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U.S. President's Malaria Initiative, Ethiopia Commemorate World Malaria

Friday, April 25 marks World Malaria Day and a renewed commitment between the United States and Ethiopia to raise global awareness of malaria, to celebrate progress, and to reaffirm their commitment to fighting the disease.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) participated in a three-day annual review meeting in Awassa this week where government leaders, health experts, and development partners joined together to share knowledge and increase understanding of malaria. USAID helped support the meeting by providing thousands of T-shirts and caps, as well as a mobile van that traveled to surrounding communities to raise aware-

President George W. Bush delivers remarks during a ceremony marking Malaria Awareness Day Wednesday, April 25, 2007, in the Rose Garden.

U.N. Looking for Ways to Enhance African Peacekeeping

By Merle D. Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington -– U.N. peacekeeping operations should have clearly defined goals and specific missions, timelines and budgets, and they should not be a substitute for ending conflicts or an excuse for delaying ways to resolve them, says U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad.

"Despite substantial improvements, we face enormous challenges," Khalilzad says of U.N. peacekeeping efforts. Part of the problem faced by the United Nations is that resources are overstretched and the supply of well-equipped peacekeepers does not meet demand, he says.

To resolve shortfalls, Khalilzad says, existing U.N. resources must be used more effectively and efficiently in combination with international organizations and with the African Union (AU). And these efforts must be matched with building more capacity -– particularly regional capacity -- to conduct peacekeeping operations.

The United Nations recently held an open debate in the Security Coun-

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U.S. President's Malaria Initiative, Ethiopia Commemorate World Malaria Day . . .

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ness of malaria.

"On World Malaria Day, Americans stand in solidarity with Ethiopia and communities across the globe in the fight against malaria," said Glenn Anders, USAID Mission Director. "Today, we commemorate World Malaria Day with you, celebrate your achievements, and rededicate our historic partnership between Ethiopia and the United States to defeat this preventable and treatable killer."

The World Malaria Day theme, "Disease Without Borders," highlights malaria as a global emergency that knows no borders. President Bush's $1.2 billion malaria initiative over five years shows an unprecedented commitment in the fight against malaria. The goals of the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) are to reduce by 50 percent the number of deaths from malaria in 15 target countries by reaching 85 percent of the most vulnerable groups —- children under five years of age and pregnant women — with proven and effective prevention and treatment measures. This includes residual indoor spraying of households with insecticides; the distribution of long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets (ITNs) to families; intermittent, presumptive treatment of pregnant women with antimalarials; and the roll-out of new, lifesaving, artemesinin-combination therapy to treat patients with malaria.

There is now evidence in at least four African countries that an impact on malaria transmission is being achieved through the Initiative. For example, in Zanzibar, the percentage of children who tested positive for malaria dropped from 22 percent in 2005 to less than 1 percent in 2007 after the distribution of long-lasting ITNs and indoor residual spraying. In Malawi, where coverage with insecticide-treated nets has increased rapidly over the past several years, a 2007 household survey in six districts showed a 43% decline in severe anemia among children aged 6 to 30 months, when compared with 2005.

Life for children in Yabo Yabo is now better because of a CCF-USAID-funded program that tackles malaria. (Richard Nyberg/ USAID)

Led by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), PMI is working with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Bank Booster Program for Malaria Control, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, public and private sector partners such as Malaria No More, the UN Foundation, and a host of others to ramp up comprehensive malaria control efforts across the continent.

In the first year, PMI reached over 6 million people in the initial 3 countries with malaria prevention and treatment activities. In just its second year of operation, more than 25 million people have benefited from PMI interventions.

Ethiopia became one of the focus countries for PMI last year. This year's funding of $20 million will be spent primarily in the Oromiya Region, which suffers most from the country's malaria burden. For more information, please visit www.usaid.gov and www.fightingmalaria.gov. ♦

U.N. Looking for Ways to Enhance African Peacekeeping . . .

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cil on strengthening the relationship with regional organizations and the African Union on peace and security in Africa.

"The United States supports democratic transitions and economic development in African countries," Khalilzad said in the discussion. And that includes working in post-conflict countries and across Africa assisting civil society organizations in combating gender-based violence, trafficking in persons and other human rights violations, he said.

A Sudanese farmer rides past a U.N. peacekeeping vehicle in Al-Fasher, the capital of north Darfur. (© AP Images)

Khalilzad, the U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations, proposed that the Security Council first should assess how it plans peacekeeping operations and how it will sustain them. "Peacekeeping operations should be a means to an end, rather than a substitute for resolving conflicts or an excuse for delay," he said. "While we understand the risks of leaving too soon, we should look to terminate nonviable peacekeeping operations."

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he is fully committed to enhancing cooperation with regional organizations to develop more effective ways for conflict prevention and resolution, as well as a predictable, interlinked and reliable system for global peacekeeping. "Preventing and resolving conflict peacefully must remain high on the shared agenda of the African Union and the U.N.," he said.

Ban also said work in Sudan's Darfur region and in Somalia must be stepped up for desperately needed progress. Khalilzad said one goal should be to free up forces and funds for where they are most needed in places like Darfur, where the U.N. peacekeeping mission has been collaborating with the African Union.

"The U.N. and AU have embarked on a historic cooperative effort -– the deployment of the U.N.-AU hybrid force UNAMID [United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur]," Khalilzad said. The United States has called for immediate and full deployment of UNAMID to improve the situation in Darfur, but also to show that the United Nations and AU can form effective partnerships, he said.

At the same time, the AU must enhance its capacity to conduct successful peacekeeping and other nations should help, he said. That also requires AU members to increase their national peacekeeping capacity.

Since 2005, the United States has trained 34,750 peacekeepers from 40 countries and has provided $375 million to increase global capacity for peacekeeping in Africa and elsewhere, Khalilzad said. The program, known as the Global Peace Operations Initiative, has developed regional organizations' peacekeeping capacity in Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, South and Central Asia, South and Central America, Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere. One of the roles for the new U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) is to enhance overall AU peacekeeping capabilities.

And funding to support this capacity building is equally important, Khalilzad said. A final recommendation is for closer U.N. and AU cooperation, he said, citing the UNDPKO-AU [United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations - African Union] Peace Support Team and its work in mission planning and the management of logistics and resources. ♦

U.S. Supports African Stance Against Arms Shipments to Zimbabwe

By Merle D. Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States does not believe that shipping Chinese arms and light weapons to Zimbabwe is in anyone's best interests, a State Department official says.

The State Department has urged countries in southern Africa not to allow a Chinese freighter to dock and offload a cargo of AK-47 assault rifles, mortars and ammunition destined for land-locked Zimbabwe, says deputy spokesman Tom Casey. And the United States has also asked the Chinese government to recall the freighter.

The Chinese freighter -– An Yue Jiang –- arrived in South Africa last week [April 13-19], but was not allowed to unload its cargo, intended for delivery to Zimbabwe. Since then, Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania and Namibia have refused to allow the cargo to be unloaded and shipped overland into Zimbabwe, according to news reports.

Zimbabwe has been embroiled in a post-election crisis since March 29, when results from the presidential and parliamentary elections were not released by the government of President Robert Mugabe. Since then, Zimbabwe's election commission has refused to release final results, and it appears that Mugabe and top opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai are facing a runoff election. Critics have argued that a runoff election cannot be held before the original results are released to the public.

Casey said April 22 that Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer is going to South Africa, Zambia and Angola to talk about bilateral issues and the current crisis in Zimbabwe.

Members and supporters of church groups protested the arms deal last week in Durban, South Africa. (RAJESH JANTILAL/AFP/Getty Images)

"We don't think it's appropriate at this point, given the political upheaval that's occurring in Zimbabwe, for anyone to be adding extra tinder to that situation by providing additional weapons to Zimbabwe security forces," Casey said.

He said that China has been asked in a message delivered by U.S. diplomats in Beijing to halt the shipment and "to refrain from making additional shipments."

"We have been in contact with various governments in the region, as well as with the Chinese government, on the subject of this vessel that had been attempting to deliver weapons to Zimbabwe," Casey said. "And we're pleased to see that many countries in the region refused to either accept this vessel in their ports or to offload those weapons."

And the United States is pleased that the Chinese government is saying that "the vessel may, in fact, now be recalled back to China," he said.

