



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Delivering the Promise of Safe Birth Delivery

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (June 11, 2008) – The Ministry of Health, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Save the Children, UNICEF, WHO and other partners called on donors, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and citizens across Ethiopia to “deliver the promise – for safe pregnancy, child birth and post natal care” as they marched in Addis on Thursday, June 5 to kick off the first-ever celebration of safe moth-

erhood that was held on Friday, June 6. In Ethiopia 26,000 women die annually of complications in pregnancy. The majority of deaths occur at home. According to the Countdown to 2015; tracking progress in maternal, newborn & child survival 2008 Report, the number one cause of maternal death in Ethiopia is hemorrhage; only 12 percent of women have 4 or more antenatal visits – while only 5 percent of babies receive postnatal

care. Less than half of the mothers are breastfeeding exclusively (without adding other foods) for the recommended for six months.

According to Save the Children’s recent State of the World’s Mothers Report, almost all births in Ethiopia take place at home (94 percent), one child in eight dies before reaching age five, and most mothers and children who need care live too far from a road, let

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Aiding Pastoralists in the Horn of Africa

Anne Marie del Castillo and John Graham

In Ethiopia, an innovative collaboration between a U.S. government foreign aid agency and nongovernmental organizations has allowed herdsmen not only to survive drought but also to rebuild their lives.

Anne Marie del Castillo and John Graham work for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Del Castillo is a policy adviser for the Office of Food for Peace in Washington, and Graham is a senior policy adviser for the USAID/Ethiopia Mission.

Abdul Hussein is an old, grizzled veteran of many droughts in the drylands of Borena in southern Ethiopia. He sits with eight other

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Across the Horn of Africa, goat herders and other pastoralists need money and technical expertise. (USAID Photo)

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alone a health facility.

According to USAID Mission Director, Glenn Anders, "The good news is that Ethiopia has made remarkable progress in improving health care for children and has cut its under-five mortality rate by 40% since 1990. Much of this success is due to the September 2005 Government of Ethiopia launch of the health extension worker program – focused on building health centers, and promoting linkages from households to health centers by employing 30,000 health extension workers by 2010. The U.S. Agency for International Development is happy to be a partner in these activities to improve the promise of safe delivery to the women of Ethiopia."

According to Dr. Shiferaw, the State Minister of Health, "Currently 24,000 of the 30,000 Health Extension Workers have been de-



This woman gave birth to her child only eight hours before the photo was taken. USAID's support for the maternity ward in this Banda Aceh hospital contributed to her safe delivery.

ployed. From Oromia 350 health extension workers have just received training from ACCESS Program and Save the Children in clean and safe delivery. We will now scale up the training to ensure all health extensions workers will develop skills in clean and safe delivery and newborn care." He added, "With the ability to reach 85% of the population in rural areas, we have faith that these newly trained health extension workers will con-

tribute to our success in achieving the MDG goals 4 and 5."

"It is very clear that there is an essential link between safe motherhood, child survival – and in particular newborn survival," stated Dr. Tedbabe Degeffie, the Head of Health and Nutrition for Save the Children USA. She added, "We believe the best way to promote and strengthen the partnership for maternal, newborn, and child health is by ensuring the imple-

mentation and harmonization of interventions included in the Health Sector Development Program (HSDP). Dr. Tedbabe continued, "As a member of the Safe Motherhood Technical Working Group, Save the Children is working in partnership with the Ministry of Health to ensure that safe delivery and post natal care will guarantee that both mothers and their newborns survive and thrive." ♦

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elders in a cramped local government office, knees touching the USAID monitoring team, as he talks about the last drought -- while welcome rain finally lashes the ground outside. Like the others gathered here he is a pastoralist, dependent on livestock to feed his family and buy his needs, occasionally planting some grain if the rain conditions are particularly good in this parched land. Herding their sheep, goats, and camels requires seasonal migration to access pasture.

"We have never had this happen before. Our animals have died from drought many times, but this time the people from [the humanitarian organization] CARE helped us to sell our cattle before they died," he said. "I sold one cow, and I was able to use the money to hire a truck to take my other cows to a place farther north, where they could survive. Now the drought is over, and I still have my cattle."

Many development experts misin-

terpret pastoralists' apparent increasing vulnerability in the Horn of Africa as a sign that their livelihood is no longer viable. As a result, they often advocate that pastoralists transition into farming or other more sedentary productive activities.

But these experts fail to appreciate the remarkable efficiencies inherent in the pastoralists' way of life that are being undermined primarily as pastoral groups suffer political, so-

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cial, and economic marginalization. Few national governments adequately recognize the importance of pastoralist livelihoods or provide the right kind of support. Support to sell or maintain animals in a drought and to have better access and higher prices from livestock markets has proven to have a remarkable effect.

USAID Initiatives

Since the late 1990s, USAID has directed support in the Horn of Africa to the pastoralist people through projects such as the Southern Tier Initiative and Emerging Focus, which addressed health, education, and veterinary services. In addition, massive humanitarian assistance was provided during droughts in 1999-2000, 2002-2003, and 2005-2006, both in food and nonfood aid. As a result of the droughts and the concomitant loss of livestock, the resource base of more than a million pastoralists has eroded to the point that they now depend on food assistance for several months every year.

In October 2005, USAID's mission in Ethiopia launched the Pastoralist Livelihood Initiative (PLI), a \$29 million investment, programmed over two years, that is changing the way USAID addresses pastoralist vulnerability in the Horn of Africa. Support came from the Famine Prevention Fund, a flexible USAID contingency fund used to prevent and mitigate famines quickly.

The PLI project aims to address the underlying causes of hunger in such



USAID is working to help African herdsmen, such as this woman driving cattle near Zeway, Ethiopia, to sustain their livelihood. Credit: Courtesy of UNWFP/Melese Awoke

a way as to effect long-term, positive change. USAID proceeded with PLI because of the urgent need, together with indications of growing commercial prospects for the meat market, keen private-sector interest, a supportive government stance, and the presence of an experienced regional nongovernmental organization (NGO) network already in place.

The project employed a development approach -- building and updating the linkages between the pastoralists and modern meat and livestock markets -- in the context of an emergency. In this way it successfully protected livelihoods during the 2005-2006 drought and created sustainable market relationships that should significantly increase the pastoralists' ability to manage through future droughts.

Getting Started

The USAID mission in Ethiopia worked through a consortium of NGOs, as well as the Tufts University Famine Center and the private, nonprofit Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA). The PLI's original objectives were to build long-term livelihoods for beneficiaries through livestock support and marketing, improve emergency response mechanisms, and promote policy reform to improve market access. The work took place in three pastoralist regions of Ethiopia: the Somali region (3.8 million population), the Afar region (1.8 million population), and the pastoralist areas of the Oromia region (2.4 million population). The project directly assisted 400,000 pastoralists and indirectly assisted some 2 million people.

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The project's rapid start-up proved fortuitous. In December 2005, just two months after the project's official launch, it became clear that the rains had failed badly in the southern part of the project area. PLI cooperating partners adjusted by re-deploying their resources to respond to the effects of the 2005-2006 drought. They were able to use flexible mechanisms, including emergency purchase of animals before they perished, both commercially and for slaughter for use as food aid, emergency animal health care, and protection of breeding herds through the provision of fodder and water.

Within one month, the PLI was facilitating animal sales by introducing traders who normally procured their livestock from the Northern Highlands to the suppliers in the drought-affected region in the south. PLI facilitated that purchase and slaughter of livestock by commercial traders and butchers, provided emergency water, and helped maintain livestock breeding herds by supplying feed and animal vaccination. Through these emergency operations, the pastoralists had cash from the sales and a core of breeding herd with which to begin rebuilding their flocks.

An innovative loan program for traders made the commercial sales feasible. PLI partners made loans totaling \$250,000 available to traders and placed an additional \$50,000 in a loan fund through an NGO which was 100 percent repaid. With the extra money, traders could buy substantially more animals. The traders also committed

an estimated \$1 million of their own capital for emergency livestock purchase.

How It Worked

For the pastoralist households, commercial livestock de-stocking provided most of the cash to hold them through the drought; nearly half of the money was used to buy food and fodder. Tufts University estimated the cost-benefit ratio at 1:41. Through de-stocking, private traders bought tens of thousands of animals from pastoralists who would have otherwise been destitute, providing them cash to buy animals after the drought.

Supplementing these activities were animal fodder programs to preserve the core breeding herds. The PLI partners, in cooperation with the regional governments and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), helped to vaccinate 3 million animals and provide veterinary treatment to more than 2.8 million animals. As a result of the PLI emergency response alone, the estimated survival rate of livestock increased by 10 percent, and the value of livestock assets protected was worth more than \$22 million.

Once the rains returned in April, PLI partners and their government counterparts resumed the originally approved activities aimed at strengthening pastoralist livelihoods, such as restocking and marketing. Coincident with the PLI, there was a fundamental shift in regional meat and livestock trade patterns. By introducing the pastoralists in the southern regions to northern traders, the PLI emergency response helped these herdsmen

benefit from the evolving market trends.

