



SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS SECRETARIAT
SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP
AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL



XLVII GRIC/SIRG MINISTERIAL
GRIC/Inf.10/07
May 22, 2007
Original: English

NATIONAL REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS FROM THE
FOURTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

**REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF
MANDATES FROM THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS**

May 2007

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INTRODUCTION

The United States of America remains committed to implementation of Summits of the Americas commitments as a way to engage with our hemispheric partners to make a real difference in peoples' lives. The Summit of the Americas, the only hemispheric meeting of all the democratically-elected leaders, fashions the parameters of cohesion, unity, and purpose for the hemisphere, accentuating concrete actions that governments, the private sector, civil society, and individuals can take to create the right conditions for progress and growth, poverty alleviation, social justice, and the promotion of freedom.

President George W. Bush has participated in three Summits of the Americas, building on the efforts of the previous Administration. At the Quebec Summit in 2001, leaders committed to a "democracy clause" and instructed foreign ministers to adopt the Inter-American Democratic Charter. At the 2004 Summit in Nuevo Leon, leaders adopted concrete, measurable commitments in areas such as remittances, small businesses, property rights, HIV/AIDS, education quality, and anti-corruption. At the 2005 Summit in Mar del Plata, leaders committed to creating jobs to fight poverty, particularly for marginalized citizens, and strengthen democratic governance.

Following is a report summarizing the United States' fulfillment of some of the major Summit of the Americas commitments under the categories of Creating Decent Work, Growth with Employment, Social Development, and Strengthening Democratic Governance.

CREATING DECENT WORK

Creating Jobs:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata Declaration mandate 76 states, “With this Declaration and Plan of Action, we Heads of State and Government of the Hemisphere reaffirm the central role we assign to the creation of decent work, in order to meet our commitments to fight poverty and strengthen democratic governance.”

Concrete USG Action: The United States continues to lead by example on the Fourth Summit’s main theme of “Creating Jobs.” More than 3.3 million jobs have been created in the United States since the Mar del Plata Summit in November 2005. More than 7.3 million jobs have been created since the Nuevo Leon Summit in January 2004. The U.S. economy has now added jobs for 44 straight months, and the unemployment rate remains low at 4.5 percent. The engines for job creation have been businesses with fewer than 500 employees; between 1992-2005, such firms accounted for 65% of average employment growth.

Next Steps: Keeping the U.S. economy growing also requires expanding free and fair trade, so that U.S. citizens can enjoy lower prices, better jobs, and increased productivity. Furthermore, the President has made small business growth one of his highest priorities and will put in place policies that encourage a climate of growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Training the Labor Force:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata Declaration mandate 40 states, “We recognize the essential role of life-long learning opportunities, especially technical and professional training of our population. Investing in knowledge, skills, capacities, and abilities facilitates access and re-entry to the labor force, supports personal and professional development, and maximizes economic productivity and institutional strengthening.”

Concrete USG Action: The President’s High Growth Job Training Initiative (HGJTI) is a strategic effort to prepare workers to take advantage of new and increasing job opportunities in high growth and economically vital industries and sectors of the American economy. Based on a demand-driven model, the U.S. Department of Labor has identified and focused on 14 industries, and has made 138 investments totaling over \$267 million to date. The U.S. Department of Labor is collaborating with the private sector to identify worker and skills shortages, and to develop customized training programs to meet the needs of local and regional economies. Additionally, through the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative, the U.S. Department of Labor has invested \$260 million in 26 regions throughout the country to catalyze the creation of high skill and high wage opportunities for American workers.

Next Steps: Under the WIRED initiative, the U.S. Department of Labor has released a solicitation for a third generation of regions, and is making \$5 million per region available for this new round of grants.

Eradicating the Worst Forms of Child Labor:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata Plan of Action mandate 2 states that we will “eradicate by 2020, at the latest, the worst forms of child labor.”

Concrete USG Action: Consistent with this goal, the U.S. Department of Labor currently supports projects that are engaged in withdrawing and preventing more than 40,000 children from the worst forms of child labor in Ecuador, Guyana, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Dominican Republic, and Central America. Projects provide educational and other support services to children, and build the institutional capacity of countries to combat exploitive child labor. In the United States, the Fair Labor Standards Act’s child labor provisions are designed to protect the educational opportunities of younger minors and to prevent employment in jobs and under conditions detrimental to the health or well-being of all minors. In part, as a result of the U.S. Department of Labor’s enhanced, targeted child labor enforcement and outreach, the number of young workers whose employment was found to be in violation of federal child labor provisions dropped substantially over the last decade, and the number of workplace injuries and fatalities to young workers has also continued to decline.

Next Steps: The U.S. Department of Labor anticipates awarding up to \$12.5 million in new grants in 2007 aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child labor in Latin America and the Caribbean.

