

TESTIMONY OF

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“EXPLORING THE U.S. ROLE IN CONSOLIDATING PEACE AND DEMOCRACY
IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION”

Chairman Feingold, Ranking Member Sununu and other Members of the Sub-committee on African Affairs, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss USAID’s contribution to consolidating peace and democracy in the Great Lakes Region. My testimony today will add to that of Assistant Secretary Frazer who has provided the Sub-committee information on the USG strategy and considerable contribution to the consolidation of peace and democracy in the Great Lakes Region. I will provide you more detail on USAID’s support to this goal, focusing on humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, reintegration and development assistance in the Great Lakes Region.

The countries of the Great Lakes Region in Africa are linked by ecological landscapes that contain some of the most important biodiversity in the world, by bountiful and lucrative natural resources that fuel economy and trade, by refugees who have traveled hundreds and thousands of miles across borders to flee violence, and by militias that owe allegiance to ethnic groups that transcend national boundaries. As history has shown, these linkages ensure that violence in one country is not contained by borders and will spread to engulf all or part of the region if not stopped. Our strategy to address fragility in the Great Lakes takes into account its regional dynamic and seeks to leverage the resources we have available to bring about peace and stability. Given the current importance of events in northern Uganda and eastern Congo, I will focus the majority of my remarks on these two countries.

NORTHERN UGANDA

Since 1986, protracted conflict between the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) has created a complex humanitarian situation in northern Uganda. This conflict has been marked by violent attacks against civilians, extensive displacement, and the abduction of children for forced conscription, labor, and sexual servitude. Prolonged conflict has had a dramatically destructive effect on the lives of virtually all citizens of northern Uganda and produced the fourth largest population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world. At the height of the conflict in 2004, there were almost 1.8 million IDPs in northern Uganda. Some of these people have not

returned home for 10 to 20 years. Some, born in camps, have never lived in their parents' homelands.

The cessation of LRA attacks more than a year ago, and ongoing peace negotiations between the GoU and LRA have encouraged IDPs to move home, or closer to home. More than 920,000 IDPs in northern Uganda have voluntarily left the camps. If peace negotiations make further progress, we anticipate a considerable increase in IDP returns, especially this November and December, because it is during these months that grasses used to build and thatch roofs mature.

The possibility of reliable, long-term security has set the stage for an eventual end to the extreme suffering of residents of north-central Uganda, where despite gradual increases in food production and improved harvests, approximately 2.1 million people remain food insecure, and IDPs continue to depend upon food aid for nearly 50 percent of their nutritional requirements.¹ The enormity of this challenge cannot be underestimated. Reintegration and recovery will be taking place in a region that, according to President Museveni, "has consistently fallen behind the rest of the country within the realm of human development," and where "access to basic services is poor by national standards," resulting in a pervasive sense of alienation in the region. Sustainable reintegration and recovery will occur neither quickly nor easily.

Anticipating and responding to improving security conditions, USAID has shifted increasing amounts of its resources to the north. In 2007, USAID provided \$106 million in assistance to northern Uganda, and a similar amount is intended to assist the north this year in support of the GoU's Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), which was released earlier this month. The amount of USAID's resources allocated to the north has increased steadily from \$77 million in 2005 to \$84 million in 2006, and \$106 million in 2007. Over half of this assistance is long-term development assistance. Further evidence of USAID's commitment to the reconstruction and reintegration of the north is the opening of our field office in Gulu in June of 2007. This office has already improved relationships with local government officials and community and religious leaders, and enables our team to better respond to northern Uganda's needs with timely and flexible programs. USAID Uganda, USAID Africa Bureau, and USAID DCHA Bureau have begun drafting a framework for transition from emergency assistance to recovery and development assistance. The goal is to ensure that proper resources are available to meet the changing conditions in northern Uganda. As needs shift from emergency care to programs that target recovery USAID will work to meet the needs as they arise with appropriate funding to appropriate partners to support sustainable returns.

Before discussing our current programs and preparations for significant IDP return and reintegration, I will briefly review USAID's history in Uganda, and then highlight the success of USAID's programs to date in northern Uganda.

