



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Americas-Africa Democracy Ties Must Benefit Regions' People

By Eric Green
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- A burgeoning democratic partnership between the Americas and Africa must translate into better lives for people in those regions, says Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Speaking July 11 at the Organization of American States (OAS), Rice lamented the "great and tragic suffering" by too many people in the Americas and Africa who are ex-

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Secretary Rice delivers remarks at the Organization of American States in Washington July 11. (AP Images)

Africa Trade Act Helps Liberalize Continent's Economies

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Strengthening the partnership for economic reforms and development between the United States and 38 African nations is the aim of the sixth annual African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum.

The forum will be held in Accra, Ghana, July 18-19, and U.S. and African officials said activity under AGOA in the host



Workers sewing machines in a textile factory in Maseru, Lesotho. Africa's textiles benefit greatly from AGOA. (AP Images)

nation spotlights the goals and potential benefits of the law.

Signed into law in May 2000 by President Clinton, AGOA provides duty-free access to American markets for a range of 6,000 African products. Its aim is to spur export-led growth in nations that agree to liberalize their economies. President Bush extended trade incentives in revisions to the law in 2002 and 2004, and 38 African nations

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cluded from opportunities for economic advancement and social justice.

Such conditions, said Rice, are causing people in those regions to "wonder whether democracies really can deliver" on citizens' "rightfully high hopes for a better life."

When citizens' hopes for advancement are frustrated, Rice said, the seeds for social and economic upheaval are sown. To foster stability and peace, the democratic governments of Africa and the Americas must "liberate the creativity and industry of their people," and help them "seize the opportunities of regional and global trade," Rice said.

"It should not be easier to start a rebellion than to start a business," Rice said.

The right to vote, she added, is not enough "when men, women and children lack opportunity, personal security, health care and education."

The secretary spoke at the opening of a two-day OAS-African Union (AU) Democracy Bridge Forum, which is focusing on applying the tenets of separate pro-democracy charters adopted by the OAS in September 2001 and the African group in January. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=July&x=20070703104151liameruoy0.604046>).)

Rice said the Americas and Africa have "enshrined" within their regions a commitment to democracy

through these two "visionary" charters. The Washington meeting now establishes a commitment to democracy "between our regions ... to each other," said Rice.

"That is the great vision that brings us together today," said Rice.

The partnership between the OAS and the AU grew out of the Community of Democracies, a coalition of countries that works to promote and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide. Mali, which serves as chair of that coalition, will host a Community of Democracies Ministerial Conference in November.

The secretary said the democratic partnership must be used to fight corruption and protect civil liberties and the rule of law. Through free and fair elections, she said, "governments earn legitimacy in the eyes of their people, and it is through good governance that they earn people's trust and confidence that life will get better."

SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WORLDWIDE

Rice said the pro-democracy charters must help the people of the Americas and Africa and in the wider world gain a "future of freedom." She pointed to Cuba, Zimbabwe and Burma as examples of nations where people still are being deprived of basic human rights. And in Sudan's Darfur region, Rice said, the world's democracies must "resolve to end the suffering and violence."

Rice said the world community must not let the government of Sudan continue this "game of cat-and-mouse diplomacy" of making promises and then reneging on those promises.

"It is our responsibility as principled democracies" to hold the government of Sudan accountable for what is occurring in Darfur, said Rice. She said a planned AU-U.N. peacekeeping force is "essential to increasing security for the people of Darfur so that they can begin returning to their homes."

Rice said that in centuries past, the peoples of the Americas and Africa met in a "more tragic way ... across the bridge of slavery" spanning the Atlantic Ocean.

"The ties that bound our people were literally the shackles and the bindings of slavery," Rice said.

"Now we have a different and hopeful binding," Rice said. "We meet here [at the OAS] to build these new bridges between us -- bridges of liberty, justice, dignity and human rights which transcend all differences in culture, race, and religion."

"History will remember the new bridge of democracy and freedom that we build together," Rice said.

The full text (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2007/88123.htm>) of Rice's remarks and more information (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/c10790.htm>) on the Community of Democracies are available on the State Department Web site.

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

Africa Trade Act Helps Liberalize Continent's Economies...

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currently are eligible for its benefits.

The forum is an important part of AGOA, said Todd Moss, deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs, because "it represents an ongoing dialogue between Africa and the United States to ensure that the benefits of AGOA are realized."

And Ghana, he said, has been in the vanguard of countries that have taken to heart this year's theme, "As Trade Grows, Africa Prospers: Optimizing Benefits under AGOA."

As an early partner in the program, the West African nation was able to take advantage of AGOA's favorable trade benefits, in part, because of macroeconomic and financial reforms undertaken by Ghanaian President John Kufuor, Moss said.

The country is now home to one of four "trade hubs" in Africa operated by the U.S. Agency for International Development as a one-stop shopping center for information on AGOA.

Moss will join other officials, trade experts and business executives at the forum in offering tips and advice on how to gain access to American markets.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns is expected to deliver a keynote address on agricultural trade development under AGOA. The forum also will include a meeting of finance, economic and trade ministers as well as separate sessions hosted by civil society and business groups.

Moss said that AGOA -- the first U.S. trade legislation aimed at sub-Saharan Africa -- shows the United States "has made Africa one of its

priority regions," adding that, as a result, "relations with the continent are as strong as they have ever been."

"At no other time in the last 50 years has interdependence between Africa and America been greater," and AGOA plays an important role in that dynamic, Moss said.

Since AGOA's implementation in 2001, non-oil exports to the United States from Africa under the program have grown on average 18.7 percent annually, he said. "This is the type of economic momentum that we want to keep going, with the aid of experience and knowledge shared at the upcoming Accra forum," he added.

The forum host, Ghana, "in particular is a key partner of the United States, and it's not just on trade but on a whole range of issues, from peace and security to governance and economic growth," he said.

President Bush made that point when he hosted President Kufuor at an April 2006 White House meeting.

"President Kufuor has done a fantastic job for Ghana," Bush said. "He's told the people of his country he'd bring honesty to government, and he has. He told the people of his country that he would work to create a stable economic platform for [development], and he has done that as well."

Ghana exported \$43 million in goods to the United States under AGOA in 2006, representing 24 percent of the country's total U.S. exports for that year, according to the AGOA 2007 report of the U.S. trade representative (USTR).

USTR said Ghana has "a market-

based economy with few barriers to trade and investment," adding that sound macroeconomic policies and debt relief have resulted in declining inflation and interest rates, a stable currency and real economic growth averaging 5 percent to 6 percent yearly.

The World Bank's recent Doing Business in 2007 Report also praised Ghana for its economic reforms and improvements in the business climate.

Ghanaian Ambassador Kwame Bawuah-Edusei said that as the first African nation to achieve independence from colonialism 50 years ago, "Ghana led Africa in political emancipation." Through AGOA, he added, "we're leading Africa in economic emancipation."

"Under the leadership of President Kufuor we have had a paradigm shift in our economic and political thinking, leading to a much more investor-friendly atmosphere, and now our nation is open for business," Bawuah-Edusei said.

Bawuah-Edusei said that Ghana began a range of financial and regulatory reforms, as well as infrastructure improvements, aimed at eliminating supply-side constraints to the economy that had hindered growth in the past. But trade constraints still remain, especially in the areas of storage, transportation and port services.

However, he said, recent deals like the \$1 billion investment in Ghana by the Denver-based Newmont Mining Company, offshore oil finds and now direct New York to Accra flights by Atlanta-based Delta Airlines are indicators that Ghana is moving in the right direction. ♦

Liberia Moves Toward Credible Elections with U.S. Support

Liberian election officials have taken an important step toward administering credible elections.