GROWTH WITH EMPLOYMENT

Advancing Free and Fair Trade:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata Declaration mandate 18 states, “Our objective is to expand our trade, as a means of boosting growth and our capacity to generate more, higher quality, and better-paying jobs.”

Concrete USG Action: In 2006, the United States built on its solid record of opening markets and creating economic opportunities for the United States and its trade agreement partners. Under President Bush's leadership, the United States also continued to set the standard for all nations seeking to spur development and alleviate poverty by increasing trade flows.

World Trade Organization (WTO): Throughout 2006, the United States led efforts in pressing for a multilateral agreement to liberalize trade in agricultural goods, industrial and consumer products and services through the World Trade Organization's Doha Development Round. President Bush regards the Doha Round as an historic opportunity to tackle poverty and to create a more prosperous future for all nations.

Free Trade Agreements in the Western Hemisphere: In 2006, the United States also made significant progress on its bilateral and regional market-opening efforts. These initiatives complement U.S. multilateral efforts.

The Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) entered into force with El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua in 2006 and with the Dominican Republic in 2007. The United States signed free trade agreements with Peru and Colombia and concluded FTA negotiations with Panama in 2006. The United States is strengthening its trade and investment relationship with Uruguay through a new Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) signed in 2007 and through entry into force of a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) in 2006.

The United States has pursued efforts to promote respect for fundamental labor rights and effective enforcement of labor law through the incorporation of labor provisions in free trade agreements. Such provisions have been included in agreements with Central America and the Dominican Republic, Peru, Colombia, and Panama. The provisions apply both to the United States and our trading partners. Respect for fundamental labor rights and assurances that labor laws will be enforced, as part of a broader respect for rule of law, democracy, and good governance, support economic growth and employment.

The United States has likewise pursued efforts to promote environmental protection and cooperation through incorporation of environment provisions in free trade agreements. In the Western Hemisphere, such provisions have been included in agreements with Central America and the Dominican Republic, Peru, Colombia, and Panama. The provisions commit the United States and our trading partners to effectively enforce their own domestic environmental laws and to establish high levels of environmental protection. Additionally, the FTAs are complemented by Environmental Cooperation Agreements that provide a framework for undertaking environmental capacity building in our trading partners' countries.

The United States has been working closely with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to enhance trade competitiveness in the Caribbean. The United States-CARICOM Trade and Investment Council met in 2006 to revitalize and strengthen relations with the Caribbean Single Market Economy and throughout the region.

Under the United States – Chile Free Trade Agreement, overall bilateral trade has grown 140 percent during the three years that the FTA has been in effect, benefiting both countries beyond initial expectations. U.S. foreign direct investment in Chile increased by 1.5 percent in 2005 over 2004, totaling \$9.8 billion; Chilean foreign direct investment in the United States increased by 67 percent in that same time period totaling \$129 million. The United States still remains the main source of accumulated foreign direct investment (since 1974). There has been a steady growth of trade in services, with an increase exceeding 10 percent between the Parties from 2004 to 2005.

Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), overall trade among the three countries has grown 198 percent since 1993; each day the NAFTA countries conduct nearly \$2.2 billion in trilateral trade. Canada and Mexico are our first and second largest export markets. For the United States, job creation, industrial production, real compensation for manufacturing workers, business productivity and investment have all increased by higher rates in the period since 1993 compared with prior years.

Next Steps:

World Trade Organization: As 2007 begins, the United States is pursuing a breakthrough that will enable WTO Members to complete the Doha Round negotiations as soon as possible.

Free Trade Agreements in the Western Hemisphere: Consultations with Costa Rica continue on implementation of CAFTA-DR. Within the CAFTA-DR, the United States is working with its neighbors to ensure that market-oriented economic reform and political stability will take hold. The implementation of the trade promotion agreements with Peru, Colombia, and Panama can be expected to benefit those countries as well as U.S. businesses, farmers, consumers, and investors. The agreements will build on economic reforms underway in the region and promote the development of economic opportunities. Through the United States-Uruguay TIFA, the United States aims to better address mutual interests.

The United States will continue to pursue respect for labor rights through trade agreements. The United States, in conjunction with the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, is working with Central American countries and the Dominican Republic to help improve enforcement of labor laws by strengthening the capacity of labor ministries and reforming labor justice systems, as part of CAFTA-DR capacity building efforts, and will work similarly with our other hemispheric partners.

The United States will continue to pursue environmental protection and cooperation through trade agreements. The United States is working with the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic to help improve enforcement of environmental laws, establish high levels of environmental protection, and undertake environmental capacity building, and will work similarly with our other hemispheric partners.