USAID's history in Uganda: USAID has been providing assistance to Uganda since 1961, working hand in hand with partners in government and non-government sectors. In

¹ FEWS NET, August 2007

the 1960s, USAID programs focused on alleviating poverty, building the newly independent country and helping to jump-start its economy. More specifically, USAID programs worked to increase agricultural productivity, secondary school enrollment, and training of Africans to assume leadership positions in public service. In 1973, USAID suspended assistance due to the political and human rights problems associated with the dictatorship of Idi Amin.

In 1981, USAID re-established its presence in Uganda after an eight-year hiatus. USAID/Uganda's 1981 interim strategy gave priority to short-term relief, recovery and reconciliation issues. During the 1980s and 1990s, USAID's longer-term development programs accomplished significant success in southern regions, in partnership with the GoU. USAID programs focused on rebuilding the economy; providing support for health programs, especially those focused on HIV/AIDS, and malaria; and basic education. Our programs have also provided support for strengthening democracy and governance, with a particular focus on building political party capacity and supporting decentralization. During this time, we also provided humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of vulnerable populations affected by conflict, especially in northern Uganda. In 2005, because of new and dialogue between the GoU and LRA that inspired hope for peace, preceded by a sharp increase in the number of IDPs the year before, USAID significantly increased both development programs and humanitarian assistance. These programs are now assisting in the recovery and reintegration of IDPs and increasing stability in the north.

Results achieved in northern Uganda²: USAID's programs directly supported the Juba peace process through assistance to the GoU for the planning, design and implementation of national consultations on accountability and reconciliation, a critical element of the on-going peace negotiations in Juba. Addressing the strong need for reconciliation among the Acholi population, USAID's programs provided essential services to 23,646 night commuters and survivors of abduction, enrolled 13,221 formerly abducted children in school or vocational training, and assisted 361 returnees (including 150 women) to live and work side-by-side with community members in 14 IDP camps in Gulu and Kitgum districts. Our programming supported 53 traditional cleansing ceremonies, in addition to holding 180 peace committees and the resolution of 2,537 local disputes using dialogue, mediation, agreements and legal referrals. Our programs also facilitated 12 local radio programs carrying messages fostering intra-Acholi reconciliation.

With market and agricultural infrastructure destroyed throughout much of the north, food assistance is critical during the return process. In FY 2007, USAID provided over 64,000 MT of emergency food targeting 270,000 returnees in Gulu, Lira and Pader districts, making the United States the largest contributor to the World Food Program in Uganda. To support the return process, USAID provided 270,000 resettlement packages of three-month rations to IDPs returning home.

Improving health and education services is one of the most critical needs for IDPs as they transition to self-sufficiency. USAID protected 371,846 people through Indoor Residual

² For the last 18 months

Spraying to prevent malaria and distributed 78,039 insecticide treated nets. USAID's robust HIV/AIDS program has provided voluntary counseling/testing for HIV at 158 sites to over 140,000 people, assisted to prevent over 1,200 cases of mother-to-child transmissions of HIV, provided nearly 10,000 people with life-saving antiretroviral therapy and reached over 110,000 youth with HIV prevention messages in northern Uganda. These programs were implemented in coordination with our partners in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In addition, USAID trained over 8,000 teachers, in 1,762 primary schools across northern Uganda in improved student counseling and psychosocial support for war victims. Last sentence deleted.

IDPs have cited water availability in areas of origin as a prominent factor influencing returns to home villages. As of August 2007, USAID and other humanitarian partners have increased the supply of potable water to IDP camps by 50 percent³ since the height of the crisis. USAID reached more than 570,000 northerners with programs to improve water, sanitation and hygiene. These programs include drilling and rehabilitating boreholes, installing water tanks and taps, constructing latrines and hand washing facilities, and distributing hygiene kits both at IDP camps and in return areas.