Traditionally, the cattle from southern Ethiopia traveled to the Kenyan markets, and sheep and goats to Somalia. Now, as demand for meat outstripped the Highlands meat supplies, traders looked southward for additional supplies. As a result, the pastoralists gained access to the slaughterhouses and live-animal markets in the north. In addition, the Somali pastoralists shifted their camel trade away from their traditional market trek to the south to the more lucrative Egyptian and Saudi Arabian markets for live camels.

New Markets

At Filtu, in a southern Somali region, women beneficiaries talked about the help they got from PLI partner Pastoralist Concern Association of Ethiopia (PCAE).

"Before, we would sell our sheep and goats to Somalia in the south, and sometimes to the Mandera market in Kenya," Aisha Abdulahi said. "Now those people are coming here to sell their sheep and goats. We are selling every animal to go north to Negelle and Addis Ababa, and we are getting better prices than ever before."

"When there was drought or war in Somalia, we used to suffer," she said. "Now it doesn't matter; we sell our animals in Ethiopia. Many members of our women's savings and credit association are using credit to buy sheep and goats in the market here, then selling at a profit in Negelle."

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The impact of the PLI was also manifest in the dynamic growth in the local economies. The PLI replaced informal bush markets with modern livestock facilities, including permanent fenced enclosures having livestock corrals and watering areas. This change allowed for more orderly exchanges and provided sanitary conditions for the livestock, thus attracting traders from the north, who sent fleets of trucks to the roadside markets with proper pens and loading facilities.

Perhaps more important were the associated enterprises that began flourishing around the new facilities. Within two weeks of the inauguration at Harobake of one of the PLI's 25 modern livestock market facilities, a number of small restaurants, hotels, pharmacies, and retail shops had sprouted.

Fofu Gezu, the local organizer for ACDI/VOCA, explained the electrifying impact of the new market: "We spoke to the community when we planned this, and they told us this was the place for the market. Because this was their choice, the local officials said yes, and now we see what has happened. The community knew that this place could grow, and they support it. Now they are planning a whole town here, and they say this will be the new center for the whole area."

Lessons Learned

Pastoralists, though a nomadic people, are not always on the move. The women and children of the pastoral household tend to be relatively sedentary, residing in small rural towns at least six months of the

year. USAID-funded pilot micro-finance programs have helped women to form or expand lucrative cooperatives; operate small grain mills; and conduct petty trade, small ruminant trade, and other enterprises. The steady stream of income from these activities complements the more seasonal income generated from the pastoral activities.

Building on the success of these activities, USAID encouraged Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to form a Livestock Policy Forum. Five working groups have been building government policy on emergency destocking, emergency animal health care, emergency fodder provision, restocking, and natural resource management. One result already: Ethiopia's government has agreed to make concessionary loans to traders to purchase livestock in an emergency.

The PLI helped pastoralists to withstand the drought, maintain their self-sufficiency, and preserve their herds. One key lesson is that agencies with a long-term presence and expertise can exercise flexibility in redeploying funds immediately to protect livelihoods. Such technical capacity and funding flexibility should be the norm for future emergencies. Adequate contingency funds need to be available at the national level and from bilateral and multilateral donor sources. Recurrent drought in the Greater Horn of Africa need not mean recurrent distress for pastoral communities. National and regional governments should implement policies and interventions to strengthen, not erode, pastoral livelihood systems.

A second key lesson is that the pastoralist livelihood is viable when it has robust links to national and regional economic and financial systems. The Pastoralist Livelihood Initiative strengthened the resiliency of the pastoralist livelihood simply by strengthening the links between pastoralists and commercial meat and livestock markets. In turn, this had a positive and dynamic impact on the local economy.

The PLI successfully and quickly addressed the root causes of vulnerability among pastoralist communities, helping to retain their livelihood by fostering financial and economic integration with the society at large. While this program has successfully completed the objectives, it has also developed new areas for programming.

Because the initial funding covered only two years, alternative funding sources will need to be identified to build on the valuable lessons learned. Implementing partners, USAID, and the Ethiopian government hope that the progress made in the first phase will convince other donors, both bilateral and multilateral, to provide the needed support to continue increasing the capacity of these pastoralists to thrive in the modern economy.

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African Women Among Entrepreneurs Honored in New York

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington -- Women entrepreneurs can face the same problem worldwide: the difficulty of starting and expanding a business in a male-dominated business environment that often is not receptive to their efforts.

One woman who has flourished despite such challenges is South African Cheyyann Bodington, who started TESA Palisade Fencing and Security Systems.

Bodington recently was honored in New York, along with 11 other international women entrepreneurs, as a winner of the second annual International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge (IWEC).

Summing up her experience, Bodington said: "I was told my first few months in business that I would never make it. It's been a tough ride." She did make it,

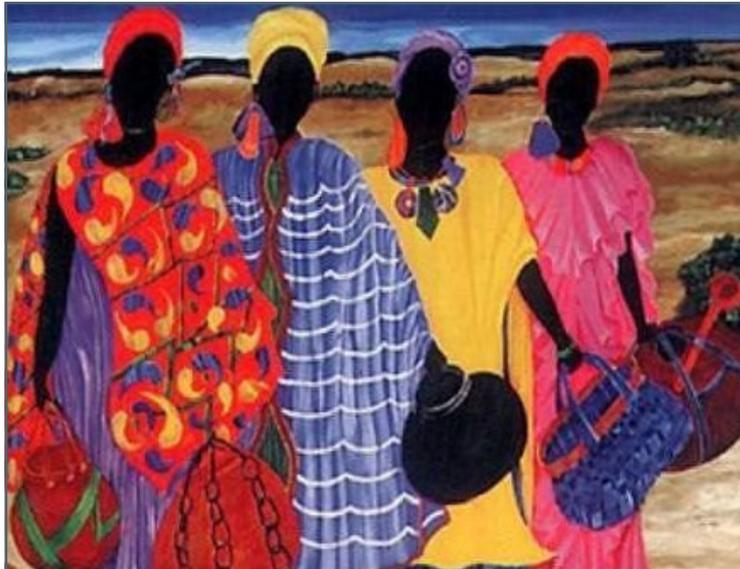
though, finally earning the respect of her male-dominated industry group after persevering for many years.

Bodington's small fencing company initially employed four people and had a first-month turnover of \$4,000. TESA Fencing now has 50 full-time employees and 20 contractors, and sustains four small black-owned businesses through its orders and cash flow.

TESA deals with large construction companies as well as cell phone companies for local and export or-

ders. TESA manufactures not only steel palisade fencing, but also stainless steel and balustrades for high-rise buildings and shopping centers.

Two other African women were honored along with Bodington: Ibukun Awosika, chief executive officer of The Chair Centre Group of Lagos, Nigeria, and Winifred Mwendia (Winnie Gitau), founder and president of Pure Health Products of Kenya.



Awosika is a graduate of the Chief Executive Program of Lagos Business School, as well as of the Global Executive MBA Program of Instituto de Estudios Superiores de la Empresa Business School, in Barcelona, Spain. She heads a multi-million-dollar business.

Confronted with poor facilities and declining social infrastructures, Awosika started designing furniture components and arranged for companies abroad to produce the designs, which she then brought into Nigeria in large volumes for assembly.

Awosika stamped her own mark of ingenuity on the industry by tasking her team to create from a few imported components a variety of finished office furniture designs. In addition, she introduced ergonomic chairs as well as bank security doors into the Nigerian market. This led to an astronomical increase in her market share and helped to maintain her leadership in the industry.

To promote export of her wares,

Awosika has taken The Chair Centre beyond the shores of Nigeria to set up an operational base in Accra, Ghana. Awosika also has been servicing other West African markets such as Mali and Niger, and her company soon will open two new stores elsewhere in Africa to increase its presence in the African market.

She has big plans, not only for her own company, but for the entire African furniture industry: She is considering setting

up a "furniture village," in cooperation with one of the state governments in Nigeria, to serve as a hub for all furniture businesses in Nigeria -- small, medium and large. She hopes eventually to break into European and American markets.

The third African entrepreneur -- Winifred Mwendia (Winnie Gitau) -- started Pure Health Products in Kenya. She is a lawyer by training, but her passion for healthy living prompted her to build a company that produces, packages and sells health products such as herbal teas,

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Selling Bead Necklaces Helps Ugandan Women Climb Out of Poverty

By Burton Bollag
Special Correspondent

Washington -- A chance encounter in a slum on the outskirts of the Ugandan capital, Kampala, led to a project that helps some of Uganda's poorest women sell handmade paper-bead necklaces in North America.

In 2004, three American women were walking through the Acholi Quarter slum, home to hundreds who had fled a brutal civil war in northern Uganda. For most residents, the only paid work was breaking stones in a nearby quarry for 80 cents a day. The Americans came across one woman sitting in front of her mud hut rolling strips of old paper into beads. The woman, Millie Grace Akena, told them that she and other women in the slum made necklaces out of the beads, but had no place to sell them.

The Americans -- Torkin Wakefield, a psychologist who divides her time between Colorado and Uganda, where her husband trains AIDS doctors; Devin Hibbard, her adult daughter; and Ginny Jordan, a psychotherapist -- brought necklaces home and found that people admired them. They set up a nonprofit association, BeadforLife, and sold the jewelry online.

Three months later, the project was mentioned in *O, The Oprah Magazine*, published by popular TV host Oprah Winfrey. Hibbard, who heads North American operations, called the response "astounding." Orders poured in.