U.S. House Foreign Affairs Chairman Howard Berman praised the African nations for blocking shipment of the small arms and light weapons to Zimbabwe, saying that "with this action, African leaders have taken a principled stand to safeguard the Zimbabwean people and to reinforce their rights."

He said that these arms could well have been used against Zimbabweans who are opposed to Mugabe and to help militias that have already been attacking villagers and destroying their homes. ♦

Rice Urges Zimbabweans to Release Election Results

By Merle D. Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States stands with the Zimbabwean people in their efforts to carry out the results of recent national elections, but it also calls on President Robert Mugabe's government to release election results.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged the Zimbabwean government to release the three-week-old election results to avoid the appearance that something is being plotted by the ruling party.

"The United States and the European Union and others have spoken out about this and we've made calls, but it's time for Africa to step up," Rice said April 17 at a news briefing. "Where is the concern from the African Union and from Zimbabwe's neighbors about what is going on in Zimbabwe?"

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned April 17 that unless there is "a transparent solution to this impasse, the situation could deteriorate further, with serious implications for the people of Zimbabwe." He called for the release of the election results immediately.

Presidential and parliamentary elections were held March 29. Since then, Zimbabwe's election commission has refused to release final results, and it appears that incumbent President Mugabe and top opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai are facing a runoff election. Critics have argued that a runoff election cannot be held before the original results are released.

Zimbabweans living in South Africa carry placards during a protest against the imprisonment of opposition activists, outside the Harare consulate in Johannesburg March 13, 2007

Mugabe has held the presidency since the nation gained independence 28 years ago. A recount of 23 out of 210 voting constituencies in the election was scheduled for April 19. Mugabe's ZANU-PF party lost control of the parliament in the election.

At the heart of the election has been Zimbabwe's faltering economy. The official inflation rate is more than 160,000 percent and the country has an unemployment rate of approximately 80 percent.

"It's a country that used to feed its neighbors, and now it can't feed itself," Rice said. "And by all of our accounts, those food aid numbers are going to go up dramatically for Zimbabwe."

She said the last years of Mugabe's leadership "have been really an abomination." But she added that it is up to the Zimbabwean people to determine if Mugabe must go.

The government needs "to release the results of that election. The longer they hold those results of the election, the more suspicion grows that something is being plotted and planned by the ruling party," she said.

Rice said there needs to be a peaceful transfer of power, but she also said the African Union and the South African Development Community must raise their voices.

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

Kenya's New Coalition Government Is Important Step Forward

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration welcomes an announcement by Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga that they have agreed on a coalition Cabinet to share power.

The U.S. State Department described the development as a courageous decision to move the country forward following the violence that occurred after the December 27, 2007, election.

In an April 13 statement, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the formation of Kenya's new Cabinet, which divides 40 posts between parties allied to Kibaki's Party of National Unity (PNU) and Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), is "an important step along the road toward full implementation of the political accord."

Former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan brokered a power-sharing deal between the political rivals in February but the PNU and ODM did not agree on how Cabinet posts would be divided until April 13. (See "Kenyan Leaders Urged to Resume Talks on Coalition Government (http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2008/April/20080409124836dmslahrelle k0.2212946.html).")

Map of Kenya in its flag color

After the opposition party charged the December 2007 vote was rigged in favor of the sitting government, violence swept through the country, especially in January and February, killing 1,500 people and forcing 600,000 to flee their homes.

Under the power-sharing agreement, Kibaki will continue to serve as president, while Odinga will become Kenya's new prime minister.

McCormack urged both President Kibaki and Prime Minister-designate Odinga to maintain the momentum of national reconciliation by quickly carrying out institutional reforms "particularly with respect to revision of the constitution, reform of the electoral process, and land issues."

The United States remains a "strong friend and partner," McCormack said, and will provide strong support to Kenya's coalition government "as it works to strengthen democratic institutions and expand prosperity for the benefit of all Kenyans."

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

Africans Living Better Lives Through U.S. Development Foundation

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington -- Women, youth and the disabled in 18 African nations are living better lives and realizing their dreams of economic self-sufficiency, while also strengthening their countries' economies, with the help of the U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF).

USADF President Lloyd Pierson told America.gov recently that the ideas for the foundation's small and medium-size enterprise development projects come directly from the Africans themselves.

"We don't go in and say, 'Here is what you should be doing.' We want those ideas to come from the local community -- for Africans to say, 'Here is what we want to do.' Suggestions," he said, "could come from an entrepreneur within that community" or from a group. It is grassroots, rural-focused development at the community level, he said.

USADF has local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working as business development officers to help it carry out its development programs, Pierson noted.

"They search out for opportunities and are constantly seeking ways to build up from the grassroots level to spur economic growth and development," he explained.

Pierson -- a lifelong development specialist who formerly was the assistant administrator for African affairs at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and chief of operations for the Peace Corps -- cautioned that USADF projects tend to be somewhat small and focused, with the largest project usually not exceeding a total one-time grant cost of $250,000.

"What makes that funding so important," he said, "is that USADF seeks buy-in and participatory support from the local host government. Whatever that amount of USADF money is, we want to double it with leveraged funds," some of which come from the host country, to form a partnership to spur economic and enterprise development. This gives the local government a stake in the success of the programs, he added.

Ghanaian farmers supported by ADF grant

"We try to leverage United States taxpayer funds that are the core revenue of this agency -- appropriated dollars. ... We don't always get the matching funds, but we at least look for the host country to provide some funds, so that the goal is to double every dollar that we get."

USADF's budget for fiscal 2008 is $30 million.

"It is important to get the money, but also important to get the commitment on the part of that country to recognize and be supportive of the kinds of populations we are serving," he said.

By statute, Pierson said, USADF programs are to be run by Africans, and any entities in which USADF invests must be 100 percent African-owned. "So we are not sending large numbers of expatriate consultants out to implement our programs. We look for Africans to build that capability internally," he said.

One such successful project Pierson cited is the Gahaya Links project in Rwanda, which, with USADF help, is now exporting sisal baskets to the United States for sale at the major U.S. retailer Macy's.

The project has grown from employing 27 women each day to employing more than 3,500 -- and their wages have likewise grown from $1 a day to $14 a week, he said.

Gahaya Links, which connects artisans and 40 cooperatives with a profitable export market, is bettering the lives of the Rwandan women and their families, he said.

Over the past 23 years, USADF has funded 1,800 projects, representing in excess of $150 million in support of African entrepreneurs and local African communities. Other small and medium-size projects it has funded recently in Rwanda include a project to export specialty coffee grown by small farmers, a dairy production project, and the introduction of pomegranate as a cash crop for small farmers.

"What has happened there has also happened in other such projects throughout USADF countries: jobs have been created," Pierson said. Gahaya, with its job creation and income improvements for rural

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U.S. Adopters of Foreign Orphans Undergo Tough Scrutiny

By Derek Repp
Special Correspondent

Washington -- Of the 143 million orphans in the developing world, the United States takes in more of them than all other countries combined, according to adoption experts.

"The United States adopts so many because there is a culture of adoption here. In the United States, a child doesn't have to be genetically linked to be loved as one's own child; that is rare in many other countries," says Chuck Johnson of the National Council For Adoption, an adoption advocacy and research group based in Alexandria, Virginia.

According to Peter Selman of Newcastle University in England, a leading expert on adoption, in 2006, people in the United States adopted 20,679 foreign orphans while all other countries adopted 19,121.

Most adopted children are coming from China and Guatemala, followed by Russia and Ethiopia, according to recent U.S. Department of State statistics. Many orphans also are adopted from South Korea, Vietnam, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, India, Liberia, Colombia, the Philippines, Haiti and Taiwan.

Experts say the large numbers of U.S. adoptions from abroad reflect, in part, the understanding other countries have about the extent to which the United States goes to protect its adopted children.

"The net is cast very deep and very wide," said Tom DiFilipo, president of the Joint Council on International Children's Services, one of the oldest and largest U.S. child welfare organizations. "In the United States, there are a myriad of agencies, both public and private, involved in child protection at the county, state and federal level. In terms of overall child protection, the United States is certainly in the top echelon."

Actress Angelina Jolie with her adopted Ethiopian daughter, Zahara

For example, U.S. child protection laws require courts to act in advance of problems in the protection of children. "In many countries, courts cannot terminate parental custody until the child has been abandoned. In the United States, however, the courts have the power to terminate parental custody when there is suspected child abuse," DiFilipo said.