Attracting Investment in Infrastructure:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata Plan of Action mandates 28, 29, and 40 state that we should “promote and encourage, when pertinent, the creation of agencies and fora for the identification and feasibility assessment of investment projects in basic infrastructure.”

Concrete USG Action: In order to address the critical infrastructure gap in the region, and provide better information to investors, President Bush proposed the Infrastructure Facility of the Americas (IFA) at the Summit. The IFA aims to catalyze private sector investment by establishing a fund to reduce the costs of identifying attractive projects. In addition, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency invested \$10.4 million in 2006 in project definition, feasibility studies, and technical assistance to support infrastructure development and create an enabling environment for investment in infrastructure in 14 countries in the region. The United States government supported projects such as information technology infrastructure in the State of Ceará and water re-use in Minas Gerais, Brazil; a refinery expansion project in Colombia; a dry bulk terminal at the Port of Cortés, Honduras; the modernization of the Managua International Airport in Nicaragua; and road pavement technology in Paraguay, among others.

Next Steps: We are working with the World Bank's International Finance Corporation to create a IFA which will (1) provide investors with accurate information about which projects will generate strong economic returns; and (2) provide project sponsors with the "know-how" to take projects to financial closure.

Improving Competitiveness:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata Plan of Action mandate 27 promotes "increased communication between ministries responsible for economic, social, and labor policies." In Declaration paragraph 4, we committed to "improve competitiveness."

Concrete USG Action: In February 2006, President Bush announced the domestic Americas Competitiveness Initiative, which has the following goals: 300 grants for schools to implement research-based math curricula and interventions; 10,000 more scientists, students, post-doctoral fellows, and technicians provided opportunities to contribute to the innovation enterprise, 100,000 highly qualified math and science teachers by 2015; 700,000 advanced placement tests passed by low-income students; 800,000 workers getting the skills they need for the jobs of the 21st century.

Next Steps: At the Mar del Plata Summit, President Bush called for the first ever meeting of the hemisphere's Commerce, Economy and Industry Ministers to discuss improving the region's competitiveness. To this end, Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez will convene the "Americas Competitiveness Forum" in Atlanta June 10-12, 2007. Tracks will include creating solutions in education and workforce development; sparking and sustaining innovation; designing successful global supply chain strategies; and fostering small business development and growth. This Forum will bring together Minister-level government officials who are responsible for the competitiveness portfolio of his/her country together with Ministers of Education and representatives of the private sector, civil society, and academia. The goal of this Forum is to motivate and inspire each of these groups to work together to improve the economic prosperity of their own countries.

Providing Debt Relief:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata Plan of Action paragraph 44 states that we should "explore ways for the multilateral development banks to provide more assistance to the poorest and least creditworthy countries as performance-based grants."

Concrete USG Action: At the Summit of the Americas, President Bush called to address the debt sustainability of the poorest countries in the region, including through debt relief and grants. For over a year, the United States government worked closely with the IDB, which agreed in March 2007 to forgive \$3.4 billion of debt, plus \$1 billion in future interest, for Bolivia, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua. The United States also pioneered the G8 debt reduction initiative that will provide the poorest countries in the region with roughly \$4.8 billion in debt service relief, on top of the \$9 billion in relief received under the earlier Heavily Indebted Poor

Countries initiative. This brings the total debt relief to roughly \$17 billion for the region's poorest countries. This translates into roughly \$555 per person. Currently, the poorest countries in the region spend – on an annual basis – about \$50 per person on health.

Next Steps: These initiatives will free up money for needed health care, education, and infrastructure development in the region.

Promoting Renewable Energy:

The Summit Mandate: Paragraph 33 of the Mar del Plata Plan of Action encourages us “to favor the research, development, and adoption of renewable and efficient energy sources and the deployment of technology for cleaner and more efficient energy sources.”

Concrete USG Action: President Bush launched the Advanced Energy Initiative and “Twenty in Ten” plan that aims to reduce gasoline consumption by 20 percent in the next ten years, reduce U.S. dependence on imported petroleum, promote use of alternative fuels, and improve U.S. energy efficiency and infrastructure. In March 2007, the United States government and the government of Brazil signed an MOU to cooperate on biofuels: bilaterally on research and development; regionally to develop third markets; and globally to develop compatible standards and codes. The United States, Brazil, and the European Union are developing compatible standards and codes for biofuels through the International Biofuels Forum, which also includes South Africa, India, and China. Also, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency provided a \$700,000 grant in 2006 for a feasibility study to Colombia’s Unidad Administrativa Especial de Aeronáutica Civil (Civil Aviation Special Administrative Unit, AeroCivil) to recommend options for converting the power supply for remote air traffic control and weather monitoring facilities in Colombia from diesel generators to renewable energy sources.