Prices for the jewelry range from \$5 for a single-strand bracelet to \$30 for a five-strand necklace. Although



the jewelry can be ordered online, most is sold at "bead parties" in homes and community centers. Two thousand such parties were held in the United States and Canada in 2007, organized by people who like the beads and want to help the Ugandan women.

Three hundred Ugandan women participate in the project. They are among the poorest in a poor country; often they are their families' sole breadwinners. The beaders together support about 3,000 people.

Many are infected with HIV, which causes AIDS. In the project, they earn, on average, more than \$1,200 a year, more than many schoolteachers make in Uganda.

BeadforLife takes a holistic approach to tackling participants' poverty. It provides health services (malaria pills, mosquito nets, vouchers for medical care), training in bookkeeping and other skills so participants can start small businesses,

and affordable housing. The project purchased 8.1 hectares of land outside the capital and named it Friendship Village. With the help of the nonprofit group Habitat for Humanity, the beaders have built 67 three-room houses there.

Beaders stay in the project for 27 months, with the first three months devoted to training in high standards of bead making. (Triangular strips of colored paper are rolled, the tips are glued and then the beads are lacquered.) The goal is for the women to use their savings and new skills to start their own small businesses by the time they leave. Dozens have done so, starting small-scale vegetable or poultry production operations, selling shoes or drinks from market stalls, or, in one case, investing in a motorbike taxi.

BeadforLife sales grew to \$3.5 million in the most recent fiscal year, and the beaders barely are keeping up with demand. Organizers are reluctant to expand too fast for fear of diluting the efforts to permanently improve the lives of the Ugandan participants.

Several scholars give the project high marks but point to its limitations. They wonder how much impact even the best-designed charitable initiative can have on a continent where people have few economic opportunities.

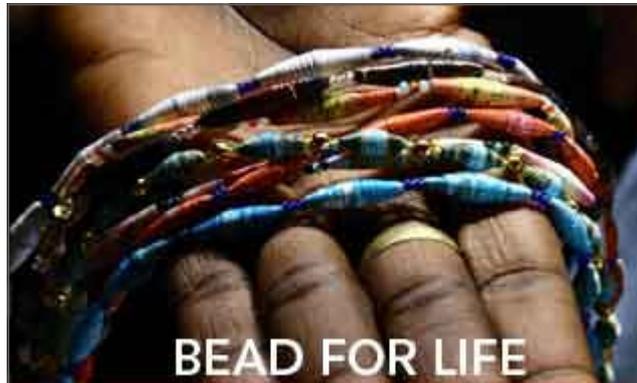
Lee Cassanelli, director of the University of Pennsylvania's African Studies Center, said, "My intuition is, it's better to produce something for the local African market than for the maybe-ephemeral international market."

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Selling Bead Necklaces Helps Ugandan Women Climb Out of Poverty . . .

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Holley E. Hanson, a professor of African history at Mount Holyoke College, said that while the project appears to have had a great impact on the lives of a small number of people, it could not improve the powerlessness of African countries over issues that greatly affect them: the undermining of African agriculture through subsidies for farmers in wealthy countries, the debt burden of African countries to banks in wealthy nations and patent protections limiting



access to cheaper generic anti-AIDS drugs.

"I'd like to see the people who buy the beads also ask our government

to make sure there is a place at the decision-making table" for African governments, she said.

Meanwhile, BeadforLife's founders believe the project connects Ugandan craftswomen and their customers. "It's not just about a product," said Hibbard, referring to the jewelry. "It's a circle of reciprocity," in which the lives of Ugandan bead makers and North Americans who buy their handiwork become bound together. ♦

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brown rice and honey.

Established in 2003, Pure Health today is a corporate social responsibility organization that hires residents of slums. The company has a children's corner with free child care for its 73 employees, offers free education on healthy nutrition, gives 10 percent of company profits to its employees and ensures that its products are grown in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge awards are a joint project by the Chamber of Commerce of Barcelona in association with the Indian Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce of New York.

The project hopes to promote a global dialogue on women's entrepreneurship so that women entrepreneurs can exchange experi-

ences, forge partnerships among enterprises and potential customers worldwide and build personal contacts and networks among women's business associations and individual entrepreneurs.

This year, IWEC honored three women business owners/awardees from Africa, three from Barcelona, Spain, and three from New York.

The list of 2008 winners follows:

Ibukun Awosika, chief executive, The Chair Centre Group, Lagos, Nigeria

Nuria Basi, president, Armand Basi, Spain

Cheyyann Bodington (Anni), managing director, TESA Palisade Fencing and Security Systems (PTY) Ltd., South Africa

Donna Childs, founder and chief executive, Childs Capital, United States

Deepika Jindal, Austenitic Creations Pvt. Ltd., India

Leni Schwendinger, founder, Leni Schwendinger Light Projects Ltd., United States

Nalini Sharma, chief executive, Nalini Sarees, India

Vidhi Singhania, proprietor, M/S VIDHI, India

Nani Marquina, founder, Nanimarquina, Spain

Sneh Mehtani, owner, Mehtani Restaurant Group, United States

Winifred Mwendia (Winnie Gitau), founder and president, Pure Health Products, Kenya

Maria del Pino Velazquez, general manager, Unifono Soluciones de Negocio, Spain ♦

Food Aid Suspension Could Hurt 4 Million Zimbabweans

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington -- Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) whose aid activities in Zimbabwe were banned by President Robert Mugabe's government have estimated that up to 4 million people will be hurt by the suspension of food assistance.

In addition, the Mugabe government's campaign of violence and intimidation against the opposition "has made a travesty" of the upcoming June 27 presidential runoff election, according to the U.S. ambassador to Zimbabwe.

Speaking to reporters on a conference call from Harare June 13, Ambassador James McGee said that with the June 6 suspension of food aid, "people are going to be hungry in a very, very short period of time." The ban, which many observers see as a tactic to pressure Zimbabweans to support Mugabe at the ballot box, comes on top of a weak harvest in a country that has been heavily reliant on food assistance.

"Typically, we don't see food insecurity kicking in until August. We're expecting to see it as early as late this month or early July," McGee said. He added that without the assistance, the average Zimbabwean now may be eating only one meal or less per day.

The ambassador said the United States has lodged a diplomatic pro-

test against the government for its June 6 hijacking of food meant for hungry schoolchildren that was instead distributed at a rally by the ruling ZANU-PF party. "The most defenseless, the people who are least able to care for themselves, young children, were being denied food for purely political purposes," he said.



File photo shows schoolchildren queuing up for porridge provided by an Irish aid agency in Harare. (AFP/File)

U.S. diplomats have tried to meet with Zimbabwean officials, including President Mugabe, but have found it difficult to arrange such meetings over the past three weeks, he said. Embassy staff members also have been investigating reports of political violence against supporters of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

"It is very, very obvious that there is political intimidation, there is thuggery, there is outright theft, murder, happening here in Zimbabwe right now," McGee said.

The ambassador said he visited a

religious hospital in Mutoko June 12 where some 25 to 30 people reportedly were recovering from attacks by ZANU-PF supporters.

"The fear was palpable there," he said, adding that the head doctor of the hospital was reluctant to divulge any information on the patients. McGee said that so far 3,000 people have been injured so badly that they have required hospitalization.

McGee relayed how, outside the hospital, a police sergeant discussed violence he had witnessed firsthand, such as "people being taken from their homes, beaten, homes being burned [and] granaries being burned." Between 20,000 and 30,000 have been displaced from their homes in the countryside and forced to sleep in the bush. With winter and freezing temperatures arriving in the country,

"this is absolutely inhumane," McGee said.

Along with losing their homes, the displaced people will not be allowed to vote June 27 unless they are willing to risk further violence and intimidation and return to their wards. The ambassador said this is one of several reasons why as many election observers and monitors as possible are needed for the June 27 vote.

He said between 400 to 500 observers from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and 70 to 80 from the African Un-

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Zimbabwe Government's Theft of Children's Aid Is "Unconscionable"

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington -- Humanitarian aid intended for hungry Zimbabwean children was looted by military and police forces June 6 and distributed to government party members as part of what U.S. officials have described as the government's control of food as a weapon to discourage support for President Robert Mugabe's political opposition.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Henrietta Ford described the action as "unconscionable" in a June 12 statement. "It is unacceptable for the Government of Zimbabwe to steal food from hungry children," she said. USAID said Zimbabwe's governor of Manicaland directed the military and police to hijack the truck carrying 20 metric tons of U.S. food assistance destined for schoolchildren and give it to supporters of the ruling ZANU-PF party who had gathered for a political rally in Mutare District.

"Given the existing food insecurity and widespread violence that has recently spread throughout the country, this event is another affront to the people of Zimbabwe and the humanitarian organizations working to assist vulnerable Zimbabweans," Fore said. "It also represents an orchestrated theft of U.S. government property. Those responsible should be brought to justice."

MUGABE REGIME TAKING "AWFUL STRIDES TO MAINTAIN ITS POWER"

At the State Department, deputy spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos said June 12 that the Mugabe govern-



The suspension of international humanitarian aid has made Zimbabweans dependent on the government for assistance.

ment "is taking tremendous and frankly just awful strides to maintain its power." By denying food to children, the regime has "lowered the bar to a level that we rarely see" in terms of the abuse of its own citizens.

