celebrate healthy children."

The first lady added that U.S. aid must help African countries build anti-malaria programs that are sustainable. She attributed part of the malaria epidemic to the lack of doctors and nurses in Africa to meet the needs and said that as part of the USAID effort, for example, community health care workers are being trained in African cities and villages.

"With every new health care worker, a long-term, sustainable health care structure is being built," she said, "one that can also cure diseases like avian flu, tuberculosis and malaria."

PMI resources already are saving lives, the first lady said. In Angola, for example, where nearly 90 percent of the population is at risk of malaria, insecticide-spraying programs already provide coverage to more than 500,000 people.

The first lady also announced the new U.S. malaria coordinator, R. Timothy Ziemer, who will have direct authority over PMI and all USAID malaria programs and policy. Ziemer joined USAID after a 31-year career in the U.S. Navy where he achieved the rank of rear admiral. Previously, he served as the executive director of World Relief, a nonprofit group that works with local churches in the United States and around the world in the areas of disaster relief, refugee assistance, AIDS ministries and other services.

A 2005 USAID fact sheet (http://www.usaid.gov/policy/malaria_122305.html) on PMI, a press release (<http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2006/pr060608.html>) on the June 8 announcement and fact sheet (<http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2006/pr060608.html>) on the program's expansion are available on the USAID Web site.

A transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/06/20060608-6.html>) of the first lady's remarks is available on the White House Web site.

For more information, see USAID Policy: USAID/General Notice – President's Malaria Initiative (http://www.usaid.gov/policy/malaria_122305.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>)?

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

Imperfect HIV Vaccine Nonetheless Helps Survival

Washington – HIV/AIDS researchers have developed a vaccine that helps prolong survival in monkeys after infection even though it does not create immunity from the virus, according to research published in the journal *Science* June 9.

Finding a vaccine against HIV has become the most difficult scientific problem in the 25-year history of the epidemic, experts say.

Medical science is able to make a vaccine work by finding a way properly to trigger the immune system to mount a response to an invader. But HIV is a virus that so successfully disables the human immune system, researchers are thwarted in their work.

This new research found that monkeys vaccinated against simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV) survived longer after deliberate SIV infection than animals not vaccinated.

SIV is a close relative of the HIV virus that plagues almost 40 million people around the world and causes an animal disease similar to that found in humans.

Two teams of researchers set out to test the theory that an imperfect HIV vaccine still might allow infected individuals to live longer and healthier lives, even while it failed to give them immunity.

Dr. Normal Levin led a team from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center at Harvard Medical School and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)'s Vaccine Research Center (VRC). Mario Roederer of the VRC led a second team.

Watching the behavior of a special subset of immune cells after a vaccinated monkey is infected was key to determining whether a survival advantage could be gained from an imperfect vaccine, according to a June 9 NIAID press release.

These special cells are known as memory CD4+ T cells and are critical to the immune system's ability to muster an immune response.

Normally, a rapid, significant loss of these memory CD4+ T cells occurs very early, only about 10 days into an SIV infection, when levels of virus in the bloodstream are at their peak.

Up to 80 percent of memory CD4+ T cells in some tissues become infected and are lost, significantly damaging the immune system.

In this research, the vaccinated monkeys had a significantly different reaction after infection. Three times to five times fewer memory cells in the vaccinated group were infected and destroyed.

"If the virus wipes out only a fraction of the memory CD4+ T cells that it might otherwise destroy, that should allow [the animals] to live longer," said NIAID's Roederer.

The research teams found that the levels of CD+ 4 T cells remained at significantly higher levels in the vaccinated animals for the 850 days they were studied.

"Although our ultimate goal is to have a vaccine that completely blocks HIV infection," said NIAID

Director Anthony S. Fauci, "this research suggests a potential benefit of even a partially effective vaccine."

The SIV vaccine used in this research was a simplified version of a preventive HIV vaccine developed by VRC scientists and currently is undergoing human trials for efficacy in the United States, the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa.

Large-scale human clinical trials are likely to begin sometime in 2007.

The full text (<http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/jun2006/niaid-09.htm>) of the press release is available at the National Institutes of Health Web site.

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

World's Top Young Football Players in U.S. for World Cup Program

By Tim Receveur
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – When the 2006 World Cup kicked off in Germany on June 9, 32 football teams from six continents joined together to share in one of the greatest international experiences in the world's most popular sporting event.

A microcosm of the World Cup also began in the United States on June 11 when 30 secondary-school football stars from 13 countries gathered outside Washington to launch the World Cup Sports Initiative.

The initiative, a partnership between the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the U.S. Soccer Foundation, U.S. Soccer Federation, and Major League Soccer (MLS), will show the players how the game of football is structured and played in the United States (where the sport is known as soccer), including the important roles of women as players, referees and coaches at all levels.

At a welcome dinner at Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia, the athletes gathered to start officially their visit in the United States and to receive their football uniforms and gear for their new teams.

The boys and girls, ages 13-18, represent Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bolivia, China, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Uganda and Uzbekistan.