Next steps: U.S. and Brazilian cooperation in biofuels will include technical assistance and/or feasibility studies to develop local capacity to produce biofuels in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and St. Kitts and Nevis, as well as define bilateral areas for research and development on biofuels.

Increasing Investment in Central America and the Caribbean:

The Summit Mandate: Paragraph 12 of the Mar del Plata Declaration states that “it is necessary to improve transparency and the investment climate in our countries, build human capital, encourage increased incomes and improve their distribution, promote corporate social responsibility, and foster a spirit of entrepreneurship as well as strong business activity.”

Concrete USG Action: In response to the call for proposals made at the Summit, the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) announced the approval of \$45 million in financing for Darby Pro-Banco II for Central America, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Colombia, a fund expected to raise a total of \$90 million. OPIC also announced up to \$80

million in financing for the AIC Caribbean Fund, which could ultimately invest as much as \$250 million in the Caribbean.

Next steps: OPIC will continue to place great importance on private sector investment toward projects that create affordable low and middle income housing; support small and medium enterprises; and create opportunity for individual entrepreneurs via micro-lending facilities. Building upon prior experience, OPIC is developing private mortgage (or mortgage-guaranty) insurance that benefits potential borrowers by allowing the less affluent to qualify for mortgages. OPIC is also focused on developing structures for transactions that can address the need for local currency finance and microfinance entities.

Reducing the Cost of Remittances:

The Summit Mandate: In the Nuevo Leon Declaration, leaders committed to “take concrete actions to promote the establishment, as soon as possible, of necessary conditions, in order to achieve the goal of reducing by at least half the regional average cost of these transfers no later than 2008 and report on progress achieved at the next Summit of the Americas in Argentina in 2005.”

Concrete USG Action: According to the Inter-American Development Bank, transaction costs to send remittances have been reduced from 15% pre-2000 to 5.6% in 2006. Based on these figures, over \$5 billion total, and approximately \$300 per recipient family, more cash ends up in pockets of families per year than if transaction costs had remained at pre-2000 levels. The U. S. government is helping to facilitate the flow of remittances to Latin America, estimated at \$45 billion in 2006, and to enhance the development impact of remittances in the region. This includes increasing financial literacy, improving payment-system infrastructures, encouraging greater private sector participation in the market, and eliminating unnecessary regulatory barriers to competition.

- In mid-2005, Treasury launched a bilateral remittance pilot with the Government of Guatemala as part of the Summit of the Americas initiative. The pilot is focused on concrete actions to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the Guatemalan remittance market, encourage remittance flows through the formal financial sector, and expanding the ability of recipients to effectively deploy their financial resources by deepening access to financial services. Treasury launched the second phase of the remittance pilot with a March 2007 workshop hosted by the World Bank in Guatemala City.
- In Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has partnered with the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) to strengthen credit unions and introduce low-cost remittance services.
- The U.S. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation’s Money Smart has extended financial training to over 35,000 Mexican immigrants in the United States.
- USAID finalized a comprehensive study that examined the impacts of remittances and diaspora investment on local and regional economies through the Hemisphere.

- In May 2006, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency awarded a \$697,550 grant to BANSEFI, Mexico's National Savings Bank, to support technical assistance to carry out a financial literacy education project targeting low-income families.
- Payment system work was launched with the October 2004 "Payments in the Americas" conference hosted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.
- Through a partnership with Visa International, USAID is enabling microfinance institutions in Guatemala and Nicaragua to issue card-based solutions used in part for receiving remittances.

Next Steps: The United States government will continue to work to increase financial literacy, improve payment-system infrastructures, encourage greater private sector participation in the market, and eliminate unnecessary regulatory barriers to competition. USAID is in the beginning stages of expanding card-based services to provide a more flexible means of accessing remittances in Mexico. OPIC is working to develop a means to leverage worker remittances through microfinance institutions, potentially enabling remittance senders and recipients to utilize the regular flow of transfers as proof of income to support a loan for a home or other purpose.

Treasury expects to launch another bilateral remittance pilot later this year.

Reducing the Time and Cost to Start a Business:

The Summit Mandate: The Nuevo Leon Declaration states that "We will take all necessary and feasible legal, regulatory, and institutional measures, by the next Summit of the Americas to be held in 2005, to simplify the procedures and significantly reduce the time and cost of establishing businesses in each country of the region."