U.S. Ambassador to Zimbabwe James McGee had told reporters June 6 that as the June 27 presidential runoff election approaches, government officials have been using food aid as a weapon against the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party by providing assistance to MDC members only if they surrender their identification cards, thereby forfeiting their right to vote in the June 27 presidential runoff election.

"The only way you can access food is give up your right to vote. It's a very well-orchestrated campaign," McGee said.

Gallegos called on the government

to "immediately reinstate permission for all aid agencies" to resume badly needed food and other assistance. "Failure to do so constitutes the government of Zimbabwe in complicity in the assault, suffering and deaths of innocent citizens."

The State Department also condemned the Mugabe government's arrest of MDC Secretary-General Tendai Biti after his arrival from South Africa.

"This is another example of their concerted effort to ensure that the opposition party cannot campaign effectively," Gallegos said. The United States is continuing to note the abuses and consult with parties in the region, he said.

"The world is taking note. And if this government does not allow a free and fair runoff, they will have to pay in some way, shape or form in the end. And they will be held accountable," Gallegos said. ♦

Two Former U.S. Senators Named 2008 World Food Prize Recipients

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Washington -- Two of America's most noted senior statesmen have been named recipients of the 2008 World Food Prize.

Former senators George McGovern and Bob Dole will accept the prize during a symposium in Des Moines, Iowa, October 16 for their leadership in passing legislation to establish the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. The date has been named World Food Day by the United Nations.

The prize announcement came during a June 12 ceremony at the State Department.

The World Food Prize is awarded annually to individuals whose efforts have made significant contributions to improving the quality, quantity and availability of food in the world. The honor is awarded by the World Food Prize Foundation based in Des Moines, Iowa.

The prize was established in 1986 by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Norman Borlaug, recognized around the world as "Father of the Green Revolution." Borlaug is credited with saving millions of lives from starvation during the 1960s and early

1970s.

The McGovern-Dole program, established in 2000, donates U.S. agricultural commodities, as well as financial and technical support for school-feeding and maternal and preschool child nutrition projects, to low-income countries committed to education for boys and girls.



School Children Participating in the McGovern-Dole School Feeding Project at St. Elizabeth Primary School, Nakuru, Kenya

It has provided meals to more than 22 million children in 41 countries and boosted school attendance by 17 percent for girls and by 14 percent for girls and boys combined, according to a World Food Prize (WFP) press release.

The program has increased international support for the expansion of school-feeding operations in developing countries. It is touted as one reason the U.N. World Food Programme's school-feeding operations have nearly doubled since 2001. In 2006 alone, that program fed more

than 20 million children in 74 countries, according to the foundation.

The world's leading industrialized nations -- known as the Group of 8 -- and the New Partnership for Africa's Development consider school-feeding programs an important tool for alleviating poverty.

The McGovern-Dole program uses food for more than nutrition, but also as an incentive to boost school enrollment and academic performance, especially for girls, whose education often is neglected when families can pay for only some children to go to school. The program also provides food to pregnant women, nursing mothers, infants and preschool children to improve all children's ability to learn when they enter school.

In 2007, the World Food Prize was awarded to U.S. food scientist Philip Nelson, who developed technologies that made possible large-scale storage, packaging and transportation over long distances of fruit and vegetables, while protecting their nutritional value.

In 2006, the prize was shared by U.S. citizen A. Colin McClung and Brazilians H.E. Alysso Paolinelli and Edson Lobato for their roles in transforming the Cerrado region of Brazil -- an area of vast, once infer-

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Two Former U.S. Senators Named 2008 World Food Prize Recipients . . .

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tile tropical high plains -- into highly productive cropland.

Other past recipients include:

2005 -- Modadugu Gupta of India. Gupta developed low-cost technologies to increase fish-farm yields and educated impoverished farmers, specifically women, in freshwater aquaculture practices.

2004 -- Yuan Longping of China and Monty Jones of Sierra Leone. Yuan's work led to successful and widely grown hybrid rice varieties. Jones pioneered efforts to develop a new variety of rice for Africa by recapturing the genetic potential of the continent's ancient rice strains.

2003 -- Catherine Bertini of the United States. Executive director of

the United Nations World Food Programme from 1992 to 2002, Bertini helped transform that agency into the world's largest humanitarian relief organization.

2002 -- Pedro Sanchez of the United States. Sanchez pioneered ways to restore fertility to the most degraded soils in Latin America and Africa.

2001 -- Per Pinstrup-Andersen of Denmark. Pinstrup-Andersen researched ways governments could reform their food subsidy programs. He is a former head of the International Food Policy Research Institute.

2000 -- Evangelina Villegas of Mexico and Surinder Vasal of India. Villegas, a cereal chemist, and Vasal, a plant geneticist, developed maize with significantly more usable

protein than normal maize.

Dole is a former leader of the Senate and McGovern is a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations food agencies. Both also are former U.S. presidential candidates.

This year's fall symposium will focus on "Confronting Crisis: Agriculture and Global Development in the Next 50 Years."

More information (<http://worldfoodprize.org/>) about the World Food Prize and symposium, named in honor of Borlaug, is available on the WFP Web site.

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

Food Aid Suspension Could Hurt 4 Million Zimbabweans . . .

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ion now have confirmed their participation.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said June 9 that the United States is providing several million dollars to assist monitoring efforts in order to encourage more observers and provide them with the resources to do their job.

Ambassador McGee said the observers "need to be on the ground as rapidly as possible, out in the countryside doing two things: Number 1, demonstrating to the people of Zimbabwe that they're going to be protected, that they're working to end the violence in this

country, and Number 2, that the people's vote will be protected."

The United States is concerned that there will be "massive ballot box stuffing" to guarantee a Mugabe victory. Already there are reports that lower-ranking police officers are being forced to vote for ZANU-PF by filling out postal ballots in front of superior officers who are regime supporters. Also, McGee said, one of the intimidation tactics, especially in the countryside, has been to force voters to say they are illiterate so they would require ballot assistance.

"So we're going to have a lot of illiterate people if ZANU gets their way on Election Day, and that's

why we need observers out there to ensure that these types of tactics do not happen," he said.

But turnout will be key, he said, and called on the people of Zimbabwe to "make a stance" and brave the possibility of violence in order to bring about a truly representative government.

"There's an old adage, I'm told, here in Zimbabwe that says you can only kill me one time. The people are starting to stand up and say, 'Despite the violence, despite the intimidation, we need a change in Zimbabwe,' and I'm hearing more and more people say this will not deter them from voting their hearts," he said. ♦

College Wins Award for Internationalization Efforts

By Jeffrey Thomas
Staff Writer

Washington -- Preparation for pursuing a four-year degree or for entering the work force: that is what usually comes to mind when most people think of the more than 1,700 two-year community colleges and junior colleges in the United States and the almost 7 million students they serve. It can be a challenge to persuade faculty and administrators at two-year institutions that internationalizing the campus -- globalizing the curriculum, creating study-abroad programs and international exchange partnerships -- is a vital part of preparing students for the challenges they will face once they graduate.

"People don't realize international, global education is not just for international students; it is for American students," says Grace Liu, the global education coordinator at St. Louis Community College at Forest Park (STLCC-FP), which recently won a prestigious award for its Global Education Committee's internationalization efforts on this urban campus in downtown St. Louis. STLCC-FP President Morris F. Johnson has made internationalization a priority campus goal.

The award, one of the Institute of International Education (IIE) Andrew Heiskell Awards for Innovation in International Education, was presented March 13 at the United Nations.

American colleges and universities have made progress in recent years in internationalizing their campuses. The proportion of institutions offering education-abroad opportunities has grown from 65 percent in 2001

to 91 percent in 2006, according to a study by the American Council on Education (ACE). The report also says more institutions are investing in international opportunities for faculty, including supporting faculty who lead study-abroad programs (58 percent), providing funding for faculty who travel to meetings or



conferences abroad (56 percent), and hosting international faculty (39 percent).

But many institutions still do not see internationalization as integral to their identity or strategy, the ACE report's authors state.

The STLCC campus at Forest Park is the central campus for a system that enrolls 130,000 students. Forest Park's student population is 46 percent black and includes students from 70 different countries who speak 80 different languages. A significant number of Forest Park's students are refugees and immigrants, Liu said.

"We're trying to send this message to our students: the world is becoming global. When you finish your education, what you are going to deal with will not just be local," Liu told America.gov, adding: "We can prepare our students with an understanding of different cultures.

People are different but people are the same. We have to understand and respect the different cultures. Then it will be easier for them to find a job and it will be easier for them to be successful."

The engine of internationalization at Forest Park is the Global Education Committee, which reports directly to Johnson. "That's the backbone" and what could serve as a model for other institutions, Liu says. The 35 administrators, faculty members and staff members who serve on the committee are all volunteers who work throughout the year on five subcommittees to implement the comprehensive internationalization plan.

The subcommittees address in concrete ways everything from globalization of the curriculum and travel abroad to campus activities and community outreach.

STLCC-FP also offers a variety of short-term study-abroad trips -- short-term because many community college students cannot afford to spend a semester abroad, Liu said.

