



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Rwanda Meeting To Review Best Practices in AIDS Care

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The international community, led by the United States, has mobilized billions of dollars to fight HIV/AIDS, but it takes the expertise and skills of legions of workers to turn money into prevention, care and treatment services for those who suffer from AIDS and its opportunistic infections.



Sister Lemlem Yeheyese from JHPIEGO gives a presentation at the Addis Ababa Hilton at the briefing on the HIV/AIDS Implementers' Meeting to be held in Kigali, Rwanda.

More than 1,500 such people -- from partner organizations, governments, nongovernmental organizations and faith-based groups, and private-sector representatives from around the world -- will gather June 16-19 in Kigali, Rwanda, for the 2007 HIV/AIDS Implementers' Meeting.

"The theme of the meeting is Scaling Up Through Partnerships," said Dr. Thomas Kenyon, principal deputy U.S. global AIDS coordinator and chief medical officer in the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. "We fully recognize that though the U.S. government is leading a global response to HIV/AIDS

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WTO Workshop in Adama Increases Understanding of WTO Accession

THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2007 - A regional World Trade Organization (WTO) Awareness Workshop will be held June 14-15, 2007 in Adama to increase understanding of the WTO and the implications of Ethiopia's plans to join the WTO. Nearly

100 business people, regional government officials and academics from 20 cities in the Oromia region will participate in the two-day workshop, which is the fourth in a series of regional workshops.

The seminar is organized by the USAID Doha Project for WTO Accession and Participation -- Ethiopia in collaboration with the WTO Affairs Department of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI), the Oromia Na-

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Rwanda Meeting To Review Best Practices in AIDS Care . . .

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through bilateral and multilateral support, we can't do it alone."

Meeting sponsors include the government of Rwanda; the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; the U.N. Children's Fund; the World Bank; and the World Health Organization.

"The United States government has made a very large commitment to target HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in the hardest-hit countries, which are mainly in sub-Saharan Africa," U.S. first lady Laura Bush said during a June 11 round table discussion about AIDS in Sofia, Bulgaria, adding that she would visit four countries in Africa in June.

President Bush announced May 30 that he would work with Congress to double the U.S. commitment to fight HIV/AIDS around the world -- to \$30 billion -- and reauthorize the legislation that established PEPFAR. If Congress meets the president's budget request for fiscal year 2008, and with the new \$30 billion proposal, the American people will have committed \$48.3 billion over 10 years to fight HIV/AIDS. The U.S. contribution is already the largest international health initiative dedicated to a specific disease.

IMPLEMENTING AIDS PROGRAMS

In Rwanda, meeting participants will share lessons learned about how best to implement a variety of HIV/AIDS programs, discuss the future directions of such programs and share best practices related to establishing HIV/AIDS programs and services.

"Implementation means that they're rolling out services to reach their populations, to prevent infections, depending on the local factors that are driving the epidemic," Kenyon said. "There's a lot to be learned from one another and how best to roll out a service like that."

Topics at the five-day meeting include combating HIV in the military, prevention programs for young people, integrating food and nutrition into care and treatment, challenges in anti-retroviral therapy scale up (moving from small groups to larger groups), implementing laboratory quality assurance and national disease surveillance.

"PEPFAR is now in its fourth year, so we have a wealth of experiences to share," Kenyon said. "More than 80 percent of our partners are from indigenous organizations, and they're working at some 15,000 sites."

Many programs have multiple international partners. Partners for a project to develop a nationwide electronic data system for monitoring the national AIDS treatment program in Malawi, for example, include the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Malawi Ministry of Health, the government of Taiwan Department of Health and the U.K. AIDS charity "Lighthouse."

SHARING EXPERIENCE

More than 500 project summaries to be presented at the meeting represent a few of the programs in place around the world that focus on AIDS prevention, care and treatment. Summary titles illustrate the wide range of projects and services:

- Impact of safe blood-bank screening and transfusion practices in Mo-

zambique.

- Challenges of HIV testing and counseling in health facilities, all countries.
- Integrating HIV and tuberculosis services in district hospitals in Kenya.
- Preventing HIV transmission among sex workers in Russia.
- HIV drug-resistance survey in Vietnam.
- Monitoring and evaluating HIV prevention for most-at-risk populations, all countries.
- Partnerships for improving health care worker safety in Botswana.

"Every presentation is about how to do something," Kenyon said. "And we've actually encouraged people to tell us how not to do something, so we can learn from mistakes. I could characterize it as a how-to meeting."

Meanwhile, on Monday June 11, a press briefing on the HIV/AIDS Implementers' Meeting organized by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Public Diplomacy Working Group took place at Addis Ababa Hilton. The briefing was given by a number of PEPFAR implementing partners such as Tulane University, Columbia University, Population Council, I-TECH, and JHPIEGO. Important work being carried out under the PEPFAR/HAPCO/Ministry of Health partnership to advance HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment in Ethiopia was highlighted at the briefing.

The briefing previewed the Ethiopian delegation's presentation at the International HIV/AIDS Implementers' Meeting in Kigali, Rwanda. It was also an opportunity to obtain firsthand information from the experts about the successes and challenges encountered in implementing HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment programs in Ethiopia. ♦

G8 Leaders Pledge Assistance for Africa, Emerging Economies

By Vince Crawley
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Leaders of the Group of Eight nations, meeting for three days in Germany, pledged to assist Africa and other countries, and endorsed President Bush's initiative for a major global climate agreement by the end of 2008.

From the U.S. viewpoint, the G8 summit in Heiligendamm, Germany, was "very positive," White House deputy press secretary Dana Perino told reporters June 8 aboard Air Force One as President Bush departed the summit for a scheduled visit to Poland.

The summit included an important compromise agreement on global climate change and "significant commitments to Africa," Perino said. Summit highlights also included "President Bush leading the way on his HIV/AIDS proposal, and a recognition of the need to work together with developing countries, including outreach countries that were there [attending the summit]: India, China, Mexico, Brazil and South Africa."

The annual G8 meeting was attended by the heads of government of Germany, France, Japan, Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom, Russia and the United States, as well as other world and regional leaders. Calling climate change an "urgent challenge," the leaders urged countries that consume large amounts of energy and emit large quantities of greenhouse gases to establish by the end of 2008 a new global framework for dealing with

emissions of these gases. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=May&x=20070531161722zjsredna0.9135858>) .)

Focusing on Africa issues during a June 8 session, G8 leaders met with the leaders of Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, as well as the chair of the African Union (currently the president of Ghana), the prime minister of Ethiopia and



German Chancellor Angela Merkel (front R) presides over a working session of the leaders G8, the five top developing and African nations on the last day of the G8 summit in Heiligendamm, northeastern Germany. The Group of Eight industrial powers ended their annual summit Friday by pledging 60 billion dollars to fight AIDS in Africa and warned Iran and North Korea over their nuclear programmes. (AFP/POOL/Peter Kneffel)

Summit leaders also pledged or renewed pledges totaling \$60 billion in the next several years to combat AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in Africa. In addition, summit leaders "set a goal of supporting treatment for 5 million HIV/AIDS-infected individuals, preventing 24 million new infections, and caring for 24 million people, including 10 million orphans and vulnerable children," the White House said in a statement. The leaders also established a goal of enabling the 30 countries in Africa most burdened by malaria to cut their malaria-related deaths in half over the next several years.

the secretary-general of the United Nations. Discussions focused on how the G8 could contribute to peace and security, sustainable investment, good governance and improving health care systems.