One of the athletes, Tumwesigye Henry, from Kampala, Uganda, is making his first trip to the United



Tumwesigye Henry (far right), from Kampala, Uganda, is making his first trip to the United States

States. The trip also marks the first time he has ever flown on an airplane.

"It was a very long trip and I was very tired, but not now. Everything is very exciting and I can't wait to get started," said Henry during an interview with the Washington File.

The program will take the athletes from Washington to New York and finally to Germany to watch a World Cup match between the United States and Ghana on June 22.

Henry said his family in Uganda, including his five brothers and sisters, are extremely proud of his football skills as a striker on the MUT Uganda football team in Kampala and of his selection to participate in the World Cup Sports Initiative.

Managed and implemented by the Delphi International Program of World Learning, the World Cup Sports Initiative works at the grassroots level to help young players discover how success in athletics -- with an emphasis on teamwork, respect, leadership, and conflict resolution -- can translate

into the development of life skills and academic achievement.

The athletes are scheduled to attend a clinic hosted by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men's Champion University of Maryland, to be special guests at a D.C. United practice, and to watch a Red Bulls game in New York. D.C. United and the Red Bulls are professional football teams in U.S. Major League Soccer.

The program reflects the theme of this year's FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) World Cup, "a time to make friends," with an emphasis on building international understanding and respect between young people around the world.

"At first I couldn't believe it, but I am finally in the U.S. and I am so excited about everything that we are going to do," said Henry.

Germany is hosting the 2006 World Cup from June 9 to July 9.

For more information, see World Cup 2006 (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/sports/world_cup.html) and the related article, "United States Set for Start of 2006 World Cup of Football" (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2006/Jun/08-861494.html>). For more information on athletics in the United States, see Sports (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/sports.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>)?

Sports Initiative Brings Together Youths from Around the World

By Cassie Duong
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington --Thirty football-playing boys and girls from 13 countries are getting a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience life and sports in the United States and then attend the World Cup in Germany.

The middle- and secondary-school athletes, ranging from 13 to 18, come from Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bolivia, China, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Uganda and Uzbekistan. They are participating in a 13-day program that will have them meeting U.S. football players (called soccer players in the United States) in Washington and New York City. They will then depart for Frankfurt to see a World Cup game. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Jun/12-490420.html>).

The program is an initiative of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the U.S. Soccer Foundation, U.S. Soccer Federation and the Major League Soccer (MLS). It is designed to help build international understanding and respect between young people around the world, according to a June 9 press release issued by the U.S. Department of State.

The program "works at the grassroots level to help young players discover success in athletics -- with an emphasis on teamwork, respect, leadership, and conflict resolution -- can translate into the development of life skills and academic achievement," according to the State Department.



President Bush talks with World Cup Soccer Youth Delegate Imane Sallah, from Morocco, on the Whitehouse steps

(See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Jun/12-490420.html>).

U.S. embassies selected the delegates from their host countries. "They are rising young stars, and some are incredible," said Heide Crossley, a chaperone for the Moroccan delegates.

"[For] at least half of them, this is the first time that they have ever been on an airplane," said Brooke Spitzer, a program coordinator for the State Department's Office of Citizen Exchanges. "They have told me that 'it wasn't so scary taking off, but it was the landing,' but they all made it through."

For many of these young people, this trip was the first time away from their parents. "We have already experienced some homesickness, but we were prepared for that," Spitzer said.

"Everyone is excited," she said. "The fact that they all play soccer, even though they have different English levels, [brings] them together."

"You can already tell they are

bonding," Crossley said.

According to Crossley, the delegates had not played together prior to coming to the United States and are eager to play as a team. For many of the delegates, this is the first time that they will play with an internationally diverse team or against American youths.

The delegates are "psyched and excited" to play against a U.S. youth team, Spitzer said. "Our goal is to show them how sports are done in the United States."

The delegates have a busy schedule in Washington from June 11 to June 16. Events include a meeting with District of Columbia police officers at a "Boys and Girls Club," a workout with U.S. soccer coach Sasho Cirovski and a scrimmage against local teams -- the MPS 90 McLean FC (for male players 16 years of age or younger) and the McLean FC (for female players 16 years of age or younger).

The delegates also will watch U.S. male and female professional sports teams during their visit. In addition, according to Spitzer, "We are going to show [the delegates] how the U.S. integrates sports into our schools."

For some of the delegates, this program will be the first time they see an organized female professional sports team. In many of the delegates' homelands, professional soccer is restricted to male players.

(Continued on page 21)

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Sports Initiative Brings . . .

(Continued from page 20)

Many of the visiting athletes expressed their admiration for the legendary female soccer star Mia Hamm. A young Indonesian woman said Hamm is her "favorite soccer player."

For more information, see World Cup 2006 (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/sports/world_cup.html).

The U.S. Embassy in Berlin's World Cup Web site (<http://worldcup2006.usembassy.de/>).

The related article, "United States Set for Start of 2006 World Cup of Football (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2006/Jun/08-861494.html>)."



For more information on athletics in the United States, see Sports (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/sports.html).

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