Generally, if a teacher or other school administrator suspects that a child is being abused, that individual is required by law to report it. In some states, the law is even broader. In New Jersey, Difilipo said, any person that suspects child abuse is required to report it to the authorities.

U.S. law makes no distinction between parental duties of adoptive and natural parents and extends the same protection to all children. In fact, all foreign adopted children become U.S. citizens at the time they enter the country and, as such, are afforded the same rights as U.S. citizens.

At the same time, the many safeguards built into the process of adoption allow flagging of possible problems at an early stage -- even before a family is approved to adopt, experts say.

Linda Perilstein, executive director of the Cradle of Hope Adoption Center, an accredited adoption agency that helps families through the process, explains: "Families adopting internationally go through many levels of screening to be sure that they are qualified to adopt and would provide a loving and safe home for a child in need."

On a state level, she said, families must present a report that they do not have a past history of behavior that would raise concerns about their fitness for raising a child, obtain references from other sources, allow home visits, present medical clearances and proofs of sufficient financial resources, and more. On a federal level, they undergo a further

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U.S. Adopters of Foreign Orphans Undergo Tough Scrutiny . . .

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background check by the FBI.

If the prospective parents pass the initial screening, they are required to complete several hours of training that gives them general information on the adoption process, on the needs of children awaiting adoption and on specific country conditions that may affect the long-term health of the children, such as the effects of malnutrition and relevant environmental factors.

Megann Andrew smiles on her 5th birthday in 2007. She was adopted by her parents from China when she was 1 year old. (© AP Images)

Such pre-adoption training has been common for some time in the United States, but the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption (HCIA), which the United States implemented on April 1, 2008, now requires that all adoptions between participating countries involve at least 10 hours of parental training.

After the child arrives home, adoptive families must submit to at least three post-placement home visits conducted by a licensed social worker who can assess the family's post-adoption adjustment, provide support and refer them to additional services if needed.

"Post-placement supervision is the best way of catching potential problems and preventing them," DiFilipo said.

In spite of all the safeguards, instances of abuse or neglect of adopted children in the United States do happen. Following abuse reports of several adopted children from Russia by their U.S. parents over the past 15 years, the authorities took measures to close down the nonaccredited agencies most of these cases involved. But experts point out that over the same period more than 50,000 Russian orphans, most from institutional orphanage care, have been adopted by loving American families.

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Africans Living Better Lives Through U.S. Development Foundation . . .

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women, represents the type of project that USADF seeks to fund across USADF countries, he added. USADF has funded almost 1,200 small and medium-size development projects.

"Economic development is very important," he said, "but ... it is not just the creation of jobs, it is what kind of employment conditions exist. We are like the union for the employees" in helping to improve overall living and working conditions.

USADF investment has led to health care and better education, he said, and the foundation particularly targets underserved populations such as women, youth and the disabled.

USADF has operated several projects to help the disabled -- one of which was run by Godisa Technologies in Botswana. Godisa Technologies applied for USADF support to design solar rechargers for batteries and produce several models of better-quality hearing aids. USADF completed its funding for the project in 2006.

The company hired people with hearing disabilities to assemble the hearing aids. Most of Godisa's sales were to the U.S. and European NGOs that distribute the products to low-income people in more than 30 countries.

Godisa also helped NGOs in developing countries (including Brazil, Jordan and the Philippines) begin production of the hearing aids and chargers. After Godisa received the USADF grant, its sales grew by $335,000 and it was able to obtain $322,000 in other financing.

The U.S. African Development Foundation is presently working in Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. ♦

Clinton's Pennsylvania Win Extends Democrats' Nomination Race

By Michelle Austein
Staff Writer

Washington -- After spending more than six weeks crisscrossing Pennsylvania, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama each claimed success in the state's Democratic primary April 22.

New York Senator Hillary Clinton won the most votes and a majority of Pennsylvania's 158 pledged delegates, but she still trails Illinois Senator Barack Obama in the overall delegate count.

Democrats award their delegates proportionally, so even though Clinton finished 10 percentage points ahead of Obama, she likely will receive only about 10 more delegates than Obama when the final votes are tallied, according to the Green Papers, an organization that tracks the awarding of delegates. Before the Pennsylvania contest, Obama led Clinton by 155 delegates.

Clinton's victory had been expected. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Pennsylvania's 2007 population of 12.4 million has a higher median age than the nation as a whole, and a higher percentage of white populations. These two groups have been key Clinton supporters in prior nominating contests.

The Pennsylvania results indicated Clinton support among these groups, and from women and union workers, continues.

In Pennsylvania, Obama did well with his core constituency -- particularly college students and African Americans. Although Clinton led in much of the state, Obama was victorious in Philadelphia , Pennsylvania's largest city.

Democratic presidential hopeful Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., celebrates as confetti falls at her Pennsylvania primary election night party in Philadelphia, Tuesday, April 22, 2008. (AP)

CANDIDATES THANK SUPPORTERS, LOOK AHEAD

"For six weeks, Senator Obama and I have crisscrossed this state, meeting people up close, being judged side by side, making our best case. You listened, and today you chose," Clinton said in Philadelphia. "I thank you, Pennsylvania, for deciding I can be that president.

"Some people counted me out and said to drop out," Clinton said. "Well, the American people don't quit and they deserve a president who doesn't quit, either."

During her speech, Clinton acknowledged she faces one particular challenge in the coming weeks: raising enough money to keep competing.

According to financial reports filed at the beginning of April, Obama's campaign had $42 million cash on hand, compared to Clinton's $9.3 million. Additionally, at that time Clinton's campaign owed $10.3 million to various vendors and consultants.

Encouraging the audience to donate to her campaign via her Web site, Clinton explained, "Your support has meant the difference between winning and losing .... We can only keep winning if we can keep competing with an opponent who outspends us so massively."

The better-funded candidate will be able to run more television advertisements and open more campaign offices in competitive states, such

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as Indiana, where voters head to the polls May 6.

NEXT CONTESTS IN INDIANA, NORTH CAROLINA

Speaking from Evansville, Indiana, Obama congratulated Clinton and thanked Pennsylvania voters.

"There were a lot of folks who didn't think we could make this a close race when it started. But we worked hard, and we traveled across the state to big cities and small towns," Obama said. "And now, six weeks later, we closed the gap.

"We rallied people of every age and race and background to our cause. And whether they were inspired for the first time or for the first time in a long time, we registered a record number of voters who will lead our party to victory in November."

North Carolina also holds a primary May 6. Obama is favored heavily to win that state, partially because its population is similar to that of neighboring South Carolina, where the Illinois senator achieved a 28-percentage-point victory over Clinton in January.

The last states to hold primaries will be Montana and South Dakota on June 3. Guam, West Virginia, Oregon, Kentucky and Puerto Rico will hold their nominating contests in May and early June.

In order to become the party's nominee, Clinton or Obama must earn votes from a majority of delegates -- at least 2,024. But with so few contests left and the proportional system of awarding delegates allowing Clinton and Obama to win delegates in every remaining contest, it is unlikely that either candidate will secure a majority by the time primaries and caucuses conclude.

Democratic presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama greets supporters during a town hall style meeting at Indiana University Southeast in New Albany, Indiana. (AFP/GETTY IMAGES/Scott Olson)

That would set the stage for counting the party's superdelegate votes to determine who will be the Democratic nominee. (See "Superdelegates May Decide Democratic Nominee (http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/20080204190330hmnietsua0.9187281.html).")

Although delegates and superdelegates are not counted officially until the Democratic National Convention in August, political experts believe the nomination will be clear before then.

Larry Sabato, a University of Virginia professor of politics, predicted to America.gov that once the nominating contests are complete, the party's superdelegates will announce their support for either Obama or Clinton. The Democratic Party wants its nominee to be determined before it holds its convention August 25-28 in Denver, Sabato said. (See "Democratic Presidential Nomination Race Seen Ending by July 4 (http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/April/20080414120514 1xeneerg0.7362482.html).")

According to the Green Papers, 253 superdelegates have announced they intend to vote for Clinton; 230 say they will vote for Obama. The remaining 312 have not made their intentions known.