"We confirmed together with the African leaders that we can only meet these challenges in a spirit of partnership, mutual accountability and trust," German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who chaired the summit, said in a written statement.

The G8 leaders also agreed to launch a high-level dialogue, known as the "Heiligendamm Process,"

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U.S. Says Africa Should Not Be Sole Source of Darfur Peacekeepers

By Stephen Kaufman
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Sudan's insistence that only African troops participate in a hybrid African Union-United Nations peacekeeping force in Darfur would render the force ineffective since the continent cannot supply the number of needed troops, the Bush administration says.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters June 12 that Sudan's reported agreement with the African Union (AU) to accept the deployment, mandate and structure of a peacekeeping force includes "fine print" that "the force should be limited to African troops."

Under that condition, he said, it would be "very difficult" to achieve the full 17,000 to 19,000 troop level, as called for under the deployment plan to help implement the peace framework established in November 2006 by leaders meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=April&x=20070405163237esnamfuak0.3946649>).)

"[I]t's not a lack of will or a lack of desire on the part of the African countries, but the assets simply aren't there," McCormack said, adding that Sudan's offer "is in effect to say that you are not agreeing to the full 17,000 to 19,000 troops, which ... the experts believe is what you need in order to perform the mission."

McCormack said the United States is "still waiting" for Sudan to agree to an effective hybrid force.

The spokesman also said the Bush administration has been continuing its diplomatic efforts to deploy the force. It also is providing direct funding to the AU to keep its existing peacekeeping mission operating in Darfur, and is contributing to the United Nations for its peacekeeping force.



Sean McCormack, State Department spokesman

"I know that we're the largest donor to the peacekeeping operations. I can't tell you what amount would be required for this particular force," McCormack said.

Emerging from a closed-door Security Council meeting at the United Nations June 12, U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad said council members are waiting for official clarification of Sudan's acceptance of troops.

"If this is an unconditional acceptance, this would be a positive step that we would welcome, but if it is conditional -- as we hear there will be only African troops involved and no non-Africans -- that would be unacceptable," said Khalilzad, the chief U.S. envoy to the United Nations.

The United States and other members of the council warned recently that if Sudan does not accept quickly the African Union-United Nations plan for the hybrid force, they will propose additional sanctions on Khartoum. Khalilzad said that policy has not changed.

Sanctions "are still very much under consideration," the ambassador said. "If we don't get an unconditional acceptance of the AU-U.N. concept on the hybrid force then ... we have to go with additional sanctions, tightening sanctions" to provide an incentive for the government to cooperate.

Khalilzad added that the United States and other council members are advocating a comprehensive approach to the situation in Darfur. "We understand the violence is not only from the government, but from the rebels. Therefore, all sides have a responsibility to cooperate with U.N. Security Council resolutions, to cooperate with U.N. humanitarian assistance, and to cooperate with the peacekeeping," he said.

A transcript (http://www.un.int/usa/07_149.htm) of Khalilzad's remarks to reporters is available on the Web site of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.

For more information, 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>) ♦

United States Might Push for New U.N. Sanctions Against Sudan

By Judy Aita
USINFO United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- The United States will press for new international sanctions against Sudan if the U.N. Security Council cannot obtain agreement from Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on an African Union-United Nations peacekeeping force for Darfur, U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad said June 7.

Darfur is one of the Security Council's major concerns, and a council mission will be visiting five African nations, including Sudan, the week of June 14. Topping the council's agenda with Sudan are the hybrid U.N.-AU peacekeeping operation for Darfur and the arrest of two suspected war criminals indicted by the International Criminal Court.

After a Security Council meeting, Khalilzad said, "We believe that the visit of the Security Council to Sudan offers the opportunity to come to closure" on the U.N.-AU force.

"If the Sudanese do not come to an agreement quickly, we intend to push for more multinational sanctions," which could include a no-fly zone over Darfur, the U.S. ambassador said.

"Time is running out, people continue to suffer. They now have this U.N.-AU plan. They need to come to accepting it so we can begin to address seriously the problems of the area. Agreement is the first important step; but, of course, given [Sudan's] record we also

want to make sure that they will implement what they agree to," Khalilzad said.

On June 6 the U.N. and the AU came to a final agreement on the command structure of the 23,000-strong joint military peacekeeping operation that will help the belea-

fur by humanitarian aid groups as well as protection for aid workers, and a political settlement between the government and rebel groups.

The Sudanese government also must turn over Ahmed Haroun, secretary of state for humanitarian affairs, and Ali Kosheib, a Jingaweit



A Sudanese woman loads water jugs on a donkey at Abu Shouk refugee camp, north of the Darfur town of Al-Fasher, Sudan. (AP Images)

guered 7,000-troop AU force currently in the province. The hybrid operation will be the final phase of a three-step plan to bolster the AU operation. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=April&x=20070417130214atiayduj0.4047357>)).

Sudan has to agree to the U.N.-AU plan "as quickly as possible," Khalilzad said.

The U.S. envoy said three issues need to be addressed by the council when it is in Sudan: the hybrid peacekeeping force, access to Dar-

leader, who were indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in May, Khalilzad said.

ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo also urged the Security Council to ensure the two Sudanese are turned over to the court to face justice. He asked that the issue be brought up during the council's Sudan visit.

"Haroun was responsible for the commission of incredible, massive atrocities against people in Darfur ... and now today he is the min-

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ister of humanitarian affairs. These people who were his victims are in his hands. This is unacceptable. We have to stop him. He has to be arrested," Moreno-Ocampo told journalists after his meeting with the Security Council June 7.

Moreno-Ocampo said that ICC investigators found witnesses to the crimes of Haroun and Kosheib in 17 countries.

"We have eyewitnesses who saw Kosheib on his horse giving instructions in each of the cases. I have eyewitnesses who saw Kosheib involved in the execution of prisoners, the rape of women," the prosecutor said.

Calling Haroun "a critical element in the massive crimes committed in Darfur," Moreno-Ocampo said: "I

have eyewitnesses who saw Haroun delivering weapons in his own helicopter to militia Jingaweit in three different states in Darfur. I have eyewitnesses who saw Haroun taking money from a box and paying the militia Jingaweit in cash. I have eyewitnesses who saw Haroun inciting the militia Jingaweit to commit crimes to dilute the population."

Haroun, he said, "was the one who coordinated all the activities of all police and intelligence. No crime was committed there without his intervention."

Haroun formerly was deputy interior minister in charge of Darfur.

Under the U.N. Charter, Sudan has an obligation to arrest the two men, Moreno-Ocampo said. If the two travel outside Sudan, they are to be arrested by any country" they visit.

"Their destiny is the dock in The Hague," he said.

The Security Council referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC in March 2005. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=April&x=20050401122037EAifas0.5436823&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>).)

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

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WTO Workshop in Adama Increases Understanding of WTO Accession . . .

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tional Government – Trade, Industry and Transportation Bureau, and the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectorial Associations. The city chambers of Adama also assisted with the organization of the seminar. The workshop will be opened by State Minister Ahmed Tussa and Ato Abdi Taha, Head of the President's Office of the Oromia Regional Government. Presenters at the seminar include members of the WTO Affairs Department of MoTI and staff from the USAID WTO Accession Project.