In June 2007, the U.S.-based non-governmental organization IFES hosted intensive trainings in Liberia to introduce the country's election officials to an innovative curriculum called Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections, or BRIDGE. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supported the training.

BRIDGE is the most comprehensive professional development course available for election administrators internationally. It improves the skills, knowledge and confidence of election professionals and key electoral groups including members of the media, political parties and election observers.

Training participants included magistrates and assistant magistrates from Liberia's 18 counties and all election commissioners. Almost half

of the commission's permanent staff also attended the sessions, which covered such topics as electoral management, comparative electoral systems, boundary setting



Women celebrate after Liberia's most recent election, in which the Harvard-educated Liberian Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was elected president.

and voter registration. The commission now is preparing for 2008 local elections and for national elections in 2011. It is leading a nationwide effort to ensure voter district boundaries are fair and plans to update voter lists.

BRIDGE partners, including the National Elections Commission of Libe-

ria and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, worked carefully to create a curriculum that would build on participants' interests and inform debate.

Participants responded positively to the course and the election commission has requested more training.

IFES was formerly known as the International Foundation for Election Systems. More information ([http://www.ifes.org/features.html?title=BRIDGE Training Sharpens Liberia%25s Election Skills](http://www.ifes.org/features.html?title=BRIDGE+Training+Sharpens+Liberia%25s+Election+Skills)) about IFES is available on its Web site.

For more on U.S. assistance programs, see Partnership for a Better Life (<http://usinfo.state.gov/partners/>).

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African Countries Can Benefit from More Trade

By Andrzej Zwanecki
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington --African countries have much to gain from a global trade liberalization accord if they are willing to open up their economies to trade and investment and press other developing countries to do the same, according to a U.S. trade official.

Such an accord, negotiated under auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO), "will open up tremendous opportunities for less-developed countries to expand their exports," said Florizelle Liser, assistant U.S. trade representative for Africa.

But how much African nations can gain from trade liberalization will depend on how much more access to large emerging markets they can obtain and how far their own policy reforms will go to strengthen their international competitive positions, Liser told US-INFO.

The WTO negotiations known as the Doha Development Agenda stalled again in late June, as talks among negotiators from India, Brazil, the European Union (EU) and the United States collapsed. Although U.S. and European negotiators had hoped to make real progress in Potsdam, Germany, the meeting broke up earlier than scheduled after Brazil and India strongly affirmed a hard-line position resisting cutting duties currently applied to industrial goods. (See related article ([\[usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=June&x=20070621172103saikceinawz0.2118189\]\(http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=June&x=20070621172103saikceinawz0.2118189\) \).\)](http://</p>
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Least-developed African countries already enjoy preferential access to rich-country markets under programs such as the U.S. African

Development and Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the EU Everything But Arms program. For example, in 2006, more than 98 percent of U.S. imports from AGOA-eligible countries entered the U.S. market duty-free.

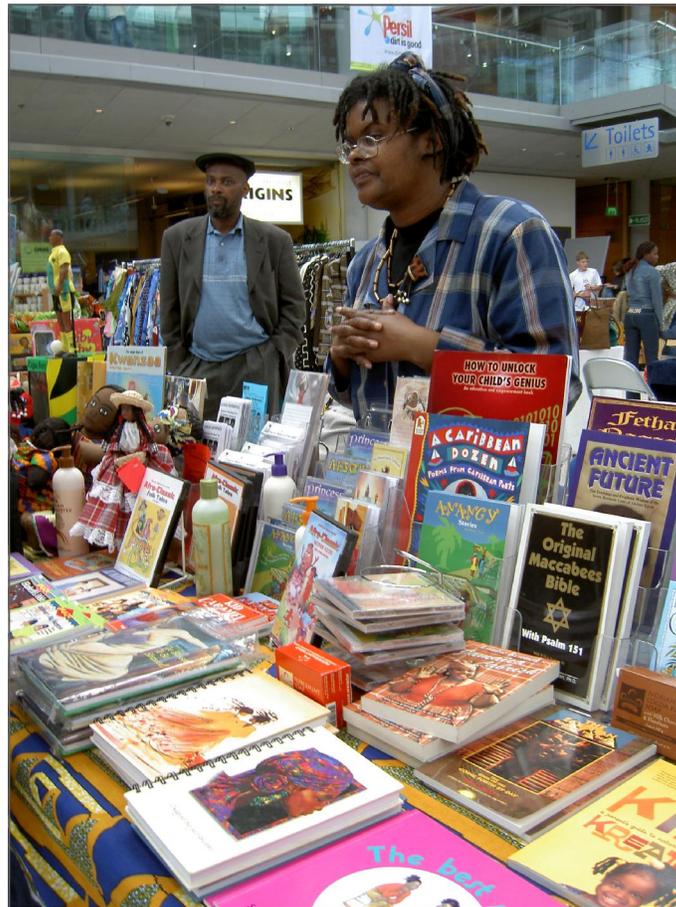
However, in the Doha negotiations most African nations -- out of solidarity or shared past experience -- have aligned themselves with large developing countries such as Brazil and India, who are reluctant to lower their tariffs significantly, she said.

Liser said the United States and the EU Economic Commission for Africa have provided the Africans with studies that show what markets have the greatest potential for their goods, mostly agricultural products.

"If they analyze [this information] and draw appropriate conclusions, their negotiating position will be much more nuanced and will much better reflect their real economic interests," Liser said. She said African countries, as the largest regional grouping in the WTO, have significant negotiating power, yet they have taken a defensive stance on many issues, focusing on preserving and expanding preferences and special treatment.

A global trade liberalization deal would reduce the competitive edge some less-developed African countries currently enjoy relative to major developing countries under existing preference programs, according to U.S. officials and independent studies. But the net effect of a global trade accord would be an increase in real incomes in sub-Saharan African nations proportionately larger than in other developing or high-

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Merchants such as this African bookseller would benefit from the increased trade that could come with economic reforms.

Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the EU Everything But Arms program. For example, in 2006, more than 98 percent of U.S. imports from AGOA-eligible countries entered the U.S. market duty-free.

Therefore, Liser said, the Africans could gain most from increased ac-

U.N. Human Rights Council Members Must Confront Abusers

By Jane Morse
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Democratic member states of the fledgling U.N. Human Rights Council thus far have not proven themselves able to confront human rights abusers, say U.S. officials.

During a recent interview with US-INFO, Erica Barks-Ruggles highlighted the need for greater will among council members to live up to the council's commitment to protect human rights worldwide. Barks-Ruggles is a deputy assistant secretary in the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Although a majority of the 47-member council comprises democratic nations with decent records on advancing human rights in their own countries, these countries have failed to stand up to the minority on the council that does not have strong human rights records, Barks-Ruggles said.

"It has been sad to see that there has not been the political will of the majority of democratic states on the Human Rights Council to stand up and work together as democracies who want to advance human rights in a more concerted way. And we hope that that will change, but so far we haven't seen it," she said.

"I think some of this reflects old attitudes," Barks-Ruggles said. "I

think some of it is fear instilled by 'bloc member mentality' of old that we believe is outdated and outmoded in this globalized world."

Ambassador Grover Joseph Rees, acting deputy assistant secretary in the State Department's Bureau of International Organization Affairs, told USINFO that practical and ideological reasons might prevent some democratic members of the council from challenging the nondemocratic members.

To further that goal, the U.N. Commission on Human Rights was formed in 1946. Among the commission's early leaders were former U.S. first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, a forceful human rights advocate, and Rene Cassin, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968 for his work in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1948.