Also on April 22, Arizona Senator John McCain won Pennsylvania's little-noticed Republican primary with about 73 percent of the vote. McCain, who already has earned enough delegates to be the party's presumed nominee, did not spend much time campaigning in Pennsylvania.

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

Kansas City Area Voters Ready for November Election

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Kansas City, Missouri -- Like their fellow citizens across the nation, Kansas City area voters differ in their political party affiliations and their preferred presidential candidates, but they share worries about the U.S. engagement in Iraq and the state of the American economy.

Gene Kennedy, who identifies himself as a lifelong Democrat, say he "strongly" supports Barak Obama for president, citing the candidate's youth and commitment to change.

Kennedy said he is not comfortable with Hilary Clinton, terming her "too hard." But, he said, in the U.S. presidential election he will support the Democratic nominee, whoever he or she is. Shirley Kennedy, his wife and a strong Clinton supporter, also plans to support whomever the Democratic Party nominates.

Ron Argus, Kennedy's friend since school days and another lifelong Democrat, said he has no candidate preference and will vote Democratic in November. Ron's wife, Mary, shares both Ron's ambivalence on the candidates and his commitment to vote Democratic in November.

The Kennedys and Arguses talked with America.gov April 17 about national politics in Overland Park, Kansas, a suburb of the Kansas City, Missouri, in America's heartland.

The Kennedy's daughter Karen, a property manager, has stronger views. She supports Obama and was inspired to abandon years of backing Clinton by the Illinois senator's speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

Karen is so enthused about the 2008 election that she braved the area's heaviest snowstorm of the winter in February to participate in her first caucus. The turnout for the top eight Democratic candidates was "unbelievable" as approximately 2,000 people crowded into a community facility meant to accommodate 400. (See "Early Primaries and Caucuses Shape Presidential Hopefuls' Odds (http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/September/20070917120019ndyblehs0.1648523.html).")

Mother and daughter disagree on one issue that recently surfaced in the campaign -- controversy about statements made by Obama's former pastor, the Reverend Jeremiah Wright, in a speech to a college audience broadcast on the Internet's YouTube.

Wright made what some called disparaging remarks about race relations in America. Shirley termed Wright's remarks nonpatriotic, but Karen said the remarks differed little from many peoples' views that U.S. leaders historically have made some poor decisions on this issue. (See "Debate Continues About Presidential Candidate's Speech on Race (http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/March/20080328184019mlenuhret0.6623957.html?CP.rss=true).")

The main issue for both the Kennedys and Arguses in the upcoming election is the war in Iraq, and all favor a U.S military withdrawal from Iraq as soon as possible.

"We never should have gotten in there in the first place," Ron said.

Economic issues also loom large for both families. "The dollar is sinking. We had a budget surplus under a Democratic administration," Gene said.

He added he also worries that the Social Security system that has worked for his generation will not be funded sufficiently to support his children when they retire. "And the cost of health care has gotten unreasonable," he said.

His wife expressed concern about the ongoing rise in gasoline prices. "The oil companies are getting rich while it's the poor people who are getting hurt most," she said.

REPUBLICAN POINTS OF VIEW

A few miles south in Belton, Missouri, farmers Mick and Tom Effertz and their office manager Judy Meyers, told America.gov why they -- and most of their neighbors -- support Republican John McCain for president.

McCain is the presumed Republican nominee for president, having secured a clear majority of votes of national convention delegates.

As with the Kennedys and Arguses, Iraq tops the Effertzes' list of election issues. "We have to get the job done in Iraq," Mick said.

The Effertzes also said the failure of any candidate to address farm issues worries them.

Judy Meyers said that even though her employers are pleased that prices for wheat, soybeans and maize have risen recently, "as a consumer we pay more at the gro-

(Continued on page 19)

Food Crisis Has Long-Term Global Challenges, Rice Says

By Merle D. Kellerhals, Jr.
Staff Writer

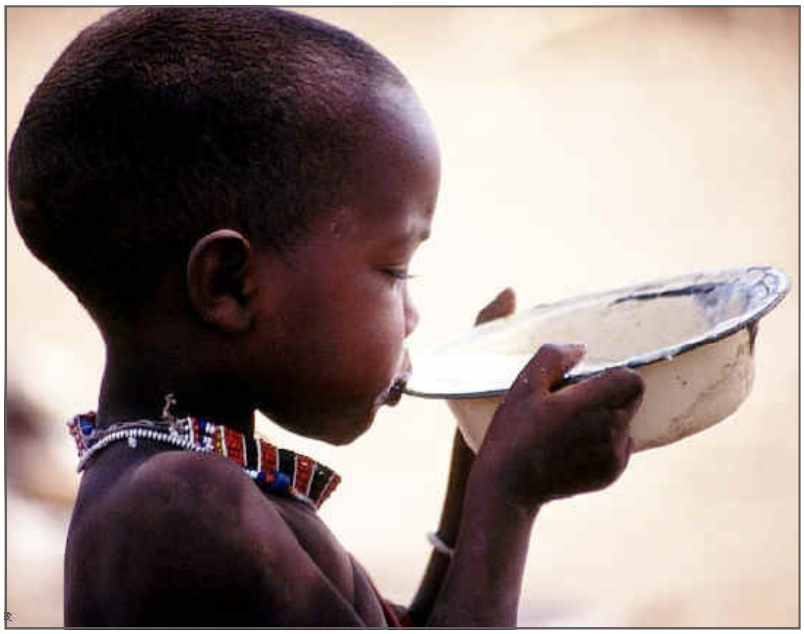
Washington – President Bush is seeking an additional $350 million from Congress to provide immediate emergency food assistance, but the current food crisis has long-term global challenges, says Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

"In the weeks ahead, we hope to announce further steps to help ease the burden of rising food prices on the world's neediest people. Ultimately, though, the world must come together to forge a long-term solution to rising prices of food," Rice says.

Food riots have broken out across the globe as food prices, along with energy costs, have soared to record levels. In Haiti, the Senate fired Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis April 12 after more than a week of food riots stunned one of the poorest nations in the Western Hemisphere. International agencies such as the World Bank, the United Nations, the World Food Programme and the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization have urged developed nations to provide more funds and food relief.

"Those who are hit hardest are the poorest people, and, of course, this is a matter of social justice because no one should have to spend all of their daily wages just to buy their daily bread," Rice said. "Rising food prices are a source of social instability, as we are seeing in a number of places around the world."

President Bush on April 14 responded rapidly by ordering Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer to draw an estimated $200 million in emergency U.S. food assistance from a special reserve fund for global food relief, which also was intended secondarily to relieve rising political instability in some regions. The funding will be used by the U.S. Agency for International Development to help speed much-needed food supplies to distressed nations.



U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has warned that the escalating food crisis has reached emergency proportions.

"We need to encourage farmers and transporters, markets and governments to meet this urgent worldwide challenge," Rice said at a briefing April 17. One of the most important measures developed nations can take at this point is to complete trade measures under consideration through the World Trade Organization that would help increase agricultural productivity and moderate prices, Rice said.

"There are many causes for rising food prices, from fast-growing global demand to devastating droughts to record high fuel costs. But one thing is clear, this is a current emergency, but it has long-term global challenges," Rice said.

The FAO attributes rising global food prices to a combination of factors, including reduced production because of climate change, historically low levels of food stocks, higher consumption of meat and dairy products in emerging economies, increased demand for biofuels production, drought and the higher cost of energy and transportation.

Rice said the president also has sought authority from Congress to provide more U.S. food assistance through locally purchased agriculture, which enables taxpayers to feed more of the world's hungry at less cost.

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

High Food Prices, Urban Migration Make It Hard to Help the Poor

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

A girl buys subsidized bread from a bakery in Cairo, Egypt, where there is unrest sparked by rising world food prices. (© AP Images)

Kansas City, Missouri -- Food aid providers and recipients face a "new and troubled landscape" that changes the dynamics of assistance, says Henrietta Fore, head of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The combination of high food and energy costs, climate extremes affecting production and a weakening U.S. dollar "is unlike crises we have faced before," Fore says. Earlier crises were caused mostly by geography-specific factors -- drought, flood or war -- and affected a relatively homogeneous group of people, she says.

Fore, who is also director of U.S. foreign assistance, spoke April 16 at the 10th annual International Food Aid Conference in Kansas City, Missouri. The conference was sponsored by USAID and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

At the conference, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said the growing demand for crops to produce biofuels is only one reason, and not a major reason, for high food costs.

