



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

International Contact Group on Somalia Communiqué

The International Contact Group on Somalia met at the Headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo, Egypt, to discuss next steps to advance the political process and stabilize the security situation in Somalia. The Contact Group expresses its serious concern at the recent violence in Mogadishu, in particular the indiscriminate shelling of heavily populated areas and in-

ter-clan fighting, which has resulted in the death, injury, and displacement

lowed by comprehensive and permanent cease-fire arrangements. The Con-



A general view of a meeting in session at the Arab League in Cairo April 3, 2007. (Reuters Photo)

tact Group stands ready to assist the efforts of the UN, in partnership with the League of Arab States, African Union, and Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to help broker these arrangements to provide a safe

and stable environment for the political and reconciliation process.

of many Somalis. The Contact Group calls on all parties to cease immediately all hostilities, fol-

lowed by comprehensive and permanent cease-fire arrangements. The Contact Group stands ready to assist the efforts of the UN, in partnership with the League of Arab States, African Union, and Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to help broker these arrangements to provide a safe

(Continued on page 2)

U.S. AIDS Relief Program Has Made "Good Start," Evaluators Say

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Two years into the five-year U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), an evaluation committee at the Institute of Medicine (IOM) concludes that the program has made a good start

toward meeting its ambitious targets and establishing the program to make further progress.

The five-year worldwide targets include supporting the prevention of 7 million HIV infections, providing anti-retroviral therapy to 2 million people with HIV/AIDS and caring

for 10 million people affected by HIV/AIDS, including orphans and other vulnerable children.

The IOM Committee for the Evaluation of the PEPFAR Implementation, chaired by Jaime Sepulveda, University of California-San Francisco

(Continued on page 3)

African news

Sanctions on Sudan Under Consideration, United States Says (P 4)

School Interventions Lead to Help for Zambian Girl (P 5)

Guinea's Parents Learn To Advocate for Schools (P 6)

American News

Legendary American Town Elects a Mayor Born in Iran (P 7)

National Museum of Women in the Arts Celebrates 20 Years (P 8)

World War II African-American Airmen Receive Congressional Medal (P 10)

American Universities Have Valued Place in Middle East (P 11)

International Issues

U.S. Calls Re-launch of Arab Peace Initiative "Very Positive" (P 12)

Victim-Centered Approach Is Key To Fighting Human Trafficking (P 13)

Anti-Corruption Drive Ensures Best Return on Anti-Poverty Fund (P 14)

U.S. Urges Action on Implementation on U.N. Anti-Corruption Pact (P 15)

health issue

Egypt, China Report New Human Cases of Avian Influenza (P 16)

International Contact Group on Somalia Communiqué . . .

(Continued from page 1)

The Contact Group reiterates its concern at the continued human suffering in Somalia, particularly following the recent increase in violence, and the burden it imposes on Somalia's neighbours. The Contact Group demands that all parties in Somalia comply with international humanitarian law, guarantee the safety and security for all humanitarian and relief work in Somalia, and ensure the protection of the Somali population.

The Contact Group strongly condemns the actions of extremists and terrorists who continue to threaten the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) and the political and reconciliation process. The Contact Group condemns any threats or hostile action aimed at deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The Contact Group supports efforts to counter these

threats, while ensuring that action is proportionate and avoids civilian casualties and disruption of humanitarian efforts. The Contact Group calls on all regional actors and Somalis to marginalize extremists and terrorists and to hold spoilers accountable.

The Contact Group emphasizes the paramount importance of establishing an inclusive and genuine political and reconciliation process reaching out to all parts of Somali society. The Contact Group looks forward to the early convening of the proposed National Reconciliation Congress, at which all relevant groups are represented and allowed

to nominate their own representatives, leading to improved representation in the TFIs and a constitutional process for the remainder of the transitional period as envisaged in the Transitional Federal Charter.

Disarmament should take place as part of a comprehensive plan in the context of the overall political process and monitored and supported by the international community. As



U.S. Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer (L) listens during a meeting at the Arab League in Cairo April 3, 2007. (Reuters Photo)

envisaged in the Charter, the Contact Group encourages the TFIs to move forward with establishment of representative local and regional administrations, and to pay careful attention to the need for a broad-based administration in Mogadishu as the capital of Somalia.

The Contact Group emphasizes the role of AMISOM and the training of all-inclusive Somali security forces in achieving lasting stability in Somalia and welcomes the deployment of the Ugandan contingent. The Contact Group condemns the killing of a Ugandan soldier and eleven members of the Belorussian airplane crew, and expresses its

sympathy and solidarity with Uganda, Belarus, and the AU. The Contact Group welcomes the contributions of several members towards this effort, and reiterates the need for funding and logistical and technical support to the AU and troop contributing countries to facilitate the full deployment of AMISOM, leading to the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Somalia. The Contact Group expresses its appreciation for the contributions of Italy, Kenya, Norway, Tanzania, United States, United Kingdom, League of Arab States, and the European Union in this regard.

Welcoming the recent visit of the UN Technical Assessment Mission to the region, the Contact Group encourages the UN Security Council to consider as soon as possible what to assist in this regard, including arrangements for burden sharing for continued financing of AMISOM.

The Contact Group agreed to hold its next meeting in London.

Agreed in Cairo on April 3, 2007*

**The International Contact Group on Somalia includes Italy, Kenya, Norway, Sweden, Tanzania, the United Kingdom, and the United States together with the African Union European Union (Presidency and Commission), Intergovernmental Authority on Development, League of Arab States, and United Nations.*

U.S. AIDS Relief Program Has Made “Good Start,” Evaluators Say . . .

(Continued from page 1)

presidential chair and visiting professor, released its report -- PEPFAR Implementation: Progress and Promise -- March 30.

The committee “did a great service in the report,” said Ambassador Mark Dybul, a physician and U.S. global AIDS coordinator, at an April 3 policy discussion at George Washington University. “There isn’t an area we’re working in where we couldn’t do better.”