The study-abroad experience is transformative, Liu added. "Once students have traveled to another country, once they have started the process of learning about different cultures, it changes them dramatically." Liu recently returned from leading a group to China, visiting seven cities in seven provinces over a two-week period.

All the study-abroad trips are led by full-time faculty, students receive

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U.S. Companies, Aid Agencies Fighting HIV/AIDS in Russia

By Jonathan Schaffer
Staff Writer

Washington -- In March, employees at the Pepsico plant in Kashira, Russia, participated in training sessions that encouraged them to find out their HIV status and to discuss behaviors and attitudes that might help stem the rise of AIDS in their community.

In Irkutsk, Orenburg and Ivanovo, programs funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development are training regional planners to evaluate HIV/AIDS intervention methods. As a result, these regions have boosted resources for prevention efforts.

On May 27, managers from multinational corporations working in Russia, including Chevron and Eli Lilly, met in Moscow to see what additional roles they could play in preventing the disease.

With the help of U.S. government money, a group called HEALTH@WORK has provided workplace HIV/AIDS prevention and nondiscrimination programs to firms employing more than 1 million Russians in the transportation, oil and gas, manufacturing and heavy industry sectors.

But health experts say much more is needed. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Russia has experienced one of the fastest-growing HIV/AIDS epidemics in the world. Just a decade after HIV was first identified in Russia, the Joint U.N. Pro-

gramme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates that more than 1 percent of adults aged 15-49 are HIV positive and that 43 percent of all newly reported cases are occurring in women.

In a report issued in March, the organization said that in 2006, the most recent period for which data are available, 66 percent of all new cases of HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia occurred in Russia.



A baby is examined at the Saratov regional AIDS center, 700 kilometers southeast of Moscow. Russia faces a widening HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Health experts say the sharing of contaminated needles by drug users is responsible for about two-thirds of HIV transmission, and unprotected heterosexual intercourse is a growing factor in transmission.

Complicating the crisis is the emergence of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB). Patients with HIV/AIDS have weakened resistance, and nearly 60 percent of those who recently died from HIV/AIDS also had TB.

Eli Lilly is working with Russian partners to help with disease surveillance and training programs and to increase the supply of capreomycin and cycloserine, medications effective in treating MDR-TB.

In 2005, Eli Lilly helped establish a center of excellence in Tomsk, Russia, to train doctors, nurses and healthcare workers from all over the former Soviet Union in preventing, detecting and treating MDR-TB.

Chevron is a founding corporate sponsor of Transatlantic Partners Against AIDS (TPAA), an initiative aimed at bringing together the Russian and U.S. governments and the private sector to address the disease.

Most U.S.-supported work has been in two regions -- St. Petersburg and the Orenburg province. These efforts have included encouraging vulnerable groups to adopt safer behaviors, providing information about precautionary

measures, urging early medical intervention, encouraging HIV-infected patients to make use of outpatient services, and enhancing competence and knowledge among midlevel medical personnel.

U.S. initiatives also are aimed at helping Russia develop a unified information system that will improve HIV/AIDS monitoring and evaluation, anti-viral treatment and palliative care. ♦

Marshall Plan Holds Lessons for Middle East, Says Bush

By David McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington -- As the Marshall Plan brought new hope to the people of postwar Europe, a new generation on both sides of the Atlantic must now come together to support others seeking the peace and prosperity that democracy can bring, says President Bush.

"Europe and America must stand with reformers and democratic leaders and millions of ordinary people across the Middle East who seek a future of hope and liberty and peace," Bush said in a June 13 speech at the Paris headquarters of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Today a 30-nation global partnership dedicated to a wide range of economic, social and environmental issues, OECD began in 1948 as the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, the body overseeing America's strategy for the reconstruction of Europe, named after then-Secretary of State George C. Marshall.

"The Marshall Plan was the source of aid and assistance, and it wisely gave Europeans the leading role in reconstruction," said Bush. "By doing so, the plan conveyed a message of partnership and respect."

The Marshall Plan helped set the stage for both trans-Atlantic secu-



President George W. Bush addresses the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Friday, June 13, 2008, in Paris, saying "America and Europe are cooperating to widen the circle of development and prosperity." White House photo by Shealah Craighead

urity cooperation under NATO and regional unity under today's European Union, Bush said, as well as the wide-ranging partnership seen between America and Europe showcased in Bush's final presidential visit to the region June 9-16.

"When the time comes to welcome a new American president next January, I will be pleased to report to him that the relationship between the United States and Europe is the broadest and most vibrant it has ever been," Bush said, highlighting cooperation in trade and investment, energy and climate change, counterterrorism and other international security issues, and efforts to reduce and alleviate global poverty and HIV/AIDS.

But the shared democratic ideals rooted in the values of liberty, tolerance and justice at the heart of the Euro-American partnership that once stood as an alternative to life

under communism must now be brought to bear against the forces of extremism that seek to wipe out dissenting voices and impose their rule across the Middle East, Bush said.

"The rise of free and prosperous societies in the broader Middle East is essential to peace in the 21st century, just as the rise of a free and prosperous Europe was essential to peace in the 20th century," he said.

Europe and America are making a difference in Afghanistan,

Bush said, through the NATO-led peacekeeping coalition that is allowing the country to rebuild after decades of war and oppressive rule. Bush thanked France for hosting the June 12 International Conference in Support of Afghanistan, which raised more than \$20 billion in new reconstruction aid.

For Lebanon, Bush urged leaders to continue efforts to help the country's government preserve its sovereignty by standing up to Hezbollah and the extremist group's sponsors in Syria and Iran, two other nations in the region whose citizens also deserve the better lives that democracy could bring.

Palestinians and Israelis continue to work toward peace through the creation of two democratic states living side by side, Bush said, while violence is on the decline in Iraq

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U.S. First Lady Says Food Crisis Demands Global Response

By Julie Hyman
Staff Writer

Washington -- Meeting people's basic need for food demands a global response, first lady Laura Bush says, as rising commodity and freight costs, devastating natural disasters and the ravages of strife combine to threaten lives and livelihoods.

"From Afghanistan to Africa, the United States understands that meeting people's basic need for food is a global problem that demands a global response. As the world's largest donor of food assistance, we're committed to helping alleviate hunger worldwide," Mrs. Bush said in a brief address to the World Food Programme's executive board June 12 in Rome.

"Today, as all nations face a significant increase in global food prices, higher costs can mean the difference between a daily meal and no food at all for millions of people across the globe," she said.

In April, \$200 million was approved by the administration for emergency food aid, and President Bush asked the U.S. Congress for an additional \$770 million in May for food aid and development assistance. Mrs. Bush projected at least \$5 billion in additional support over the next two years.

She cited rising commodity and ocean freight costs as an obstruction to efficient emergency food aid delivery and said international transportation methods should be changed. Economic development

experts believe that inefficient delivery systems contribute indirectly to the failure of much-needed food to reach those most in need.

"President Bush has called on Congress to support a proposal to purchase up to 25 percent of U.S. food



First lady Laura Bush speaks at the World Food Programme headquarters in Rome. (© AP Photo/Rein Skullerud, WFP)

assistance directly from farmers in the developing world. This measure would help build local agriculture, and by reducing shipping delays and costs, it would help us get more food to those in need faster," she said.

Mrs. Bush mentioned the effects of food assistance, specifically citing U.S. aid to Afghanistan, Burma and Bangladesh. Earlier June 12, she spoke in Paris at the International Conference to Support Afghanistan, where she announced that the United States would contribute \$10.2 billion to support continuing progress and growth in Afghanistan.

"After a hard winter and years of drought, more than 5 million Af-

ghan men and women live each day with food uncertainty," she said. "Food assistance is critical to these efforts" to bring relief to Afghanistan.

She said that after two floods and a cyclone devastated Bangladesh, the United States contributed \$20 million. And an additional \$78 million in food aid has been promised, she said.

"In times of natural disaster, we know that timely food aid can mean the difference between life and death," she said.

In Burma, \$12 million of the U.S. commitment of \$35 million will go to the World Food Programme. Mrs. Bush urged Burma's government to stop refusing international assistance and thanked the World Food Programme for its work in Burma and elsewhere.

A transcript (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2008/June/20080612145443eaifas0.6140863.html>) of the first lady's remarks to the World Food Programme is available on America.gov.

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

Afghan Determination Earns \$20 Billion in New Aid

By David McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington -- The Afghan people have shown their determination to rebuild their country, and the international community has responded by pledging more than \$20 billion in new aid to help Afghanistan continue along the road to recovery.

"We all know that success will not be easy, but Afghanistan has reached a decisive moment for its future," first lady Laura Bush told delegates from more than 80 countries and institutions at the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan in Paris.

Mrs. Bush announced a new U.S. pledge of \$10.2 billion at the June 12 conference, where Afghan President Hamid Karzai introduced the Afghan National Development Strategy -- his government's five-year plan to build on Afghan development gains since 2001, when U.S.-led coalition forces routed the Taliban regime and its al-Qaida allies. America's Paris pledge is twice the \$5.9 billion it offered at Afghanistan's 2006 London donors' conference, as well as a significant addition to the \$26 billion in security and development commitments Washington has made to Afghanistan's democratic future.