The 53-member commission became discredited over the years, however, when human rights violators such as Cuba, Zimbabwe and Sudan were allowed to join. Libya, notorious for human rights abuses, was elected to chair the commission in 2003. In 2005, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan acknowledged: "The Commission's declining credibility has cast a shadow on the reputation of the United Nations system as a whole."

In an attempt to rectify the situation, the U.N. General Assembly replaced the commission in March 2006 with the

Human Rights Council. The Council's 47 seats are allocated to 13 countries in Africa, 13 in Asia, six in Eastern Europe, eight in Latin America and the Caribbean and seven to countries in Western Europe and "others." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060906174917bcreklaw0.4854853>).)

But the U.N. General Assembly de-

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People are agitating for respect for human rights in (clockwise) Zimbabwe, Cuba, Burma and North Korea. Despite these countries' human rights records, each country has a seat on the U.N.'s human rights council.



"They don't believe in criticizing other governments; and this issue of interference in internal affairs resonates with some countries and some regional blocs," Rees said.

HISTORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The U.N. Charter calls for member states "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women."

Radiation-Monitoring Stations Set Up at Russian Borders

By Jacquelyn S. Porth
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – The United States, in close cooperation with Russia, is spending billions of dollars to account for and secure Russian nuclear materials to keep the world safe from acts of nuclear terrorism.

During the Cold War, it would have been difficult to imagine two nuclear superpowers cooperating on such a sensitive issue. But Russia and the United States have been working together since 1998 to put radiation sensors at key transit points – Russian ports, boarder crossings, international airports and key train and road intersections.

During a June trip to Kazakhstan, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Rood said trafficking in nuclear materials remains a global problem.

“We continue to see nuclear smuggling incidents occur with some regularity,” he said. “While most involved material that would not be useable for a nuclear weapon, some are particularly concerning.”

“We live in a dangerous and unpredictable world,” William Tobey, deputy administrator for defense nuclear nonproliferation, said. “Prevention plays an important role in our nonproliferation strategy.”

Tobey, who works for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy, said the United States has had “a long track record of successful cooperation” with Russia and former Soviet bloc nations.

His agency has worked closely with Russia to account for and secure its

nuclear materials. Tobey said these activities are on track, and, in some cases, well ahead of schedule. But the issue remains of what to do about nuclear material that might be undocumented and untracked from

hand-held wands. The NNSA and Russia’s Federal Custom Service have galvanized the effort. The strategy is to detect what illicit material might be outgoing, but also what might be brought into Russia



A radiation detector scans cargo for evidence of radioactive material.

the time before those efforts got under way; a legitimate concern given the size of the former Soviet Union’s weapons arsenal.

By the end of 2007, the two nations will have deployed nearly 200 fixed-portal radiation monitors and

as a transit point to another destination.

Investigative reporter Steve Coll wrote about the issue recently in the New Yorker magazine.

“Although Russia’s resurgent secu-

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Northern Ireland Exhibit Encourages Rethinking of Province

By Elizabeth Kelleher
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Sean Doherty, a retired judge from Alexandria, Virginia, who has been to Northern Ireland a few times over many years, has seen a transition in the province.

Several years ago, Doherty passed through guard towers at the province's border with the Republic of Ireland and saw armed soldiers on the streets of Northern Ireland's towns. During a recent visit, he found "no visual sign separating the two Irelands, only a change of currency."

The annual Folklife Festival on the National Mall, which rarely in its long history has focused on a West European country, this year featured Northern Ireland, the six counties that are part of the United Kingdom. In 2003, the Northern Ireland government asked host Smithsonian

Institution to consider an exhibit that would "get Americans to re-think Northern Ireland," said curator Nancy Groce.

Approximately 35 million U.S. residents claim Irish ancestry, according to the Census Bureau, and most have not traveled recently to Northern Ireland, as Doherty has. The organizers of this year's Folklife Festival, which ended July 8, hoped to end stereotypes caused by the area's troubled political history. The southern portion of the island of Ireland formed an independent country in the early 20th century, but the northern portion remains part of the United Kingdom. Its political status has been a point of sometimes violent contention between the Protestant and Catholic

populations of Northern Ireland in recent decades.



This peaceful Northern Ireland town defies the stereotypes about this formerly war-torn area.

Doherty spoke of an easier border crossing between the two Irelands, but culturally, there has long been a "blurry border," Groce said.

The music at the festival testified to such a blurring. Under tents named for Northern Ireland rivers, Roisin White sang songs in Irish that she learned on the Aran Islands (located off the western coast of the Republic of Ireland). The Low Country Boys sang in Ulster-Scots with an infusion of American gospel and bluegrass. And internationally renowned singer Tommy Sands sang social-activist ballads.

Storytellers entertained children, and step-dancers dazzled audiences with fast-paced jigs and reels. The food was authentic -- sausage, salmon, cheeses, brown bread, shepherd's pies and Guinness or Harp beer. There were exhibits on Northern Irish pottery, linen, fishing, farming and industry.

Athletes from the sports of hurling and Gaelic football spoke to sports

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Beautiful Northern Ireland was the focus of this year's Folklife Festival on Washington D.C.'s National Mall.

Northern Ireland Exhibit Encourages Rethinking of Province...

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fans. A visitor told an athlete that he thought the hurling sticks were replicas of weapons used by the heroes of ancient Celtic myths "to club each other over the head," causing a laugh.

"We've moved on from that," assured the player.

DRUMS, MURALS, SYMBOLISM

"The exhibits were excellent. The people putting them on could not have been more open or more informative," said Doherty. "There was a discussion group that spoke of efforts to let children now feel safe in public areas. There was discussion of problems of immigrants in Ireland by an Indian woman. All was positive and informative," he said.

"Then I heard the big drums, and my reaction was an emotional one to the history of the sectarian parades as provocation to violence," he said.

Doherty referred to Lambeg drums – double-headed, 17th-century military drums, three feet in diameter and two feet deep – that have been used in recent decades by Unionists to mark Protestant traditions. At times drummers have marched through Catholic neighborhoods in Belfast, Northern Ireland, to celebrate the anniversaries of English military victories, causing rioting.

Most visitors did not make this association with the drums. But

Groce said that the drum tent had been a touchy area even for other exhibitors. She said that, at first, the Lambeg demonstrations "drowned out even those more positively inclined toward them." But in an effort worthy of the new Northern Ireland, an accord was agreed upon. There would be a "Lambeg five minutes" every hour. Nearby performers would stop at that time. "It works well now," Groce said. "And people who are not Lambeg fans, those who are here from Northern Ireland, who never would have listened to them before, have realized they do not just make noise."

On either side of a replica of a Belfast rowhouse at the Folklife Festival, painters worked. Mural painting in Northern Ireland dates to the 19th century, and during political trouble, these artists painted to make statements or commemorate activists. With the return of peace in Northern Ireland, artists have replaced the more divisive murals with new ones.

Will Kelly, one of the "The Bogside Artists" who historically represented Northern Ireland's Catholic majority, painted a mural depicting U.S. civil rights hero Martin Luther King Jr., the Statue of Liberty and a dove. The mural on the other side of the faux rowhouse, celebrating Belfast industry, was painted by the East Belfast Muralists, who historically represented the Protestants.

Kelly said all the painters got along. "We talk[ed] every day," he said. "Artists have common ground on

which to converse."

Groce said that overall there was a balance of Catholics and Protestants participating at the festival. "They [were] here to talk about who they are and where they come from. They can disagree with each other. They don't have to talk about politics. They [were] talking directly to the American people," Groce said.