A GOOD START

In 2003, Congress passed the U.S. Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Act, which established the five-year, \$15 billion PEPFAR initiative to help countries around the world respond to their AIDS epidemics. The act required that the IOM give Congress a three-year evaluation of the initiative’s progress.

To produce its report, the IOM committee examined the initiative and made visits to most of the 15 PEPFAR focus countries -- Botswana, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guyana, Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia.

“Though the programs evaluated are still young,” Sepulveda wrote in the report’s preface, “it was clear that millions of people are being served and life-saving medical care is being delivered on a large scale in some of the world’s most challenging settings.”

He added, “I strongly believe that the American people, acting through PEPFAR, are to be complimented for supporting this remarkable humanitarian undertaking.”

Since its beginnings, the PEPFAR program has supported anti-retroviral therapy for more than 800,000 adults and children; HIV testing and counseling for nearly 19 million people; and services to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV to more than 6 million women, including preventive anti-retroviral

“broad and bold development agenda” based on a radical philosophy outlined in the Monterrey Consensus -- the outcome of the 2002 United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development -- that rejects the donor-recipient approach and embraces the power of partnership.



[U.S. Ambassador Don Yamamoto visited Hope for Children, one of six community organizations chosen by PEPFAR/Ethiopia as the first recipients of the Small Grants to Community-Based Organizations Program under U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief \(PEPFAR\). \(02/08/07\)](#)

drugs for more than half a million HIV-positive women.

PEPFAR also has reported funding education and information campaigns that have reached an estimated 140 million adults and children; care and support services for 4.5 million adults, orphans and other vulnerable children; and training in HIV/AIDS care and support services for more than 1 million people.

Dybul said PEPFAR is part of a

The principles include country ownership of programs and processes, good governance, performance-based development and engagement of all sectors, not just governments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To respond to the “enduring need for U.S. leadership in the effort to respond to the HIV/AIDS pandemic,” the committee said, PEP-

(Continued on page 5)

Sanctions on Sudan Under Consideration, United States Says

By Stephen Kaufman
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States is looking at the "next diplomatic steps" to take on Sudan to pressure the government to allow peace-keeping forces into the Darfur region to provide security and stability, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said April 2.

"There are a number of different diplomatic levers that are at our disposal," McCormack said, including "bilateral sanctions [and] multilateral sanctions."

He said the Bush administration currently is considering its options, and is consulting with its international partners.

After talks in Ethiopia in November 2006, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir committed in principle to allowing a three-phase, 15,000-member hybrid United Nations-African Union (AU) force to deploy in the Darfur region to augment the overstretched contingent of AU troops already on the ground.

"We haven't seen any actions by the Sudanese government to indicate that they're going to change their position about letting in all three phases of the AU-U.N. force," McCormack said, adding that President Bashir has attempted to add caveats to the plan "that we believe would lessen the effectiveness of that force." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=March&x=20070313182857esnamfuak6.715029e-02>).

"Quite clearly, to this point the diplomatic pressure that we as well as others have tried to apply hasn't been working," he said, and "as a result, we have to take a look at what else we might do."



State Department spokesman Sean McCormack
(File photo State Dept.)

McCormack said U.S. officials "still hold out hope" that President Bashir indicated a potential change in Sudan's position during recent talks with U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in Saudi Arabia.

However, he said, there is no alternative to having a force deployed in Darfur, saying "it's what needs to be done."

"They need to be able to provide security not only for the people, but the humanitarian aid workers, providing an environment in which ... Darfur is more stable and that you can actually start to make some progress on the implementation of the Darfur peace agreement," he said.

The spokesman also acknowledged continued difficulty in obtaining troop contributions for the force, saying Sudan has been sending "subtle signals" suggesting those

forces could be entering a nonpermissive environment, as well as Sudan's suggestion that only African countries could contribute troops.

McCormack said imposing that requirement would "hamper the effectiveness" of the force.

"There need to be forces from outside of Africa in this AU-U.N. force, just for the simple reason of not a matter of will on the part of African forces but just the limited amount of capability that they have," he said.

When asked about an April 2 attack on AU peacekeepers in western Darfur that killed five Senegalese soldiers, McCormack condemned the incident and called on the Sudanese government to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The AU soldiers "are there trying only to provide some semblance of security for innocent civilians in Darfur," he said, adding the United States does not yet know who was responsible for the attack.

For more information on U.S. policy, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).

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

School Interventions Lead to Help for Zambian Girl

Precious Banda was viewed by her teachers at a school in Chipata District, Zambia, as a quiet girl who participated little in school and often fell asleep at her desk. She frequently missed classes. When Banda was in school she usually was on the sidelines during sports activities.

Then the school began participating in a health and nutrition intervention program sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Program staff tested a sample group of pupils for bilharzia, a disease caused by parasitic worms. The bilharzia rate in the Banda's district was found to be high. Some

schools had a 70 percent positive testing rate.

Banda was among those pupils who tested positive for the disease. Through the program she received treatment for the parasites, was given vitamin A and started a 10-week course of iron supplements.

Several weeks after her treatment began, staff members interviewed the headmaster and teachers and found that the intervention had had a dramatic impact.

The headmaster said Banda seemed to be a new person. She was now active, frequently raising her hand to answer questions instead of sleeping or staying away from

school. Banda's participation in sports also increased.

The teachers were enthusiastic about the intervention program, noting that, in general, performance at the school improved after everyone had been treated.

Word of the change in Banda and other pupils who had been treated spread rapidly to other districts. Their residents began to ask when they could be included in the program.

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

U.S. AIDS Relief Program Has Made “Good Start,” Evaluators Say . . .

(Continued from page 3)

FAR should modify its approach, including the following:

Transition from its focus on emergency relief to an emphasis on long-term strategic planning and capacity building for a sustainable response.

Address long-term factors underlying the epidemics in each country (accumulate better data, emphasize and enhance prevention, empower women and girls, build work force capacity and expand the knowledge base).