Schafer said, "Higher energy prices are the biggest factor in pushing up food prices." He said failed crops in many countries also contribute to the food crisis, which some have called a "perfect storm."

Fore said USAID currently is facing $265 million in unanticipated food aid costs, approximately $200 million attributed to higher commodity prices.

Schafer said that on April 14 he was authorized by President Bush to draw down an estimated $200 million from the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust for emergency food aid.

URBAN MIGRATION

Fore said a shift in the world's poor population from primarily rural areas to urban areas poses new challenges for food aid providers.

During the next 30 years, the world's population is expected to increase by 2.5 billion people, with 2 billion of those being born in cities, she said.

She said there could be "an increase in the number of people suffering from extreme hunger" in towns and cities. "If urban hunger continues to grow, the most visible and worrisome threat will be mass and civil disruption, as we are already seeing," Fore said.

In recent weeks, food riots have occurred in Haiti, Egypt, West Africa, Bangladesh and other areas because of the increasing price of food.

One of the challenges aid providers face is identifying and assessing the needs of urban poor, "household by household and neighborhood by neighborhood," an assessment model that is "very different from what we are undertaking in rural areas," Fore said.

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U.S., Allies Want Iran to Abandon Nuclear Weapons Research

By Merle D. Kellerhals, Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington -- From its location at the crossroads of the Middle East and South Asia, Iran could threaten three continents and eventually the United States in the next decade if it had nuclear weapons, says a senior U.S. diplomat. However, its greatest threat is to moderate states within the region.

The goal of the United States "is to convince Iran to forever abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions and urge Tehran to become a better neighbor in the region," says Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman, principal deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs. "We are committed to a diplomatic solution to pressure the Iranian regime to change its behavior on the nuclear issue."

The U.S. diplomatic strategy toward Iran is a dual-track approach working with the other permanent members of the U.N. Security Council -- Britain, China, France and Russia -- plus Germany, a group often referred to as the P5 + 1. In the first instance, the allies specifically want Iran to abandon once and for all any long-term nuclear weapons ambitions, he said.

"Also to help prompt such a strategic shift, the second track of our policy is represented by our standing offer of a generous package of incentives that cover the gamut of political, economic, technological and social benefits that would accrue to the Iranian people were the regime to resolve international concerns with its nuclear activities," Feltman said in recent testimony before a House foreign affairs subcommittee.

The subcommittee was conducting an oversight hearing to examine U.S. policy options to prevent a nuclear Iran and their potential effectiveness, but also to determine if additional legislation might be required.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (C) visits the Natanz nuclear enrichment facility, 350 km (217 miles) south of Tehran, April 8, 2008. REUTERS/Presidential official website/Handout

As part of the incentives offering, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has pledged that she would willingly meet with her Iranian counterpart if Iran would suspend all uranium enrichment and proliferation-sensitive activities, he said.

"Since May 2006, we have presented Iran with an increasingly stark choice between two paths -- confrontation and isolation or cooperation and reward," he said.

In addition to this two-track approach, Feltman said, the United States continues to support efforts by the U.N. nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which has been struggling for six years with Iran for cooperation in its investigations.

Feltman said the United States has stressed the use of all tools and options are still on the table for possible use -- including multilateral diplomacy, financial measures, counterproliferation actions such as weapons interdictions and -- as a final resort -- the threat and use of military force.

One significant concern has been Iran's continued use of centrifuges to conduct uranium enrichment,

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U.S., Allies Want Iran to Abandon Nuclear Weapons Research . . .

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which could be used for peaceful civilian purposes or for weapons development.

The IAEA will launch more talks April 21 to press the Iranian regime on answers to questions on its nuclear ambitions. "This is an issue of importance, obviously. The international community needs to make sure Iran did not have a weapons program," ElBaradei told Reuters in Berlin.

Centrifuges are used to spin compounds of uranium at high speed to separate and concentrate the most fissile isotope of the element for use as nuclear fuel.

Daniel Glaser, deputy assistant treasury secretary for terrorist financing and financial crimes, told the subcommittee that U.S. financial sanctions against Iran are having an impact, blunting Iranian efforts to obtain nuclear weapons and aid terrorist groups.

"Financial measures are an integral component of U.S. and international efforts to counter Iran's threatening behavior," Glaser testified. "Through our authorities and our engagement with counterparts around the world, we are implementing a financial strategy that is having an impact."

"The true effects of multilateral sanctions, especially on a regime's decision-making, are difficult to gauge. However, at a minimum, these sanctions are limiting Iran's access to sensitive technologies and goods, with the possible impact of slowing Iran's nuclear and missile development," Feltman testified.

Peter Rodman, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington and a former U.S. defense official, said in an interview late in 2007 that there is a serious debate going on inside Iran because of the new economic sanctions. He said a recent U.S. intelligence report on Iran's nuclear ambitions indicates that the Iranian regime "is susceptible to international pressures. And I think the [Bush] administration is right to want to maintain the momentum of the current diplomacy." ♦

High Food Prices, Urban Migration Make It Hard to Help the Poor . . .

(Continued from page 14)

SOLUTIONS

While Fore said that she did not expect to see a decline in food prices "anytime soon," she did offer hope for the longer term. At a press conference, Fore said public-private partnerships that develop countries' production and market-access systems, provide training and exchange research ideas "will solve the problems of the future."

She said the partnerships help developing countries raise their production levels, which have been falling as many farmers have become unable to afford increasingly expensive inputs -- seeds, fertilizer and fuel. While in the 1970s and 1980s, production growth rates averaged 3 percent annually, in recent years growth rates have declined to 1 percent.

Fore said USAID wants to help improve the trade systems in developing countries and encourage governments to support entrepreneurs. "The ultimate anti-hunger tool is a favorable business climate," she said.

She said USAID has begun to analyze 15 transportation corridors for development in Africa. Those would link production centers with consumption centers and "could substantially reduce the price of food staples," she said.

Schafer said American researchers are collaborating with their counterparts in other countries to develop a new variety of wheat that would resist a devastating rust disease that affects crops in Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Africa.

Already, U.S. wheat stocks are at a 60-year low. But, while 75 percent of current U.S. wheat strains are susceptible to this rust disease, the disease is not yet present in America. If its spores travel to the Western Hemisphere on air currents and if a resistant wheat variety is not discovered, food supplies could be diminished severely, Schafer said. In 2007, America helped feed 35 million people in more than 70 countries. ♦

Innovative Business Sees the Future in a Cup of Tea

By Lea Terhune
Staff Writer

Washington -- In Britain, China, India and Japan, residents look forward to a nice cup of tea. Africans enjoy rooibos; South Americans prize yerba mate. Tea is a social beverage everywhere but the United States, where authoritative coffees, fizzy drinks and beer have long dominated the available teas. John-Paul Lee and Sonny Caberwal resolved to change that when they started Tavalon Tea in New York City.

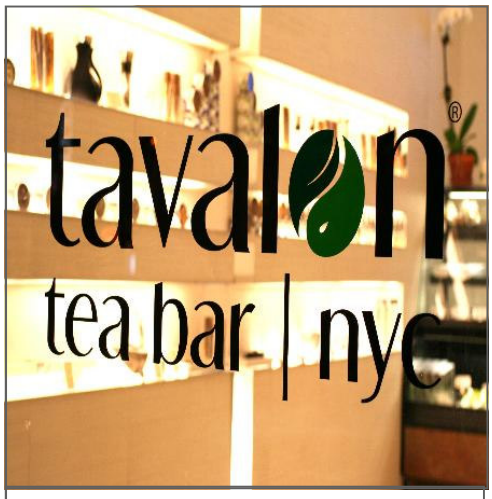
An American tea awakening was under way around the time the young entrepreneurs began planning their escape from corporate shackles. Caberwal was studying law at Georgetown University and working summers at a law firm. Lee, with a finance background, worked at Accenture, an international business performance consultant. They looked beyond a corporate career path.

"We both wanted to break out of the rat race of the system and do something for ourselves," Lee told America.gov. Caberwal adds: "For some people, the lure of starting something and creating a vision is what's important. And that was something that we found that we both shared."

That was in 2001. A few years of careful planning later, they found "a product and business that we could really put on the map," Lee said -- tea.