Concrete USG Actions: With United States government support, Latin America and the Caribbean has made significant improvements in removing obstacles for doing business and paving the way for a more healthy, vibrant, and formal sector. Of the 21 countries originally included in the World Bank surveys, there has been a 19% drop in time and a 32% drop in cost since 2003. USAID provided technical assistance to authorities in Jamaica to strengthen the Office of the Registrar of Companies. The number of days required to register a business in Jamaica was reduced from 31 days in 2003 to 9 days in 2005. At the sub-national level, USAID/Peru worked with two municipalities in Lima to streamline the business license registration process. The average time to issue a license in these municipalities fell from 221 days to 5 days. In December 2006, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency organized an orientation visit for officials from Brazil's National Business Registry Department (DNRC) to support the Brazilian government's efforts to reduce the time and steps involved with registering a new business. The visit provided an opportunity for the DNRC to meet with U.S. state government agencies and gather information on simplified and automated business registration procedures in the United States. In the United States, it takes an average of 5 days to start a business and costs approximately 0.7% of gross national income per capita.

Next Steps: USAID will continue to assist governments lower the time and cost to start a business. For example, the USAID Central America Regional Program will be working to harmonize business registration process across the region. USAID will also assist the Dominican Republic climb the World Bank Doing Business rankings in areas such as starting and closing a business, licensing, property registration, tax collection, and contract enforcement. The Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) Threshold Program in Paraguay, which is managed by USAID, will streamline the business registration process. SBA and small business development counterparts in Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Costa Rica plan on signing a Memorandum of Understanding on inter-institutional collaboration sometime in 2007.

Expanding lending to SMEs:

The Summit Mandate: The Nuevo Leon Declaration states, "We support the work of the Inter-American Development Bank, so that through its mechanisms and programs for private sector development, it triples, by the year 2007, its lending through the banking system to micro, small, and medium- sized enterprises, striving to benefit all of the countries that participate in the Summits of the Americas process."

Concrete USG Action: The IDB baseline was \$210 million, and the December 2006 figure was \$470 million. The IDB expects to meet the indicative target of \$630 million by the end of 2007. Additionally, the United States government is enabling thousands of small and medium- sized enterprises (SMEs) to take advantage of economic opportunities through greater access to finance. In El Salvador, USAID's Financial Services for SMEs project is helping commercial banks expand financial products and services and introduce viable loan products that better serve SMEs financing needs. In addition, the United States government is expanding lending to SMEs through loan guarantees managed by USAID's Development Credit Authority (DCA). DCA guarantees are designed to demonstrate that SMEs are creditworthy by sharing up to 50 percent of the risk of loan loss. USAID has 23 active guarantees, leveraging \$140 million to local private capital for SMEs across the Hemisphere. For example, USAID couples a DCA guarantee with technical assistance for SMEs in Guatemala. The guarantee mobilizes longer-term financing as SMEs need investment upgrades in order to benefit from the opportunities available under the Central America- Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). Domestically, in 2006, SBA loan guarantees provided funding for 30,753 start-ups and 52,935 existing businesses.

Next Steps: Before his March 8-14, 2007 trip to the region, President Bush instructed Secretary Rice and Secretary Paulson to develop a new initiative that will help U.S. and local banks improve their ability to extend good loans to small businesses. OPIC will support the initiative for risk-sharing and loan facilities for U.S. and local banks. Also in response to the President's challenge, USAID is developing a proposal with the Treasury Department to enhance the policy environment, support capacity building, and decrease real and perceived risk of SME lending in Columbia, Brazil, Peru, Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras.

Securing Property Rights:

The Summit Mandate: In the Nuevo Leon Declaration, leaders committed to “strengthen property rights and expand the use of property as collateral, ensuring enforceable, efficient, transparent, comprehensive, and equitable rules governing property contracts; and improve or promote the related measures governing the transfer of property, property registries, the use of property as collateral, and the rights and responsibilities of debtors and creditors. With regard to these measures, we commit to undertake concrete actions prior to the next Summit of the Americas to be held in Argentina in 2005, and to report at that time on progress achieved.”

Concrete USG Action: The United States is helping to establish secure property rights as one way to break the vicious circle of poverty in the Hemisphere. USAID helped establish the Inter-American Alliance for Real Property Rights to support the Summit of the Americas process and in response to the commitments made in the Declaration of Nuevo Leon. The Alliance brings together advocates for the improvement of real property rights systems. Continued progress is being made through USAID’s past support of the Alliance’s Blueprint for Strengthening Real Property Rights, which guides policymakers through the reforms necessary for more secure property rights. The blueprint helped the Government of Colombia prioritize policy and legal reforms, including in recent months, reform of their collateral laws. Secondly, USAID has supported the Central American Mortgage Initiative. At the December 15 Summit of Central American presidents, advances made under this initiative were highlighted and the region’s presidents urged continued effort. Furthermore, USAID provides support to Hernando do Soto’s Institute for Liberty and Democracy (ILD) to promote legal and institutional reforms related to property in Guatemala and Mexico. Lastly, through USAID’s Bolivian Land Titling Program, the United States and Bolivian governments are improving property rights security and expanding access to land markets, thereby enabling individuals to leverage the full benefit of their land assets.