The first lady's speech followed her June 8 visit to Bamiyan province, where the ruins of two massive 2,000-year-old Buddha statues demolished by Taliban militants remain a reminder of how far Afghanistan has come as well as the many challenges still facing the South Asian nation.



Afghan currency exchangers in Kabul. Representatives from 80 nations and institutions pledged \$20 billion in new Afghan aid June 12.

"I have met children orphaned by Taliban massacres who now have classrooms to study in and safe homes to live in. And I watched women once forbidden to leave home [now] run businesses that provide for their families," Mrs. Bush wrote in a June 12 commentary for the Wall Street Journal. "It is important -- and smart -- for the world to invest in Afghanistan."

America's contribution will support the Afghan development plan's efforts to bring new economic opportunities to rural communities with roads, electricity and other key infrastructure. The funds will also go toward the Afghan government's voter registration efforts and related administrative costs ahead of Afghan's 2009 presidential vote and 2010 parliamentary elections.

Conference host France announced it would double its aid to Afghanistan, while Germany pledged \$653

million. Japan also doubled its aid to \$500 million and Australia pledged \$234 million. Additional pledges included \$1.9 billion from Canada, \$1 billion from the United Kingdom and \$770 million from the Netherlands, while Denmark, Italy, Norway and Poland offered additional aid.

The World Bank pledged \$1.1 billion at the conference, while the Asian Development Bank pledged \$1.3 billion and the Saudi Development Fund offered \$118 million.

While the new funds are a substantial down payment toward the Afghan government's \$50 billion long-term development plan, how that money will be spent is an equally important question, said Secretary



First lady Laura Bush (center) with Secretary Rice and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner

of State Condoleezza Rice.

"Success is going to depend on the collaborative efforts of the international community to back an Af-

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Afghan Determination Earns \$20 Billion in New Aid . . .

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ghan-led development plan that connects the government to every level of the Afghan people," Rice said. "This means successfully fighting corruption, improving accountability, and it means Afghan ownership of development."

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon joined Rice in calling on the Afghan government to step up efforts against corruption and drug traffickers to ensure that interna-

tional aid funds are truly benefiting the Afghan people. "Every act of corruption is a deliberate act by someone in a position of authority," he said.

A major contributor to corruption and insecurity is the continuing impact of Afghanistan's drug traffickers, who have allied with militants in the country's least secure regions to manufacture and distribute 90 percent of the heroin and related narcotics flooding the streets of Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Under the new Afghan plan, Karzai pledged that his government would take strides to root out corruption and expand economic development to all corners of the country.

"The Afghan people have shown their determination to see their country succeed," said Mrs. Bush. "And now it's up to the international community to do our part to help make that success possible." ♦

College Wins Award for Internationalization Efforts . . .

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credit, and scholarships are available for needy students. "We have seen when students come back from study-abroad trips how much they have changed," she said. "We have seen from students how much it meant to them."

Another major focus of campus activities is International Week in November, when workshops, guest speakers and films are presented, as well as an international festival.

Often, students invite the community to participate. For the festival, students set up tables representing 30 to 40 countries and cook their ethnic food.

Faculty members take international students on field trips to make them feel welcome and a part of the college. "We give training to our faculty on how to work with international students, explain the culture differences," Liu said. "We also help international students learn about American culture -- what's

the behavior that's expected in the culture."

Faculty exchange programs with the United Kingdom, China, Turkey and Macedonia also have played a key role in internationalization. STLCC-FP currently is discussing making student exchange part of its internationalization plan and expanding its Chinese studies program and increasing enrollment in Chinese-language courses. ♦

Marshall Plan Holds Lessons for Middle East, Says Bush . . .

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and its elected leaders continue on the path to democracy.

Since 2001, democracy has made new inroads from Kuwait to Algeria, from Saudi Arabia to Morocco, and from Jordan to Bahrain and Yemen. OECD's initiatives, as well as others from the G8 and the United States, must find new ways to encourage the trend.

"Liberty takes hold in different places and different ways, so we must continue to adapt and find innovative ways to support those movements for freedom," Bush said.

The Middle East's growing youth population and a burgeoning women's movement seeking change are two hopeful signs, said Bush, as are millions of Middle East-

ern immigrants residing in Europe who see the benefits of democracy every day and would like to see the same for their families back home.

"As some of the world's oldest democracies, we should never be surprised by the appeal of freedom," Bush said. "One day the same determination and desire that brought freedom to Paris and Berlin and Riga will bring freedom to Gaza, Damascus and Tehran." ♦

Rice Warns Israel on Settlement Expansion

By David McKeeby
Staff Writer

Washington -- An Israeli plan to expand settlement activity in disputed areas of East Jerusalem could slow progress toward a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice warned during her latest peace mission to the region.

"At a time when we need to build confidence between the parties, the continued building and the settlement activity has the potential to harm the negotiations going forward," Rice said in a June 15 appearance with Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni in Jerusalem.

Israel's announcement that it will build 1,300 new homes for Jewish settlers in territory Palestinians claim for their future capital underlines the need for continued progress to define the borders of a future Palestinian state, Rice said, which is one of several goals of an intensive U.S.-supported peace effort launched at the November 2007 Annapolis Conference.

"It's important to have an atmosphere of confidence and trust," Rice said following talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah. "The United States believes that the [settlement] actions and the announcements that are taking place are indeed having a negative effect on the atmosphere for negotiation."

The new construction should not be allowed to shape future Israeli-Palestinian borders, Rice said. The borders remain under negotiation.



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, right, and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, are seen, following a press conference at Abbas' headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Sunday, June 15, 2008. (AP Photo/Muhammed Muheisen)

"The United States will not let these activities have any affect on final status negotiations, including final borders," Rice said.

Settlement expansion also conflicts with the road map -- a series of peace-building measures developed by the diplomatic Quartet -- the European Union, the United Nations, Russia and the United States. Since the Annapolis conference, U.S. Air Force Lieutenant General William Fraser has been tasked to work with Palestinians and Israelis to oversee their implementation of the road map.

"Israel will benefit from the establishment of a peaceful and democratic Palestinian state. And so it is in Israel's interest to do everything that it can to promote an atmos-

phere of confidence," Rice said.

Fraser's efforts are producing results on the ground, Rice said, such as efforts to lift Israeli roadblocks and checkpoints to allow easier movement of workers and goods between Jenin and Nablus. Improving security and economic conditions will help encourage further international support projects to help strengthen the Palestinian government, Rice said, allowing it to deliver basic services and new opportunities to its citizens.

Rice's visit comes as Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian Authority are working to negotiate a truce with

Hamas, which seized the Gaza Strip in a 2007 political struggle with Abbas, and since then has allowed terrorists to use the territory to stage attacks into Israel.

"Hamas is effectively holding the population of Gaza hostage," Rice said. "The rocket fire needs to stop. There needs to be a more sustainable circumstance for the people of Gaza, meaning that there will need to be sustained openings of the crossings, enough at least to permit humanitarian needs to be met."

Despite the latest challenges to the peace process, Rice expressed confidence that Israeli and Palestinian negotiators will continue moving forward and a settlement by the end of 2008 remains possible. ♦

Iranian-born Journalist Wins Award for Press Freedom Advocacy

By Eric Green
Staff Writer

Washington -- Iranian-born journalist Ahmad Rafat, now a well-known reporter based in Italy, has been honored for his more than 30 years of work advocating press freedom and exposing human rights abuses.

The 2008 Ilaria Alpi award was presented by the Italian chapter of Reporters Without Borders to Rafat at a June 7 ceremony in Riccione, Italy.

The prize, which recognizes courageous investigative reporting, was named for an Italian investigative journalist murdered while pursuing a story in Somalia in March 1994. The events leading to the murders of Alpi and her cameraman Miran Hrovatin in Somalia's capital of Mogadishu were dramatized in a 2003 movie called *The Cruellest Day*.

Rafat is a correspondent for a U.S.-backed station called Radio Farda, which broadcasts Persian-language news and information to Iran. He also hosts a show every Thursday for the Voice of America (VOA) that is broadcast to Iran, and serves as the deputy director for the Italian news agency Adnkronos International. (The word Farda translates as "tomorrow" in English.)

Rafat told America.gov that he was able to win the award in part because of the support he has received for his journalistic work from the board of governors of Radio Farda and the VOA. Radio Farda is a joint project of the VOA and the U.S.-funded international communi-

cations service, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, headquartered in Prague, Czech Republic.

With his prize, said Rafat, comes a "responsibility" to continue "more than before to report on human rights abuses and to promote freedom of the press."



Ahmad Rafat

Rafat said he was pleasantly surprised to have been honored for his achievements. The ceremony's organizers invited him to the event in Riccione without telling him he would receive the prestigious award, which consists of a statue valued at about 2,000 euros (\$3,068).

The journalist said he has received much international media attention

recently, both for winning the award and for losing his press credentials. His credentials were confiscated and he was barred June 3 from covering a news conference by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the U.N. summit in Rome on world food security. Rafat later was admitted to the June 3-5 summit after Ahmadinejad left the news conference venue.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty said Rafat is an "active advocate of media and human rights" who had reported extensively for Radio Farda on preparations for Ahmadinejad's visit to Rome.