In May, Northern Ireland's power-sharing government convened, ending years of direct rule from London and raising hopes for a permanent, peaceful coexistence between Northern Ireland's Catholic and Protestant communities. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfileenglish&y=2007&m=May&x=20070508165112esna mfua0.3298456>).)

In the first major cultural outing since Stormont (the parliament) convened, seven Northern Ireland ministers came to review the Folklife Festival. "They seemed delighted," Groce said. "They seemed to be very, very happy."

More information (<http://www.folklife.si.edu/festival/2007/index.html>) on the 2007 festival is available on the Smithsonian's Web site.

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

Virginia Rooted in Senegalese, Kentish and Native Cultures

By Stephen Kaufman
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – The American Indian, African and English roots of modern-day Virginia culture were showcased at the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington. Exhibit organizers took advantage of the attention focused on the U.S. state, also known as the “Old Dominion, as it celebrates the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America.

Participants at the festival, which ended July 8, included artisans, farmers and craftspeople from Senegal, where many of the first African slaves originated, as well as Kent, England, which supplied Jamestown with its first English colonists. The participants were joined by representatives from Virginia’s eight remaining Indian tribes in an exhibit designed to show how all three groups contributed to the emerging culture of the state.

For example, Virginia’s famous peanuts have their origins in the first plants brought to the area by slaves. Near the French-speaking Senegalese farmers demonstrating how to raise the crops, Virginia farmer Sam Edwards showed visitors how his family has cured and aged Virginia hams for generations with salt and smoke from hardwood trees.

Amy Ritchie, who helped organize the Virginia Roots exhibit, said the state’s long history and varied landscapes made the presentation unique. “We’ve got mountains and we’ve got the maritime culture from the Tidewater area. And so many different cultures came together to

form what is now Virginia,” she said. The mixing of cultures brought about musical innovations such as bluegrass, integrating songs from a Scots-Irish background with the banjo, an instrument brought from Africa.

they are reflective. Objects that are shiny are considered to have some kind of significance, and the function is very decorative,” she said. But she added that, traditionally, Virginia’s Indians did not have a word for art. “You would make



A blacksmith works over his anvil. Different blacksmiths learned from each other in Virginia, where the traditions of many different people groups make for a unique culture.

“You see an English blacksmith and an African blacksmith. They all did blacksmithing in different ways, and they all learned from each other,” said festival volunteer Linda Stanier, who also worked on the Jamestown 2007 commemoration.

Karenne Wood, a member of Virginia’s Monacan tribe, demonstrated traditional beadwork. A bead necklace, which can take weeks to make, would often be used as a gift to show honor and the relationship between people.

“Beads have been considered spiritual objects in the culture because

things beautiful because it was your obligation to do well by this material that you were using. You would make it as beautiful as you could, not just for art’s sake.”

Wood also demonstrated Virginia Indian dances, and said onlookers should be aware that cultural differences existed between the Siouan-speaking Monacan and the Algonquian-speaking descendants of the Powhatan tribes.

“Culturally there were many similarities, but in those days the dances would have been different. Nowadays we’ve learned each others’ dances in Virginia and we’ve

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Craft Artists Demonstrate Technical Virtuosity, Bold Vision

By Lauren Monsen
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery -- America's premier venue for viewing contemporary American crafts -- is honoring the bold vision and technical virtuosity of four American women artists.

The work of Paula Bartron, Beth Lipman, Beth Cavener Stichter and Jocelyn Chateauvert "represents the strength of artists working in crafts today, all across the United States," says Jane Milosch, Renwick's curator of contemporary craft and decorative arts.

In coming years, Milosch predicted, U.S. universities will attract gifted students from around the world through programs in glassblowing, metalworking, ceramics and papermaking. U.S. schools already have vibrant glass studios, she said, that "bring in students from around the country, and from Asia, Europe and beyond."

The four artists are showcased in the 2007 Renwick Craft Invitational, a biennial event that focuses

on the achievements of three to five mid-career artists whose craftsmanship and extensive body of work deserve wider attention, according to Milosch.

She said Bartron, Lipman, Stichter and Chateauvert are "innovators who fully embrace the craft material

bine "great creative imagination with tremendous technical ability."

Crafts are inherently exciting because of the physicality of the materials that artists use, Milosch said. "The sensory and physical properties are so vital. They are primordial, elemental, and they link the

past, present and future. Modern craft artists draw on past traditions, but they want to put their own interpretations on them. It's all about the expressive range of the material," she added.

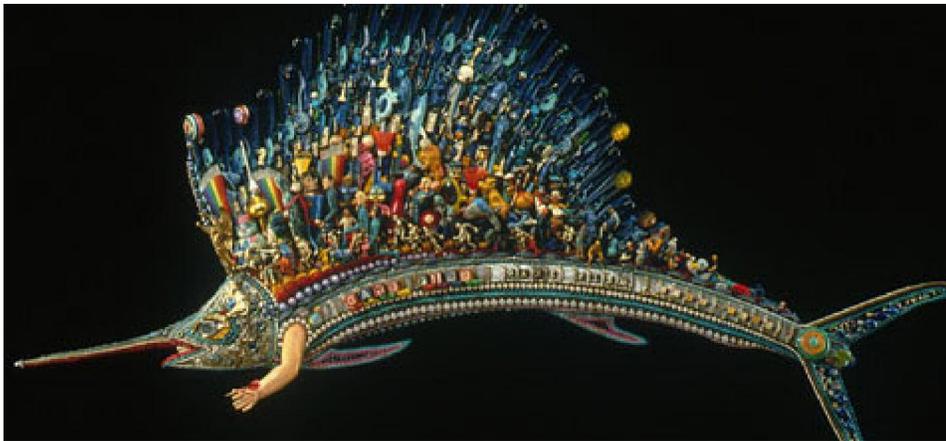
The theme of the 2007 Renwick Craft Invitational, From the Ground Up, is a reference to the earthy origins

of traditional craft media -- clay, glass and fiber -- whose properties are explored and manipulated, often in surprising ways, by the artists.

Milosch said Bartron, a native of California, has achieved such a strong reputation that she was asked to establish the studio glass program at Sweden's Konstfack (University College of Arts, Crafts and Design) in Stockholm, where she

now lives. Milosch added that Bartron's artistic development is a good example of how craft artists evolve by synthesizing techniques and influences from different places.

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These class items by (above) Paula Bartron and (below) Beth Lipman will be on display at the Smithsonian's 2007 Renwick Craft Festival.



they use." Barton and Lipman are glass artists, Stichter is a ceramicist and sculptor and Chateauvert is a paper artist and metalsmith. In a recent interview with USINFO, Milosch described the four as "masters of their craft" who com-

Craft Artists Demonstrate Technical Virtuosity, Bold Vision...

(Continued from page 11)

Bartron produces glass objects that "often don't look like conventional glass," said Milosch. Instead, Bartron creates geometric pieces with rough-hewn surfaces, such as rectangular basins that appear to be made of bricks or cylindrical vases that mimic ancient clay vessels. Many of her pieces resemble items discovered at archaeological sites, with little to betray their modern provenance except the minimalist sensibility conveyed in their unadorned outlines, restrained color palette and subtle translucence.

Lipman's lavishly ornamental work presents a glittering contrast to Barton's understated designs. Although Lipman "is rooted in the Renaissance and Baroque traditions, she puts a contemporary, ironic twist on classic motifs," said Milosch. Her glasswork is "dazzling and elegant," Milosch added, but it also recalls the memento mori, an artistic meditation on death and evanescence that dates back to pre-medieval times.

