



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

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U.S. Ambassador Don Yamamoto Awards Prizes to Winners of Black History Month Essay Contest

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) -- To commemorate Black history Month in Addis Ababa this year, the US Embassy invited eleventh and twelfth grade students from four schools from Addis Ababa and one school in Mekki to participate in an essay contest on "An African-American Whom I Admire" in the month of February.



Ambassador Yamamoto (C) posing for photo with the essay contest winners

On Saturday, March 10, at a ceremony held at the Ambassador's Residence, U.S. Ambassador Don Yamamoto awarded prizes to the winners of the essay contest. The five schools that participated were: Bethel Mekhane Yesus, Don

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PEPFAR Supports Major Renovation at St. Peter's Tuberculosis (TB) Specialized Hospital

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office (HAPCO), officially launched on Tuesday, March 13 newly renovated



DCM Janet Wilgus shakes hands with Dr. Solomon Zewdu, Country Director, Johns Hopkins University, with Minister of Health Dr. Tedros Adhanom on the right

sections of St. Peter's TB Specialized Hospital to better serve Ethiopians. Renovated areas include HIV counseling and testing units, TB/HIV and Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) clinics, an Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs dis-

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U.S. Experts Support Government of Ethiopia to Conduct Prescribed Fires in Oromia

Controlled Burning Returns to Rangelands

SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 2007
Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – A team of four fire technical experts from the United States Forest Service (USFS) assisted with planning a series of rangeland fires in the Negelle area of Oromia National Regional State. Restoration of fire to these rangelands will increase fodder for livestock grazing, and ultimately increase food security for pastoralist communities. The prescribed burns are being carried out

at the request of the Government of Ethiopia and support the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Pastoralist Livelihoods Initiative (PLI).

As a result of fire suppression in the Afar and Oromia Regions for the past several decades, former rangelands which provided fodder for livestock are now overrun by thorny invasive plant species that prevent grazing. In an effort to improve the lives of Ethiopian pastoralists, USAID is working with the Government of Ethiopia to return fire to

land that depends on periodic burning for healthy survival. Controlled rangeland fires repair the health and overall ecological integrity of the land by removing invasive species and allowing new growth.

The U.S. fire experts worked in collaboration with other institutional partners in Ethiopia, such as Save the Children, and CARE. In consultation with regional government officials, two to four sites were selected and burns started on March 12th. ♦

PEPFAR Supports Major Renovation at St. Peter's . . .

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dispensary unit and pharmacy store. The renovation is a collaborative effort between partners funded by Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the major implementers of PEPFAR in Ethiopia.

The Minister of Health Dr. Tedros Adhanom and U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Janet Wilgus delivered remarks at the event, and inaugurated the renovated sections of the hospital.

With funding through CDC, Johns Hopkins University renovated and furnished the client waiting area, TB/HIV and ART clinics of St. Peter's. Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus, funded by USAID, renovated and furnished the ARV drugs dispensary unit and pharmacy store. The newly renovated facilities will



The newly renovated and furnished facilities at St. Peter's Hospital

improve the chronic space problem faced by the hospital.

The PEPFAR partners have trained hospital staff in TB/HIV co-management, ART service delivery,

and ARV drug supply management system. Standard Operating Procedures and recording and reporting formats have been developed. Computers for data entry and analysis have also been donated through the PEPFAR program. Clinical mentors and supportive supervision have also been an important part of the renovation to improve services.

The hospital has provided HIV counseling and testing service for all TB patients since September 2005, through support provided by PEPFAR. So far, 3,338 newly diagnosed TB patients have been counseled and tested for HIV, out of which over 50% were found to be HIV positive. There are 1,210 patients currently on ARV drugs and the clinic has handled a total of 7,177 clinic visits. There is sufficient stock of ARV drugs for over 1,000 patients for the next six months. ♦

U.S. Ambassador Don Yamamoto Awards Prizes to Winners . . .

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Bosco Catholic School, Mekki Catholic School, Awalia Muslim Missionary School and The Study Center (ACCESS Micro-scholarship Program).

As part of the event, drama students from the International Community School under the direction of teacher Joanne King prepared dramatic entertainment in the form of a poem set to music by Habte Seyoum, and a presentation entitled "Langston Hughes, Poet of the People."

The winners of the essay contest are:

1. Anene Negeri (Bethel Mekane Yesus School) – 1st Place
2. Yomiyu Melaku (Bethel Mekane Yesus School) - 2nd Place
3. Hilina Getachew (Bethel Mekane Yesus School) - 3rd Place
4. Rahel Tadele (Bethel Mekane Yesus School) - 4th Place
5. Kalkidan Kassaye (Bethel Mekane Yesus School) – Most creative work
6. Alemtsehai Kefene (Don Bosco Catholic School) – Inspiring



Ambassador Yamamoto congratulating on of the essay contest winners

thoughts winner

7. Neda Hussien – winner from Study Center category

Black History (or African-American History) is celebrated in educational institutions in the U.S. and at U.S. embassies and consulates abroad during the month of February. The event serves to remind us of the contributions of African-Americans to many aspects of American life, culture and history. Black History Month was started as Black History Week in 1926 by an African-American, Dr. Carter G. Woodson,

who was disturbed by fact that history books in the US largely ignored the black American population. He took on the challenge of writing black Americans into the nation's history. He chose the second week of February for Negro History Week because it marks the birthdays of two men who greatly influenced the black American population, Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. Later the "week" became a month, and is celebrated in the month of February. ♦

Sudanese President Appears To Step Back from Peace Commitments

By Stephen Kaufman
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The Bush administration is "extremely troubled" by Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's recent letter to the United Nations, in which he appears to back away from prior commitments to the Darfur peace agreement, according to State Department deputy spokesman Tom Casey.

In a 14-page letter to the world body, President Bashir reportedly argued against plans to augment African Union (AU) troops with a hybrid AU-U.N. force that would help implement the peace framework established in November 2006 by leaders meeting at the AU's headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

An estimated 200,000 people have died in Darfur's four-year conflict,

and millions more have been displaced.

Casey told reporters March 13 that it is "troubling" that Bashir now is trying to select which elements of the interim plan, known as the "heavy package," to help implement after he already had agreed to the deployment of the hybrid force.