Helping displaced people regain their livelihoods and their ability to support themselves and feed their families is critical to recovery in Northern Uganda. USAID provided agriculture and food security assistance to nearly 800,000 people in northern Uganda including training, seed and agricultural inputs, and land tillage to increase land area for cultivation. USAID has also funded road rehabilitation to increase access to markets and to clear roads to villages that have been deserted for years, in some case for decades. Opening up these abandoned roads will not only enable IDPs to go home, but will also ensure access for the police to provide security to the area. USAID also provided livelihoods assistance including income-generating activities for returnees.

USAID is also working to promote commercial high value agriculture that supports small holders. USAID's programs supported a Ugandan company to procure 32,000 tons of sunflowers with a farm-gate value of \$7 million mostly from smallholder farmers in Lira, Apac and Masindi. With these inputs, the programs launched four sunflower producer Savings & Credit Cooperatives in Lira and Apac districts with a total membership of 1,840 and combined assets of \$9,500.00. Our programs worked to educate over 40,000 Ugandans in conflict-affected districts in a national savings mobilization campaign and assisted 12,000 small holders to open up their land for organic cotton production, which promises a guaranteed price and market through a public-private partnership with U.S. cotton company Dunavant. Recognizing the important economic, environmental and cultural relationship between northern Uganda and Southern Sudan, USAID established three cross-border Conservation Landscapes for Peace with the Government of Southern Sudan.

Other important successes in northern Uganda facilitated by USAID include the dissemination of voter education messages, public dialogues and candidate debates to millions of citizens in IDP camps in the lead-up to the February 2006 Presidential and

³ according to OCHA

Parliamentary elections. USAID also supported radio programming to increase information about return conditions and available assistance in areas to which IDPs were returning. USAID worked with the GoU to increase budget flexibility to meet the unique needs of displaced populations. As a result, local governments can now allocate up to 50 percent of their expenditures to locally determined projects, as compared with ten percent in the rest of the country. Importantly, USAID developed and rolled out software to improve effective budget management, public expenditure tracking, and local government procurement, which will be particularly important for the success of the GoU's recently launched PRDP.

Meeting the challenge ahead: Building upon these successes and recognizing the enormity of the challenge ahead for northern Uganda, USAID is committed to working with the GoU to bring solid and lasting stability to northern Uganda. That means people in the north have to feel that their government is supporting them and that they have a stake in their country. This will require the government to deliver basic services to help people move back to areas they left more than a decade ago. This necessarily includes work on the justice sector. Stability and reintegration is about the restoration of livelihoods, so people can feel the pride of supporting themselves and their families. Reintegration and recovery is about working through the painful process of reconciliation with family, neighbors and community members who have been pitted against each other and who must reconcile atrocities committed against each other. USAID is committed to funding programs in northern Uganda to achieve reintegration and recovery for northern Uganda with long-term development that will ensure that the stability now enjoyed in northern Uganda will benefit generations to come. These programs will need to collaborate regionally, with Southern Sudan in particular, as increasing economic ties between the two have contributed to significantly increased economic growth in northern Uganda.

USAID's strategy for Northern Uganda is to support the GoU's National Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP).

The objectives of the PRDP that USAID are supporting are as 1) consolidation of state authority, 2) rebuilding and empowering communities, 3) revitalization of the economy and 4) peace building and reconciliation. Details under each objective are as follows:

- 1) ***Consolidation of State Authority:*** Increase the capacity of GoU administration to govern effectively, deliver essential services, and provide security for the population

In support of this objective, USAID is sponsoring programs to build a more effective legislature, which will include training for MPs and staff so they can operate effectively in a multi-party Parliament and strengthen their engagement in anti-corruption initiatives and with constituents, civil society and local government. USAID is also provide support to local governments (particularly in the north) to become more accountable, by strengthening civil society and local engagement in anti-corruption initiatives. In northern Uganda, USAID is disseminating messages to civil society to help community

members know what their rights are and to ensure that their local level political leaders are helping their communities.