Improve coordination with partner governments and other donors and support the World Health Organization prequalification process (a faster process than approval through the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration) for medications obtained through PEPFAR.

Expand, improve and integrate prevention, treatment and care for orphans and vulnerable children services and increase attention to marginalized populations.

“The United States has taken a critical leadership role in responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic,” Sepulveda wrote, “but since it cannot provide all the necessary resources, the lessons learned from PEPFAR will be critical leverage to motivate other donor nations to follow its lead with deeper investments.”

“The United States cannot solve the world’s HIV/AIDS problems, or tuberculosis or malaria or development problems,” Dybul said. “These are global epidemics that require a

global response. Currently, the American people are providing as many resources as the rest of the world combined for HIV/AIDS. As long as that is happening, there will be gaps.”

The United States has expanded its HIV/AIDS funding dramatically, he added, “and we need the rest of the world to do the same or we’re not going to solve this problem.”

More information (<http://www.pepfar.gov/>) about PEPFAR is available on a Web site of the U.S. global AIDS coordinator.

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

Guinea's Parents Learn To Advocate for Schools

Whether building a latrine, serving lunches, running a library or promoting adult literacy, local school committees have proven to be a strong force in improving education in the Forest Region of Guinea.

Members of local committees -- affiliates of the Association des Parents d'Élèves et des Amis de l'École (APEAE), or the Association of Parents and Friends of the School -- have received extensive training through the Community Participation in Education for Equity and Quality (PACEEQ) project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Save the Children.

In laying the foundation for local management, PACEEQ trained local organizations, who in turn trained APEAE members in a variety of organizational skills, including internal governance, educational quality, financial management, student health and nutrition, and gender equity.

The PACEEQ approach rests on the belief that the community knows its needs and is best able to identify solutions. The program encourages partnerships among schools, local governments, civil society and school committees.

Through PACEEQ, members of the regions' parent associations learned how to participate in school management and to boost the equal treatment of urban and rural boys and girls. Developing grassroots organizations to support schools reflects the Guinean government's aim to decentralize education services.

APEAE members, particularly women, have benefited from the project's literacy component, which is part of the literacy program led by Guinea's National Literacy Service.

The school committee in Didita District manages a community library of French literature and textbooks

school administrators and the APEAE can focus their annual planning and streamline teacher-parent collaborative efforts.

In the words of one member, improving school conditions illustrates that "the embryo of democracy" is at work in the region's local communities.



Students participate in class at a school supported by USAID and Save the Children in Guinea. Parents and friends of the school received training to support in school management. (Save the Children)

made possible through a grant from Save the Children. The library gives schoolchildren supplemental reading opportunities.

In Bossou subprefecture, the school committee uses a uniform set of criteria to evaluate a school's physical infrastructure. This includes the presence of latrines, a fence around the grounds, its quality of instruction -- the teacher-to-student and textbook-per-student ratios -- and other performance factors. By referring to the same quality criteria,

As one member of the Bossou APEAE put it: "The community has placed confidence in us."

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

Legendary American Town Elects a Mayor Born in Iran

By Steve Holgate
USINFO Special Correspondent

Portland, Oregon -- Few places conjure up as many iconic images of the American dream -- movie stars and millionaires, palm-lined streets, the legendary Sunset Boulevard -- as Beverly Hills, California. Jimmy Delshad added his own dream to that list when he became the legendary town's first Iranian-American mayor.

In a close race that saw the top four finishers separated by only 3 percentage points, Jimmy Delshad won re-election to the Beverly Hills City Council on March 6. By local tradition, as the longest-serving member of the City Council, Delshad was chosen mayor by the other four council members. The formal selection took place March 27, the day election results were certified as official.

Delshad mounted an electoral campaign to make Beverly Hills "the smartest and safest city in the United States" by providing wireless Internet access, installing traffic lights that adjust to changing traffic flows and increasing security measures.

Born 66 years ago in Shiraz, Iran, Delshad also promised "to serve as a bridge" between the city's majority communities and its large Iranian-American population, which makes up roughly a quarter of the 33,000 residents of this Los Angeles suburb. Reflecting the American challenge of balancing respect for ethnic identity with inclusion, Delshad proudly ran on his Iranian heri-

tage while emphasizing his community's desire to be part of the larger American social fabric.

Delshad noted that residents in Beverly Hills had been good to Iranian ex-patriots. "They have opened their arms to us and taken us in," Delshad told USINFO in a telephone interview. He added that Iranian-



Jimmy Delshad (L) is given the oath of office by Fred Hayman (R) as Delshad is installed as Beverly Hills' first Iranian-born mayor during a city council meeting in Beverly Hills, California March 27, 2007. REUTERS/Phil McCarten

Americans want "to show we are here and want to be good citizens of America and contribute to its welfare."

The road from Shiraz to Beverly Hills has been a long and successful one for Jimmy Delshad, who came to the United States in 1958 at 18 years of age. After earning a university degree in 1965, he entered the fledgling business of computer technology, forming his own successful company a few years later. A longtime resident of the Los Angeles area, Delshad moved to Beverly Hills in 1989 and was elected councilman four years ago.

Speaking of his years of public ser-

vice, Delshad, who also served as president of his synagogue, said, "These things could not have happened to me somewhere else. So, I wanted to give back to the community and at the same time create a higher level of respect for the Iranians in America."

On the City Council, he has plenty of opportunity to do both. Within the decentralized American political system, cities exercise considerable autonomy. Typically, they enact and enforce their own ordinances over a broad range of issues, including construction standards, business permits, vehicular traffic and sanitation. They also set zoning standards, which determine what types of construction and businesses will be permitted in various neighborhoods. Like many cities, Beverly

Hills imposes and collects taxes and hires employees, including police officers and a city manager who runs the city's day-to-day affairs under the guidance and policy set by the council.