The heavy support package "is

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Sudanese President Appears To Step Back from Peace Commitments . . .

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something that's been worked out by the AU with the United Nations, and it's what the AU thinks is necessary to be able to support the mission," Casey said, and the United States believes the package "needs to be provided for as soon as possible" to help the AU perform its peacekeeping functions.

The deputy spokesman added that the United States and others will need to "think seriously about implementing additional measures to deal with the humanitarian crisis in Darfur," if the Sudanese government continues efforts to "frustrate" the implementation of the Darfur peace agreement.

Casey warned that there is "growing impatience" on the part of the international community with Sudanese "delaying tactics."

"I think the patience of the international community is limited, and I think that we, unfortunately, may be approaching a time when other steps will have to be taken," he said. "The benchmark for us has always been whether the Sudanese government is permitting the implementation of the hybrid force to move forward."

Casey acknowledged that troop contributions still are needed for the hybrid force and called for countries to "make the commitments necessary" to implement the three-phase deployment plan. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=February&x=20070207170436esnamfuak0.3354761>).)

However, "for right now what is unfortunate is, regardless of the

limitations on the commitments already made, ... Sudan [is] taking a step back from its willingness to cooperate and implement this package," he said.



Sudanese President
Omar Hassan al-Bashir's

He also said there has been continued violence, some of it from some rebel factions, and called upon all sides to obey the terms of the cease-fire. Those who have not signed on to the Darfur peace agreement should do so and adhere to it, he urged.

"The only real way to achieve a lasting solution in Darfur is to have all sides sit down and work out the kind of agreement that ultimately was achieved between the North and the South in Sudan," Casey said. That also involves moving forward on the deployment of the hybrid force, he added.

A senior State Department official said the first page of Bashir's letter contained an acceptance of the need to deploy the heavy support

package in Darfur, but the bulk of the 13 pages that followed "are spent walking away from a commitment to the full package and delineating parts of it that they don't like, and raising concerns and exemptions."

The official said that even though an overwhelmingly positive position by Sudan toward the deployment of the force was not expected, "I think people were surprised by exactly how far of a pulling back this represents."

The hybrid AU-U.N. force agreed to in Addis Ababa would be deployed in three phases. The first, consisting of 185 troops, would provide mainly technical expertise.

In phase two, approximately 1,000 individuals would set up headquarters and other infrastructure as "an enabling force" for the main body of the more than 15,000 troops who would arrive as phase three.

"Up until now, you've been able to say that there's been cooperation from the Sudanese government in implementing the Addis agreement through phase one. This was sort of the next step in the process, and ... it's awfully hard to see how you can move forward with phase two under the terms that were laid out in that letter," the official said.

For more information on U.S. policies, 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>) ♦

Zimbabwean Receives International Women of Courage Award

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spotlighted the achievements of Zimbabwean human rights activist Jennifer Williams with an International Women of Courage Award presented at the State Department March 7.

Williams, founder of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) -- a civil society organization established in 2003 to protest government abuses -- accepted the award in the name of the group's more than 45,000 members.

"The award is a great honor, but the real award will be a free and independent Zimbabwe," Williams told USINFO during an interview at the State Department on the day of the ceremony.

The Zimbabwean was one of 10 recipients of the courage award chosen from among a field of 82 women activists nominated by U.S. embassies worldwide. The ceremony was held on International Women's Day, during a month that the United States celebrates as National Women's History Month. Announcing the award for Williams, the department cited the "harassment and physical abuse" she suffered under President Robert Mugabe's regime and commended her for "providing an example of courage and leadership by working for change through peaceful and nonviolent means."

In establishing the award in 2006, Rice said, "Women of courage are standing up for freedom and human dignity and the United States stands with them. We must not forget that the advance of women's rights and the advance of human liberty go hand in hand."

Arrested more than 25 times for leading protests against Mugabe's regime, Williams said, "Zimbabwe supposedly got independence in 1980." But under "dictator" Mugabe's disastrous land-seizure poli-



Under Secretary Paula Dobriensky with Jennifer Louise Williams, International Women of Courage Award recipient. (J. Sides/State Dept)

cies the economy is being destroyed and the country is turning into a beggar of international food aid.

Because of resulting malnutrition and lack of proper health care, she said, "Women are dying at age 34 [median age]; men, at 37. You can't earn a living. The authorities tear down houses that are not squatter houses and stop you from making a living."

Hardships fall especially hard on women, Williams said, because it is the children "who beg mama for more food or want to know why they can no longer go to school" when there is no money for school fees. Williams, a Matabele from Bulawayo, has paid a high personal price for her social and political protests. She received death threats following her arrests. Her thriving public relations business is defunct

and her husband and children live in "economic exile" in Britain. A Matabele is a member of the Bantu people native to southern Zimbabwe.

Despite the personal sacrifices, the activist said she feels empowered because WOZA's strength lies in its community members "who have ownership" in the organization. "It is because of our united struggle, hand in hand, that we are going to get the Zimbabwe we want," she said.

"Another very important aspect in saving our [protestor's] lives is the solidarity we get from people around the world," Williams said. And in that regard "the American Embassy in Harare has been very helpful."

"On the 12th of December I was arrested along with 300 others at parliament," she related. "It was an incredible thing to see a U.S. Embassy vehicle parked right there where we were seated on the ground under arrest. One police official after another tried to get the Americans to move but they just kept sitting there saying, 'we are just here to observe the process.'"

"That gave us a lot of courage," Williams said. "We had been brutally beaten just two weeks before at a demonstration and we just needed to know that someone was watching out for us this time around. And at the demonstration at parliament, the police allowed us walk away free, which had never happened before."

"So, we think it is important for the diplomatic community to play a role in helping us achieve our struggle," she added. "We can do it ourselves but it helps when the Mugabe authorities know the world is watching." ♦

United States Condemns Crackdown on Zimbabwe Protesters

By Stephen Kaufman
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The government of Zimbabwe's March 11 attack on opposition protesters in the Harare suburb of Highfield was "brutal and unwarranted," the State Department said, calling for the immediate release of those detained and for medical treatment to be provided to the injured.

According to a March 11 statement by spokesman Sean McCormack, the protesters had gathered peacefully to "exercise their legitimate democratic rights at a prayer meeting" when they were attacked.