- 2) ***Rebuilding and Empowering Communities:*** Improved social service infrastructure and capacity of local government to provide basic services that increase the quality of life of the population

USAID trains community outreach workers in treatment of tuberculosis and malaria, supports immunizations against childhood diseases, provides insecticide treated bed nets, and improves the quality of and access to family planning services. In addition, Uganda is a focus country for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI). Through the Emergency Plan and PMI in Uganda, USAID and other government agencies collaborate with government, religious, and community-based institutions to deliver comprehensive prevention, care, and treatment for both diseases. These programs are working through the GoU's public health system, building capacity not only at district centers, but also at the parish level, thus enabling many returning IDPs to receive care at home similar to that which they were receiving while in IDP camps. USAID and HHS support health programs focusing on HIV and malaria across all of Uganda; however, a significant portion of this support is channeled through a program specifically for northern Uganda.

Additionally, USAID is improving the quality of basic education through support to teacher training, strengthening school management, and increased parental and community involvement. USAID will also continue to provide water assistance to return communities, and community access roads to enable IDPs to access their home villages. Community grants will assist returnees to build infrastructure based upon their own collective priorities.

Access to water, sanitation, and hygiene remains a significant concern across the Acholi and Lango sub-regions, particularly in areas of return that lack the services available in the IDP camps. USAID is working to extend water, sanitation and hygiene programs to return areas by continuing to provide water assistance to communities of high return.

- 3) ***Revitalization of the Economy:*** Reactivation of the productive sectors with a focus on agriculture and rehabilitation of critical infrastructure with a focus on increasing cross border economic trade.

After years of conflict which resulted in over 90 percent of the population being forcibly located to IDP camps, revitalizing the economy and jump-starting agriculture is the key element to helping people regain self-sufficiency and USAID has several programs supporting this objective. USAID is providing agriculture and livelihoods support to return communities, reaching over 60 percent of the population of Acholiland (by 2009), including agricultural inputs and extension, training and equipment provision to establish off farm activities such as tailoring, carpentry, and beekeeping. Additionally, much of the community road rehabilitation work planned will be cash-for-work, thus resulting not only in improved infrastructure, but also in a badly-needed infusion of cash into an

economy that was until not long ago reliant largely on barter-only trade. This will include community based livelihoods programs for the reintegration of ex-combatants and their families.

USAID is continuing its work with public private alliances, which leverages funds from private companies for important development programs. The alliance with the Dunavant Cotton Company, for example, will provide 12,000 farmers in northern Uganda with inputs and training to increase cotton and food crop production, in addition to a guaranteed cotton market. USAID assistance will increase and diversify commercial agricultural production and increase competitiveness in local and international markets. This will be accomplished by improving agricultural productivity and strengthening producer organizations, increasing access to credit and savings services for rural people, and ensuring greater food security. By increasing the production and marketing of food and cash crops, rural incomes will rise.

- 4) ***Peace Building and Reconciliation:*** Increase access to information and media, increase access to trauma counseling services, strengthen intra- and inter-community conflict resolution, and support to the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) plan.

USAID will provide support to address the social challenges in northern Uganda that have arisen as a result of fractured social relationships in order to resuscitate the peace building and reconciliation processes. This will require putting in place mechanisms for rehabilitating the victims of war and reintegrating them into communities while strengthening the local conflict resolution mechanisms, and the relationship between civilians and government. USAID will support programs to provide a platform for ongoing reconciliation. Peace forums will be developed to facilitate relationships between citizens and the government, as well as among communities and individuals across the north. An important component of this program will be to increase access to accurate and reliable information, particularly regarding the Juba Peace Talks. Additionally, programs will focus on improving access to justice, including legal aid and dispute resolution, and increasing awareness of human rights and property rights.

In sum, significant USAID resources across all sectors, complimented by diplomatic and defense-related initiatives, will work synergistically and in partnership with the Government of Uganda and with other donors to continue to provide the social, economic and political foundations for a lasting peace in northern Uganda.