In December of last year, the Government of Ethiopia (GOE) submitted the Memorandum of Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) to the WTO Secretariat. Submission of the MFTR marks the beginning of the most active and important phases in the accession process. A number of donors, including the United States through USAID, are supporting the WTO accession process through technical assistance programs. The USAID Doha project, administered by the US firm Booz Allen Hamilton, has assisted a number of countries with WTO accession and has been working at MoTI

since 2005, reviewing existing laws and regulations and helping to draft new ones. This legal work is an essential part of the accession process. Becoming a member of the WTO will help Ethiopia realize its potential by improving its international competitiveness. This, in turn, will help Ethiopia to increase exports, reduce poverty, and raise the standard of living for all of its citizens. ♦

U.S. Navy Plans Six-Month West African Training Mission

By Vince Crawley
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. Navy plans this autumn to begin a half-year patrol of West Africa as a follow-up to a regional conference in November 2006, in which Gulf of Guinea nations called for greater maritime security cooperation.

Under the new plan, a U.S. ship will act as a floating headquarters and training base. It will cruise the region for five or six months, conducting numerous port visits, deploying training teams and allowing international visitors on board, said Admiral Harry Ulrich, chief of U.S. naval forces for Europe and Africa.

The ship will carry between 200 and 300 personnel – exact numbers will change over time as experts and specialized teams come and go, Ulrich told reporters May 31 after describing the plan to West African diplomats and military officers in Washington.

The ship's personnel will focus mainly on training and working closely with Gulf of Guinea nations. Ulrich said he actively is seeking participation from European nations with an interest in West Africa as well as nongovernmental organizations. The idea is to create a "floating schoolhouse" in which multinational training teams can train in key activities such as port and oil-platform security, search-and-rescue missions and medical and humanitarian assistance.

"I think there are plenty of opportunities for nations to participate," Ulrich said.

The ship has not yet been formally

identified, and the six-month mission is part of a new concept that the Navy calls Global Fleet Station. The concept allows the Navy to conduct regionwide training and partnership missions involving hundreds of Americans and thousands of international personnel while minimizing the requirements for shore-based, host-nation facilities.

Sao Tome and Principe, Cameroon, Gabon and Angola. Ulrich said that Nigeria also has expressed interest but has just completed an election and is forming a new government, so discussions on Nigerian involvement likely will take place later this summer.

Ulrich said the Gulf of Guinea naval mission is "closely aligned" with the



A U.S. Navy engineer and a São Tomé and Príncipe coast guardsman repair a motor aboard the USS Kauffman. (U.S. Navy)

The first Global Fleet Station mission began in late April when the high-speed vessel [HSV] Swift embarked on a summer-long tour to the Caribbean and Central America, with teams scheduled to visit Belize, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Panama, according to a U.S. Navy announcement.

For the West African mission, Ulrich said the ship is expected to sail a circuit of Gulf of Guinea nations, including: Senegal, Liberia, Ghana,

creation of the new U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) announced by President Bush in February to coordinate U.S. military and government interests across Africa. Unlike a traditional military headquarters, AFRICOM is expected to focus on humanitarian, medical and training missions to assist African nations in creating the conditions for political, social and economic stability. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=February&x=200>

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U.S. Navy Plans Six-Month West African Training Mission . . .

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The Navy has been increasing its presence in West Africa for several years, Ulrich said, but added that the new Gulf of Guinea initiative is "in the spirit of AFRICOM."

The initiative is a follow-up to a November 2006 conference in Benin, co-sponsored by the United States, in which 11 Gulf of Guinea nations agreed to work together to address maritime security issues. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=December&x=20061219101202MVyelwarC0.1016352>).)

The Gulf of Guinea accounts for almost 15 percent of the U.S. crude oil supply and is rich in other natural resources. But the region also faces numerous challenges, including illegal fishing, piracy, oil theft, criminal activity and illegal trafficking. A priority for U.S. policy in-

cludes helping to foster economic and political stability, and good governance as ways to undermine factors that contribute to terrorism and other regional threats.

The Navy's training teams in West Africa will focus on four main themes:

Training maritime professionals, such as navy and coast guard crews;

Improving maritime infrastructure, such as protecting harbors, ships and oil platforms;

Enhancing maritime "domain awareness," which concerns being able to monitor and identify illegal or hostile sea traffic; and

Strengthening maritime interdiction capability, such as being able to stop illegal traffic, as well as being able to conduct search-and-rescue operations or to help mariners in distress.

Retired Ambassador Peter Chaveas, director the African Center for Strategic Studies in Washington, a Defense Department initiative, said West African officials appear to support the idea of increased U.S. Navy training emphasis. But African nations also are concerned that the concept will not be long-lasting.

"Africans show a great deal of skepticism. We have to ... make the case that we're with them for the long term," he said.

Ulrich said he intends to follow up the six-month Gulf of Guinea mission with a year-round presence.

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

Do Not Isolate Nigeria, State's Frazer Tells Congress

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Nigeria's significance as a force for stability in Africa and its economic clout should not be discounted despite recent elections judged seriously flawed by international observers, a senior State Department official told Congress.

Some critics of legislative and presidential elections held April 14 and April 21 "will no doubt urge us to isolate the country. But the stakes are too great to walk away from Nigeria," Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer told the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa June 7.

Nigeria will remain an important "strategic partner of the United States," she said.

Frazer acknowledged "credible reports" by democracy groups like the International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI) of "vote rigging, ballot box stuffing, and nontransparent counting," but said, "Nigeria remains vitally important to U.S. security, democracy, trade and energy policy needs and objectives."

In addition, Frazer reminded lawmakers of the African context in which the elections took place. "Nigeria has just inaugurated President Musa Yar'Adua in the first-ever transition between civilian leaders in the country's history," a noteworthy event on a continent beset by leaders reluctant to step down from power.

After eight years of President Olusegun Obasanjo's leadership, during which Nigeria participated in several important peacekeeping missions in West Africa, Frazer said, Nigeria's importance as a

force for stability is critical. "It remains one of our most dependable allies ... on a wide array of diplomatic initiatives such as Darfur, peacekeeping and counterterrorism."

Nigeria has been one of the world's leaders in international peacekeeping with more than 6,500 troops recently having served outside its



Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Jendayi Frazer (File photo; AP Images)

borders in places such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola, Rwanda, Somalia and Mozambique. Its troops also have served in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Kuwait, Cambodia, Lebanon and Pakistan (Kashmir).

Nigerian General Martin Agwai, a veteran of peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone and Liberia, recently was named to command the 7,000 peacekeepers of the African Union force in the Darfur region of Sudan.

On the economic front, Frazer said that Nigeria, with its population of 140 million people and second-largest gross domestic product (the market value of all goods and services produced) on the continent, is an important emerging market. It already supplies 12 percent of all oil exports to the United States and is currently one of the world's largest importers of U.S. wheat.

During a May 29 conversation with President Yar'Adua, Frazer said she touched on issues like political reform, regional security and eco-

nomics opportunity, driving home the point that the United States "could offer an array of technical assistance" to civil society organizations when "matched by political commitment of the host [Nigerian] government."