In her work Bancketje (Banquet), Lipman presents a formal dining table littered with the remains of an elaborate meal. Crumpled napkins, half-empty wine glasses, bowls of fruit and plates of partially consumed food -- all meticulously rendered in transparent glass -- are piled high in a riotous jumble that signals luxury, decadence and monumental waste. Amid the remnants of this feast, a glass mouse nibbles on glass crumbs.

Another of Lipman's works in the exhibition, *Dead Birds* (after Frans Cuyck van Myerop), evokes a 17th-century Dutch still-life composition: it consists of two game birds, rendered in opaque black glass, hanging upside down within a glossy black picture frame. Her opulent scenes hint at decay and mortality, even as they capture the beauty of life's abundance.

Stichter creates life-size ceramic animal figures that can be interpreted -- at least psychologically -- as animal/human composites. Most of the animals appear to be trapped or struggling, and their predicament often elicits anxiety and empathy from viewers. In some cases, the disturbing quality of these figures is heightened by the distorted proportions of their limbs, as in *I Am No One*, which depicts a cowering hare with exaggerated hind legs.

Virtually all of Stichter's sculptures recall "the symbolic roles of animals in allegory, folklore and mythology," said Milosch. "These are psychologically very powerful works" that serve as reminders of human vulnerability.

The exhibit concludes with Chateauvert's delicate paper-and-metal designs. Her creations -- ranging from sculptures to lighting fixtures to jewelry -- are richly textured pieces made from plant fibers, including abaca, Manila hemp and flax. Despite the apparent fragility of her work, the handmade paper is archival and can last for hundreds of years if cared for properly.

Chateauvert employs Western-style papermaking techniques, although she was educated in Eastern traditions as well, said Milosch. The wit and humor of Chateauvert's approach are evident in her paper-and-silver jewelry series: *Electrolux* and *Upright/Upstarts* are miniature vacuum cleaners, interpreted as a pendant and earrings, respectively. Her organically formed lighting fixtures (wall sconces, pendant lamps and floor lamps) are playful and whimsical, as well.

Chateauvert's exuberant *Lily Clouds*, a ceiling-mounted installation of giant paper "blossoms" that dangle overhead, introduces a vivid fairy-tale ambience as visitors exit the gallery. Beneath the dense canopy of *Lily Clouds*, Milosch explained, "you float out of the exhibit."

The works are on view at the Renwick March 9-July 22. More information (<http://americanart.si.edu/renwick/index.cfm>) on the 2007 Renwick Craft Invitational is available on the Renwick Gallery Web site.

For more stories on the influence of artists in society, see *The Arts* (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/the_arts.html).

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Wood Craftsman Sam Maloof Still “Loving It” at 91

By Jeffrey Thomas
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- A renowned 91-year-old furniture-maker who never attended university recently delivered a commencement address at Mount San Antonio College in California, inviting students to see a way to build their lives through the process of building a chair.

Begin with the legs, said Sam Maloof, the most famous woodworker in the United States. “They are the foundation. They hold you up like values, principles, beliefs.”

Next, Maloof likened choosing the arms to choosing friends wisely, and the seat back to what keeps a person upright, steady and looking straight ahead toward his or her goals.

Even in his 90s, the man deemed a “living treasure” by the legislature of California continues to work at his trade six days a week, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and says he is still “loving it.” He has a backlog of orders from all over the world that will keep him busy until he is 105.

Maloof said he believes his work still is getting better. “It comes from within,” he said. “There’s a lot of work being done today that doesn’t have any soul in it. The technique may be the utmost perfection, yet it is lifeless. It doesn’t have a soul. I hope my furniture has a soul to it.”

Born in 1916 in Chino, California, Maloof was the seventh of nine children born to Lebanese immigrants. Entirely self-taught, he sells his most popular creations -- his signature rocking chair and baby cradle -- to customers around the

world. No two pieces of furniture are exactly the same. Three U.S. presidents have owned a rocking chair -- Presidents Carter, Reagan and Clinton -- and both rocker and cradle are famous for the silken feel of the wood and for swinging gracefully with a light touch. Maloof



Sam Maloof on building chairs

typically finishes one handcrafted piece per week, and the rocking chair and the baby cradle are very expensive to purchase. “I let the wood guide me,” Maloof recently told a local California newspaper, the *Daily Bulletin*. “If a client comes in with a drawing and says this is what I want you to make, I say: ‘Sorry. You can tell me how big you want something or whether you want the back soft or hard, but I need to have a free hand.’”

Maloof still puts everything together himself, although he has taken on three apprentices who will carry on the business when he retires or dies. In the 1960s, he refused an offer of \$22 million for the right to mass-produce his designs. From the time he was 10 -- when he made a breadboard so that his mother could take her homemade Arab bread from the oven without burning her-

self -- until today, Maloof never has made anything he did not design himself.

His workshop is located in Alta Loma, California, at his home, now known as the Sam and Alfreda Maloof Foundation (named for his late wife, Alfreda, who died in 1998). The handmade wooden home was declared a historic site by the state of California and moved three miles to its current location to make way for a freeway. Filled with Maloof’s unique furniture, unusual door latches and a widely photographed spiral staircase of his own design, the structure was built room by room over 40 years as he earned the money for materials.

Maloof considers himself a craftsman rather than an artist, despite the fact his work has been displayed in New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, Chicago’s Museum of Contemporary Art, Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts and Philadelphia’s Museum of Art. But when he talks about his craft, Maloof sounds like an artist: “I do not feel that it is possible to make a working drawing with all the intricate and fine details that go into a chair or stool, particularly. Many times, I do not know how a certain area is to be done until I start working with a chisel, rasp or whatever tool is needed for that particular job,” he said.

In 1985, Maloof became the first craftsman to be awarded a “genius grant” from the MacArthur Foundation, which gave him \$375,000.

In discussing an exhibition of his work for the Smithsonian’s Renwick Gallery in 2001, Maloof concluded: “It’s been a lot of fun. How many people are doing what they really love to do?” ♦

Arsenic Filter for Water Offers Hope to Millions

By Jeffrey Thomas
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The winner of a prestigious engineering prize is working hard to ensure that needy communities around the world benefit from his invention, which removes arsenic and other impurities from water drawn from tube wells.

Abul Hussam, a chemistry professor at George Mason University in Virginia, has devoted most of the \$1 million he was awarded as winner of the 2007 Grainger Challenge Prize to distributing his inexpensive water filtration system to the poor in countries such as his native Bangladesh, where between 77 million and 95 million people are drinking water contaminated with arsenic. The remainder of the prize money was donated to the university or set aside for more research.

Arsenic contamination is a serious problem in tube wells in Bangladesh, eastern India, Nepal and several other countries. Arsenic is poisonous and, even in low concentrations, can cause skin ailments, nerve damage, fatal cancers, organ failure and the loss of arms and legs, as well as death.

Hussam first became involved professionally in working on the arsenic problem when his brother, a physician in Kushtia, Bangladesh, asked him to develop a technique for precise arsenic measurement. As part of his research at George Mason University, Hussam developed an electrochemical analyzer and utilized it to develop a measurement protocol. "The first sample we measured was our home tube well and we found 160-190 parts per billion [ppb] -- 50 ppb is the limit -- arsenic. We then decided to develop a water filter," he said.