In discussing the City Council, Delshad emphasizes its openness and the opportunity it gives local residents to find compromise on controversial matters. The council holds public hearings on a broad array of topics and listens to all who want to speak. It then makes binding decisions on issues such as whether a house of a certain design can be built within a certain part of the city (to maintain a neighbor-

(Continued on page 9)

National Museum of Women in the Arts Celebrates 20 Years

By Lauren Monsen
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Throughout its existence, the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) has been called on to justify its mission in a way that "other established museums don't have to," says Jordana Pomeroy, co-curator of the NMWA's new exhibition, "Italian Women Artists from Renaissance to Baroque."

As the world's only museum dedicated solely to the works of women artists, the NMWA is accustomed to critics who question the need for such a facility and who insist that art should not be viewed through the prism of an artist's gender. But in interviews with USINFO, both Pomeroy and the NMWA's director of communications, Howard White, said the museum is needed.

The obstacles that confronted women artists in the past have not disappeared entirely, they said. The NMWA performs a valuable service by offering women artists "a guaranteed place to display their art," according to White.

"Historically, women had been notoriously underrepresented in museums and art galleries," so female artists "had a hard time being taken seriously," he said. "In the 1960s, with the advent of the women's movement, things began to change." The expansion of women's rights "drew attention to the fact that women had been shut out by the male art establishment," he added.

Although circumstances have improved, "it's still harder for women to get commissions, and they still

face a little bit of an artistic glass ceiling," he said.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO TRAILBLAZERS

The NMWA is commemorating its 20th anniversary by staging an exhibition that honors the pioneering efforts of Italian women artists during the Renaissance and Baroque eras because that extended period represents "the first time in Western history where you can attach



First lady Laura Bush and Leila Castellaneta tour the Italian Women Artists exhibit at NMWA. (AP Images)

women's names to particular works [of art]," said White. "For the first time, women artists were competing with men and achieving individual recognition."

These women produced paintings, prints and drawings that encompassed a wide range of subjects and themes, including portraits, religious works and mythological allegories. Although their talent often was acknowledged and admired by their male peers, professional women artists had to struggle for wider community acceptance. Also, negotiating a commission was particularly challenging at a time when women did not have the legal standing to sign their own contracts. The fact that a number of women artists managed to thrive in a fairly hostile environment led to "a thawing of societal conventions"

that helped pave the way for their successors, White observed.

In addition, "we're trying to present a broad spectrum of women in the arts, encompassing literary artists, filmmakers, potters and ceramicists, metalworkers and others, as well as painters and sculptors," said White. "And we have an ongoing series of exhibits called 'Women to Watch,' featuring women artists whose careers are about to take off."

The NMWA also exhibits the work of contemporary artists who have attained a significant following in mid-career. In 2006, for example, the NMWA staged a show highlighting the work of African-American sculptor Chakaia Booker. White said Booker uses recycled rubber tires to create "beautiful and very ethereal" abstract sculptures, some as high as 6.1 meters tall, "and her work has both

an aesthetic message and an ecological message: that there are things you can do with materials that we casually throw away."

Asked to name previous NMWA exhibitions that demonstrate the museum's scope and ambition, White and Pomeroy agreed that three rank among their personal favorites. A 2000-2001 exhibition on the stagecraft of Julie Taymor, a renowned Broadway set and costume designer, was "magical," they said. "Taymor is a three-dimensional genius, really brilliant," recalled Pomeroy. "The show was fun; we incorporated a lot of interactive, high-tech items that appealed to kids and to people of all ages."

The other exhibitions they cited

(Continued on page 9)

National Museum of Women in the Arts Celebrates 20 Years . . .

(Continued from page 8)

were “Nordic Cool: Hot Women Designers” (2004), showcasing Scandinavian women designers who create distinctive furniture, textiles, utensils, fashion, jewelry and architecture, and “Dreaming Their Way: Australian Aboriginal Women Painters” (2006), featuring the work of indigenous female artists from across Australia.

WORKING WITH GLOBAL PARTNERS

White stressed that the NMWA always is interested in working with international partners to stage exhibitions that highlight the talents of women artists from around the

globe. “We’d like to do something with Mexico or Turkey, for instance,” he said. “We’ll probably approach those countries’ embassies and ask them if they can suggest women artists who deserve more recognition.”

New domestic projects are under way, too. The NMWA has launched the first phase of a pilot program to help incorporate the arts into U.S. school curricula. Known as “ABC” (arts, books, creativity), the program targets economically disadvantaged schools that otherwise might not be able to introduce their students to artistic pursuits. Educators have discovered that “early exposure to the arts is not only a good thing in and of itself,

[but] it also facilitates learning,” said White.

As the NMWA looks back on its first 20 years, the museum’s commitment to advancing the prospects of outstanding women artists remains of paramount importance, White indicated. “There’s still a bit of an old-boy network in the art world, but things are getting better,” he said. “After all, some of the best artists working today are women.”

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

Legendary American Town Elects a Mayor Born in Iran . . .

(Continued from page 7)

hood’s architectural integrity), or how much parking space, landscaping and street improvements a new hotel must agree to include in its plans before receiving a construction permit. Delshad says that the openness of the process is its great strength. “It’s a question of integrity,” he says. “Even if [some involved parties] disagree with your reasons, they respect your honesty.”

In many disputes, Delshad says, council members listen to all the testimony and then tell the opposing parties, “Go ahead and work it out between you. If you can’t come up with a compromise, we will give you a date to come back [before the council] and we’ll make a final decision.” Faced with the prospect of an all-or-nothing resolution, the parties usually find a com-

promise they both can accept.

One issue shows Delshad’s ability to serve as mediator between the Iranian-American community and other residents of the city. A number of years ago, newly arrived Iranians began building extraordinarily large houses to accommodate their extended families. These houses often featured vivid colors and architectural features that clashed with the homes around them, causing friction within the community. The matter was brought to the council.

“Since I got on the City Council in order to bring the communities together,” says Delshad, “I helped create a Design Review Commission. Designs would have to go through this special commission to make sure that the homes were appropriate for that street. As a result they became better designed, much

better looking. The designers were happier. The [Iranian] homeowners were happier. And the neighbors were happier.”