Next Steps: USAID will continue to encourage countries in the Hemisphere to use the Blueprint to strengthen real property rights. USAID will also continue to support ILD as it continues to provide property rights technical assistance to authorities in Mexico, Guatemala, and expand this assistance to the Dominican Republic. Lastly, USAID will continue to enable Bolivians to leverage through their land assets through the Bolivian Land Titling Program.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Healthy Work Environments:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata, Plan of Action, paragraph 16 promotes “occupational health and safety conditions and facilitate healthy work environments for all workers, and, to that end, ensure effective labor inspection systems. For this purpose, it is essential to foster strategic alliances between the labor, health, environment and education sectors.”

Concrete USG Action: In the United States, the overall workplace injury and illness rate in 2005 is at its lowest (4.6 per 100 employees) since the U.S. Department of Labor began publishing

data in 1973; since 2002, the injury and illness rate has fallen by more than 13%; the overall fatality rate has fallen by 7% and the fatality rate among Hispanics has declined by 18% since 2001.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which maintains English and Spanish resources on-line, helps assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women by providing national and world leadership through research, information, education, and training in the field of occupational safety and health. The United States operates programs in every state to improve the health and safety of workers.

The United States government also conducts and supports a variety of programs to track occupational injuries and illnesses. These include the Sentinel Event Notification System for Occupational Risks (SENSOR), which is a collaborative effort with state health departments to improve the recognition and prevention of occupational sentinel health events, such as asthma, silicosis, amputations, burns, dermatitis, and noise-induced hearing loss. The United States also supports the Adult Blood Lead Epidemiology and Surveillance Program (ABLES) in over two thirds of the states. Through ABLES, states track and respond to cases of excessive lead exposure and develop broader intervention activities.

The United States government supports training of occupational safety and health professionals and researchers through 16 regional Education and Research Centers (ERCs) and 35 Training Project Grants (TPGs) in 22 states and Puerto Rico. These programs are critical for meeting the increasing demand for occupational physicians, occupational nurses, industrial hygienists and other safety professionals. The ERCs also provide education to practicing professionals through extensive continuing education programs.

Examples of projects in the Americas include the Americas Initiative to Eliminate Silicosis - a joint project with WHO, PAHO, ILO, and countries of the Americas, such as Chile, Brazil and Peru, that works on controlling silica exposures, surveillance, and personal protective equipment programs – and, in cooperation with PAHO, training for technical representatives from the Ministries of Labor and Health - to improve the calibration and maintenance of industrial hygiene sampling equipment - in Central America and the Dominican Republic.

The United States also works with PAHO and the WHO on the Americas Initiative for Health Care Workers, including collaboration on a safety manual, and Technical assistance and training for the Aragua State of Venezuela to adapt the WHO tool kit: *Preventing Needlestick Injuries and Occupational Exposure to HIV/AIDS*.

Next Steps: Continue training and program development through the Americas Initiatives.

Fighting HIV/AIDS:

The Summit Mandates: Mar del Plata, Plan of Action, paragraph 46 mandates that states “implement – with the support of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) – the ‘Three Ones Initiative: one HIV/AIDS action framework, one national AIDS coordinating authority, and

one country-level surveillance and evaluation system' developing primary prevention of HIV/AIDS and strengthening health services for young people and other vulnerable groups, with special attention to the problem of stigma and discrimination in the labor environment, taking into account the ILO Code of Conduct on HIV/AIDS in the workplace. To promote efforts to provide integral prevention, treatment, and care to HIV/AIDS carriers with the aim of providing as close as possible universal access to treatment for all those who need it as soon as possible."

Mar del Plata, Plan of Action, paragraph 54 recognizes "the positive results of the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria (GFATM) and we reaffirm our support to their activities and goals. We recommend the continued important participation of civil society in the fulfillment of these goals, and we urge the Global Fund Board to evaluate the eligibility criteria with the intent of addressing middle income countries in the hemisphere."

Concrete USG Action: The United States government has played a key role in expanding HIV/AIDS counseling and testing, a critical gateway to provide prevention, care and treatment, by helping approximately 419,800 individuals get tested and learn their HIV status (not including women seeking prevention of mother-to-child transmission services). To prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to child, The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has contributed to 1,700 HIV+ women receiving anti-retroviral (ARV) Prophylaxis. The United States has supported more than 13,900 people on life-saving anti-retroviral therapy throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Funding for HIV/AIDS in the Americas has increased sevenfold--growing from \$22 million in 2001 to over \$153 million for 2007. Over this period, the United States government has spent more than \$552 million on bilateral HIV/AIDS programs in the region.