Since 1999, when the road to civilian democracy was begun with the election of Obasanjo, Nigeria gained "important ground," Frazer said, adding that the judicial and legislative branches especially have "demonstrated an impressive surge in independence."

Lorne Craner, IRI president who described the April elections as "among the worst" his organization had ever observed, said "the independence of the Nigerian judiciary was a bright spot throughout the electoral process."

Kenneth Wollack, NDI president, also highlighted the gains the Nigerian legislature had made in the recent past. He said that in May 2006 the National Assembly, "following a rigorous debate," voted down an attempt by Obasanjo's supporters to amend the constitution to allow an extension of the time in office for the president and state governors.

Like Craner, Wollack praised Nigeria's high courts for asserting their independence "strictly and impartially applying the country's laws." The NDI president also commended Nigerian civil society organizations for their successful contributions to the electoral process.

"Trade unions, interfaith religious bodies and the media undertook extraordinary efforts to inform citizens about and encourage their participation in the electoral process," he told lawmakers. ♦

New U.S. Web Site Helps Legal Immigrants Assimilate

Washington – The United States is welcoming legal immigrants with a new Web site that helps them find such things as the requirements for naturalization to the location of nearby English-language classes.

WelcometoUSA.gov is a comprehensive site aimed at helping newcomers learn about America's civic values and history, settle into their new communities and take part in the life of the nation.

The Web site is one of several initiatives to help immigrants assimilate, said Emilio Gonzalez, director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), during a June 12 press conference. Assimilation is one of the five pillars of President Bush's comprehensive immigration reform plan, Gonzalez said.

In June 2006, the president created the Task Force on New Americans, a multiagency effort to help immigrants embrace core U.S. values such as freedom, equality before the law and tolerance, learn English and become integrated into American life. Gonzalez serves as executive secretary.

America wants legal, new immigrants to feel "as welcome as the Founding Fathers," he said, "and our goal is to help them."

WelcometoUSA.gov links to all federal government resources for new immigrants as well as to some state agencies and faith-based and community groups. There are also sections on U.S. history and government, federal benefits, health care and housing, education, child care, employment and financial management.

One link focuses on volunteer opportunities for both immigrants and

U.S. citizens. "It is absolutely imperative that we have a community network" that can help immigrants



Emilio Gonzalez, director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

and refugees get the services they need, said Martha Newton, head of the Office of Refugee Resettlement at the Department of Health and Human Services. "Volunteers are integral to making this work."

Immigrants also are encouraged to volunteer, said Kathy Wills Wright, deputy director of USA Freedom Corps, a White House initiative to expand community service throughout America. "Volunteer service is a wonderful way for newcomers to learn about and truly feel a part of their new community," she said.

In addition to WelcometoUSA.gov, the Task Force on New Americans reaches out to immigrants through the thousands of public libraries in the United States, said Alfonso Aguilar, head of the USCIS Office of Citizenship. More than 12,000 Civics and Citizenship Toolkits will be distributed free to public libraries, and additional copies will be available at nominal cost. Some educational materials in the kits are for newly arrived immigrants, while

others – such as a DVD on history and civics, and flash cards with questions and answers about the American government – are aimed at people studying for their citizenship test.

Aguilar said that in October, USCIS will introduce a Web-based electronic training module for volunteers and adult educators with courses on the naturalization process, U.S. government and civics education. There also will be eight regional training conferences for civics and citizenship instructors and volunteers to help them teach immigrant students.

For more information, see Fact Sheet: Task Force on New Americans (http://www.freedomcorps.gov/about_usafc/newsroom/announcements_dynamic.asp?ID=1634), Visas and Immigration (http://usinfo.state.gov/global_issues/immigration.html) and WelcometoUSA.gov (<http://www.welcometousa.gov/>)

See also: Citizen's Almanac Introduces New Americans to Nation's Symbols (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=April&x=20070425155330xlrennef0.9618799>).

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

Art Exhibition Showcases Works by Students with Disabilities

By Carolee Walker
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Kids around the world -- including kids with disabilities -- can share their experiences and reflect their cultures through their writings and artwork.

"The arts break barriers," Abdulmohsen F. Alyas of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia told USINFO at a June 6 reception on Capitol Hill for an exhibition in Washington of writings and artwork by students with disabilities from around the world.

The reception was held in conjunction with the opening of the Culture Scope: Focusing on My Life exhibition by ArtLink, an international cultural exchange program that paired U.S. classrooms with classrooms in 58 countries in November 2006. Students with disabilities in the United States and abroad created visual arts projects and writings that they exchanged, and the best pieces from all classrooms were selected by a panel of judges to be included in the exhibition at Union Station in Washington and in an exhibit at the nearby U.S. Department of Education.

ArtLink is sponsored by VSA Arts, a nongovernmental organization affiliated with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington.

"For children with disabilities, the arts help to bridge the differences, change perceptions and promote understanding and break down barriers," John H. Hager, U.S. assistant secretary for special education

and rehabilitative services, said at the opening of the companion Capturing the Moment exhibition at the education agency on June 6.

Violinist Niv Ashkenazi, 17, a VSA Arts International Young Soloists award recipient, performed at the

they can go through their lives independently, proudly and contributing to our society," Hager said. It is important to engage the imagination of students as well as their intellect, he added.

Playing Music -- a watercolor painting of a piano by Luke Montemarano, 9, of Westerville, Ohio, included in Culture Scope -- shows a realistic depiction of his living room. "I painted the lamp on top of the piano first," Luke told USINFO, "then I painted the piano." Montemarano said he painted the scene because he plays the piano every day.

"I just keep drawing things and adding things, and I don't know how it's going to turn out in the end," Luke said. "Painting is a lot like playing music," added the young artist, who enjoys playing blues on the piano and pieces by Beethoven.



[Congressman Dale E. Kildee of Michigan offers congratulations to winning artist Curtis Schaefer. \(Janine Sides/State Dept.\)](#)

exhibition opening at the Department of Education and at a Capitol Hill reception for 13 of the artists featured in the Union Station exhibition. Niv, who has spina bifida, a birth defect that causes partial paralysis, has been playing the violin since the age of 3 and hopes to have a career as a virtuoso. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=June&x=20070608155535bcreklaw0.7685511>).)

One of the goals of the ArtLink program and the exhibitions, which run until June 24, and the VSA Arts awards is to "ensure the success of students with disabilities so that

The multimedia work by Curtis Schaefer, 13, of Clio, Michigan, features the young artist's favorite things to do at summer camp. Swimming at Camp uses collage to overlap underwater images of Curtis and images of some of the marine life he might find swimming in an ocean, including crabs, coral and fish.

"Were you born perfect?" asks 16-year-old Jax Fliss from Conway, Arkansas, in his poem, "Feeling Imperfect," included in the exhibition.

(Continued on page 12)

Art Exhibition Showcases Works by Students with Disabilities . . .

(Continued from page 11)

Most of the students participating in ArtLink attend school in regular classrooms, but there are many who attend special schools for students with physical or mental disabilities or who study in specially designed classrooms.

VSA Arts partners around the world facilitated the recruitment of participating schools and coordinated artists to work directly with the students in the classroom, according to Soula Antoniou, president of VSA Arts. Teachers received information and guidelines for incorporating ArtLink into their lesson plans. Children were taught ways to use the arts to reflect their cultures, and through the international ex-

change, they were able to learn how students in other countries live, Antoniou said.