The issue underscores some of the strengths that Delshad believes Iranians bring to American culture. “One of the things we have to offer is a very close-knit family,” he says. “They respect their elders, their parents They create a value system that gets handed down from parents to children. The respect for education is very important. They press children to get good grades, get a higher education.”

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

World War II African-American Airmen Receive Congressional Medal

By Lauren Monsen
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The legendary Tuskegee Airmen, an elite corps of African-American military pilots who served with great distinction during World War II, were honored with the Congressional Gold Medal on March 29.

At a ceremony in the Capitol rotunda, aviators who once had to struggle for recognition from a segregated defense establishment finally received their due, in the form of the highest honor Congress can bestow on civilians. Historians say the pilots' achievements were instrumental in persuading President Harry S. Truman to desegregate the U.S. armed services in 1948.

From 1942 to 1946, nearly 1,000 black fighter and bomber pilots were trained at the segregated Tuskegee (Alabama) Army Air Field, and 450 served overseas. "These airmen fought two wars -- one against a military force overseas and the other against racism at home and abroad," says the group's Web site.

The Tuskegee Airmen flew more than 150,000 sorties over North Africa and Europe during World War II. They escorted Allied bombers while also destroying more than 250 enemy aircraft in the air and another 150 on the ground. Their bravery was well documented, and throughout their wartime service, they never lost a plane.

Although only 385 of the original 994 Tuskegee Airmen are still alive, many made the trip to Washington for the medal ceremony, where President Bush and former Secretary of State Colin Powell, a retired general, were among the featured

speakers.

In his remarks, the president compared the feats of the now-elderly aviators to the patriotic service of historic figures whose statues line the Capitol rotunda. "As I walked into the rotunda," said Bush, "I was impressed by the fact that I wasn't among heroes who were statues. I was impressed that I was amongst heroes who still live."



President Bush and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi shake hands with Tuskegee Airmen during Congressional Gold Medal ceremony. (AP Images)

The president saluted the pilots for selflessly serving their country at a time when they were subjected to countless indignities because of their race. Despite their impressive service record, the Tuskegee Airmen were refused access to the all-white officers' clubs of their day, and some were reprimanded officially for demanding admission to the clubs. They also were denied opportunities for advancement that their white colleagues took for granted.

"Even the Nazis asked why African-American men would fight for a country that treated them unfairly," said Bush. "Yet the Tuskegee Airmen were eager to join up."

Eventually, the exemplary service of the pilots and the black ground crews who supported them opened doors for other African Americans, in the military and elsewhere. Bush paid tribute to the aviators' sacrifice and applauded their determination to establish new standards of fairness in U.S. society.

"These men in our presence felt a special sense of urgency," said Bush. "They were fighting two wars: one was in Europe, and the other took place in the hearts and minds of our citizens. ... And little by little, every victory at war was translated to a victory here in the United States."

The pilots, now recognized as trailblazers whose efforts paved the way for the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, remained relatively obscure until Hollywood actor Laurence Fishburne starred in the 1995 film *The Tuskegee Airmen*.

One of the aviators, Bill Wheeler, 83, told *Newsday*: "There were guys who were anxious that they would pass away before this day came. But I wasn't among them. I knew I would live to see this."

Bush thanked the pilots for their dedicated service and acknowledged the debt their country owes them.

"The Tuskegee Airmen helped win a war, and you helped change our nation for the better," he said. "And the medal that we confer today means that we're doing a small part to ensure that your story will be told and honored for generations to come." ♦

American Universities Have Valued Place in Middle East

By Judy Aita
USINFO Staff Writer

New York -- American universities in the Middle East are important agents for social and developmental change and help deepen understanding between East and West, say the leaders of four major American educational institutions in the region.

The American University in Cairo, American University of Beirut, Lebanese American University and American University of Sharjah -- with a combined enrollment of more than 22,000 students -- have thrived and are valued and respected throughout the Arab world, the presidents of those institutions say.

The presidents say they see their universities as a creative force for culturally sensitive social change in their communities. They also see their universities helping pave the way for a more peaceful and prosperous region and educating generations of Middle Easterners and Arabs who understand American values and can enter into a positive dialogue with the United States.

"Our American institutions play the role of agents of change in two ways," said Joseph G. Jabbara, president of Lebanese American University, at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York March 29. The first way is "by providing students with the opportunity to go through an educational process where reason and the heart come together ... so that they learn, for example, how to solve conflict by peaceful means, how to accept the other, although the other might have a different opinion, without recourse to violence."

The second way is by calling on an "army of alumni" that now numbers more than 100,000 who occupy important positions in civil society, government and public service, Jabbara continued.

Also central to the schools' mission is the education of women. David Arnold, president of the American University in Cairo (AUC), said, "In our part of the Middle East and Arab world, one cannot overlook the importance of that in terms of societal change and social progress," he said.

Founded in 1919, AUC admitted its first female student in 1928. The Lebanese American University opened in 1866 as a school for girls and did not admit men until 1974. American University of Beirut (AUB), founded in 1866, became co-ed in 1920. At the American University of Sharjah, founded in 1997, some 45 percent of the students living in dormitories are female, according to the school's Web site

The universities also support and strengthen civil society institutions in the Middle East, Arnold said.

The university in Cairo has a variety of student community service and outreach activities connected to local nongovernmental organizations. It also is home to the John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement, which studies charitable giving in the Arab world.

John Waterbury, AUB president, said that common to all American institutions of higher learning is the set of values they try to impart to their students: a sense of mutual respect and tolerance of people of diverse backgrounds.

"We seek to encourage responsible free speech and, of course, responsible academic freedom," Waterbury said. "We expose students to a wide range of choice in the design of their program and studies. We all emphasize a liberal arts education, [and] broad-based exposure to the great wealth of human creativity and knowledge."