They quit their jobs and found a perfect showcase location in a busy, hip Manhattan neighborhood. They called it Tavalon Tea Bar. For pizzazz, they installed a disc jockey on the mezzanine and a tea sommelier to answer questions, offer whiffs of loose tea and pour samples at the tea bar.

Entrepreneurs John-Paul Lee and Sonny Caberwal are co-founders of New York-based Tavalon Tea. (Courtesy Tavalon)



Tavalon's Manhattan storefront offers a total tea experience, but is only one aspect of the business. (Courtesy Tavalon)

"I'm the tea guy," tea sommelier Chris Cason told America.gov, explaining that he grew up next door to a tea plantation in South Carolina, "the only tea plantation in America." He has been in tea for a decade, and his book A Guide to Tea brought him to Tavalon. "I met Sonny and John-Paul on my book tour ... and they wanted to do the tea shop but needed someone who knew about teas." Cason's enthusiasm for educating America about tea matches that of Caberwal and Lee.

Both Lee and Caberwal were born into immigrant tea-drinking families: Lee's parents are from South Korea and Caberwal's from India. Both families started businesses from scratch.

Caberwal, an observant Sikh who wears a turban, said pride in ethnic heritage "gives you a little bit of confidence to believe and work outside the norms of traditional and overwhelming American experience. You can take part in a unique culture" while still being mainstream. "Tea is an example of this. We drink tea as a normal part of our lives growing up, but the average 16-year-old guy in the United States is not drinking tea."

Caberwal said, "It was from that kind of cultural awareness and understanding that Tavalon as a concept grew up ... because we had that crossover ability."

CHANGING TEA'S IMAGE IN AMERICA

To Americans, tea is an ancient product mostly consumed by Europeans, Asians or the elite, Lee said. "It's actually the second most widely consumed beverage in the world next to water."

Tavalon endeavors to "show that tea can be a really enjoyable beverage, not in the traditional sense that people know it in the States, but really as a mass-marketed product with a much more fun, young, vibrant image," said Lee, who revels in tea's social aspect.

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Trademarks -- Not Counterfeits -- Create Jobs, Experts Say

By Judy Aita
Special Correspondent

United Nations -- Developing nations stand to be the biggest beneficiaries of strong trademark and copyright laws, experts said at a forum focusing attention on World Intellectual Property Day, which will be observed April 26.

Reform of intellectual property laws, coupled with strong protection efforts, can unleash the technical and creative innovation that has been the hallmark of long-term growth and development in Western economies, the trademark experts said.

Michael Ryan, director of the Creative and Innovative Economy Center at The George Washington University Law School, said that when trademarks and other intellectual property tools are part of national development strategies they can spur growth and prosperity in economic sectors from agriculture and medicine to entertainment.

"We've been told in developing country after developing country that pirates are a good thing because they create jobs. No. Pirates are not good things. They don't create very good local jobs. Instead, what they do is they take away lots of good jobs," Ryan said during the forum.

"Film pirates do not hire directors, actors, cinematographers, sound technicians and key grips; software pirates do not recruit computer science and business management graduates from universities. They manufacture discs worth a few cents and pay their workers accordingly," he said.

Ethiopian coffee tasters tasting a variety of Ethiopian coffees

Bollywood is one of the world's biggest producers of films, yet a fundamental constraint is piracy, Ryan noted. "Piracy has made it difficult for Indian filmmakers to get much return on their investment," he said.

"If they can figure a way to get control of piracy, which is prevalent throughout the distribution chain, they will have an extraordinary opportunity. Bollywood has not yet seen what it will be able to do with both the creativity and profits that will be unleashed," he said.

Pirates of patented technologies, copyrighted creative expressions and trademarked goods operate multibillion-dollar global industries, but they provide only low-skill, low-wage jobs, according to Ryan. He said they do not comply with good manufacturing practices, but produce poor-quality goods that can be ineffective or downright dangerous. He said they add nothing to the well-being of a country.

Pirates do not open their factories to inspection by health and labor regulators; they do not establish relationships of trust with consumers, nor do they pay taxes, Ryan said.

COFFEE PRODUCTION

Meanwhile, Colombian and Ethiopian coffee producers are brilliantly managing their trademarks and brands, panelists said. Through

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Trademarks -- Not Counterfeits -- Create Jobs, Experts Say . . .

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marketing strategies, quality control and intellectual property enforcement, Colombia has been able to get 10 cents per pound more than market price for its coffee for decades, Ryan pointed out. "That is a remarkable achievement," he said.

Begun in 1927 by coffee growers, the nonprofit National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia has used trademarks, marketing, enforcement and an internal system of accountability to bring international recognition for its coffee. It has meant improved living standards for 566,000 growers and a better price for Colombian coffee on world markets, said Mary Petitt, vice president of the federation.

The federation's logo of Juan Valdez is known worldwide as "a seal of quality" for a good cup of coffee, Petitt said.

Ethiopia's efforts to get control of the names of three of its high-quality coffees -- Sidamo, Harar and Yirgacheffe -- is one of a number of recent initiatives designed to give developing countries and their farmers and artisans a bigger profit share.

Ron Layton, chief executive of the nonprofit Light Years IP, said that Ethiopia's strategy is to control the brands and change negotiating terms so that the coffee price, and therefore the farmers' income, increases. The country now issues royalty-free licenses that allow third parties to use the trademarks. In exchange, the licensees must advertise the origin of the coffee, educate customers about Ethiopia's coffee and provide information on retail sales.

As a result of the new strategy, Layton expects demand for Ethiopian coffee to grow and bring $100 million to $150 million in additional income to the country each year.

TEXTILE MANUFACTURING

On the other hand, Washington-based lawyer Anthony Carroll said that the demise of traditional textile manufacturing in West Africa is a sad lesson on how a region lost control of its creative heritage and was unable to protect its markets.

In the 1980s at the height of production, 600,000 tons of the unique wax-dyed cotton was produced by more than 100,000 workers. In the 1990s, however, 140 of 180 factories in West Africa closed; the jobs went to China, where most of the traditional patterned cloth now is produced.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION AND INNOVATION

After reforms to national intellectual property laws, biomedical companies in Brazil and Jordan have become "very dynamic innovators," Ryan said. One Brazilian company has turned decades of research toward developing its own products. A Jordanian company, instead of focusing on producing generic drugs, has secured 80 patents worth $5 million since 2006.

Layton said that he already has been approached by a number of developing countries about how they can protect their products and has identified 30 potential industries in Africa that could benefit from intellectual property protection. ♦

Kansas City Area Voters Ready for November Election . . .

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cery store."

Health care is another major concern. Effertz Farms is "paying too much" for employee health insurance, she said.

The Effertzes said they'd like to see McCain select Mitt Romney as his vice presidential running mate.

"He knows what he's talking about. He knows how to turn a business around and make money," Tom said.

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

What is Earth Day?

By Timothy Brown
Staff Writer

Washington -- Earth Day, April 22, is the annual U.S. celebration of the environment and a time for Americans to assess the work still needed to protect the natural gifts of our planet. Earth Day has no central organizing force behind it, though several non-governmental organizations work to keep track of the thousands of local events in schools and parks that mark the day. It affirms that environmental awareness is part of the country's consciousness and that the idea of protecting the environment -- once the province of a few conservationists -- has moved from the extreme to the mainstream of American thought.

This was not always the case. In the 19th century, Americans, blessed with a vast land rich in natural resources, lived with the notion that fresh fields were always just over the horizon. When one exhausted the soil or forests or coal of a given place, it was possible to move on to another. As industry boomed in the early 20th century people accepted without question skies blackened from smokestack emissions and rivers fouled with industrial waste. As early as the mid-1930s -- and again in the 1950s -- Ohio's Cuyahoga River, running through America's industrial heartland, was set ablaze by burning chemical waste from factories built upon its banks. There was no public outcry. Few people even noticed.

During the 1960s public attitudes began to change. In 1962 a marine biologist named Rachel Carson published Silent Spring. The title referred to a future without birds and described in plain language devastating long-term effects of highly toxic pesticides and other chemical agents then commonly used in American agriculture, industry and daily life. The book was a surprise best-seller.

Take Pride in America, Living Lands and Waters and other volunteers pick up trash along the Potomac River. (Janine Sides/State Dept.)