EASTERN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is emerging from 15 years of protracted conflict, a conflict that involved nine neighboring countries, cost as many as four million lives and caused social and economic damage that will take generations to overcome. Recognizing that eastern DRC's continued insecurity and weak governance is destabilizing for the region and threatens to undermine the progress being made in the DRC as a whole, USAID has increased its focus on both humanitarian and development

resources to the east as part of a broader stabilization effort. In FY 2006 and 2007, USAID has provided an average of over \$120 million in development and humanitarian assistance to the DRC, with an average of \$80 million per year allocated to the east. Over 25 percent of assistance allocated to the east is longer-term development assistance.

The impact of the protracted instability in the DRC is far reaching. Poverty is widespread in the country, and the education and health care systems have eroded due to a lack of resources and looting. Throughout eastern DRC, insecurity hinders access to agricultural land and traditional markets. Gender-based violence (GBV) is rampant. The DRC has a vast supply of natural resources that has been a key source of conflict and exploitation for well over a century. If managed in a transparent manner and under a legal environment where laws are enforced, those resources could present an opportunity for economic growth that will benefit the population and provide an alternative to war. However, grossly inadequate infrastructure, a weak and ill-trained security apparatus and the legacy of generations of bad governance persist throughout the country. Major change will be required before the Congolese public gains confidence in its government.

Insecurity and conflict have resulted in major humanitarian crises across eastern DRC, with conflict and tension presently strongest in the Kivus. In 2007, North Kivu Province witnessed the most significant population displacement in more than three years, with an additional 318,000 people displaced, bringing the total IDP population in North Kivu alone to 745,000⁴.

To respond to the humanitarian crisis in the east, the USG⁵ has provided more than \$683 million to support life-saving humanitarian activities in the DRC since 1999, in addition to the \$311 million USAID has spent on development programs. In FY 07, USAID provided 33,822 metric tons of emergency food assistance. USAID has distributed emergency food rations to over 300,000 persons displaced by violence in the North Kivu. USAID has distributed emergency relief supplies to nearly 250,000 displaced persons in North Kivu, and maintains an emergency relief supply stockpile (for 100,000 people) in Goma, North Kivu Province. Importantly, USAID has supported activities to improve access to isolated areas in eastern DRC, including humanitarian flights to transport relief personnel to conflict-affected areas and road rehabilitation.

USAID has supported emergency health interventions in the east, working through local structures to provide free access to 24-hour primary and maternal health care and referral services in temporary settlement areas. Throughout eastern DRC, USAID partners improved access to health care for more than 545,000 beneficiaries. Programs focused on the restoration of primary health services, training of health staff, availability of essential medicines, and the reconstruction and rehabilitation of health structures as well as roads and bridges for people to reach these facilities. In addition, food security and agriculture initiatives benefited more than 600,000 conflict-affected Congolese.

⁴ OCHA estimates that in the DRC there are 1.1 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as well as 2.2 million former IDPs and refugees returning to their areas of origin that continue to require emergency assistance.

⁵ Includes funds from entire USG, including State/PRM

Assistance included distributions of seeds and farming and fishing equipment as well as training programs covering seed and soil conservation and marketing techniques. USAID also supported economic and market systems activities to ensure sustainable food security, benefiting more than 150,000 people through activities such as tailoring, banking, carpentry, and masonry.

In addition to USAID's important humanitarian work, which is directed mostly to eastern DRC, USAID's programs also seek to promote reconstruction, stability, and transformational development. Before discussing our current program, I will provide some background on the history of USAID's work in the Congo.

USAID's history in the Congo: USAID has had a continuous presence in the Congo since 1961 but our programs have had to remain flexible over the last 50 years due to chronic instability and periods of intense conflict. In 1964, USAID programs were directed at the development of a new role for the UN as coordinator of bilateral assistance activities; the implementation of a comprehensive economic stabilization program to contain inflation and the improvement of internal security through programs for military and police training. In subsequent years, programs also funded expatriate personnel to work with the Congolese government to maintain administrative effectiveness until Congolese were trained.

In the 1970s the Congo became increasingly stable as the Mobutu regime managed to put down the insurrectionary movement of the 1960s. During the economic boom of the first half of the 1970s driven by high world prices for copper (the major export product), the USAID's assistance focused on transport infrastructure development. Most USAID financing was in the form of loans to support road, river, maritime and air transport.