The U.S. Embassy in Harare reported that one person was killed, several were injured and more than 100 were arrested, including Movement for Democratic Change leaders Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara and Lovemore Madhuku, who heads the National Constitutional Assembly.

The statement added that Zimbabwean police have refused to tell lawyers where those who have been arrested are being held. Subsequent press reports said Tsvangirai, Madhuku and at least four other opposition and civic leaders have been beaten and tortured.

McCormack said the United States is holding President Robert Mugabe and the government of Zimbabwe accountable for the government's actions as well as for the safety

and well-being of those being held in custody.

"We call for the immediate release of those detained, and for the provision of medical treatment for those injured," McCormack said.



Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai was among those injured during a "brutal and unwarranted" attack, said Sean McCormack. (AP Images)

State Department deputy spokesman Tom Casey expressed shock at the government's actions, saying they were "absolutely uncalled for and unfortunately certainly representative of the repressive nature of the Mugabe government."

Speaking to reporters March 13, Casey said the government is using "increasingly harsh treatment" especially against those wishing to express political views in opposition to Mugabe, and the March 11 crackdown is "unfortunately ... just another example" of that.

Mugabe has ruled Zimbabwe since the country gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1980. Casey said over the last few years there has been an increase in repression, violence, threats and intimidation "against anyone who wants to stand in President Mugabe's way."

The deputy spokesman called for free and fair elections in Zimbabwe "wherein the people in that country have a chance to choose their leaders." But under current circumstances, he said, "it's hard to imagine ... any election in which [Mugabe] is standing as a candidate or any election in which he and his current government are running could possibly meet international standards."

For additional information on U.S. policies in Africa, see Democracy and Human Development (http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/democracy_human_development.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>) ♦

U.S. Conducts Securities Market Oversight Training in Africa

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Africans are learning techniques for better oversight of stock market trading -- a critical part of the business engine transforming Africa from aid dependency to self-reliant prosperity -- through an innovative training program recently conducted by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The SEC announced March 5 that it had completed its first major Capital Market Development and Oversight Training Program held in Kampala, Uganda, February 26-March 2. Fifty participants from 12 countries representing securities authorities, stock exchanges and central banks attended the workshops.

Co-sponsors of the program were the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Financial Services Volunteer Corps and the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Technical Assistance. The program was hosted by the East African Securities Regulatory Authorities (EASRA), which consists of the capital markets authorities of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

Ethiopia's Tafara, director of the SEC's Office of International Affairs, commended the leadership of EASRA for promoting the training partnership. "It speaks volumes about the interest that regulators and exchanges in Eastern Africa have in market development, and in the promotion of market integrity."

Steven A. Browning, U.S. ambassador to Uganda, enthusiastically backed the program saying, "We are greatly encouraged by the participation of so many African countries, regulators and exchanges in

this training program [because]... the growth and development of strong capital markets are critical to Africa's, and Uganda's, continued economic development."

The weeklong training partnership focused on methods of investigating market misconduct such as insider trading, financial fraud and market manipulation. Sessions also addressed corporate governance and disclosure, market regulation and broker-dealer inspection and compliance. Several workshops were held to address current interest in harmonizing and integrating markets on a regional basis, according to an SEC press release.

Japheth Katto, chief executive officer of Uganda's Capital Markets Authority, said he had no doubt "the seminars would help regulators and exchanges in the development of their legal and regulatory frameworks for the benefit of investors."

As regulator of the largest capital market in the world, the SEC has shown great leadership and social responsibility by sharing its experience, expertise and resource material with participants from 12 young emerging capital markets in Africa," Katto said.

Robert Fisher, assistant director of the SEC's Office of International Affairs, responsible for technical assistance, told USINFO that "While the specific challenges facing markets of different sizes and in different settings may vary, the fundamental nature of fraud and the need to protect investors is universal."

Particularly in this age of globalized markets and connectivity, Fisher said, "Quality regulators need to unite in their efforts to work across borders to combat fraud. We

greatly value this opportunity to exchange ideas on how best to confront such universal problems as market manipulation, insider trading, offering fraud and customer abuse. The concerted effort by various African regulators to promote the integrity of their markets and to improve investor protection is very impressive."

In 2006, the SEC's technical-assistance training programs provided training for 1,045 foreign officials from scores of foreign countries. Recently, SEC staff conducted or participated in regional or bilateral market training programs in China, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Ecuador, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia.

In addition, Vietnam, Kuwait and Iraq recently have sought and been provided assistance in developing new securities laws.

The SEC's flagship training programs are its International Enforcement Institute and its International Institute for Market Development (IIMD). Last year, IIMD hosted 148 senior securities officials from 68 emerging market countries. Its technical-assistance program includes regional training programs such as the African program, bilateral training programs, reviews of foreign statutes and regulations and responses to specific technical-assistance inquiries.

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Millennium Aid Funding Achieving Results, Official Says

By Kathryn McConnell
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) funds are achieving development results by focusing on such country-identified priorities as infrastructure improvements that make access to markets, clinics and schools possible, and support projects that secure land tenure for farmers, says John Danilovich, MCC's executive director.

Testifying March 13 before a House Appropriations subcommittee, Danilovich said MCC funding also increasingly is being channeled toward such country priorities as improvements to sanitation and irrigation systems, and providing microloans to women entrepreneurs.

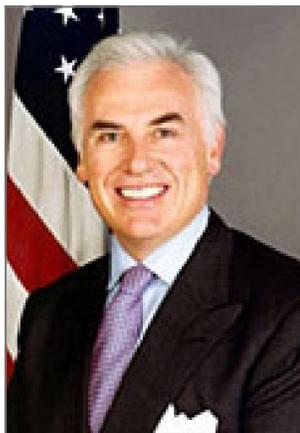
The investments eventually will lead to higher household incomes, which will enhance poor people's resources for better food, housing, education and health care, Danilovich said.

More than 22 million people in 11 partner countries already are benefiting from MCC-funded projects, he said.

In Nicaragua, MCC's \$175 million multiyear agreement aimed at rural business development has helped build a rural milk-collection facility

and has attracted foreign investment in a textile manufacturing company expected to create 1,500 jobs.