Hussam found that the entire neighborhood in which he grew up and 60 percent of Kushtia's 400,000 residents were drinking arsenic-contaminated water. While he and his siblings did not develop symptoms of arsenic poisoning, others in his community did. The Grainger Challenge Prize was

Hussam's SONO filter, as he calls it, was one of 75 entries. It was tested in a laboratory of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and analyzed by each of the 10 members of the prize selection committee, according to the committee's chairman, professor Charles O'Melia of Johns Hopkins Univer-



Village women in Bangladesh use Abul Hussam's dual parallel SONO filter to make safe drinking water. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Munir)

created by the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) with support from the Grainger Foundation. NAE challenged the U.S. engineering community to develop a water treatment system that would significantly lower the arsenic content in groundwater from tube wells in developing countries. The challenge stipulated that the winning system be low-cost, technically robust, reliable and maintainable; be socially acceptable and affordable; be manufacturable and serviceable in a developing country; and not degrade other water quality characteristics or create a toxic waste disposal hazard.

sity in Maryland, who called Hussam's invention "innovative."

The SONO filter works without electricity, using three stacked buckets. The top bucket is filled with coarse river sand and a composite iron matrix, which serves as the active arsenic removal component. The middle bucket contains coarse river sand and wood charcoal to remove organic impurities. The bottom bucket contains fine river sand and brick chips to remove fine particles and stabilize water flow. The SONO filter is manufactured in Bangladesh using local raw materials at a cost of \$35-\$40. It

Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis Target of World Health Agencies

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- International incidents have focused recent attention on deadly forms of drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB), and the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Stop TB Partnership are launching a plan to help patients and communities most at risk.

The Global MDR-TB and XDR-TB Response Plan 2007-2008 set out measures needed over the next two years to prevent, treat and control extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) and multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB). The plan lays out steps to give access to drugs and diagnostic tests to all MDR- and XDR-TB patients by 2015, potentially saving up to 1.2 million lives.

The Stop TB Partnership, formed in 2000 to eliminate TB as a public health problem, is a network of more than 500 international organizations, countries, public-sector and private donors, and nongovernmental and governmental organizations.

The plan emphasizes an urgent need to boost basic TB control and to target investment in strengthening programs for treating drug-resistant TB, building capacity in diagnostic laboratories, expanding infection control and surveillance, and supporting research in diagnostics, drugs and vaccines.

"The persistence of the TB epidemic underscores the importance of continuing fundamental research," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, in a recent statement, "to better understand how [MDR-TB]

interacts with the host and to translate these findings into new health care interventions to improve the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of TB infection and disease."

NIAID is the lead agency of the Na-



Andrew Speaker, who has a drug-resistant strain of TB, and his wife speak with the press after his diagnosis.

tional Institutes of Health for TB research.

DEADLY STRAINS

TB microbes spread from person to person through the air. Globally, nearly 9 million people get TB each year, and 1.6 million die as a result.

One-third of the world population is infected with latent (inactive) TB. The disease usually does not become active unless something reduces a person's immunity -- a disease like AIDS, advancing age or some medical conditions.

TB is treated with a six- to nine-month course of "first-line" (most

effective) drugs. If patients do not complete the drug course or are not treated properly, they can develop MDR-TB, which is resistant to at least two of the best anti-TB drugs, isoniazid and rifampicin. Those with MDR-TB must be treated with more expensive, less effective second-line drugs for 18 to 24 months.

If they do not complete this course or are treated with the wrong drugs, they can develop XDR-TB, a relatively rare type of MDR-TB that is resistant to first- and second-line drugs. There could be 50,000 cases of XDR-TB worldwide.

INTERNATIONAL INCIDENTS

Worldwide attention focused on XDR-TB in March 2006, when researchers reported on an emerging global threat of highly resistant TB strains.

Six months later, a cluster of virtually untreatable XDR-TB cases arose in an area of South Africa that has a high prevalence of HIV. All but one of 53 patients died within 25 days after samples were taken for drug-resistance tests.

In May, scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) diagnosed an international air traveler from the United States with XDR-TB.

After Andrew Speaker -- a 31-year-old lawyer from Atlanta -- returned to the United States and was served with a federal order of isolation, he traveled to the National Jewish Medical and Research Center in Colorado, a leader in treating lung diseases.

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Success Against Bird Flu Slowed by Ongoing Animal Infections

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Despite the eradication of avian flu viruses in poultry in many countries, and reductions in the prevalence of infection in others, the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain continues to threaten bird and human populations around the world.

This finding was among the conclusions reached in Rome June 27-29, at the International Technical Meeting on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and Human H5N1 Infection. The 115 participants included representatives of 15 countries, many international and regional organizations, and 24 independent experts.

The meeting comes as the World Health Organization (WHO) reports that 317 people have been infected with avian influenza since 2003 and 191 have died.

A recurring theme throughout the meeting was that there is no room for complacency about bird flu, said Ambassador John Lange, the U.S. State Department's special representative on avian and pandemic influenza, during a July 2 USINFO interview.

"The H5N1 virus is highly persistent," he said, "it is spreading in poultry populations, and the threat that it will mutate to become a human pandemic continues."

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and WHO organized the meeting in collaboration with UNICEF and the office of the U.N. System Influenza Coordinator.

The U.S. delegation included representatives from the State Department, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Participants were veterinary and human health officials, scientific



More than 250 million chickens have died of H5N1 or have been destroyed to stop the virus's spread. (AP Images)

experts and technical specialists, and representatives of international and regional technical agencies, the private sector, donors and nongovernmental organizations.

OUTBREAK AND RESPONSE

More than 250 million chickens have died of H5N1 or have been destroyed to stop the virus's spread. Farmers and poultry producers have lost billions of dollars as a result.

"In the 15 or so countries in Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East where the H5N1 virus was introduced during the past six months, it was rapidly detected and eliminated or controlled," FAO's chief veterinary officer, Joseph Domenech, said during a June 27 press briefing at the meeting in Rome.

"Most affected countries have been very open about new outbreaks,"

he added. "This shows that countries are taking the H5N1 threat seriously. They are better prepared today and have improved their response systems."

Recent poultry outbreaks in Bangladesh, Ghana, Togo, the Czech Republic and Germany are a clear reminder that the virus can spread to new or previously infected countries, Domenech said. A potential human pandemic cannot be ruled out as long as the virus continues to exist in poultry.

Two new WHO-confirmed human H5N1 cases in Vietnam, for example – the first human cases reported there since 2005 – coincided with a large number of new poultry outbreaks of H5N1 in Vietnam in May and June. In Europe, OIE confirmed H5N1 in three swans found dead in France July 5, the second outbreak in France in 17 months.

For bird outbreaks, the three main countries of concern are Indonesia, Egypt and Nigeria, because of large bird populations, bird and people interactions, and – in Nigeria – the effect avian flu will have on people's livelihoods. Indonesia also has the greatest number of human H5N1 cases since 2003 – 101, with 80 deaths.

PANDEMIC READY

The persistence of H5N1 in countries despite efforts to tackle it, said David Nabarro, U.N. system coordinator for avian and pandemic influenza, is a concern for affected communities, countries suffering as a result, and the world as a whole.

Part of the answer, he said, is to make all nations "pandemic ready," meaning they have health care sys-

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Watershed Conservation Supported by Coke, World Wildlife Fund

By Kathryn McConnell
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Conservation and protection of seven of the world's most critical river systems is the aim of a multiyear partnership launched by the Coca-Cola Company, a beverage manufacturer, and the international conservation group World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Coca-Cola, also known as Coke, pledged \$20 million for use "to replace every drop of water we use in our beverages and their production to achieve balance in communities and in nature," the company's chief executive officer, Neville Isdell, said at WWF's annual meeting in June. The meeting was held in Beijing, where WWF has one of its 30 national offices.

Currently, 1 billion people in the world lack access to clean drinking water, according to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Coke's commitment transforms the way the company works with WWF to address water issues from one in which the drink maker simply provided financial support for some of WWF's water conservation projects to one in which the company works with water, its supply chains and with its energy use, Suzanne Apple, WWF vice president of business and industry, told USINFO.