The fall of world prices for copper in mid-1970s and poor economic policies adopted by the Government of the Congo eroded the capacity to respond to the basic needs of the population. In response to this situation, the aim of the USAID's assistance shifted to meeting the basic needs through development projects in health, nutrition, agriculture, rural development, human resources development, etc.

In late 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, due to the deepening economic crisis, other components were added to USAID-funded development assistance programs, these included balance of payment support (commodity import programs and PL 480 programs) to support the manufacturing sector and reduce food deficits; policy dialogue to encourage the adoption of sound fiscal and monetary policies; and support for private sector initiatives.

USAID's emphasis on economic development and policy reform continued into the early 1990. However, in June 1991 the Government of the Congo became one year in arrears of debt due to the U.S. Government. Brooke sanctions became effective restricting further development assistance to the country. A wind down plan was being developed when in September 1991 the Congolese armed forces went on the rampage, looting industries and businesses.

As a result of the Government's inability to maintain order and security, the USAID Mission drastically reduced its presence in December 1991. Lacking sufficient staff, USAID shut down its development program in April 1992. USAID provided only humanitarian assistance until March 1996 when the Mission was closed completely and humanitarian programs were managed from Washington. After Laurent Kabila came into power in May 1997, USAID re-established its development assistance to the DRC with a small staff, and opened a full Mission in 1998. USAID's programs focused on building democracy, stabilizing population growth and protecting human health, encouraging broad-based economic growth, and protecting the environment.

USAID's current program in DRC: The real opportunity for the DRC is a new, legitimate government; one at peace with its neighbors and poised to engage in sustainable development. Attaining this goal will also contribute significantly to peace in the region. USAID's strategy is based upon the premise that to contribute to stability in Central Africa, the newly elected government must uphold the rule of law as embodied in the country's new constitution and deliver tangible results to the Congolese people. Security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs for former combatants are a critical part of this development process.

USAID is supporting coordinated donor efforts to help provide access to basic services, build on democratic structure, and contribute to economic growth to help consolidate the democratic transition, thus demonstrating the results of the democratic process at the community level. Large flows of donor assistance and support are needed to capitalize on this opportunity and make the transition irreversible. Despite prolonged insecurity, successful, democratic elections in 2006 have resulted in the establishment of a new government. Insecurity persists, however, and civilian authorities are unable to operate effectively, especially in large parts of eastern Congo. USAID's strategy is focused on several key objectives, which are discussed below along with results:

Enhance Protection of Individuals from Physical Violence: Despite concrete gains in the area of peace and security, violence, notably Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a critical problem and an instrument of conflict. The authors of a recent UN report describe GBV in the DRC as the 'worst they have ever seen.' Ungoverned space in eastern DRC, coupled with the ongoing conflict fueled by armed militias and other negative forces, provide an environment in which the cycle of violence against women and children can perpetuate and poses serious threats to efforts to protect these vulnerable populations from sexual violence and abuse. Ongoing population displacement due to continued conflict puts individuals at increased risk for abuse and threatens to undermine progress achieved through USAID-supported interventions. In an environment of lawlessness that permits the Congolese army and police as well as numerous rebel groups to act with impunity, rape is used as a weapon against local populations, with women and children continuing to be the most vulnerable. UN agencies indicate a 60 percent increase in reported rape cases in North Kivu Province from August to September 2007, with 351 cases in September alone.

Since 2002, USAID has been supporting interventions that respond to GBV in eastern Congo and which address the immediate, medium, and longer-term consequences of sexual violence for victims, their families, and communities. Programs help victims to resume their roles within families and communities and help to prevent new acts of GBV. USAID programs are designed around a holistic approach to GBV care and treatment, ensuring medical assistance (including fistula repair), psychosocial support, advocacy, sensitization, and socio-reintegration services, while promoting judicial support and legal referral when appropriate. To date, USAID has provided medical assistance to 45,000 survivors of sexual violence, and 70,000 have received counseling support.