In Georgia, which has a \$295 million agreement, MCC funding is being used to rehabilitate water supplies in two cities serving 230,000 people.



John Danilovich

The project is expected to generate almost \$60 million in economic benefits to the two cities over the life of the compact, Danilovich said.

He urged congressional approval of the full \$3 billion the Bush administration is requesting for the MCC for fiscal year 2008.

The MCC expects to sign funding agreements, called compacts, with four additional countries in the current fiscal year, fiscal year 2007 and up to eight countries in fiscal year 2008, Danilovich said. The average size of a new compact will be between \$400 million and \$500 million, he said.

Ten percent of MCC funding is directed to its "threshold" agreements that focus primarily on strengthening governance, especially fighting corruption, improving child immunization rates and im-

proving elementary completion rates for girls, Danilovich said.

For example, Burkina Faso's \$12.9 million threshold funding is being used to build new schools throughout the country that will encourage more girls to attend. Some include day care centers so girls can be near younger siblings for whom they are responsible, and separate restrooms for girls and boys.

These schools also provide take-home food rations for families with girls who attend school at least 90 percent of the time school is in session.

The full text (<http://mca.gov/press/speeches/2007/testimony-031307-danilovichhacfo.php>) of Danilovich's prepared testimony is available on the MCC Web site.

For more information on U.S. policies, see 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>) ♦

U.S. Initiative Aims To Smooth Way for Foreign Investment

By Andrzej Zwanecki
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – The United States is launching an initiative to attract more foreign direct investment (FDI) by addressing regulatory impediments and promoting the strengths of the U.S. marketplace.

Frank Lavin, under secretary of commerce for international trade, announced the Invest in America Initiative March 7 at the Peter J. Peterson Institute for International Economics.

“We need to make sure that international investors understand the unique advantages of the United States,” he said.

The Commerce Department’s International Trade Administration, led by Lavin, will spearhead the initiative by helping foreign investors cut through bureaucracy, managing regulatory reviews and addressing other investment issues. The initiative is aimed at transactions that do not have national security concerns, he said.

Lavin indirectly acknowledged the U.S. image as an investment-friendly destination for foreign investment was hurt by the 2006 DP World controversy. The administration approved the deal by the Dubai-owned company to manage operations at several U.S. ports as part of a larger agreement, but a political uproar in Congress over security implications forced the company to divest its interest in the transaction. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/Archive/2006/Mar/10-614203.html>).)

Lavin said the United States cannot risk having perception of its investment climate shaped only by an “occasional difficulty.”



Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, Frank Lavin

“We need to remind our investment partners that the overwhelming majority of investment activity in the United States takes place on a normal commercial basis,” he said.

In response to a question, Lavin said that Chinese companies thinking about investing in the U.S. market must do extra preparatory and outreach work to avoid misperceptions or controversies.

In 2005, a Chinese company made a bid to buy the American oil firm Unocal but later withdrew the offer after the deal raised security concerns in Congress. (See related article ([http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=July&x=20050719135139TJkcolluB0.9948542)

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=July&x=20050719135139TJkcolluB0.9948542>).)

Lavin said, however, that increasing competition for FDI, not damage control, is the primary reason the administration decided to set up the new program.

He said the United States frequently finds itself in competition for foreign direct investment with other developed economies as well as emerging markets such as Mexico, China, India and Central European nations.

In 2006, the United States was the largest recipient of FDI -- a position it has not always held -- followed by the United Kingdom, France and China.

Lavin said that the United States is the only major economy that does not have a federal government program to attract and retain foreign investment.

“This historically passive role toward FDI is increasingly anachronistic,” he said.

Additional information (<http://trade.gov/investamerica/>) on the Invest in America Initiative and the full text (http://trade.gov/press/speeches/lavin_030707.asp) of Lavin’s remarks as prepared for delivery are available on the International Trade Administration’s Web site.

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

Challenged by Trade Partners, China Ends Export Credit Subsidy

Washington -- China has terminated its central bank program that allowed a select group of large exporters to take advantage of discounted loans unavailable to many other companies.

The United States and several other countries had challenged the program as a prohibited export subsidy and requested World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute settlement consultations. The loan program was among nine Chinese activities the United States has identified as possible violations of WTO rules.

China's decision to stop its subsidized export loan program was made public March 8.

"This is a welcome move by China," said U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab. "We hope that the termination of these discounted loans signals China's willingness to withdraw other subsidy programs identified in our recent WTO action that harm U.S. companies and workers."

Some of the supports identified by the United States appear to offer benefits to foreign investors and their Chinese partners to export to the United States and other markets. Others encourage import substitution by providing incentives for companies in China to purchase domestically produced goods.

The United States requested WTO dispute settlement consultations February 2. Japan, Australia, the European Union and Mexico asked to participate in the talks as additional parties; Mexico filed its own consultation request February 26. It is the third time the United States has turned to the WTO for enforcement of China's trading obligations.

In March 2004, it challenged China's value-added tax rebates, which it said discriminated against imported semiconductors. The two sides resolved the dispute in the



U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab

consultation phase. In 2006, the United States, the European Union and Canada challenged Chinese taxes on imported auto parts. The parties agreed to establish a panel to adjudicate the matter.

Another dispute concerning Chinese duties on a U.S. paper product was resolved in January without WTO involvement after the United States had informed China about its intention to file for WTO consultations.

Consultations are the first stage in the WTO dispute-resolving process.

The issue of trade subsidies and other forms of the Chinese government's involvement in commercial activity was a critical one during the negotiations leading to China's WTO accession in December 2001. China committed itself to follow WTO regulations and refrain from

prohibited export subsidies and import substitution programs.

The U.S. trade representative's office, however, says China has continued to use subsidies to support Chinese industry.

In testimony February 15 before the House Ways and Means Committee's Subcommittee on Trade, Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Karan K. Bhatia said U.S.-China relations are entering a new phase in which China "will be held fully accountable for its WTO obligations as a mature trading partner and will be expected to play a greater role in strengthening the global trading system."