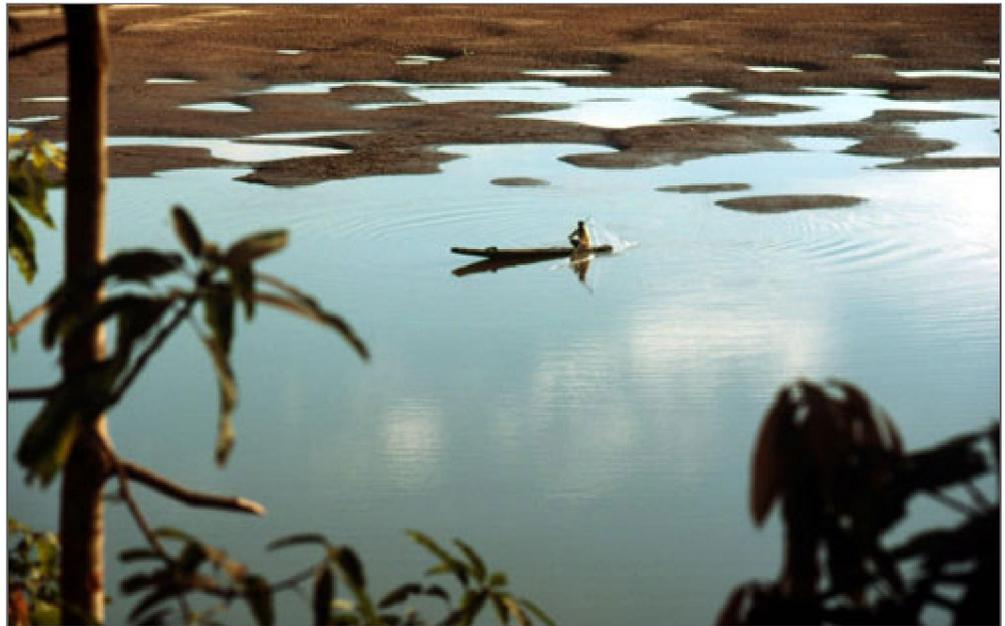
China's Yangtze is one of the first three river systems to be targeted in the Coke-WWF partnership. The Mekong system in southeast Asia and Rio Grande/Rio Bravo system in the United States and Mexico are the other two "top tier" systems

being given priority attention, Apple told USINFO.

The other river systems the new partnership is targeting are the Danube in Europe, the coastal East Africa basin, the Mesoamerican Reef in Latin America and the rivers and streams of the southeastern United States, including the Cahaba.

U.S.-based company investing in improving the world's freshwater resources is beverage maker Pepsi Cola.

Coke and Pepsi have been criticized for their heavy use of water. Some of the strongest criticism has been in India, where water shortages in rural areas can be severe.



Asia's Mekong River is one of the first three river systems to be targeted in the Coke-WWF partnership. (WF-Canon/Elizabeth Kempf)

Coke also has been working since 2005 with USAID through its Community Water Partnership program, which supports activities in Bolivia, Mali, Indonesia, Malawi, Egypt, Thailand, Uganda and South Africa.

In March, Coke announced that it would invest \$7 million in USAID-sponsored water projects in Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana and Ivory Coast.

Both Coke and WWF are based in the United States and have operations around the world. Another

Since 2005, Coca-Cola has partnered with the Soong Chingling Foundation to implement a rainwater harvesting project in Pengyang County in western China, an area with a significant water shortage. The project builds household and community water facilities and installs water reservoirs, pump stations and water pipelines providing drinking and bathing water for 500 families in seven rural villages.

Coke also has provided new water-boiling equipment and heat-keeping containers, built new boiler rooms, drilled deepwater wells and laid wa-

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Arsenic Filter for Water Offers Hope to Millions

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produces 20 liters of clean water per hour, requires little maintenance, and lasts a minimum of five years. It is also "green," in the sense that it does not produce any hazardous waste.

Hussam says he has distributed 32,500 of the filters in Bangladesh, including to more than 1,000 schools. "We are beginning to see the effect of drinking clean water on patients being cured of melanosis and keratosis [skin ailments], and most people feel better," he said. People are also more aware of the importance of clean, potable water.

Hussam's work on arsenic contamination and his collaboration with others to create an environmental research laboratory in Bangladesh illustrate the synergy that can develop between U.S. institutions and those in other countries as a result of a single individual's education. Hussam came to the United States as a graduate student in 1978, joining George Mason University's Chemistry Department after completing his doctorate at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania and doing postdoctoral research at the University of Minnesota. "Since 1983, I have been in touch with my physician brother, who was trying to develop a clinical diagnostic lab in my hometown, Kushtia. I was also helping my professors in Dhaka

University to develop an electro-chemistry lab and lecturing in different institutions," he said.

"The experience in the United States was of immense value," said Hussam, who became a U.S. citizen in 1978. "I must say that I had excellent colleagues here and abroad who were receptive and helpful."

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Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis Target of World Health Agencies . . .

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There, on July 3, officials from CDC and National Jewish announced that tests from National Jewish and a second test from CDC showed that Speaker actually had MDR-TB.

"There's not a lot of difference between XDR- and MDR-TB in the sense that the public health response is the same," said Dr. Charles Daley, head of the Infectious Disease Division at National Jewish, during a July 3 press briefing.

"It makes a big difference to me, as a clinician, however," he added, "because I can pick another couple of drugs up and add them to the treatment regimen and improve the chance of cure."

Even though CDC and National

Jewish are both TB reference laboratories (regional or national resources with specific technical capabilities), and CDC is an international reference lab, CDC officials are not yet sure why their initial lab results indicated XDR-TB.

"Any time there is a concern or conflict with a test result," said Dr. Mitchell Cohen, director of CDC's Coordinating Center for Infectious Diseases, "we automatically review those results and see whether there are clear explanations as for the differences."

A significant problem, Cohen added, is "not having the types of diagnostic tests we truly need to be able to address the challenge from TB. Different or discordant test results in different laboratories are an important issue. If we could, working together, develop a gold-

standard test that could give us a definite answer, that would be a tremendous step in the right direction."

TB test results of passengers and crew who traveled on the trans-Atlantic flights with Speaker will be completed over the next few weeks.

For additional information about U.S. and international efforts to combat TB, see Health (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/health.html).

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Radiation-Monitoring Stations Set Up at Russian Borders . . .

(Continued from page 7)

rity police and years of investment in nuclear security by the United States and other countries have reduced the dangers, international organized crime networks still thrive in Russia and the smaller countries on its southern rim.”

Russia and the United States share common nonproliferation goals. As Russian and American technicians install these detectors, they are aware that a poor, but nuclear ambitious North Korea is nearby. An unidentified U.S. official told the Reuters news service recently that detectors are now in place on the Russian-North Korean border. In that way, he said, “we are able to monitor not only what is going in to Russia, but also what might be coming out of North Korea.”

Recently, the United States and Russia decided to accelerate their program of passive defense. This means that nuclear and radiological detectors will be in place by 2011 at 350 key Russian border crossings – six years ahead of schedule. Installation and training costs – esti-

mated to be around \$280 million -- will be split.

Under the terms of the recent agreement, Russia gradually will become responsible for repairing and maintaining the equipment in the post-installation phase between 2009 and 2013.

Acting NNSA Administrator Bill Ostendorff says that as the U.S.-Russian counterproliferation and counterterrorism partnership grows stronger, it will make Russia safer, while boosting the security of the United States and its allies.