Founded in 1997, the American University of Sharjah (AUS) is the "youngest" of the four universities. Chancellor Winfred L. Thompson said that the university is unique in that it was not founded by an American connection but by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates and ruler of Sharjah, who established the institution on the American model of higher education even though he was educated in Egypt and the United Kingdom.

Envisioned as a leading educational institution in the Gulf region, AUS is thoroughly grounded in Arab culture part of the revitalization of intellectual life in the Middle East, Thompson said.

"We try, within the unique cultural circumstances that we find ourselves, to conduct all our activities as much as we would as an American institution located in the United States in terms of our values and traditions and the ways in which we provide young people with an educational experience," he said.

The universities are also helping Americans understand the Middle East better, the presidents say. ♦

U.S. Calls Re-launch of Arab Peace Initiative “Very Positive”

By Stephen Kaufman
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Reaffirmation of the 2002 Arab initiative offering Israel recognition and permanent peace in exchange for a withdrawal from territory captured in 1967 and a resolution to the issue of Palestinian refugees is “very positive,” according to State Department spokesman Sean McCormack.

Speaking to reporters March 29, McCormack said the initiative is “an effort to reach out, to be constructive on an issue of interest to all the countries of the region, and we are encouraged by this development and we certainly welcome it.”

He urged the Arab League to use the initiative, first proposed by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, as “a basis for active diplomacy.”

The initiative calls for open direct negotiations between Arab countries and Israel. Israel has said it could accept the offer with some changes, mainly due to its opposition to a full withdrawal from the West Bank and east Jerusalem, as well as concern about an influx of a large number of Palestinian refugees inside its borders.

The Arab League, meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, also discussed forming committees to explain its

initiative to parties involved in Arab-Israeli peace efforts, including the Quartet of nations (France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States), the Group of Eight (G8) nations, and other interested parties in the region.

The G8 includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United

said earlier in the day. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=March&x=20070325183708attocnich0.210232>).)

“It’s their initiative,” he said. “We are not and have not asked them to amend it. It is up for them to decide the scope and details of [it].”



Leaders participate in the annual summit of the Arab League in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia March 28. (AP Images)

Asked about whether the Arab League will seek direct contact with Israel to discuss the initiative, a senior State Department official said the working groups the Arab states had proposed would be reaching out to the Quartet, the G8 and “other interested parties,” adding “certainly Israel might be included” among the latter group.

“I can’t rule out that they would all be in the same room together, so we’ll see,” the official said.

Kingdom, the United States and Russia.

McCormack encouraged Arab states to “use this as a moment to reach out and try to explain to all interested parties the nature of their initiative and the thinking behind their deciding to re-launch this initiative.”

During her recent visit to the region, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told leaders that it will be “very important for Arab states to play an active role in promoting the cause of peace in the region,” McCormack

For more information on U.S. policy, see *The Middle East: A Vision for the Future* (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/me_vision.html).

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

Victim-Centered Approach Is Key To Fighting Human Trafficking

By David Anthony Denny
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- A Justice Department official and representatives of nongovernmental organizations involved in combating trafficking in persons say a "victim-centered approach" to the problem is crucial to prosecuting perpetrators and rescuing victims.

Testifying at a March 26 hearing of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law, Deputy Assistant Attorney General Grace Chung Becker cited the formation of the Justice Department's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit, which uses such an approach.

The new unit works closely with U.S. attorneys' offices and human trafficking task forces around the country. These task forces are composed of federal, state and local law enforcement authorities, plus nongovernmental organization personnel who provide necessary services to trafficking victims.

"We work together to ensure the victims' safety and housing, to see that their medical and psychiatric needs are taken care of, and -- for our foreign victims -- to cooperate in normalizing their immigration status," said Becker. "This victim-centered approach works," she added. Working with U.S. attorneys' offices, Becker said, the Civil Rights Division has increased court-filed human trafficking cases since 2001 by 600 percent.

PROTECTION OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

A key U.S. tool in the fight against human trafficking is the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000

(TVPA). This law makes adult victims of severe forms of trafficking who have been certified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services eligible for benefits and services to the same extent as refugees. Victims of severe forms of trafficking who are under 18 years



Ela Sangma, a rescued trafficked victim from Meghalaya, India, attends an anti-trafficking function in Gauhati, India. (AP Images)

of age also are eligible for benefits to the same extent as refugees but do not need to be certified.

However, Katherine Kaufka, an attorney with the National Immigrant Justice Center, said statistics show that enforcement efforts have fallen short of the law's goal of identifying victims and tracking down and prosecuting traffickers operating in the United States.

"We believe that a principal cause of this failure is that the burdens placed upon the victims are too high," said Kaufka, referring to the requirement for HHS certification for protection.

Kaufka listed three areas in which she believes the law needs adjustment: providing greater protection for victims and their families; ensuring that victims who make an effort

to cooperate with law enforcement are adequately protected; and responding to the special needs of children who are victims of human trafficking.

One example Kaufka cited was a teenage girl from India who at first was reluctant to cooperate with law enforcement because the traffickers had threatened to hurt her younger sisters in India if she ever went to the police.

"We recommend that victims of trafficking who cooperate with law enforcement have the option to be united with family to support them through the legal process," said Kaufka. "If those family members reside outside the United States, they should be allowed to enter the U.S. temporarily to aid the prosecution's efforts. This change to the law will not only enhance victim protection and rehabilitation, it will simultaneously facilitate cooperation between victims and law enforcement, leading to more successful prosecutions of criminal traffickers."

Martina Vandenberg, an attorney in private practice and author of three reports on trafficking in persons, said that although Congress, the executive branch and nongovernmental organizations have worked together to assist victims and bring traffickers to justice, gaps do still exist, and traffickers continue to operate with impunity in those gaps. Holding traffickers accountable for their human rights violations can only be done when their victims are safe, secure and able to rebuild their lives, Vandenberg said.