He said subsidies and intellectual property rights protection remain the main concerns in U.S.-China trade relations, but also mentioned positive developments over the last 12 months. Bhatia said U.S. exports to China climbed by 32 percent, and several major transactions have helped to further open the Chinese market to U.S. companies. For example, he cited the fact that Citibank and others acquired a stake in Guangdong Development Bank, and the Westinghouse Electric Corporation won a \$5 billion to \$8 billion nuclear power contract in China.

The full text (<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp?formmode=view&id=5465>) of Bhatia's prepared testimony is available on the committee's Web site.

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

Governments Seen Flourishing with Women Included in Leadership

By Louise Fenner
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Democracies function best when women are included fully in decisionmaking and governing, says a leading American political scientist and advocate for women's issues.

"Democracy without women simply isn't democracy," Georgia Duerst-Lahti, professor of political science at Benoit College in Wisconsin, said during a webchat March 8, International Women's Day. She answered questions about the status and contributions of women in U.S. political life.

Duerst-Lahti believes it is "important to have women in public office, and especially in leadership roles."

This does not just send a signal of inclusion, it actually can make government more responsive, she said. "Women have different life experiences than men, which leads to different perspectives.... Women change the agenda when they get into office in sufficient numbers. Where women are in office, everyone gets better care from governments."

She added that "women in political office are significantly more likely than men to work against discrimination and for gender opportunities."

Duerst-Lahti is currently a visiting professor and research fellow at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she is studying trends in gender and leadership of public organizations. She has served as president of the Women's Caucus for Political Science and has been appointed to the American Political

Science Association's Committee on the Status of Women.

The status of women in the United States' political life presents a mixed picture, she said. At the state level, "we can claim consider-



Having women in public office "actually can make government more responsive," says Georgia Duerst-Lahti. (University of Wisconsin)

able progress and overall a critical mass of women in office" -- with women holding 23.5 percent of all legislative seats and nine of the 50 governorships. At the federal level, women comprise 16 percent of the Senate and 16.3 percent of the House of Representatives. The United States ranks 61st among all countries in the proportion of the national legislature that is female, Duerst-Lahti said.

She noted that Representative Nancy Pelosi is now speaker of the House, which makes her third in line for the presidency, although no woman has ever been elected U.S. president or vice president. Duerst-Lahti said that in U.S. economic life, American women still earn less than men on average and hold fewer senior positions. "This

speaks to some sexism that still exists," she said, "but good laws and general societal change have ameliorated this problem greatly."

In America, "women have advanced to the highest levels in areas commonly associated with women such as health, education, welfare," she said, although certain jobs are still associated with men, including the top military commands and Cabinet posts for defense, homeland security and the Treasury.

"No government, whatever the form, is good government unless it has a critical mass of women with formal power equal to men," Duerst-Lahti said. "The governments of the world need to incorporate fully the wisdom, experience and perspectives of women to flourish. A balance of power between women and men should be our goal."

She added that "countries that educate their women develop faster and further than those that do not. Basic health for women is a key to education and economic security. It is in the interest of all people to treat women well."

During the webchat, Duerst-Lahti mentioned that Wisconsin's lieutenant governor, Barbara Lawton, has established a program to cultivate female leaders in politics and other institutions. It is one of four initiatives under Lawton's "Wisconsin Women = Prosperity" (WWP) program.

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

Mentoring Helps American Girls Succeed in Careers, Life

By Carolee Walker
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – Girls who are coached in sports, leadership and academics from as young as 8 years old are better equipped to combat social pressures and enter adulthood as healthy individuals, says social worker and triathlete Molly Barker, founder of Girls on the Run, a nongovernmental organization (NGO).

“Peer pressure plays a big role in a child’s development in the middle school years,” Barker told USINFO. “Girl-only groups provide a ripe environment to discuss the challenges that peer pressure can bring and an opportunity to create coping strategies to handle this pressure before it actually exists.” In the United States, middle school usually refers to grades six, seven and eight.

According to published reports by the American Psychological Association, young girls in the United States are vulnerable to some of the same mental health problems facing some women today, including low self-confidence and depression. Programs designed specifically to help adolescent girls stay mentally healthy and obtain tools to be successful at school, at home and in life are becoming increasingly important, said Anissa Freeman, executive officer of Girls on the Run.

Girls on the Run sponsors programs in the United States for girls 8 to 13 years old that combine training for a five-kilometer running event with confidence-building workouts.

Because the before- and after-school programs provide lessons



Social Worker and Triathlete Molly Barker, Founder of “Girls on the Run”

that enhance emotional and social health, the benefits are more than physical.

For example, at an early morning practice in February at a primary school in Arlington, Virginia, girls learned the importance of making and keeping promises. Coach Jenn Brown used cue cards to prompt discussions related to keeping promises and then incorporated lessons into relay races. Even simply placing the cue cards at poles around the track field and having the girls race to find them and discuss them in teams drove the point home.

“If you keep your promise, people will trust you,” said Isabel, age 10, who has participated in Girls on the Run for three years. “The [Girls on the Run] practices really push you to do all you can do.”

“The running makes me feel good about myself, respect myself,” said Elise, age 11. “If you take the practices seriously, it’s not hard to run the race.”

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Summer mornings at another program for young girls in North Carolina begin peacefully at dawn with yoga classes, but by the time the girls fall into their beds close to midnight, their minds are racing with ideas.

“Born to lead” is the theme of the Power Girls Global Summer Leadership Institute for girls of color, aged 14 to 17, from around the world at Bennett College for Women in Greensboro. Targeting African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American and American Indian girls, the two-week residential leadership training program uses education and training to bring opportunities within reach of young minority women.

“By the time some girls go to college, it is too late to orient them to the idea that they can be the CEO

(Continued on page 13)

Mentoring Helps American Girls Succeed in Careers, Life . . .

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[chief executive officer] of a business or even start their own business," said Bea Y. Perdue, president of the Johnnetta B. Cole Global Diversity and Inclusion Institute at Bennett College for Women. "Part of the problem is that many young women of color do not have access to women who look like them, who are successful in church, government and industry."

Participants work with mentors to develop oral, written and interpersonal skills and to examine issues affecting minority women within the global marketplace. Team experiences in developing and implementing business plans teach marketing along with managing conflict.