In 1968 Apollo astronauts, returning from their pioneering orbital flight around the moon, photographed the planet Earth as a whole for the first time. This image of the Earth -- small, fragile, beautiful, and unique -- quickly was imprinted on the psyches of millions. In 1969 industrial runoff in the Cuyahoga River again caught fire. This time the public reaction was immediate and intense. Cleveland, where the fire occurred, became a national laughing-stock, and the satirical song "Burn On, Big River, Burn On" was heard on radios across the country. In that same year the U.S. Congress passed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), establishing a "national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment."

Concurrent with this slow building of environmental awareness was the increasingly vocal opposition to U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam. Public demonstrations against the war -- particularly on college campuses -- gave impetus to the idea that organized challenges to the "status quo" could in fact change public policy and behavior.

ORIGIN OF EARTH DAY

Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. senator from Wisconsin and a longtime conservationist, was one who understood that the methods developed for use in the anti-war protest could succeed in other areas as well. "At the time," Nelson later wrote, "there was a great deal of turmoil on the college campuses over the Vietnam War. Protests, called anti-war teach-ins, were being widely held on campuses across the nation ... It suddenly occurred to me, why not have a nationwide teach-in on the environment? That was the origin of Earth Day."

Nelson returned to Washington and began promoting Earth Day to state

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What is Earth Day? . . .

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governors, mayors of big cities, editors of college newspapers and, importantly, to Scholastic Magazine, which is circulated in U.S. elementary and secondary schools. In September 1969, Nelson formally announced that there would be a "national environmental teach-in" sometime in spring 1970. "The wire services carried the story nationwide," recalled Nelson. "The response was dramatic .... Telegrams, letters, and telephone inquiries poured in from all over the nation. Using my Senate staff, I ran Earth Day activities out of my office. By December, the movement had expanded so rapidly that it became necessary to open an office in Washington to serve as a national clearinghouse for Earth Day inquiries and activities ....

A unique vision of Earth rising above the Moon was captured during an Apollo 8 Mission. (NASA Photo)

"Earth Day achieved what I had hoped for. The objective was to get a nationwide demonstration of concern for the environment so large that it would shake the political arena. It was a gamble, but it worked. An estimated 20 million people participated in peaceful demonstrations all across the country. Ten thousand grade schools and high schools, two thousand colleges, and one thousand communities were involved .... That was the remarkable thing that became Earth Day."

Groundbreaking federal legislation followed the success of the first Earth Day. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was established in 1970, followed by the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act of 1972, and the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Among the many far-reaching provisions of these bills was the requirement that automobiles use unleaded gasoline, achieve a minimum number of miles-per-gallon of gasoline and be equipped with catalytic converters to reduce the amount of toxic fumes released by automobile exhaust.

Then, in the wake of this legislative success, Earth Day seemed to disappear. Though annual celebrations continued, they failed to match the size and enthusiasm of the first year. Earth Day seemed to have become a relic of the protest days of the early 1970s.

Yet the spirit of Earth Day continued. Environmental organizations grew in size and power. Groups such as Greenpeace, formed in Canada in 1971, adopted principles of nonviolent civil disobedience to raise public consciousness about dwindling whale populations and the risks of nuclear power. The Nature Conservancy, formed in 1951, rededicated itself in the early 1970s to the "preservation of natural diversity" and began to buy undeveloped land for use as nature preserves. Venerable institutions such as the Sierra Club and the National Audubon Society vigorously brought suits against logging companies to slow the destruction of old-growth forests. Funded by public contributions and staffed with lawyers and educators as well as scientists and naturalists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) became aggressive watchdogs for the environment.

At home, Americans, often prompted by their children, began to separate their household trash for recycling. By the late 1980s recycling programs were established in many communities. By the mid-1990s these municipal recycling programs were paying for themselves, the amount of trash dumped into landfills was in noticeable decline, and more than 20 percent of America's municipal trash was being converted into useful products. Corporations, ever conscious of the desires of the consumer -- and the bottom line of profits -- began to promote themselves as being environmentally friendly. Many firms adopted sensible business practices that increased efficiency and reduced the amounts of industrial waste.

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What is Earth Day? . . .

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RESURGENCE IN 1990S

Earth Day came back in a big way in 1990. Led by Dennis Hayes, a primary organizer of the first Earth Day, Earth Day 1990 was international in scope. More than 200 million people around the world -- 10 times the number in 1970 -- participated in events that recognized that the environment had finally become a universal public concern. The global momentum continued in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janiero, Brazil, where an unprecedented number of governments and NGOs agreed on a far-ranging program to promote sustainable development.

The 25th anniversary of the first Earth Day in 1995 was a time to assess environmental progress. In Western countries the news seemed good -- air and water were cleaner, forests were expanding and many other environmental indicators were up as well. The sometimes volatile combination of legislation, lawsuits brought by NGOs, public education and more efficient business practices had made a noticeable and positive effect on the condition of the environment.

But there were conflicting views on just how good this news was. Environmental reporter Gregg Easterbrook wrote in The New Yorker magazine that environmental laws "along with a vast array of private efforts spurred by environmental consciousness ... have been a stunning success .... Environmental regulations, far from being burdensome and expensive, have proved to be strikingly effective, have cost less than anticipated, and have made the economies of the countries that have put them into effect stronger, not weaker."

Environment magazine, a leading NGO journal, offered a gloomier assessment: "Earth Day ... has neither spawned a permanently active citizenry nor transformed the general malaise that undermines faith in democratic accountability. Although environmentalism has made great strides since 1970, institutionally as well as in public consciousness, environmental security... today remains even more elusive than 25 years ago."

Earth Day celebrates its 37th anniversary in 2007. What began in 1970 as a protest movement has evolved into a global celebration of the environment and commitment to its protection. The history of Earth Day mirrors the growth of environmental awareness over the last three decades, and the legacy of Earth Day is the certain knowledge that the environment is a universal concern. ♦

Innovative Business Sees the Future in a Cup of Tea . . .

(Continued from page 17)

Tavalon's shop gave the partners branding and exposure, boosting their wholesale and online retail business. "We work with a lot of hotels, restaurants, lounges and clubs," Lee said. They are discussing a deal to build 35 tea bars in Bloomingdale's department stores throughout the United States. Bloomingdale's SoHo store will feature a Tavalon tea bar by fall 2008. Tavalon also has something brewing in Brazil: a shop is planned in São Paolo.

Tea has unexpected applications in Tavalon's business plan. Tavalon partners with Absolute 100 Vodka to market tea-based cocktails. It is a preferred vendor for WTS International, which manages upscale spas worldwide, where a new trend is white tea pedicures and green tea facial masks.

"Medical studies on why tea is good for you ... that's the best kind of PR you could ask for," Lee said.

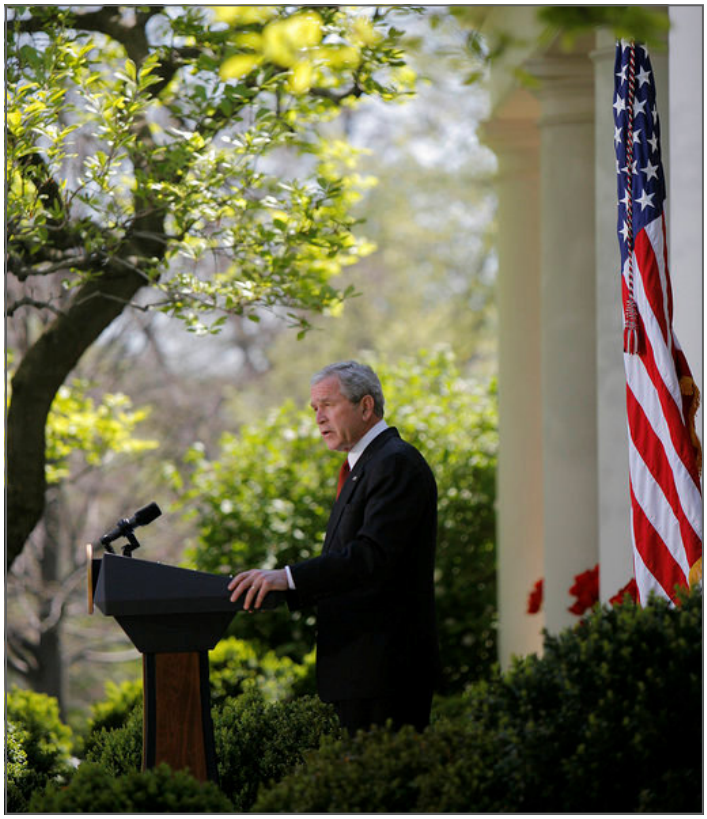
Business is good. On the wholesale side, "we can't give them enough," Cason said, "It's a good problem to have." They have outgrown the original tea bar and are hunting for a larger space.