In 2006, Russian customs officials responded to 50,000 alarms from the equipment installed as part of this program. Nearly 500 cases were referred to Russian authorities as potential cases of illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive material, but investigators have attributed most of the alarms to irradiated paper money or scrap metal and even radioactive jewelry.

Although no proof of illicit trafficking in radioactive materials has been found, the detectors deter traffickers and increase the comfort level

of those concerned about proliferation.

The next step in the process is the development of more sophisticated and sensitive detectors, an effort being pursued at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York. Tobey says new detection technology will provide one more tool to counter the proliferation threat. The next generation of detectors will be able to distinguish between harmless materials that emit radiation and materials that pose legitimate threats.

Lab physicist Aleksey Bolotnikov says “the improved devices will be able to detect more minute quantities of radiation, detect radioactive materials more quickly or from greater distances, better identify the sources of radiation and distinguish illicit sources of concern from common, naturally occurring radioactive materials.”

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Success Against Bird Flu Slowed by Ongoing Animal Infections . . .

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tems that can accommodate patients during a pandemic and publics that understand the implications of a pandemic.

“At least 178 countries have drafted or finalized their national pandemic preparedness plans,” Lange said, and the revised International Health Regulations – which provide a standardized way for the international community to detect, report and respond to public health emergencies of international importance – have come into force.

“One element of such preparedness is the Community Mitigation Guidance prepared by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,” Lange said.

The best protection against pandemic flu – a vaccine well-matched to the virus – will not be available for five months to six months. Community strategies that do not involve vaccines or medications (nonpharmaceutical interventions) may be the best way to delay or help stop a pandemic’s spread.

“We use it domestically and offer it to other countries to consider for

their own preparedness plans,” Lange said.

Meeting participants also discussed the New Delhi Ministerial Conference on Avian and Pandemic Influenza, Lange said, scheduled for December 4-6 in India. The government of India will host the meeting and the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza will sponsor it.

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African Countries Can Benefit from More Trade . . .

(Continued from page 5)

income countries, according to a 2006 World Bank study. Net farm incomes would rise substantially, alleviating rural poverty in the region, the study said.

African countries trade the least with each other of any regional group, something that leaves them largely ill-prepared for a more competitive global trade system, Liser said.

Even though a Doha agreement would not require most African countries to make substantial tariff cuts, the trade liberalization in Africa would bring substantial economic benefits by lowering barriers to intraregional trade, she said.

Several studies note the short-term costs from a global trade accord to less-developed countries, particularly net food importers and those with preferential access to rich-country markets.

Liser said these studies take a narrow view of the Doha round as limited to market access for goods. Actually, the round also aims to increase access for services and improve trade facilitation, all areas from which African countries can benefit, she said. This would be particularly true as they move from raw commodity exports to value-added goods, which generate more revenue but require more sophisticated financial, transportation and distribution services.

For many less-developed countries, Liser said, a WTO global trade liberalization deal also would provide impetus for politically difficult financial, legal and regulatory reforms necessary to put them on a more equal footing with competitors from other regions. Some nations such as Ghana, Mauritius and Tanzania already have initiated such reforms. But even they could benefit politically from a global trade liberalization agreement, she said.

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U.N. Human Rights Council Members Must Confront Abusers . . .

(Continued from page 6)

clined to ban from the council's membership countries that are under U.N. Security Council sanctions for human rights abuses. Council members instead are approved by a simple majority vote by the General Assembly. Current council members include countries with troubled human rights records such as China, Cuba, Russia and Saudi Arabia.

To date, the council has passed 12 resolutions -- nine condemning Israel for human rights abuses against Palestinians and Lebanon and three noncondemnatory resolutions on Sudan.

THE U.S. RESPONSE

The United States voted against the formation of the council, citing concern over the failure to institutionalize any human rights criteria for

membership. It has declined to seek the system."

In an April 2006 letter to the foreign ministers of other U.N. member states, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made clear that the United States will support membership on the council only for those states that have "a genuine commitment to human rights" and not for states "that systematically abuse human rights," including countries that are cited under the U.N. Charter for human rights abuses or sponsorship of terrorism.

The "institution-building" process of the council's first year, according to Barks-Ruggles, has been a concern for the United States. "The last-minute backroom deals that were made in a nontransparent manner, which ended up depriving several democratic member states of their right to vote," she said, "were against all tradition, all the rules in

Barks-Ruggles called for the council's democracies with good human rights records to turn the council away from this "single, much politicized issue [Israel] and actually begin to address egregious human rights violations around the world, including in Burma, North Korea, Zimbabwe and Cuba." She also urged the council to demand cooperation from the Sudanese government in investigations of human rights abuses.

"If there is no demonstrated political will by member states who are strong defenders of human rights, then this body will fail," she said.

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Watershed Conservation Supported by Coke, . . .

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ter pipes for primary schools so more than 20,000 students have access to clean water. In addition, the company planted 1 million trees and drilled five deepwater wells in Hebei province's Huailai County to help protect Beijing from the onslaught of sandstorms and severe desertification.

In 2006, Coke used 290 billion liters (about 75 billion gallons) worldwide as an ingredient in its beverages and in such manufacturing processes as cleaning, heating and cooling, Isdell said. Water is the main ingredient in Coke's products and in many communities Coke is the largest employer, said WWF's Lee Poston.

Isdell said Coke will set specific water-efficiency targets for its global operations by 2008 and return by 2010 all the water it uses in manufacturing its drinks to the environment "at a level that supports aquatic life and agriculture."

The project includes helping Coke's product suppliers adopt water conservation processes, beginning with sugar producers, Apple said. Other commodities essential to making Coke products include aluminum, glass, citrus, coffee and tea.

Water users and local government officials in the affected rivers' watershed areas will be involved in project planning and local workers will be employed in the project's implementation, Apple said. Pepsi reports that it is working with China Women's Development Foundation to research ways to expand the availability of safe drinking water in Western and Central China. It says it also is working with India's Energy and Resources Institute to create sustainable water management systems.

"We can accomplish more working together than separately," WWF's Apple said of the importance of public-private partnerships. ♦

Virginia Rooted in Senegalese, Kentish and Native Cultures . . .

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developed friendships," she said. Dance traditions also have evolved. For example, the two-step dance that was showcased with men and women dancing together would not have been done in the past.

"Virginia Indians are still here ... their cultures are thriving. We're not just people of the past," Wood said. "We honor our past and we have adapted and changed, and we're still here."

Kentish artisan Keith Hill showcased the traditional English art of making stained-glass windows, similar to those that adorned some of Virginia's first churches. He said he had seen "a lot of interest" by visitors to the Virginia Roots exhibit "from 4 years old and up.

... There's been something to interest everybody."

After showing how soft lead rims would be bent to house the cut pieces of glass, he pulled out a photo of a strip of window lead unearthed in an excavation of a 17th-century American settlement. Inside, it was printed the name of the manufacturer, which was the same as on a similar strip of lead found in Kent. "So that's where the link is," he said. "It's like putting their brand on it for advertising."

Ham farmer Edwards said while it was "an honor" to be asked to participate, he also has made it a point to enjoy the showcases of his neighbors, making sure each of his trips to get water to help bear the summer heat take him through the music performance tents. He

remarked that the festival itself might be contributing to new cultural innovations.

"At our hotel, they get together after the event's over with, and musicians from different parts of the festival jam out on their own instruments," he said. With the Folklife Festival featuring the Mekong River and Northern Ireland, as well as Virginia, "You get guys from China and Cambodia and Vietnam and the mountains of Virginia. And then you've got guys from Ireland singing about whisky," he said. "I'm anxious to see how that turns out tonight."

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