The goal of Power Girls is to show girls how to attain the skills they will need to be successful rather than just telling them what to do. The program exposes the participants to leaders in government and industry who mentor them in all-day activities. Students visit the North Carolina state capital, where they meet key women in government, and career sessions introduce them to successful women in an array of jobs with local and national companies.

"We have to reach these girls early on and we have to make them aware of the possibilities while encouraging them to make their own

personal growth and education a priority," said Perdue.

MENTORING UNDERSERVED GIRLS

It is widely accepted that girls between the ages of 8 and 12 still are receptive to adult influence while beginning to feel peer pressure. The nongovernmental organization Girls Inc. recognizes the importance of adult mentoring during these years.

"We know that girls have the capacity to do or be whatever they want, but they are often limited by external expectations and by their lack of confidence," said Joyce M. Roche, head of Girls Inc., which provides after-school mentoring to adolescent girls.

Girls Inc. programs teach girls to tackle math and science in school and to learn fundamental economic concepts so that they can make the right financial decisions for themselves, according to Roche. The programs teach girls how to be economically self-sufficient and provide basic information about the stock market. They also examine peer pressure and violence.

Girls Inc. centers allow girls to "try new things they may be less likely to try with boys around," Roche said.

Girls Inc. was founded as the Girls Club of America in 1864 to help young girls who were migrating from rural communities to cities.

Today, most Girls Inc. clubs help American girls in high-risk, underserved areas confront social pressures and prepare them to lead successful and fulfilling lives, Roche said. The organization changed its name to Girls Inc. in 1990.

Both Girls on the Run and Girls Inc. receive public funding from agencies authorized by the U.S. Congress, and the local clubs associated with the NGOs receive significant community support from businesses and large corporations.

Additional information on Girls on the Run (<http://www.girlsontherun.org/>) and Girls Inc. (<http://www.girlsinc.org/>) is available on the groups' Web sites. More information about the Power Girls Global Summer Leadership Institute (<http://www.jbcinstitute.org/>) is available on the Bennett College for Women Web site.

For more stories on women's issues, see Women in the Global Community (http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/women.html) and National Women's History Month (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history_geography_and_population/population_and_diversity/women_in_the_us/womens_history_month.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>) ♦

Iraqi Women Strive To Rebuild Country Despite Obstacles

Washington – Iraqi women have made great progress in recent years, but still face obstacles while working to achieve full equality, two Iraqi women activists said March 7.

Wide participation of women in the political process is something new for Iraqi society, said Sundus Abbas, executive director of the Women's Leadership Institute in Baghdad, Iraq. "For more than 35 years Iraqi women were absent from the decision making process," she told USINFO. "Now Iraqi women participate. In spite of this, there is suffering for Iraqi women."

Security problems, a difficult economic situation and the attitudes of some who seek to roll back women's rights and erase the achievements of women make the role Iraqi women more difficult, she said.

"Iraqi women are working hard in spite of all these difficulties, despite all that you have seen in the media," Abbas said.

She said women have the right to participate in the rebuilding of their country, a task too large for only men. "It is our country, and we are all the people rebuilding it," she said.

Shatha Abdul Razzak Abbousi, a member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, agreed. Of the 275 council members, 80 are women. Although many of these female members are not the most vocal leaders and often do not speak to

the press, they are very active in the council's committees, Abbousi told USINFO.

Iraqi women are working diligently to improve their economy, achieve peace and participate in civil society and other fields, the women said. "Iraqi women are fighting more than one front," Abbas said. Both Abbas and Abbousi have been active on many of these fronts. With the



Under Secretary Paula Dobriensky with Sundus Abbas, recipient of an International Women of Courage Award. (Janine Sides/State Dept.)

Women's Leadership Institute, Abbas has taught classes on decisionmaking, providing women with leadership skills that better empower them. Abbousi, who is a member of Iraq's Human Rights Committee, has helped introduce and pass human rights legislation.

Women are well qualified to participate in Iraqi society, Abbas said. "Not only in our houses. We can build, we can educate others; we can even make decisions in political and economic situations. ... We deserve as women to take our rights to participate in all decision making positions."

Abbas and Razzak Abbousi were two of 10 women receiving the Award for International Women of Courage from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. It is the first time the award has been given.

In celebration of International Women's Day 2007, Rice paid tribute to these women for their commitment to advocating for women's rights. The Award for International Women of Courage recognizes women around the globe who have shown exceptional courage and leadership. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=March&x=20070307164030ajesrom0.6110193>))

Both women said they felt their awards were not for them, but rather for all Iraqi women. These awards encourage them to work harder, the activists said.

Iraq and especially the women of Iraq still need the international community's help, Abbas said. "We still need the moral support from all the women of the world. We need them to support us in this difficult and critical time."

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

2008 AIDS Relief Budget Request Tops Original Commitment

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – President Bush has asked the U.S. Congress to approve \$5.4 billion for his President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) for fiscal year 2008 (2008-2009), the last year of the five-year effort to fight HIV/AIDS around the world.

If that funding is approved, the PEPFAR program – the largest commitment by a single nation to an international health initiative – would be on track to exceed the original \$15 billion pledge and bring to \$18.3 billion the amount of money the United States has invested in the fight against AIDS.

“By working with host nations to build quality health care networks and increase capacity,” U.S. global AIDS coordinator Ambassador Mark Dybul testified March 1 before the House Committee on Appropriations subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, “we are laying the foundation for nations and communities to sustain their efforts against HIV/AIDS and other diseases long after the initial five years of the Emergency Plan.”

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has killed at least 20 million of the more than 60 million people it has infected so far, leaving 14 million orphans worldwide. On the continent of Africa, nearly 30 million people have the AIDS virus – including 3 million children under age 15, according to the White House.

Bush announced the PEPFAR pro-

gram in 2003 to support treatment for 2 million HIV-infected people, help prevent 7 million new infec-

tions and help care for 10 million people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS by 2008 in 15 focus countries – Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guyana, Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia. (See related fact sheet ([http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-](http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=January&x=20070123170311xjsnommis1.020449e-02)



U.S. global AIDS coordinator Ambassador Mark Dybul

english&y=2007&m=January&x=20070123170311xjsnommis1.020449e-02).)