"By focusing on the human rights and fundamental needs of the victims," said Vandenberg, "we can

(Continued on page 17)

Anti-Corruption Drive Ensures Best Return on Anti-Poverty Fund

By Andrzej Zwanecki
USINFO Staff Writer

Johannesburg, South Africa -- Working with governments that are committed to fight corruption helps ensure that assistance provided by an innovative U.S. development fund -- the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) -- has the greatest impact on people's welfare in developing countries, says a U.S. official.

"We are getting the greatest poverty-reduction return on our investment in countries that have low levels of corruption or are governed by anti-corruption reformers," said Maureen Harrington, vice president of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), which manages the MCA.

Harrington is participating in the Fifth Global Forum on Fighting Corruption, which is being held in Johannesburg, South Africa, where she talked April 2 to USINFO.

MCC is based on the principle that aid is most effective when it reinforces good governance, economic freedom and investments in people, according to the corporation's mission statement. MCC is setting a new standard for allocation of performance-based aid as it ties eligibility for assistance directly to performance on publicly available, transparent indicators related to those policies, according to a U.S. statement released by the U.S. delegation to the Global Forum.

This innovative approach has generated interest among other donor countries and international organizations, Harrington said, adding that during a recent peer review at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the MCA received high marks for being flexi-

ble and pragmatic.

But this novel approach is not without controversy. Some private development experts have said that MCC, by depending on strict standards and making an anti-corruption commitment the single most important element among those standards, could divert aid from the countries that need it most. They have argued that nations going through a post-conflict crisis or experiencing extreme poverty are very unlikely to qualify for MCA grants.

But Harrington said the MCA was meant to be different from traditional development assistance from the very beginning when President Bush announced it in 2002. The fund focuses on countries whose governments meet certain policy requirements because such governments are more likely to use their own and their donors' resources to the benefit of the people, she said.

Harrington said other U.S. and international assistance programs are available to help countries that badly need aid but have high levels of corruption.

THE MCC THRESHOLD PROGRAM

Even if potential recipient nations do not qualify immediately for MCA grants but come close to doing so and commit to reform their policies, the MCC, through its threshold program, helps them meet the qualifying criteria.

This program is intended to improve governance, and particularly to expand and accelerate anti-corruption initiatives of reform-minded governments, according to officials. To date, the MCC has approved close to \$300 million for threshold agreements with 12 countries: Albania,

Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Jordan, Malawi, Moldova, Paraguay, Philippines, Tanzania, Uganda, Ukraine and Zambia.

The corporation leaves it up to the threshold countries themselves to identify corruption-related problems and design programs to address them because it believes that ownership of such programs makes them more likely to succeed, Harrington said.

"They will always know better than anyone else what the key sources of corruption are and how to tackle them," she said.

Anti-corruption technical assistance related to the threshold program provided by the MCC through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) "does vary from country to country based on each country's unique challenges," Harrington said. Those programs vary broadly and include activities that support government procurement, reform the process for business licensing, strengthen prosecution and judicial systems and make admissions to colleges and universities more transparent.

In return for funding, MCC demands accountability. Threshold agreements signed with individual nations contain specific benchmarks to help measure those nations' progress toward the established goals. Some recent examples of such benchmarks include increasing the percentage of students tested for university admission, shortening the time it takes to process corruption cases and reducing the percentage of firms that report bribery in tax collection is frequent.

Harrington said the MCC tries to set

(Continued on page 17)

U.S. Urges Action on Implementation on U.N. Anti-Corruption Pact

By Andrzej S. Zwanecki
USINFO Staff Writer

Johannesburg, South Africa --The international community should move beyond the discussion phase and direct its resources to implementation of the U.N. Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) because a major international meeting that helped to establish the pact has exceeded original goals, says a U.S. official.

The Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity, a biannual gathering of senior government officials and experts, has achieved "far more than its original goals," said Joseph Gangloff, deputy director of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics, at the opening session in Johannesburg, South Africa, of the April 2-5 fifth global forum. Those goals included expanding awareness of corruption among governments, increasing international anti-corruption cooperation and promoting strong related standards, he said.

Gangloff co-heads the U.S. delegation to the forum.

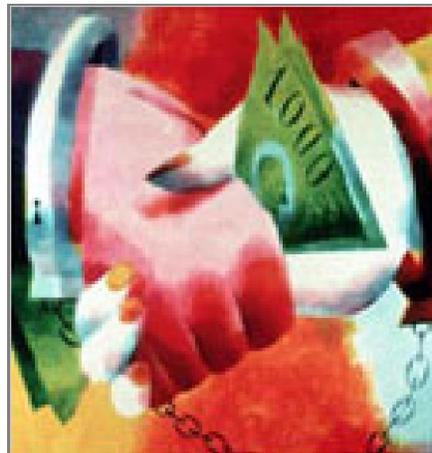
"Now, it is time to move beyond the global forum process to focus global resources on the United Nations convention and its implementation," he said.

The UNCAC, which Gangloff called "the most ambitious international anti-corruption effort" ever, provides the framework for effective global action, according to U.S. officials. The United States believes that a gathering devoted to its implementation – the Conference of the State Parties to the Convention – will elevate the original goals of the global forum to a new level to

achieve an effective global action, Gangloff said.

The UNCAC calls for action to prevent, criminalize and prosecute corruption worldwide.

Gangloff said the international community needs to support countries committed to establishing and implementing laws related to all three areas of the convention. He cited African countries as among those that might need such a support.



The Africa Forum on Fighting Corruption, which took place in March, urged African nations to sign and ratify the UNCAC as soon as possible.

South Africa's president, Thabo Mbeki, who opened the forum, said anti-corruption initiatives must be viewed in the broader context of international anti-poverty and development efforts. He said corruption hampers progress toward the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education by 2015.

"Everywhere it undermines democracy and good governance, ac-

countability and transparency," he said. "It also seriously compromises the beneficial operation of economic markets."

Mbeki said the fight against corruption must use approaches developed in the multilateral setting and involve global cooperation.