Separation and Abandonment of Children: Child separation and abandonment has been a reality in DRC for many years, fueled by more than a decade of conflict, internal displacement, and a deteriorating economic situation. Since 2003, USAID has supported a program that aims to reintegrate separated and abandoned children (including former child-soldiers, street children, and IDPs) into their families and to reduce further separation and abandonment. The current program achieves reunification through family mediation, awareness-raising on the rights of the child, income generating activities for vulnerable families and children, training of parents, government social workers, and religious leaders, training and support to centers for street children, and public media campaigns. USAID's child protection activities have resulted in the reunification of more than 6,000 children with their families, and extensive effort to prevent further separation through community support outreach and livelihoods activities.

Reintegrate Persons Affected by Crisis: USAID's program works with the Government of the DRC to provide support for the reintegration of former combatants in eastern DRC, to support the development of stable communities in areas of return, and the forging of links between communities and government. USAID has contributed to the reduction in hostilities in Ituri and Katanga, including the reintegration of 13,000 former combatants, with plans to reintegrate up to 5,700 more. Reintegration of former combatants includes livelihoods assistance, which provides training and or equipment necessary to begin a small enterprise either back on the farm or for other non-farm activities.

Livelihoods: USAID is supporting the dissemination of disease-resistant staple crops such as cassava and plantain that have suffered a 50 to 100 percent reduction in yield in the last 10 years. The three-year, \$5 million DRC cassava program ensures the availability of 960,000 food rations annually nation-wide, at less than one dollar per ration; no other food assistance program is known to achieve this cost efficiency in the DRC. This DRC program is part of a regional initiative to combat the same diseases in staple crops across several countries in central Africa. The DRC's 18-month crop crisis control project has just been assured on-going funding by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Increase Access to Essential Services: USAID supports a package of integrated health sector services to increase access to and quality of primary health care and increase the capacity of national health programs and structures. While DRC is not a focus country, the U.S. Government HIV/AIDS activities in the DRC are part of the President's

Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and USAID and HHS work with the Government of the DRC to implement HIV/AIDS activities in prevention, care, and treatment and to build capacity in the DRC Ministry of Health (MOH). Under the Emergency Plan, USAID is combating HIV/AIDS through a regional approach, focusing activities on principle transport corridors across the Great Lakes that are important vectors of the disease. USAID support for strengthening routine immunizations has shown steady increases in terms of access and use of services, as is evidenced by the increase in vaccination coverage in program areas from 60 to 78 percent. Health programs are implemented throughout the DRC, with significant programming in the east.

Additionally, USAID is working to improve access to and quality of basic education, especially for girls, in the eastern DRC through innovative teacher training, distribution and proper use of educational materials, and encouraging community participation in education. USAID is training over 1,000 teachers and education officials in participatory learning methods, and providing them with teacher guides, textbooks and didactic materials. In addition, first- and second-grade teachers receive training in and lead their students through daily learning sessions in interactive radio instruction. This activity has resulted in a 35 percent increase in student achievement, and has increased enrollment and retention of students by 22 percent. Through USAID programs, over 107,000 students have access to learning kits and materials. In order to play a more active role in school decision-making, approximately 3,000 community members have received training in the development of income-generating activities, and in school administration and management. As a result, community groups have raised USD 31,390, most of which goes to supporting the schools in the communities and 1,249 parents now play an active role in school management committees.

Advance Democratic Governance: Building upon the success of the 2006 elections and installation of the new government, provincial governors and provincial assemblies – an electoral processes for which USAID provided significant support - USAID is supporting the transformation of the Independent Electoral Commission into a permanent institution. USAID continues to support efforts to strengthen judicial independence, expand access to justice, build the capacity of new judiciary personnel, advocate for human rights, and support peaceful means to ease tension and manage conflict. U. S. assistance was instrumental in the preparation of new laws on magistrates and the passage of a law against sexual and gender-based violence. Programs also focus on strengthening political party leaders, civic activists, elected local and national government and government officials to address the challenges inherent in the consolidation of good governance in a rebuilding state.

USAID is also supporting activities to clearly define the roles of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government while simultaneously working to create a legal framework for decentralization. Furthermore, the USAID is working with civil society organizations and media to build a more active and representative civil society.