The Brussels, Belgium-based International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) said in a June 3 statement that Rafat was barred by U.N. officials from entering the food summit "apparently [due to] protests raised by Iranian officials."

The IFJ said it had urged U.N. agencies not to be "bullied" by any U.N. member state that attempts to prevent journalists from covering news events. The federation urged agencies "to stand up for media freedom and protect access" for the media.

The full text of the IFJ statement (<http://www.ifj.org/en/articles/mugabe-in-journalist-out-ifj-slams-new-un-ban-on-media>) is available on the group's Web site.

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

Reintegration a Major Issue for Former Child Soldiers

By Samantha Berk
Staff Writer

Washington -- Former child soldiers can readjust to normal, peacetime society, but it is a long and difficult process, say a former child soldier and a psychologist.

"Children can recover from this experience," says Ishmael Beah, "though [it is] a long-term process and difficult."

Beah, who wrote best-selling memoir *A Long Way Gone* about his experience as a child soldier in Sierra Leone, is educating the international community about the exploitation of children in war.

The 28-year-old is the UNICEF Advocate for Children Affected by War and travels the world to lobby for government and private support for rehabilitating and reintegrating child soldiers.

"Socializing the children requires a strong community, society involvement, as the community, too, needs to heal and learn to accept the children again," Beah told an international audience in a State Department webchat June 12.

Beah was joined by psychologist Michael Wessells, author of the book *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection*. Wessells is a professor at Columbia University and Randolph-Macon College and has worked with child soldiers around the world to reintegrate them into society.

STIGMATIZATION A PERSISTENT PROBLEM

Both Beah and Wessells said stigmatization is a persistent problem faced by former child soldiers when

Because communities tend to reject them, many girls choose to keep silent about their experiences, and much of the international public is still unaware of the problems of



attempting to reintegrate into society. This is especially true for girls, who, in addition to fulfilling domestic roles in armies, might take on combat responsibilities as well.

Returning home can be harder for girls than for boys, according to Wessells, who has studied the effect of combat experience on girls.

"Many become pregnant and give birth, and many experience extreme reproductive health issues, STIs [sexually transmitted infections], and much greater amounts of stigma than do boys," Wessells said.

former girl soldiers, Wessells and Beah said.

"The image of a child soldier that has been portrayed internationally has been the boy with the AK-47," Beah said. He recalled that girls in Sierra Leone were a large component of the army and they tended to avoid getting help for fear of rejection by their communities.

Wessells suggested the different problems girls face warrant different reintegration programs that specifically address their issues.

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Global Causes of Death Move from Infectious to Chronic Diseases

By Cheryl Pellerin
Staff Writer

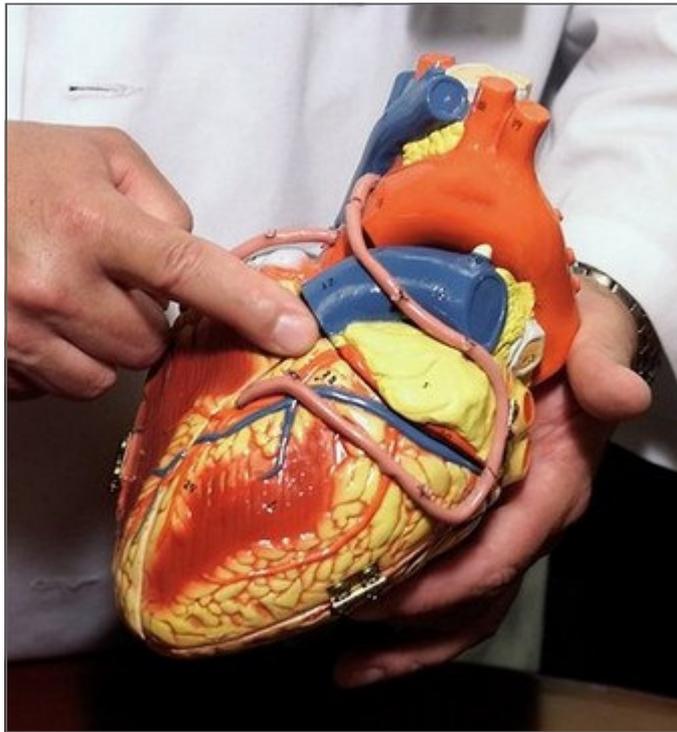
Washington -- Globally, causes of death will shift from infections like AIDS and malaria to chronic illnesses like heart disease and cancer, a new World Health Organization (WHO) report finds.

World Health Statistics 2008, published May 19, presents the most recent health statistics for WHO's 193 member states on 73 health indicators. This fourth edition has 10 highlights in health statistics, including a section on "Future Trends in Global Mortality: Major Shifts in the Causes of Death Patterns."

According to the report, the four leading causes of death in the world in 2030 will be ischemic heart disease (involving lack of blood flow and oxygen to the heart muscle), stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary (lung) disease, and lower-respiratory infections (mainly pneumonia).

"The decline in infectious diseases is driven largely by [an] epidemiological transition," Colin Mathers, coordinator for country health information at WHO in Geneva, told America.gov, in which disease trends change with economic development -- infectious diseases in less-developed nations and noncommunicable chronic diseases in developed nations whose populations have better nutrition, living conditions and health care.

"The rise of heart disease and cancers is driven by population aging," said Mathers, lead investigator for the projections. "Populations will



A doctor points out one of the three major coronary arteries on a model of the human heart.

grow and get older, which is also a reflection of the lower death rates from infectious diseases."

2030 PROJECTIONS

Globally, cancer deaths will increase from 7.4 million in 2004 to 11.8 million in 2030, and deaths from cardiovascular diseases will rise from 17.1 million to 23.4 million, the report predicted.

The report included road traffic accidents, saying deaths from this source will increase from 1.3 million in 2004 to 2.4 million in 2030, mainly due to increased motor vehicle ownership and use associated with economic growth in low- and

middle-income countries.

By 2030, deaths from cancer, cardiovascular diseases and traffic accidents together will account for 56 percent of the projected 67 million deaths from all causes.

The increase in deaths from noncommunicable diseases will be accompanied by large declines in mortality from the main communicable, maternal, perinatal (five months before and one month after birth) and nutritional causes, including HIV infection, tuberculosis and malaria.

Deaths from HIV/AIDS are expected to rise worldwide from 2.2 million in 2008 to a maximum of 2.4 million in 2012 before declining to 1.2 million in 2030.

These shifting health trends indicate that leading infectious diseases -- diarrhea, HIV, tuberculosis, neonatal infections and malaria -- will become less important causes of death globally over the next 20 years.

PAST AND FUTURE

The starting point for the projections, Mathers said, is the WHO Global Burden of Disease project, which estimates deaths by cause for every region of the globe.

"For the actual projections of deaths," he added, "we look at the available data from predominantly high- and middle-income countries from death registration data over the last 50 years and see how rates for major causes of death change as countries develop."

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Feeding the Hungry Through Biotechnology

With the United Nations projecting a global population of about 10 billion by 2050, estimates indicate that farmers will need to grow twice as much food as they do today. The impact is particularly significant for countries with the largest population growth and the most widespread nutritional deficiencies. Many agricultural tools and resources will be needed to meet these demands. Given the limits on land available for cultivation and the ability of current techniques to grow food in arid and pest-infested areas and salty water, agriculture biotechnology now offers one of the most promising approaches.

Biotechnology's potential role in addressing vitamin A deficiency is one example. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 140 million to 250 million children, most living in developing nations, suffer serious symptoms of vitamin A deficiency, the leading cause of avoidable blindness and other afflictions. Vitamin-enhanced "golden rice" and cooking oils derived through biotechnology may help to meet this challenge. Similar approaches are targeting dietary shortages of iron, zinc, and other essential nutrients.

The first biotech food reached the market in 1994: a tomato with improved ripening. Insect-protected maize was introduced in 1996, followed by pest-resistant and herbicide-tolerant maize, cotton, and soya. While the first countries to adopt the technology were developed countries including the United

States, Canada, and Argentina, biotech crops are now grown in 22 countries around the world by more than 10.3 million farmers, of which 9.3 million are small-scale farmers living in developing countries. Maize, cotton, and soya constitute the largest share of crops currently produced using biotechnology; however, other biotech-improved crops are now available, including disease-resistant papaya and squash and nutritionally improved maize, soya, and canola. Growing biotech crops increased income to farmers by about \$27 billion between 1996 and 2005, with \$13 billion of that going to farmers in developing countries.

Yet all these advances have generated differences of opinion and even controversy. Although data show that most American consumers feel they do not know enough about food biotechnology to have an opinion, among those who do express an opinion, positive attitudes are twice as common as are concerns. In a 2006 survey by the International Food Information Council, some 75 percent of American consumers indicated that they are at least somewhat confident in the safety of their food. By contrast, consumer perceptions in Europe have historically been more negative, likely stemming from a number of food safety crises totally unrelated to food biotechnology. Nevertheless, consumer acceptance appears to be slowly growing in Europe; consumers polled in 2005 by Eurobarometer expressed an increasingly positive opinion toward

medical and pharmaceutical developments in biotechnology and a moderately positive opinion about the technology as a whole.