Their youth -- Caberwal and Lee are both 29 -- sometimes gets in the way. "Most people we are talking to are twice our age," Lee said. "And when we started we were much younger, so when we went out to sign a lease on the store or try to get an investment opportunity, they look at you and say, 'I've been in business longer than you've been alive -- what could you possibly offer to us?'"

It doesn't faze them. They are encouraged by how "the big guys" like Starbucks are chasing tea. "That really shows how much potential there is ... and how much room for growth," said Lee. ♦

Technology-based Policy on Climate Change Urged by Bush

Washington -- President Bush is calling for a technology-based policy to slow greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming. His remarks came on the eve of the Paris "Major Economies Meeting," April 18-20 where 16 leading nations will discuss solutions to climate change. The meetings were initiated by Bush in September 2007 to stimulate international cooperation.



President George W. Bush speaks on climate change during remarks from the Rose Garden Wednesday, April 16, 2008, at the White House. White House photo by Noah Robinowitz

"Today, I am announcing a new national goal: to stop the growth of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 2025," he said.

Bush cited recent federal legislation that mandates a fuel-economy standard for passenger vehicles of 14.7 kilometers per liter (35 miles per gallon) by 2020 and requires substantially increased production of renewable fuels by 2022. "This should provide an incentive for shifting to a new generation of fuels like cellulosic ethanol that will reduce concerns about food prices and the environment," he said.

The president acknowledged the need to act more quickly to "slow the growth of power-sector greenhouse gas emissions" through the development of new technology and investment in the green energy sector. He opposed "abandoning nuclear power and our nation's huge reserves of coal." Rather, he wants "to promote more emission-free nuclear power and encourage the investments necessary to produce electricity from coal without releasing carbon into the air."

Other new objectives include improving energy efficiency in lighting, appliances and buildings, and increasing reliance on renewable energy sources for electricity. These steps will "prevent billions of metric tons of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere," he said.

Bush said the commercialization and use of low-emission technologies should be more competitive. "Long-lasting" incentives should be introduced to "make lower emission power sources less expensive relative to higher emissions sources."

American economic and energy security, he said, would be protected and harmful greenhouse gas emissions simultaneously would be reduced by fortifying technology and green economy investment. "The right way is to set realistic goals for reducing emissions consistent with advances in technology, while increasing our energy security and ensuring our economy can continue to prosper and grow," he said, adding it is possible to "slow, stop and eventually reverse the growth of greenhouse gas emissions as long as technology continues to develop."

Commenting on the "flawed approach" of the Kyoto Protocol, which will expire in 2012, he called for international cooperation in formulating new policies to meet the challenge of climate change, "a new process that brings together the countries responsible for most of the world's emissions."

The Kyoto Protocol is an amendment to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. Countries that ratified this protocol committed to reducing their emissions of carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases, or engage in emissions trading if they maintain or increase emissions of these gases, which have been linked to global warming. It was negotiated in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997 and came into force on February 16, 2005. The United States is not a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol;

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Prepare for Health Effects of Climate Change, World Experts Urge

By Cheryl Pellerin
Staff Writer

Washington -- Recognition of the link between climate change and health is growing, driving efforts of those who are the front-line responders -- public health professionals -- to make sure health care systems and global populations are prepared for the worst.

Scientists worldwide agree that climate is changing as a result of human activity, and climate influences the biological functions basic to life.

On April 7, the theme for the World Health Organization's (WHO) World Health Day was "Protecting Health from Climate Change." In the United States, the theme of National Public Health Week, April 7-11, was "Climate Change: Our Health in the Balance." On April 9, a U.S. House of Representatives committee heard testimony from climate and health experts on the same topic. (See "World Health Day Targets Human Effects of Climate Change

"The public health system will be a front-line responder to potential emergency conditions caused by climate change," Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association (APHA), told the House Select Committee on Energy Dependence and Global Warming. "It will also play a key role in informing, educating and empowering the nation to make the changes needed to mitigate the problem."

Waters in Lam Takong Dam in Korat, Nakhon Ratchasima province of Thailand have dried up due to prolonged drought

The APHA, Benjamin added, has had a policy on climate change and health since 1995.

ENERGY POLICY = HEALTH POLICY

People around the world already are feeling the effects of climate-sensitive diseases that kill millions, according to WHO. Malnutrition causes more than 3.5 million deaths a year, diarrheal diseases kill more than 1.8 million annually and malaria nearly 1 million.

Other recent events foreshadow a climate-altered future -- the 2003 European heat wave that killed 70,000; major Rift Valley fever outbreaks in Africa; 2005's Hurricane Katrina, which killed 1,800 and displaced thousands; malaria in the East African highlands; and cholera epidemics in Bangladesh.

"Global warming is unlike many other health threats," said Dr. Jonathan Patz, a professor in the Department of Population Health Sciences and at the Nelson Institute, both at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, "because, unlike single-agent toxins or microbes, climate change affects multiple pathways of harmful exposures to our health."

The policy changes needed to address this problem, he told the committee, will be large if the nation is serious about protecting the public from the effects of climate change.

"Energy policy," Patz said, "now becomes one and the same as public health policy."

Reducing fossil-fuel burning, for example -- in part by making it practical for more people to travel by foot, bicycle or public transportation rather than by car -- would reduce air pollution, improve personal fitness and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and subsequent global warming.

"The challenges posed by climate change urgently demand improving public health infrastructure, energy conservation and urban planning policies," he added. "As such, climate change can present enormous health risks and opportunities quite directly via improved fitness, reduced obesity and improved air quality."

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Technology-based Policy on Climate Change . . .

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neither are developing nations like China and India.

"China and India are experiencing rapid economic growth which is good for their people and good for the world. But this also means that they are emitting increasingly large quantities of greenhouse gases which has consequences for the entire global climate," Bush said.

In response, a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) vice president and member of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Richard Moss, called Bush's plan "unrealistic" and "too little too late" in a April 16 statement posted on the WWF Web site.

"Halting the growth of emissions by 2025 is woefully inadequate," he said. "While no one knows exactly what the right emissions target is, it's very clear that by 2020 emissions must be in sharp decline," Moss said.

He added it is time to "focus on the next occupant of the White House. We need to hear how each of the candidates would address the climate change threat. The world is looking to them for leadership."

The United States is working to achieve a mutually acceptable replacement for the Kyoto Protocol with other nations under the United Nations Framework on Climate Change by the end of 2009.

"We're working toward a climate agreement that includes the meaningful participation of every major economy and gives none a free ride," Bush said.

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

Prepare for Health Effects of Climate Change, World Experts Urge . . .

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PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH

Around the world, public health officials are assessing the measures already in place and determining future needs for protecting health from climate change, with a focus on women and children in developing nations and other vulnerable populations.

WHO and its partners, for example -- the U.N. Environmental Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the U.N. World Meteorological Organization -- are devising a work plan and research agenda to get better estimates of the scale and nature of health vulnerability and to identify health protection strategies and tools, including better surveillance and forecasting systems and stronger basic health services.

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) leads efforts to anticipate the health effects of climate change, to ensure systems are in place to detect and track them and take steps to prepare for, respond to and manage associated risks.

CDC scientists already have expertise in disease surveillance, environmental health, geographic information systems and modeling, preparedness planning and training, said Dr. Howard Frumkin, director of the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health and of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the agency has identified the following ways to meet the health challenge of climate change:

Improve surveillance systems for food-borne, water-borne, vector (insect)-borne, zoonotic (animal diseases in people) and other diseases with state and local partners; Build research capacity by boosting staffs experienced in epidemiology, infectious disease ecology, disaster preparedness, modeling and forecasting, climatology and health science and communication.

Support capacity in universities to research the links between climate change and public health.

Provide communication and technical assistance on the health effects of climate change to health professionals, state and local health departments, universities, science teachers, community groups, state and local officials, faith-based organizations, industry and the public. ♦