Public Private Partnerships: USAID is also working with large mining companies to promote transparent practices and reinvestment in communities. Global Development

Alliances with three mining companies have leveraged USAID's \$3.5 million investment to raise \$10 million in funds from these companies to support 38 community infrastructure projects such as schools, clinics, markets and water points. Nearly 2,000 families received support for agriculture activities, over 900 women are participating in micro-savings and literacy programs and 252 small-scale miners were trained to begin new jobs and businesses.

Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE): USAID is improving livelihoods for inhabitants of the Congo Basin while promoting the sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity conservation. CARPE activities take place in 12 key biodiversity landscapes in seven countries: Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, the DRC, and Gabon, with over half of its activities located in the DRC. Many of these landscapes are trans-boundary in nature and require consultation and cooperation among different national governments. CARPE also supports cross-cutting activities that serve the entire Basin, such as monitoring of deforestation trends, natural resource governance, and harmonization of policies.

\$15 Million Supplemental: In addition to the programs described above that address critical humanitarian and development problems in the east and other regions of the DRC, USAID is using the additional \$15 million in supplemental funds provided by Congress to reinforce our current strategy to fund timely and critical interventions to stabilize the eastern DRC. These funds are being used to support stabilization activities, demobilization for former combatants, peace initiatives, and the consolidation of democratic gains in critical areas of eastern DRC, focusing on the Kivus where escalating tensions threaten to erupt into large scale conflict. USAID has maintained a temporary office in the east and will reinforce our presence in the east to respond to increasing insecurity, and vulnerability of the local population.

The supplemental will fund the following activities:

1) Reconstruction and Reintegration in North Kivu

In order to strengthen the scope and impact of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) activities in North Kivu, supplemental funds will be used to expand, accelerate and complement DDR options for ex-combatants. Considerable flexibility is required in the programming of these funds given the uncertain timing of a breakthrough in dialogue leading to demobilization, the undetermined number of demobilizing combatants, as well as uncertainties regarding the timing of funding through the World Bank Program. First priority will be placed on a timely response to demobilization and reintegration requirements, modeled on successful activities in Ituri and Katanga. In order to create additional incentives for combatants to demobilize and return to communities in the Kivus, any remaining funding will be used to extend the reach of civilian institutions and extend U.S. presence, support community-based programs to restore basic services and provide opportunities for job creation, and address fundamental needs for non-violent conflict mitigation as a means of achieving post-conflict reintegration. Should the FDLR demobilize in great numbers, USAID will cooperate with the World Bank regional Multi-

Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) program to support needs on both sides of the border as the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, Repatriation or Resettlement (DDRRR) process takes these ex-combatants across the border to reintegrate in Rwanda, their country of origin.

2) Dialogue and Conflict Mitigation in North and South Kivu

Supplemental funding will focus on fostering dialogue and agreement among key leaders and reducing conflict, particularly in North and South Kivu. This dialogue will be bolstered by ‘stabilization centers’ in eastern Congo that will strengthen existing democracy centers that USAID established in 2004. These democracy centers will provide continual presence and the ability to negotiate agreements in the east where conflict is greatest. Funds will also go to support upcoming local elections in North Kivu and other critical areas in eastern DRC to ensure that all groups are confident of their representation in local government.

3) Stabilization in Ituri and Northern Katanga

Supplemental funding is also directed to DDR and stabilization activities in Ituri and Northern Katanga. This program is already taking advantage of a fragile window of stability in these two areas that saw some of the worst militia fighting and population displacements in the DRC. The program will provide livelihoods options to ex-combatants to assist in their reintegration in the two areas, and will also provide a peace dividend in Ituri.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a potential leader in Sub-Saharan Africa because of its central location and vast array of natural resources. USAID has committed significant resources and achieved significant results in the DRC and will continue its support of broader USG goals of peace and stability in the DRC and in the region.

Senator, this concludes my remarks before the Subcommittee this morning, I welcome any questions that you and the other Members of the Subcommittee may have.