"This program broadens children's views at an age when they are forming impressions," added Antoniou.

The full text (http://www.vsarts.org/PreBuilt/showcase/openbook/onlinejournal/selectedworks/2006/feeling_imperfect.cfm) of "Feeling Imperfect" and more information (<http://www.vsarts.org/>) about VSA Arts are available on its Web site.

For more stories on the influence of artists in society, see The Arts (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/the_arts.html). See also Americans with Disabilities (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/>

[history_geography_and_population/civil_rights/disability_rights.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history_geography_and_population/civil_rights/disability_rights.html)).

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G8 Leaders Pledge Assistance for Africa, Emerging Economies . . .

(Continued from page 3)

between the G8 countries and the emerging economies of Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa. The Heiligendamm Process will "address innovation, freedom of investment, development in Africa and energy efficiency," according to a White House statement. Members taking part in the process will provide reports at the next two annual G8 summits.

"We acknowledged our respective responsibilities and the need to develop common solutions," Merkel said in her written statement. "We therefore agreed to launch a new topic-driven dialogue on key world economic issues with the aim of

reaching concrete results" by the G8 Summit in Italy in 2009.

A goal of the Heiligendamm Process is to "work together ... to foster open and more favorable investment conditions in our respective countries," Merkel's statement said.

A fact sheet (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/g8/2007/>) on summit accomplishments is available on the White House Web site.

The full text (http://www.g-8.de/Content/DE/Artikel/G8Gipfel/Anlage/AbschlusserkI_C3_A4rungen/Chairs-summary.property=publicationFile.pdf) of Merkel's statement and other summit documents are available on a Web site of the host German government.

For more information, see Group of Eight (G8) (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/group_of_8.html).

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Public Awareness of Human Trafficking Increasing, Rice Says

By Eric Green
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. efforts to raise awareness of trafficking in persons are paying off, and now millions more people know about the global problem, says Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

In introducing the State Department's seventh annual Trafficking in Persons Report on June 12, Rice said human trafficking until recently was "akin to a global family secret. It was known but not often discussed publicly."

Rice said that in her travels around the world, she has noticed "a greater desire by our partners to fight this crime and protect its victims." The United States, she said, is helping to lead a global movement "not just to confront this crime, but to abolish it. More and more countries are coming to see human trafficking for what it is -- a modern-day form of slavery that devastates families and communities around the world."

Mark Lagon, the new director of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking in Persons, said in detailing the 236-page report that Georgia merited special praise in its trafficking efforts. That nation, he said, has shown "admirable political commitment" to confront the problem. Georgia's improvement, Lagon said, includes efforts to prevent girls and women from being lured into the global sex trade, where employers turn them into "mere commodities, with their bodies for sale."

The report, mandated by the U.S. Congress, grouped Georgia for the first time with what is called the "Tier 1" countries -- those doing the best job of controlling human traf-

ficking, prosecuting those involved, and supporting and assisting trafficking victims. Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic are also newcomers to the Tier 1 group.

The report lists 75 countries in an intermediate Tier 2 group -- those

ous year, "due to a lack of effort" by these nations to combat trafficking. Countries new to the Tier 3 group are Algeria, Bahrain, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman and Qatar.

Lagon said India stayed on the Tier



US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announces the release of the 7th Annual Department of State "Trafficking in Persons Report" at the US Department of State in Washington, DC. US Middle East allies Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar, as well as Malaysia were added to a Washington blacklist of countries trafficking in people, the State Department said. (AFP/Paul J Richards)

that are demonstrating a "significant" commitment to address their trafficking problems but have not yet achieved international standards -- while 32 countries are on a Tier 2 "watch list" for having shown signs of failing to make improvements. The report places 16 countries in the bottom Tier 3 -- those governments that have shown no commitment to meeting international standards.

Lagon said that the list of countries in the Tier 3 group has grown to 16, compared to 12 from the previ-

ous year and was not downgraded to Tier 3, despite the fact that the world's "largest democracy" has the "world's largest problem of human trafficking." The United States, he said, needs to "engage in a very serious dialogue with India" on the South Asian nation's trafficking problem, since the countries are "two serious democracies" with a "developing alliance."

The U.S.-India relationship is such, said Lagon, that the "level of com-

(Continued on page 22)

U.S. Lauds Ghanaian Official's Efforts Against Human Trafficking

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The extraordinary efforts of Deputy Police Superintendent Patience Quaye, who doggedly pursued and helped prosecute a man who abducted and sold his 9-year-old stepson to strangers in Nigeria, enforced a new law in Ghana to combat human trafficking.

The 30-year police veteran is being honored by the U.S. State Department for her efforts in returning the child to his mother and helping to prosecute the abductor, who was sentenced to six years in prison.

Quaye was named one of eight "Heroes Acting to End Modern-Day Slavery" in conjunction with the June 2007 release of the department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report.

Speaking June 5 by phone from Accra, Ghana, Quaye told USINFO she was "most grateful" for the U.S. recognition. The investigation and prosecution of the offender was "a big achievement for our human trafficking law, passed by Parliament in 2005," she said.

Following a complaint from a woman that her husband had disappeared with her son from a previous marriage, Quaye said the Ghanaian authorities got a tip that the two were in Lagos, Nigeria. "When I

traveled to Nigeria I discovered he had attempted to sell the child unsuccessfully and then moved on to Abuja," Nigeria's capital, she said.



Deputy Superintendent of Police of Ghana Patience Quaye (Photo courtesy of Patience Quaye)

In Abuja, 600 kilometers from Lagos, the stepfather was able to sell the boy, but people became suspicious and reported him to the police, who arrested him, Quaye explained.

After a round of "very cooperative" meetings with Nigerian authorities, Quaye said, the man was extradited to Ghana, where he was tried and found guilty of human trafficking -- the first successful prosecution under the 2005 law.

A U.S. Embassy official said Quaye's efforts were "viewed very highly by the State Department" because "at this point, even though the law was passed, its mandate for setting up a human trafficking board -- regulating how prosecutions are to be handled -- had not been implemented."

Quaye's efforts to navigate the legal bureaucracy, leading to a successful prosecution, were "above and beyond the call of duty" and represent the best in law enforcement in Ghana, the U.S. official added.

Since 2005 the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided more than \$2.2 million for programs in eight African countries to fight human trafficking.

The 2007 Trafficking in Persons Report is scheduled to be released on June 12.

For additional information, see 2007 Trafficking in Persons Report (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/human_trafficking/traffick_report.html).

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Moroccan Activist for Children's Rights Wins U.S. Recognition

By Lea Terhune
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- For many years, Yasmina Baddou, Moroccan secretary of state for families, children and the handicapped, has worked to free children from forced labor. As a government minister, she leads the charge for the empowerment of women and protection of children in her country.

Her unwavering dedication and advocacy earned her recognition by the U.S. State Department as a 2007 "Hero Acting to End Modern-Day Slavery."

Baddou initiated Morocco's Plan of Action to combat child labor. The program, called Inquad, or "rescue" in Arabic, focuses particularly on preventing employment of little girls as maids and giving them opportunities for a better future through education.

"I was always very sensitive to the plight of children," she told US-INFO. "All the time, I was touched by children deprived of education and a family environment. Child labor especially shocked me," she said.