INVESTMENTS TO DATE

Resources are being invested mainly in partnerships with host nations to build health care networks and increase capacity, Dybul said, but PEPFAR also amplifies the effects of other international HIV interventions by working with and contributing to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Other international partners include the World Bank; United Nations agencies, led by UNAIDS; other national governments; and private-sector businesses and foundations.

Dybul recapped progress toward the plan's goals through the end of September 2006:

Treatment -- The number of people receiving treatment with support from PEPFAR bilateral partnerships was 987,100 – about half the esti-

mated 2 million receiving treatment in low- and middle-income countries. PEPFAR also supported training or retraining of about 52,000 people in providing treatment. PEPFAR's impact on treatment includes increased availability of safe, effective, low-cost generic anti-retroviral drugs in the developing world.

Prevention -- PEPFAR supports the most comprehensive evidence-based programs, including prevention activities that focus on sexual transmission, mother-to-child transmission, HIV transmission through unsafe blood and medical injections, and HIV awareness. Community outreach programs reached about 61.5 million people, and PEPFAR supported anti-retroviral drugs for HIV-positive women during 533,700 pregnancies, saving an estimated 101,500 infants from HIV infection.

Care -- Through fiscal year 2006, PEPFAR supported care for nearly 4.5 million people worldwide, including 2 million orphans and vulnerable children, and more support for national efforts to provide care for related infections, especially HIV/tuberculosis co-infection. PEPFAR supported training for about 143,000 people in caring for orphans and vulnerable children, nearly 94,000 in caring for people living with HIV/AIDS, and more than 66,000 in providing counseling and testing services.

PEPFAR AND DEVELOPMENT

“At least one quarter of PEPFAR's total resources are devoted to capacity-building in the public and private health sectors,” Dybul said, “supporting physical infrastructure, healthcare systems, and workforce development.”

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Statement on Iranian Women's Protests

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
March 8, 2007

STATEMENT BY SEAN MCCORMACK, SPOKESMAN

Iranian Women Protests

The United States is deeply concerned by reports that Iranian authorities attacked peaceful women's rights protestors in Tehran today at a gathering to mark International Women's Day. These repressive actions by the regime highlight an alarming trend of intolerance toward the expression of independent

views by the Iranian people.

The regime's actions today follow the beatings and arrests of more than 30 women earlier this week. Those brave women had gathered outside a courthouse in Tehran to show solidarity with five women on trial for organizing a June 2006 protest against gender-discrimination laws.

The United States stands with the women of Iran, who courageously struggle for their universal rights and justice in their country. We continue to work with the international community through the

United Nations, foreign governments, and international NGOs to focus attention on the Iranian regime's abuse of its own citizens. We call on the Iranian government to improve its own human rights situation before more Iranians suffer for attempting to exercise their universal rights and freedoms.

(end text)

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

2008 AIDS Relief Budget Request Tops Original Commitment . . .

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One example is a recently announced \$10 million public-private partnership called Phones for Health. The program brings together mobile-phone operators, handset manufacturers and technology companies who work closely with ministries of health, global health organizations and other partners to use mobile technology to strengthen health care services and monitoring systems.

"The Phones for Health network will have applications for more than just HIV/AIDS," Dybul said. "In the event of an outbreak of bird flu, extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis or any other suddenly arising epidemic, this system and others like it will prove to be invaluable."

In September 2006, Laura Bush

announced a \$60 million public-private partnership called the PlayPump Alliance, an effort among PlayPumps International, PEPFAR, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and other private-sector partners to bring the benefits of clean drinking water to up to 10 million people in sub-Saharan Africa by 2010. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060920141330AKllennoCcMO.2921564>).)

PlayPump™ water systems are innovative, patented water pumps powered by children at play. They are installed near schools and double as water pumps and merry-go-rounds for children. Through USAID and PEPFAR, the U.S. government will provide \$10 million to the alliance over three years. The goal is for every U.S. government tax dol-

lar to be matched by \$5 from the private sector.

The investment will provide and support the installation of the water systems in 650 schools, health centers and HIV-affected communities. HIV/AIDS messages on PlayPump™ billboards will spread the word about healthy behavior.

More information about PEPFAR (<http://www.pepfar.gov/>) is available on the organization's Web site.

For more information on U.S. policy, see President Bush's HIV/AIDS Initiatives (http://usinfo.state.gov/global_issues/HIV_AIDS/hiv_aids_initiative.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>) ♦

Astronaut Suni Williams Describes Life Aboard Space Station

By Lea Terhune
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington – The audio signal was clear from the International Space Station (ISS). Except for a slight lag in transmission, the astronauts might have been across town. Flight Engineer Sunita “Suni” Williams, who arrived on the Space Shuttle STS-116 Discovery on December 11, 2006, for a six-month tour of duty, took time out from her duties to chat with USINFO about her experiences in orbit.

Williams joined Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Tyrurin and mission commander Michael Lopez-Alegria to continue scientific experiments and to install new equipment and upgrades to the space station.

In February, Williams logged a total of 28 hours and 17 minutes in four spacewalks, setting a record for women astronauts. But she said, “I believe there is a generation of explorers behind me who are going to shatter my record.” She foresees manned missions to the moon and even Mars in the coming years.

Inside or outside the space station, Williams says life as an ISS crew member is a busy one. “Every day is a little bit different. We get a plan by the week and there’s an amazing number of things that we are doing from science to maintenance to EVAs [Extra Vehicular Activity] -- which are space walks -- to robotics.” The crew also works out every day. “That’s part of our maintaining of our bone and muscle while we’re up here in microgravity.”

Although it was difficult for her to name one activity as her favorite, dinnertime ranked high. “At the dinner table down in the Russian seg-

ment service module where we all get together at night and eat and trade stories about the day, it always ends up being a good laugh and a lot of fun.” She adds, “The camaraderie of living on a small ship and working together is probably the best part of this.”

ISS cuisine is eclectic. Williams, whose father is from India, loves

niche benefit.”

She says her ISS experience has affected her outlook. “It just makes you realize a lot of things about your life,” not only about people but the planet. She said that from the space station windows, “You can see the small, little atmosphere that protects us. We are only 200 miles or so above the earth and we are



In this December 2006 photo from NASA, astronaut Sunita L. Williams smiles for the camera while in the hatch which connects the flight deck and middeck of space shuttle Discovery. (AP Images)

Indian food. She found saag paneer and chole in her “bonus containers” which she shared with her crew mates. “Maybe a little too hot for some” without rice, roti or raita, she said. “Hopefully I’ll be getting some samosas before too long.”