In 2004, the United States co-sponsored the "Three Ones" agreement under the auspices of UNAIDS. The United States government, through PEPFAR, is committed to implementing the principles of the "Three Ones" across all of its international HIV/AIDS activities. All U.S. bilateral HIV/AIDS programs, therefore, are developed and implemented within the context of multi-sectoral national HIV/AIDS strategies, under the host country's national authority. Programming is designed to reflect the comparative advantage of the United States government within the national strategy, and it also leverages other resources, including other international partner and private-sector resources. In keeping with the principles of the "Three Ones," Country Operational Plans in the PEPFAR focus countries of Haiti and Guyana are developed in close consultation with partners in-country, in particular the host country government, to reflect unique challenges and opportunities for each country, ensure support of host-country HIV/AIDS strategies, effectively build on U.S. government expertise, and complement other international partners' programs. PEPFAR activities in non-focus countries in the region also support and operate within the context of the "Three Ones."

The United States government implements PEPFAR workplace-targeted projects that focus on prevention and reduction of HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination. As of March 2006, the United States, in cooperation with the International Labor Organization and the Academy for Educational Development, has helped 32 enterprises in the focus countries of Haiti and Guyana, and 52 enterprises in Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados and Belize to adopt policies that promote worker retention and access to treatment. These programs have reached more than

61,000 workers now covered under protective HIV/AIDS workplace policies. The U.S. Department of Labor brings to all these endeavors its experience in building strategic alliances with employers, unions, and Ministries of Labor. Programs focus on three major components: Increasing awareness and knowledge of HIV/AIDS by focusing on a comprehensive workplace education program, improving the workplace environment – by helping business, government, and labor develop and implement workplace policies that reduce stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS, and building capacity within employer associations, government, and trade unions – to replicate workplace-based programs in other enterprises - improving worker access to counseling, testing, and other supportive HIV/AIDS services.

The United States is providing technical regional global fund grants in the Caribbean. The Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has committed \$510.78 million over the last four years in Latin America and the Caribbean to the fight against HIV/AIDS, of which roughly \$150 million is attributable to U.S. taxpayers. By the Mar del Plata Summit about 640,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS in the region were receiving anti-retroviral therapy (ART), exceeding the Nuevo Leon Summit goal of treating 600,000 people by November 2005.

The United States government supports the design, validation, socialization, and implementation of National Strategic Frameworks for the Global Fund in Central America. In the Caribbean, the United States government supports the enhanced development of monitoring and evaluation systems at the national level and has worked very closely with the national HIV/AIDS programs. The United States has supported efforts to enhance the appreciation of the need and use of reliable data to better inform the development of policy and evidence-based programming. The United States also works in support of the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework (CRSF), which is coordinated by CARICOM's Pan Caribbean partnership Against AIDS-PANCAP

Next Steps: The United States will continue to support the “Three Ones” Strategy throughout the Americas where bilateral activities exist. Under this framework, the United States remains committed to the pillars of prevention, care and treatment. Fighting stigma and discrimination in the workplace, as well as in all other environments, remains a crucial activity for bilateral programming. The United States remains the largest donor to the Global Fund, and has committed \$2.9 billion to the Fund through 2008. It has also committed funding for technical assistance to aid in the implementation of Global Fund projects. The United States is working throughout the Western Hemisphere to promote the participation of civil society representatives on Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanisms, and through its interactions with the Global Fund Secretariat in Geneva. The U.S. delegation to the Board of the Global Fund continues to promote, in collaboration with the delegation from Latin American and the Caribbean, an effort to revise the Global Fund's eligibility criteria.

Preparation for Pandemics:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata, Plan of Action, paragraph 47 commits “to initiate immediately, with the support of PAHO, and finalize by June 2006, national plans on the preparation of influenza and avian flu pandemics in countries that do not have plans. In countries

that already have plans, these should be implemented immediately according to the January 2005 decision of the Executive Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO).”

Concrete USG Action: In Fall 2006, the United States government gave WHO \$10 million for the newly established *Global pandemic influenza action plan*, which is intended to promote increased worldwide vaccine productive capacity. The United States also gave \$1.3 million to PAHO to assist in meeting the Summit goal of having all countries with an articulated Pandemic Preparedness Plan by June of 2007. These funds were to prioritize work in the Caribbean and Central America. All of these countries now have some form of a written plan.

The United States-Mexico Border Health Commission (BHC) brought together U.S.–México Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance (EWIDS) programs in Tijuana, Baja California, México, in October 2006 that focused on the cross-border coordination of infectious disease activities.