Her experiences as a lawyer and government minister impressed on her the need for the state to champion equality for people in all segments of society, she said.

Born in 1962, Baddou studied law and practiced in Casablanca before entering politics in 1987. She was first elected to public office in 2001. Her ministerial tenure began in 2004.

Baddou's rise to such a high level in government is in itself incentive for other women to enter public service and, as she sees it, shape their des-

tiny. "It is imperative to insist on the political participation of women," she said, adding that only "massive participation" of women in elections can help them realize their political and institutional goals.



"The place occupied by Moroccan women today, in different sectors of public life, will encourage more Moroccan women to enter the field of politics and be more active in all spheres of decision-making," she said.

The recent introduction of significant reforms paves the way for Moroccan women to enter politics. Morocco's Family Code promotes women's social and economic development and equality with men, and stands against domestic violence.

"Morocco has made notable advances with regard to recognizing the rights of children," Baddou said, referring to the 10-year action plan to "make Morocco worthy of its children." She said it is the first time Morocco has had such a comprehensive program that integrates rescue of children from servitude and their rehabilitation. Nongovern-

mental organizations (NGOs) work with the government to accomplish program goals. A three-pronged strategy involves adoption of laws safeguarding children, campaigns to raise public awareness and prevention of abuse by improving the socio-economic position of vulnerable families.

Baddou says children are forced to work because of low family income "associated with illiteracy of the parents" because they have dropped out of school and as the result of criminal trafficking. Girls are especially vulnerable to exploitation. Thanks in large part to her advocacy, the government now encourages girls' education, has increased the minimum age for employment from 12 to 15 years and prohibits those under 18 from performing dangerous work.

Baddou said that since the Moroccan government adopted the new measures, employment of children under age 15 has decreased from 600,000 in 2004 to 177,000 today. Child labor "greatly undermines human rights, particularly children's rights," she said, adding: "Child labor is also a threat to the socio-economic equilibrium in the countries where the practice is current. The human capital represented by the children is potential wealth for development."

"The elimination of these phenomena is within our range," Baddou said. "It simply requires the political will, belief and adherence to the efforts toward this goal."

The State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons annually recognizes outstanding individuals whose work has helped to stop trade in humans and bonded labor around the world.

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Bush Seeks To Expand Education for World's Poorest Children

By Lauren Monsen
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- As part of U.S. efforts to boost international development, President Bush is launching a plan to expand education assistance for children in the world's poorest countries, says the White House.

The president first announced his plan during a May 31 speech in Washington, just days before attending the June 6 - 8 Group of Eight (G8) Summit in Heiligendamm, Germany, where he met with the leaders of other major industrialized nations (Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, Japan and Russia). Bush cited a U.S. obligation to help "bring progress and prosperity to struggling nations across the world," and called on the U.S. Congress "to fund [an additional] \$525 million over the next five years to make our educational initiatives even more robust."

The goal "is to provide basic education for 4 million additional children on the continent of Africa and across the globe," Bush said in the May 31 address. According to a May 31 White House fact sheet, the new plan is designed to produce a beneficial "ripple effect" in needy countries. "Our investment in disadvantaged children will help foster the development of stable and productive environments where social justice, economic development, and democratic principles thrive," the White House said.

The president's plan calls for:

Creation of new "Communities of Opportunity" centers where 100,000 at-risk youngsters in developing countries would receive

after-school training in English, computer skills, critical thinking, science, math and finance;

Expansion of support for basic education programs in developing countries; and

Better coordination of education resources, with a new coordinator of education at the U.S. Agency for International Development directing

-- to further expand its impact."

In his meetings with G8 leaders, Bush also discussed other U.S. proposals to assist the developing world. In late May, he urged Congress to double U.S. funds for the global fight against HIV/AIDS and to fund his 2005 commitment to expand U.S. assistance to sub-Saharan Africa to \$8.67 billion by 2010.



Chadian children in Ecole Mani. Girls number 60% of 40 million children in Africa not in school due to economic hardships. (AP Images)

"We're working to increase access to trade and relieve the burden of debt" for developing countries, he said. "We are increasing our assistance to the world's poorest countries and using this aid to encourage reform and strengthen education and fight the scourge of disease." By providing basic quality education to an additional 4 million children in Africa and elsewhere, the United States is helping to address a great need, said Bush. "Giving these young people in these countries the skills they need to succeed, we're going to give them keys to a brighter future," he added.

a strategic use of resources that builds on the United States' current support for overseas basic education, child health and nutrition.

The White House described the president's plan as "a transformational approach to education" that will promote progress, reduce poverty and help girls and boys become productive and active citizens.

"Moreover, education offers opportunity and counters the forces of extremism and violence," the White House added. "This plan will draw on partnerships with the private sector -- including business and nongovernmental organization leaders, local communities, and parents

To underscore the U.S. commitment to aiding international development, first lady Laura Bush has announced that she will visit the African nations of Senegal, Mozambique, Zambia and Mali at the end of June. During her trip, the first lady will visit schools, clinics and a pediatric hospital supported by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

For additional information, see fact sheet (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttrans-english&y=2007&m=May&x=20070531155142eafas0.1002161>). ♦

Judicial Corruption Continues To Plague the World, Report Says

By Jaroslaw Anders
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Systemic corruption of judicial systems not only denies citizens their basic human rights, but hinders economic development and sometimes pushes aggrieved populations to violence, according to a recent report.

Global Corruption Report 2007: Corruption in Judicial Systems says that despite international efforts, different forms of judicial corruption continue to afflict many parts of the world. The report was issued in late May by Transparency International, an international anti-corruption non-governmental organization.

"We are talking not just about outright bribery, but political bias or interference, the influence of money, which can have a profound impact on all of us, undermining our trust in public institutions and their capacity to deliver fair and impartial outcomes," said Nancy Boswell, the president of Transparency International-USA. She spoke June 6 at an event at the Brookings Institution, a private research organization in Washington.

According to the report, there is a clear connection between high levels of judicial corruption and low levels of economic growth. This comes as no surprise, the report says, since "the expectation that contracts will be honored and disputes resolved fairly is vital to investors, and underpins sound business development and growth."

Speaking at the same event, Aryeh Neier said widespread mistrust of the institutions of justice also is one of the factors that push citizens to resolve their grievances through the use of force, leading to social disorder

and violence. Neier is the president of the Open Society Institute, a private group that promotes democratic governance, human rights, and economic, legal, and social reform.

According to Transparency International, a majority of people in seven of the eight African countries it polled said their legal systems are corrupt and one among five of those who had dealt with courts admit to paying bribes. Another aspect of judicial corruption -- political influence over the judiciary -- is especially serious in Niger, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the organization says. In addition, it cites Kenya and Lesotho as countries with high level of social tolerance for corrupt practices.

In Latin America, 80 percent or more of respondents in Bolivia, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru perceive their judiciary systems as corrupt.

Governments in many low-income countries in Asia -- including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam -- are not providing adequate support for their courts and court officials, "inviting corruption and undermining the rule of law," the report says.

In Europe and Central Asia, the report cites what it considers undue influence of the executive branch on judicial appointments in countries such as Azerbaijan, Croatia and Turkey. The report also concludes that Russia and Georgia have been backsliding on international standards of judicial independence.