The view is “amazing.” After a month of watching the computer map that monitors the ISS location above earth, Williams now can recognize the continents herself. “You get pretty good at geography up here because you have some time to look out the window. It’s really a

already in a microgravity environment where it’s very harsh, in the vacuum of space. And it’s hot and cold out there, and you realize there’s not much protecting this planet.” She adds, “[W]e need to take care of it.”

“Looking down at the planet, looking out at the wonderful places that there are in the world to go to, you don’t really think about any of the problems that are down there ... you just look at the geography and go, ‘Wow! That’s a really great

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Scientists Create High-Resolution Map of Antarctica

By Cheryl Pellerin
USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- Researchers from NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) have woven together nearly 1,100 images from the Landsat 7 satellite to create the most detailed high-resolution map ever produced of Antarctica.

The Landsat Image Mosaic of Antarctica (LIMA) offers seamless, cloud-free views of the coldest continent on Earth in 10 times greater detail than ever has been possible, according to March 7 statements from NASA and USGS.

Researchers at NASA, USGS and the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge, England, have launched a Web site with support from the U.S. National Science Foundation to offer public access to the image mosaic.

The site contains original images and close-ups of areas of Antarctica, all available for download. The research group will continue to release additional parts of the mosaic until it is complete, expected to be by the end of September 2007.

"These images give us incredibly detailed views of the Antarctic ice sheet surface and serve as maps for many locations that have never been mapped before," said Robert Bindschadler, chief scientist at the Laboratory for Hydrospheric and

Biospheric Sciences at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland, in a March 7 statement. Bindschadler oversaw the selection of the scenes used to create the mosaic.



The Landsat Image Mosaic of Antarctica (LIMA) brings the coldest place on Earth alive. (Image courtesy of Landsat/USGS)

EYES IN THE SKY

USGS manages the Landsat Program, which began in 1972 with the launch of the first Landsat Earth remote-sensing satellite. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=January&x=20060131160456lcnirellep0.27055&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html>).

Over the past 35 years, sensors aboard Landsat satellites have captured millions of digital images of the Earth's land masses and coastal regions that researchers worldwide

use to study global change, natural disasters and other aspects of the Earth's terrestrial environment.

Scenes used to create the mosaic map of Antarctica were drawn from more than 8,000 images collected between 1999 and 2006 by Landsat 7's Enhanced Thematic Mapper Plus sensor.

Scientists at the USGS Center for Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) are performing the digital weaving of Landsat scenes for most of the continent. British Antarctic Survey researchers are generating the Antarctic Peninsula region of the map.

"The optical remote sensing characteristics of the Landsat sensor, and other satellite observations, provide a unique, never-before-seen view of this critical continent of the Earth system, said EROS Director R.J. Thompson.

"The availability of the final data set via Internet-based tools will represent a tremendous scientific asset for the global Earth science community."

Landsat scenes make up most of the map's digital dataset, but scientists will use some images captured by instruments carried aboard NASA's Terra and Aqua satellites, and possibly a small amount of radar data, to fill in part of the Antarctic continent surrounding the geographic South Pole that Landsat 7 does not "see" as it circles the Earth in its near-polar orbit.

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Astronaut Suni Williams Describes Life Aboard . . .

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place; I'd love to visit that one day."

"One of the really great aspects of the International Space Station is that it is international," Williams said. "We've had 16 countries working on this project. It's one of the most amazing engineering projects in the world." Countries that were formerly at odds now join together on engineering, medical and scientific research of all types on the ISS. "I think that's just an example ... of how to work together," she said.

The daughter of neuroanatomist Dr. Deepak Pandya and his wife, Bonnie, of Massachusetts, Williams graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, became an engineer and a test pilot before being selected by NASA's Astronaut Candidate School in 1998. She encourages young people to follow their dreams. "I never thought for a moment I would be an

astronaut when I was growing up. Never thought it was possible," she said. "And those ideas and those dreams ... don't let anyone tell you that you can't do them." She emphasized physical fitness: "Don't take your health for granted."

Williams sees bright prospects for future astronauts: "Many people will be up here, not only circling around our beautiful planet but going off to the moon and maybe on to Mars. The next generation has a lot to look forward to in front of them. And I wish them all good luck."

For additional information about U.S policy, see Science and Technology (http://usinfo.state.gov/global_issues/scitech.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>) ♦

Scientists Create High-Resolution Map of Antarctica . . .

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ZOOMING IN ON ANTARCTICA

"The resolution sensitivity of the Landsat sensor is well beyond that of even the most state-of-the-art digital camera," Bindschadler said. "It's able to record subtle variations in the ice sheet's surface that tell us more about ice sheet features, the flow of the ice sheet and changes in the ice sheet's surface."

According to Bindschadler, researchers will have special interest in the new ability to zoom in on areas like Antarctica's dry valleys that lie between the ice sheets. Until now, only aerial images of the valleys have been possible. LIMA's carefully collaged images provide clear, high-resolution

views.

Through special processing of images captured by Landsat 7's Enhanced Thematic Mapper Plus sensor, scientists were able to produce a true color, nearly cloud-free view of Antarctica.

For the process, they use special software to stack several images of Antarctic locations to create one larger image. The researchers also arranged the images on top of each other in a sequence that allows clear views to the surface, removing the effects of clouds in some images.

"Using the Web portal, scientists, as well as students, teachers and others, will be able to zoom in to a specific Antarctic region and adjust for various levels of detail," Bind-

schadler said. "This will be like having a room with a tremendous view, a detailed view from space aboard Landsat to peer down as if you were just above the ice sheet's surface."

LIMA is one of more than 228 projects funded in conjunction with the International Polar Year, a two-year initiative (March 2007 to March 2009) that 63 cooperating countries have launched to improve scientific understanding of Earth's polar regions.

During the past three decades, Landsat sensors have captured 2 million high-resolution digital photographs of Earth's continents and surrounding coastal regions, enabling scientists to study various aspects of the planet. ♦