As with many major developments in science, initial doubts and uncertainties may change to acceptance and optimism as knowledge and understanding increase. Agricultural biotechnology is meeting with growing acceptance in countries around the world, helping farmers and food producers rise to the challenge of producing enough food to meet the needs of growing populations in the 21st century and beyond.

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Working Together to End Hunger

Alan Larson

Ending hunger and malnutrition is an achievable goal, but only if governments in both developed and developing countries make the right policy decisions.

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There is no more important global goal than ending hunger. More than 800 million people around the world are hungry or malnourished. A large percentage of these are children.



Advanced food technology is shared with developing countries as here in The Gambia where farmers assess rice varieties. Courtesy of African Rice Center (WARDA)

Childhood malnutrition is a special tragedy. It can cause brain damage that permanently impairs an individual's capacity to achieve his or her full potential.

Food security is a need so basic that neither families nor countries can effectively tackle other challenges when they do not have enough to eat. Hunger and malnutrition must be conquered in order to make lasting progress on education, health, and environmental problems.

Americans of all political persuasions have a strong commitment to addressing hunger. For Republican and Democratic administrations alike, overcoming hunger has been a top priority. For years, the United States has been the largest supplier of food aid and the largest contribu-

tor to the U.N.'s World Food Program.

American universities and scientists share this commitment. Since Norman Borlaug won the Nobel Peace Prize for work leading to the Green Revolution, American universities have produced a stream of scientists devoted to curtailing world hunger. American citizens provide generous private contributions to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that deliver food aid abroad and to anti-hunger advocacy groups such as Bread for the World.

An Achievable Goal

Of all the pressing challenges the world faces, ending hunger can be one of the most achievable. There is no global shortage of food. The

capacity to continue to produce sufficient high-quality food to meet the needs of the world's population is not in doubt.

Hunger, rather, results from policy problems. Wars and civil conflicts leave vulnerable women and children without access to food. Sometimes emergency food assistance is too small, too slow, or too inefficient to meet these needs.

Science and technology have not always been available to meet the special agricultural needs of developing countries. International donors sometimes have underfunded efforts to assist developing countries raise agricultural productivity and promote rural development. Developing countries sometimes

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have avoided valuable new technologies, such as biotechnology, that are used safely and effectively in developed countries.

Although the trading system can and should help people meet global food needs at lowest cost and least environmental impact, misguided trade and agriculture policies, in both developed and developing countries, sometimes have impaired the ability of the trade regime to operate. Europe and the United States, for example, cling to trade-distorting subsidies that disadvantage farmers in developing countries. Food-importing countries too often have used trade barriers to provide unfair and inefficient preferences for local production.

What Is Needed

Ending hunger and malnutrition is an achievable goal, but only if governments make the right policy decisions. Ending hunger will require great political will, close cooperation, a clear plan, and a sustained effort. Here are a few of the central elements of such a plan.

1. Providing More and Faster Food Aid: When international or domestic conflicts leave people in circumstances in which they cannot afford or cannot gain access to the food they need, international donors must step forward more quickly and more generously. Working under the leadership of the World Food Program, bilateral donors such as the U.S. Agency for International

Development (USAID) have stepped forward. Other donors need to recognize that food aid is indispensable. All donors need to act more quickly in responding to food emergencies, using early warning systems.

2. Providing More Effective Food Assistance: Food assistance must be made more effective. In some instances, the direct delivery of



The United Nations World Food Program works quickly delivering food in emergencies such as the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. Courtesy of UNWFP/Keith Ursel

food from traditional exporting countries such as the United States is less efficient than purchasing food locally or from the region in which the food shortage occurs. As the U.S. Congress rewrites the multiyear farm policy bill, groups including Bread for the World have been advocating reforms to make American food aid more efficient.

3. Helping Poor Countries Grow More Food: The United States and other donors can do more to help developing countries increase their agricultural productivity. The United States has begun to do so during the past six years. The World Bank

and the regional development banks need to ramp up their own programs for agriculture. Robert Zoellick, now president of the World Bank, has taken an interest in African agricultural issues. I hope he will act to re-establish the leadership position of the World Bank in increasing agricultural productivity in developing countries.

4. Using Food Aid to Support Agricultural Development in Developing Countries: International food aid should be a short-term response, not an enabler of long-run dependency. Working with NGOs, the United States supports countries that are trying to use food aid to jumpstart their own agricultural productivity. In Burkina Faso, USAID and the U.S. Department of Agriculture work with a group called Northwest Medical Teams to support farmer groups that share cultivation equipment and build wells. Similar successful projects have been launched in Senegal, Kenya, and Eritrea.

5. Making Agriculture and Nutrition National Priorities: While assistance is indispensable, hungry countries themselves must take the lead in making agriculture and nutrition national priorities. China and India, the world's most populous countries, have shown what can be done. In China, the government launched major reforms that have given farmers more freedom over what they grow. In India, the government has

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launched seed distribution schemes to assist farmers and milk distribution schemes to help consumers. Each country has begun to harness its scientific capability to address issues of hunger and nutrition. Policy makers and scientists from China and India have won the prestigious World Food Prize.

In contrast to these positive examples, abysmal leadership in Zimbabwe has transformed this rich agricultural land into a hungry one. In North Korea, the distorted goals of the regime and its heavy-handed political control over food distribution have created great hunger and hardship, notwithstanding years of generous food aid.

6. Extending the Power of Technology: In the United States, our citizens have been fortunate to benefit from sustained advances in food technology. Some advances, notably biotechnology, not only have increased productivity but also can produce plant varieties that are more resilient to drought, have higher nutritional content, require fewer chemicals, and are more resistant to pests. With a concerted international program, including both the public and private sectors, the power of biotechnology could be harnessed to the benefit of farmers and consum-

ers in developing countries. It is heartening that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation are teaming up to address agriculture. With stronger international help we can expect even more important initiatives from researchers such as Sierra Leone's Monty Jones, who improved rice-growing techniques in West Africa.



Poor policies in Zimbabwe have helped turn a rich agricultural land into a hungry one. AP Images/Themba Hadebe

7. Tapping the Power of Trade: The trading system must be a tool in ending hunger. Rich trading regions such as Europe and the United States must slash trade-distorting agricultural subsidies that impoverish farmers in developing countries. Rich countries including Japan must slash stiff trade barriers against the agricultural exports of developing countries so that the food production capabilities of those countries can be enhanced.

At the same time, too many developing countries have been slow to realize that trade barriers against food imports raise food prices for their people and perpetuate inefficiencies in their own food supply systems. While adjustment periods may be appropriate, a reduction of developing-country barriers to food imports is a necessary part of the solution to global hunger.

8. Making the Elimination of Hunger a Top Political Priority: In the fight against world hunger, we face a shortage. It is not a shortage of food; it is a shortage of political will. Eight hundred million people, many of them women and children, are counting on us.

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Telling America's story

Global Causes of Death Move from Infectious . . .

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The trends then are applied to developing countries, he added, on the assumption that what happens in the developing world with economic development will follow similar trajectories to what has happened in more developed countries over the past 50 years.

"The projections essentially assume the future will be like the past," Mathers said, "and that's always an uncertainty."

Factors used to establish a nation's level of development include gross national income per capita based on World Bank economic projections, average years of schooling for adults, projected improvements over time in health care technology, and smoking levels in the population.

"If we had the information," Mather said, "we'd probably add other risk factors like overweight and obesity

and so on. But we don't have good data going back." The projections also do not account for potentially substantial health effects of pandemics and other disasters.

Although the numbers of deaths will rise along with population growth, Mathers said the projections actually show small declines in the death rate at any given age.

"It's reflecting an improvement in health," he said. "We're living longer and so more of the deaths are from the diseases that affect very old people. It's the same with disabilities like arthritis or Alzheimer's disease. People say the population is aging and we've got an epidemic of Alzheimer's, but on the whole, people are getting more useful years of life, even if they do end up getting Alzheimer's at an age when they would have been dead in a previous generation." ♦

Reintegration a Major Issue for Former Child Soldiers . . .

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DEALING WITH THE CAUSES

Although the recruitment of children (anyone under the age of 18) for military purposes has been condemned by the United Nations, there are an estimated 300,000 child soldiers around the world today.

"Any country that has an active armed conflict can expect that troop-hungry commanders will use children to fill their ranks," Wessells said.

In addition, significant unemployment and a lack of educational opportunities can fuel political dissatisfaction among youths who resort to violence.

Dealing with the problem of child soldiering is a multilateral process involving the cooperation of various U.N. agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

UNICEF has been an important force in organizing the release of child soldiers and works with partners to reintegrate them into society. The Christian Children's Fund, for instance, implements programs in communities that "develop holistic, culturally grounded support," Wessells said.

Both Beah and Wessells expressed hope for an end to child recruitment for combat purposes with the help of enough international advocacy.

Making the International Criminal Court more accountable for prosecuting recruiters, Wessells said, would be a significant preventive measure against child soldiering. Targeting the source of conflicts that draw children into military roles is also important, he said.

Beah expressed optimism that accountability and prevention will eventually bring an end to the involvement of children in warfare.

"I believe it will end," Beah said. "I was in it, and I am no longer there. I have hope, as I cannot afford anything else. The alternative of giving up is worse." ♦