The report also looks critically at the United States, citing a 2004 poll that showed that more than 70 percent of U.S. respondents believe

contributions to U.S. judicial campaigns influence judicial decisions in the states in which judges are chosen through elections.

The report points out that judicial and political corruption tend to reinforce each other. A corrupt judicial system is unlikely to sanction people who bribe and threaten politicians. As a result, "honest and unfettered candidates" often are prevented from entering politics or succeeding in public life.

But Susan Rose-Ackerman, a law professor at Yale University and one of the authors of the report, cautioned that judiciary independence is not enough to guarantee impartial justice. "You can certainly have independent judges who are acting with impunity, who are lazy, corrupt, but are completely independent: they can do what they want because nobody can control them," she said.

The report calls for a delicate balance between judicial independence and accountability. On the one hand, constitutional and legal mechanisms must protect judges from political pressure; on the other, judicial officials should not be permitted to "shelter behind outdated immunity provisions, draconian contempt laws, or notions of collegiality," the document states.

The full text (http://www.transparency.org/publications/publications/gcr_2007) of the report is available on the Transparency International Web site.

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

U.S. Boosts Developing Nations' Access to Safe Water, Sanitation

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – A new State Department report outlines 2006 successes and 2007 strategies in U.S. efforts to provide affordable and equitable access to safe water and sanitation in developing countries.

The June 5 report to Congress offers detailed regional strategies for assisting those in need in Asia, the Near East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Eurasia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

"This is a prime example of how the United States is a leading country in efforts to improve the lives of millions in a real, tangible way," Claudia McMurray, assistant secretary in the State Department's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, told USINFO.

Mandated by the first U.S. law to embrace a target – to halve by 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation – under the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, the annual report is the second on progress in implementing the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005.

The eight Millennium Development Goals are a blueprint endorsed by nations and leading development institutions to halve extreme poverty, halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, provide universal primary education, ensure environmental sustainability and achieve other goals by 2015. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=September&x=20050926151609AKll-en>

noccM0.1719324).)

The more than 15 U.S. federal agencies involved in international water issues obligated more than \$860 million in official development assistance for water, sanitation and related activities around the world in fiscal year 2006. (See related



article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060906125620cmretrop0.9751398>).)

The U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) 2006 investment alone provided more than 9 million people with improved access to safe drinking water, and nearly 1.5 million with better access to sanitation. USAID also increased aid in some of the neediest areas of the world, such as sub-Saharan Africa.

"Sound water management and increased access to water and sanitation are critical to human progress,"

the report reads. "The challenge, given limited resources, is determining where and how to focus U.S. efforts to achieve the greatest benefits in support of U.S. foreign assistance goals."

WATER FOR THE POOR

The law directs the State Department, with USAID and other U.S. government agencies, to develop a strategy "to provide affordable and equitable access to safe water and sanitation in developing countries," and help those countries develop sound water management policies and practices.

The first progress report, submitted in June 2006, laid out U.S. objectives on water, six major sectors in which the United States would focus its work and key principles by which to guide programs. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/05-150848.html>).)

Goals included increasing access to and effective use of safe water and sanitation to improve human health, enhancing water resource management and productivity, and strengthening water security through cooperation on shared waters.

In August 2006, the State Department asked its embassies and USAID's missions to assess the water and sanitation situation in more than 60 countries to identify challenges and opportunities for U.S. engagement.

Responses showed every region considered better governance of water resources a key opportunity for effective intervention. Also listed were sanitation, hygiene edu-

(Continued on page 19)

U.S. Boosts Developing Nations' Access to Safe Water, Sanitation . . .

(Continued from page 18)

cation and safe management of household water.

These assessments laid the groundwork for regional strategies included in the 2007 report. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, where few countries are making progress toward the Millennium Development Goal target – the report calls for specific steps:

Expand access to small-scale water supply and sanitation, including watershed protection;

Enhance hygiene education;

Improve utility governance and regulation;

Mobilize domestic financing for water projects; and

Increase local and transboundary capacity for reducing water conflict.

SUCCESS STORIES

With U.S. government funding in 2006, many countries made progress toward improving their populations' access to clean drinking water and sanitation.

The work of 290 Peace Corps volunteers gave nearly 276,000 people access to improved water and sanitation in 805 communities in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Kiribati, Mali, Panama and

Paraguay.

In 18 countries in Africa and Asia, U.S. government partners sold about 23,000 bottles of chlorine solution - enough to give 12.5 million people two liters of safe drinking water a day. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) designed this "Safe Water System," and it has been scaled up with USAID and other donor support and ongoing CDC technical assistance.

More than 200,000 people in 129 communities of Burkina Faso received clean water for schoolchildren and residents as part of a joint initiative between the Millennium Challenge Corporation and USAID to improve the health and educational status of rural girls. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttrans-english&y=2007&m=May&x=20070531132811xjsnommis0.9933893>).)

In Iraq, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built 449,200 cubic meters of daily water-treatment capacity, potentially benefiting 2.2 million people.

Besides the regional strategies, the Water for the Poor Act requires goals, benchmarks and timetables for the work being done in developing countries, and methods to assess what is needed most in each country and whether interventions

already implemented are working.

The full text (<http://www.state.gov/g/oes/water> "title= "http://www.state.gov/g/oes/water) of the 2006 and 2007 reports, as well as McMurray's May 21 prepared testimony (<http://www.state.gov/g/oes/rls/rm/2007/85333.htm> "title= "http://www.state.gov/g/oes/rls/rm/2007/85333.htm) on this issue is available on the State Department Web site.

Additional information (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>) about the Millennium Development Goals is available at the U.N. Web site.

For more information about U.S. policies, see Global Development and Foreign Aid (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/global_development.html).

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U.S. Tuberculosis Case Raises Questions on Global Disease Issues

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – The 12-day international journey of a U.S. man with a rare form of tuberculosis (TB) has ended with the patient in hospital isolation, congressional hearings into U.S. public health processes and many questions about a new strain of an old disease.

Government officials testified June 4 before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee about how someone with a potentially infectious disease could travel on commercial airline flights to and from Europe and cross the border from Canada into the United States.

The complex story – now the subject of internal investigations by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection – involves the airborne infectious disease tuberculosis.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told the subcommittee that TB is “one of a group of diseases that continue to persist, emerge and re-emerge in the form of multiple-drug-resistant microbes.”

DRUG-RESISTANT MICROBES

Globally, nearly 9 million people get TB each year, and 1.6 million die as a result. One-third of the world’s population is infected with latent (inactive) TB, but the disease usually does not become active unless something reduces a person’s immunity – a disease like AIDS, advancing age or some medical conditions.

TB is treated with a six- to nine-month course of “first-line” (the most effective) drugs. If patients do not complete the drug course or are treated improperly, they can develop a multidrug-resistant (MDR) form of the disease.

Those with MDR TB must be treated with more expensive, less effective second-line drugs for 18 to 24 months. If they do not complete this course or are treated with the wrong drugs, they can develop extensively drug resistant (XDR) TB, whose bacteria strains are resistant to first- and second-line drugs.

Fewer than 30 percent of XDR TB patients – like 31-year-old Georgia lawyer Andrew Speaker – who are otherwise healthy and whose immune systems are not compromised, can be cured. More than half of those with XDR TB die within five years of diagnosis. There might be 50,000 cases of XDR TB worldwide.