Under the theme of "Fulfilling our commitments: Effective action against corruption," the fifth global forum will address through a ministerial forum and workshops such issues as effective implementation of anti-corruption measures, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, law enforcement and prevention. It also features round-table discussions on the role of civil society, media and banking in the fight against corruption, money laundering and organized crime. U.S. delegates will be participating in many discussions to offer expert experience and listen to concerns of other countries.

The organizers expect around 1,500 delegates from more than 100 countries to participate in the forum. The biannual gathering was initiated in 1999 in Washington by the United States.

For more information, see Bribery and Corruption (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/bribery_and_corruption.html).

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

Egypt, China Report New Human Cases of Avian Influenza

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Egypt’s Ministry of Health and Population and China’s Ministry of Health have reported on new verified infections in their countries, bringing the total number of human cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza to 288, with 170 deaths.

In China, the 15th person of 24 infected there since 2003 has died from H5N1 bird flu virus. The case was confirmed by the national laboratory and reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) March 29.

The 16-year-old male from Anhui province developed fever and pneumonia-like symptoms March 17, was hospitalized March 20 and died a week later. So far, there is no evidence that he had contact with sick birds before becoming ill. Investigations continue to identify the source of exposure.

In Egypt, over the past five days, the Ministry of Health and Population, with confirmation by the Egyptian Central Public Health Laboratory and U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 in Cairo, has announced five new cases in children.

Three cases, announced April 2, included a 4-year-old boy from the southern governorate of Qena, a 7-year-old boy from Sohag governorate in southern Egypt, and a 4-year-old girl from Al-Qalubia governorate, according to WHO. Two cases, announced March 28, included a 6-year-old girl from Qena governorate (the sister of the 4-year-old boy whose case was reported April 2) and a 5-year-old boy from Menia governorate in central Egypt.

All five children are being treated and are in stable condition; their close contacts are under surveillance.

U.S. FLU RESEARCH AND SURVEILLANCE

In the United States, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is awarding \$23 million a year for seven years to establish six centers of excellence for influenza research and surveillance.



The centers will expand NIAID’s flu surveillance program internationally and in the United States, and will bolster flu research in key areas, including understanding how the virus causes disease and how the human immune system responds to infection with the virus.

“The threat of an influenza pandemic is a major source of concern for the public health community,” said NIAID Director Dr. Anthony Fauci in an April 2 statement.

The centers, he added, “will help expand the federal government’s existing international and domestic influenza surveillance efforts, further our understanding of influenza viruses, and generate the information and tools necessary to better prepare and respond to a pandemic situation.”

The new awards build on a program led by St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Tennessee and initiated by NIAID after the 1997 Hong Kong outbreak of highly pathogenic avian flu in people – the first reported human cases of H5N1.

Under the program, researchers conducted surveillance of flu viruses in aquatic birds and live bird markets in Hong Kong, helping shed light on the natural history of flu viruses. Scientists also conducted training courses in animal flu surveillance, developed diagnostic tools to detect animal flu viruses and generated viruses for use in developing human flu vaccines.

The new centers’ work will include determining the prevalence of avian flu in animals that routinely come into close contact with people; understanding how flu viruses evolve, adapt and transmit infection; and identifying immunological factors that can determine whether a flu virus causes mild illness or death.

Some centers will monitor for international and domestic cases of animal and human flu to detect and characterize quickly viruses that might have pandemic potential and to create vaccine candidates targeted to those viruses.

Ultimately, the studies will lay the groundwork for developing new and better control measures for emerging and re-emerging flu viruses.

All research findings generated by the NIAID centers of excellence will be used to support the pandemic influenza preparedness and response efforts of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). NIH is an agency of HHS.

◆

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS
SECTION
AMERICAN EMBASSY**

P.O.Box 1014
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Phone: 251-1-174007
251-1-174000
Fax: 251-1-242454
Email: pasaddis@state.gov



Anti-Corruption Drive Ensures Best Return . . .

(Continued from page 14)

benchmarks that are challenging but realistic and achievable within the two years those programs run.

It is too early to evaluate the success rate of the threshold program, according to Harrington; some threshold nations only recently passed a one-year implementation milestone. Among those, many are on track to succeed, she said.

Harrington said anti-corruption programs are most successful in those countries that focus on the sources of corruption rather than symptoms.

THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL WILL

Another U.S. participant in the forum, Elizabeth Hart, a senior anti-corruption adviser at USAID, agreed. She said that political will also plays a critical role in implementing anti-corruption initiatives.

"Anti-corruption programs need champions," she told USINFO.

Transparency, external accountability, public participation, long-term commitment and other factors also matter, Hart said.

On the other hand, she said, public anti-corruption campaigns or anti-corruption bodies not supported by specific action are counterproductive. Often the only thing they produce is disillusion among the general public, Hart added.

For additional information, see Bribery and Corruption (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/bribery_and_corruption.html) and Millennium Challenge Account (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/mca.html).

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

Victim-Centered Approach Is Key To Fighting Human Trafficking . . .

(Continued from page 13)

close off the zones of impunity in which the traffickers thrive."

Holly Burkhalter, vice president of government relations for the International Justice Mission, focused her testimony on the need for greater enforcement not only of the TVPA, but also the 1988 labor rights and anti-slavery provisions in the Trade Act, which linked U.S. trade benefits to recipients' abolition of slavery and child labor, and the Millennium Challenge Act, which tied access to U.S. aid to meeting a standard of good governance that included ending corruption -- "a key factor in the exis-

tence of slavery today," Burkhalter said.

"The most difficult and significant work for this Congress is to insist on the execution of existing law that we have in our hands today that speaks directly to the enduring, contemporary crime of human trafficking and slavery," said Burkhalter. "If supported and enforced, these statutes could contribute substantially toward the abolition of these crimes in our lifetime."

Subcommittee Chairman Dick Durbin noted that there are now 117 signatories to the U.N. Protocol To Prevent, Suppress and Pun-

ish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and many of these countries have passed tough anti-trafficking laws in the past few years, including the United States.

"If there is any silver lining to this tragic problem, it is that the world has now opened its eyes," he said.

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