Speaker’s first diagnosis, in May, was of MDR TB. His TB test, doctors said, was “smear negative, culture positive.” This means that when his respiratory secretions were put into a culture medium, tuberculosis bacteria grew, but when they were smeared on a microscope slide, no bacteria were visible.

“Smear negative-culture positive patients generally pose a very low hazard of transmission,” CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding told the subcommittee, “but it’s not zero.”

QUARANTINE ORDER

Speaker’s sample went to CDC for further tests. In the meantime, Speaker said, he was told repeatedly that he was not contagious –

not a danger to anyone. He was advised not to travel and to seek treatment at the National Jewish Medical and Research Center in Colorado, a leader in treating lung diseases.

Speaker learned it would take two to three weeks to get into the center, so the lawyer, whose wedding in Greece was less than two weeks away, took a commercial flight to Europe May 12.

On May 22, the CDC lab determined that Speaker had XDR TB, and CDC officials tried to find him. They did not know how contagious he was, but they had to assume the worst. CDC also contacted U.S. Customs and Border Protection to have Speaker’s name put on a lookout list at all U.S. entry points.

Later that day, Speaker contacted CDC from Italy, willing to cooperate. His options, among others, were to check into an Italian hospital or pay more than \$100,000 for an air ambulance. CDC’s own aircraft could not be made safe to transport a patient who, they thought at the time, needed respiratory isolation.

Speaker and his new wife decided to get back to the United States and traveled by commercial airliner from the Czech Republic to Canada. There, on May 24, a border guard ignored the lookout advisory and let Speaker and his wife into the country.

CDC reached Speaker on his cell phone May 25 and directed him to Bellevue Hospital in New York City, where he was served with a federal order of isolation – the first one issued since 1963, when an order was issued for a smallpox case. By

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G8 Countries Agree on Process To Address Global Warming

By Andrzej Zwaniecki
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Leaders of the Group of Eight (G8) countries have agreed on an accelerated process that eventually can lead to “substantial” cuts in emissions that contribute to global warming.

“We are ... committed to taking strong and early action to tackle climate change,” they said in a June 7 declaration issued in Heiligendamm, Germany.

Calling climate change an “urgent challenge,” the leaders called on the countries that are heavy users of energy and emitters of greenhouse gases to establish by the end of 2008 a new global framework for dealing with emissions of these gases. Such a framework would serve as a basis for reaching, by the end of 2009, a broader global agreement under the auspices of the United Nations that would replace the Kyoto Protocol once it expires in 2012.

The Kyoto Protocol is an amendment to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. Countries that ratify this protocol commit to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases, or engage in emissions trading if they maintain or increase emissions of these gases. The United States has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol due to concerns it could constrain economic growth and will achieve little because it does not include countries in the developing world such as China and India that emit large quantities of greenhouse gases. U.S. Deputy National Security Advisor David McCormick, briefing reporters June

7, said the G8 leaders for the first time reached an agreement on an “approach and process for moving forward.” The G8 comprises Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States and Russia.

“As you look through this text, you’re going to find an enormous step forward, in terms of our understanding and our agreement on a path ahead,” McCormick said.



President Bush talks with Russian President Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the G8 Summit in Germany. (White House photo)

U.S. National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley said that specific proposals on long-term emission goals by the European Union, Japan and Canada differ and need to be discussed further.

Nevertheless, he told reporters, President Bush endorsed the year of 2050 proposed by Germany’s chancellor, Angela Merkel, for cutting greenhouse gases in half as an “aspirational goal.”

The declaration does not contain specific long-term emission goals because “all of the key ‘players’ are not at the table,” Hadley said, referring to large emerging market countries. Hadley said those countries worry that binding limits on emissions would hamper their growth.

Trying to alleviate this concern, the declaration recognized that climate change must be addressed as part of a broader agenda, which also should include energy security, economic growth and sustainable development.

“These all need to be addressed in a consistent way so that developing countries recognize that they don’t need to protect their environment at the expense of development, growth and bringing people out of poverty,” Hadley said. “Both the G8 countries and major emerging economies have the chance to define a new partnership responding to ... world economic challenges,” according to the declaration.

The G8 leaders also cautioned against trade barriers and protectionism as a threat to prosperity and development and vowed to work to strengthen

open markets. However, they acknowledged that globalization and technological progress have produced not only benefits and opportunities but also dislocations. To address those dislocations, they proposed to promote and develop further social standards, strengthen corporate governance and social responsibility and invest in social safety nets.

The full text (http://www.g-8.de/Content/EN/Artikel/_g8-summit/anlagen/2007-06-07-gipfeldokument-wirtschaft-eng.property=publicationFile.pdf) of the summit declaration is available on a G8 Web site of the German government. ♦

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U.S. Tuberculosis Case Raises Questions on Global Disease Issues . . .

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May 31, Speaker was in isolation in Colorado, where he remains.

Speaker says he might have gotten TB during a five-week humanitarian visit to Vietnam with the Rotary Club in 2006, or during a 2001 trip to Peru.

"We have millions of people around the world crossing borders every day, many of them with TB or other infectious diseases," Dr. Nils Dau-laire, president of the nongovernmental organization the Global Health Council, told the subcommittee. "Unless we address the problems of these diseases at their source, in the world's poorest communities, no walls we can build will be high enough to protect the American population."

Internal reviews are ongoing at CDC to determine what procedures are needed to deal with similar cases in the future.

More information (<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/healthscience/healthtopics/tuberculosis/default.htm>) about tuberculosis and TB research is available at the NIAID Web site.

Answers to frequently asked questions about XTR TB (<http://www.who.int/tb/xdr/faqs/en/index.html>) are available at the World Health Organization Web site.

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

Public Awareness of Human Trafficking Increasing, Rice Says . . .

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munication between our two governments" can "stand some serious, frank talk about a problem like bonded labor or sex trafficking."

One country that fell off the Tier I list was Ireland, placed instead in a group called "Special Cases." The report said the presence of "foreign women in prostitution and a growing migrant labor population raise concerns about a potential trafficking problem" in Ireland. Other special cases are the Bahamas, Barbados, Brunei, Haiti, Iraq, Kiribati, Lesotho, the Solomon Islands, Somalia, Swaziland, Tunisia and Turkmenistan.

The report does not exempt the United States from a cataloguing

of its own trafficking problem, including women and girls who migrate to America and become prostitutes. An unknown number of U.S. citizens and legal residents are also trafficked within the United States, primarily for sexual servitude and forced labor, the report says.

While the United States is not assigned a tier rating, Lagon said America stands "ready to be judged" on the problem. He stressed that the United States should be seen as an ally against trafficking.

In fiscal year 2006, the United States contributed more than \$74 million abroad to fund 154 international anti-trafficking projects in 70 countries. Since fiscal year 2001, Lagon said, the U.S. government

has funded more than \$448 million to fight a problem in which an estimated 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year. Some 80 percent of that total is female, and up to half are minors.

The United States is "not just standing with our arms folded, judging others," because trafficking is a "transnational problem," Lagon said. "We offer our hand as a partner to try and solve this problem of modern-day slavery."

Rice's remarks (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2007/06/86323.htm>), Lagon's remarks (<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/rm/07/86306.htm>) and more information about human trafficking (<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/>) are on the State Department Web site. ♦