The BHC sponsored the first-ever federal-state bi-national forum on pandemic influenza: *Border Pandemic Influenza Forum: Challenges and Opportunities* in Hermosillo, Sonora, México, in November 2006. The United States and México signed an agreement to boost cooperation on bi-national pandemic influenza preparedness. The agreement will enhance the health and quality of life among residents along both sides of the border.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), coordinates interagency activities among the United States government’s federal departments, State, and local officials responsible for emergency preparedness for the protection of the civilian population from acts of bioterrorism and other public health emergencies. Over the last year the United States government has implemented a series of important initiatives which include contracts to vaccine makers for the advanced development of H5N1 influenza vaccines using an immune system booster called an adjuvant; a contract to support further studies to determine if a proven pharmaceutical can be an effective treatment for seasonal and life-threatening influenza, including highly pathogenic H5N1 influenza; and as part of President Bush’s plan to mobilize the nation and prepare for an influenza pandemic, funding for state and local preparedness. These funds will continue to help local, tribal, territorial and state public health officials as they undertake critical preparedness planning that communities must do themselves.

The United States government has released new guidance on community planning strategies that state and local community decision-makers, as well as individuals, need to consider based on the severity of an influenza pandemic. These strategies are important because the best protection against pandemic influenza -- a vaccine -- is not likely to be available at the outset of a pandemic. Community strategies that delay or reduce the impact of a pandemic (also called non-pharmaceutical interventions) may help reduce the spread of disease until a vaccine that is well-matched to the virus is available.

May 3, 2007 was the one-year anniversary of the U.S. National Implementation Plan for pandemic influenza.

Education Standards:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata, Declaration, paragraph 42 agrees “that in order to improve employment opportunities we must ensure quality education for all citizens, which requires the evaluation of our efforts based on clearly defined standards and accountability for results.”

Concrete USG Action: The United States government’s No Child Left Behind program strengthens accountability by requiring States to implement statewide accountability systems covering all public schools and students. These systems must be based on challenging State standards in reading and mathematics, annual testing for all students in grades 3-8, and annual statewide progress objectives ensuring that all groups of students reach proficiency within 12 years. Assessment results and State progress objectives must be broken out by poverty, race, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency to ensure that no group is left behind. School districts and schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward statewide proficiency goals will, over time, be subject to improvement, corrective action, and restructuring measures aimed at getting them back on course to meet State standards. Schools that meet or exceed AYP objectives or close achievement gaps will be eligible for State Academic Achievement Awards.

Next Steps: The Administration is seeking renewal of the No Child Left Behind Law.

Promoting Literacy:

Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata, Declaration, paragraph 43 states that “we support the recommendations contained in the Declaration and Plan of Action of the Fourth Meeting of Ministers of Education, held in Scarborough, Trinidad and Tobago, August 10-12, 2005. We will strive for quality public education at all levels and promote literacy to ensure a democratic citizenry, foster decent work, fight poverty, and achieve greater social inclusion. Achieving these goals requires a substantial financial investment by our governments and international financial institutions. We note with satisfaction the suggestion of the Ministers of Education that our governments explore innovative forms of increasing financing for education with international financing institutions, such as debt swaps for investment in education.”

Concrete USG Action: The No Child Left Behind program seeks to ensure that every child can read by the end of third grade. To accomplish this goal, the Reading First initiative significantly increased Federal investment in scientifically based reading instruction programs in the early grades. The Reading First State Grant program makes 6-year grants to States, which make competitive sub-grants to local communities. Local recipients administer screening and diagnostic assessments to determine which students in grades K-3 are at risk of reading failure, and provide professional development for K-3 teachers in the essential components of reading instruction. The Early Reading First program makes competitive 6-year awards to school districts to support early language, literacy, and pre-reading development of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families. Recipients use instructional strategies and professional development drawn from scientifically based reading research to help young children

to attain the fundamental knowledge and skills for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond.

U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers in Latin America and the Caribbean provide innovative leadership to strengthen reading instruction and to increase the reading skills of targeted students in the first four years of primary school. They also assist schools in setting up community libraries. Through a multiplier effect approach, the teaching of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) education program focuses on strengthening the capabilities and skills of English teacher trainers. Volunteers help build capacity of secondary school English teachers through team teaching and teacher training activities in urban and rural communities of selected departments.

Increasing Access to Quality Education:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata, Declaration, paragraph 44 states that “we understand that the potential for developing the capacity of our citizenry and attaining greater productivity depends on a well-educated and well-trained labor force. In this sense, we recognize the advances made in increasing access to education and we reiterate the need to expand coverage, improve quality, strengthen the teaching profession, and improve the efficiency of our education systems. We reiterate the importance of incorporating new information and communication technologies in the training of our citizenry to increase their productivity.”

Concrete USG Action: The Leave No Child Behind Act requires local school districts to ensure that all teachers hired to teach core academic subjects in Title I programs (focused on improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged) are highly qualified. In general a "highly qualified teacher" is one with full certification, a bachelor's degree and demonstrated competence in subject knowledge and teaching. The act also calls for *all* teachers of the core academic subjects (teaching in Title I programs or elsewhere) to be highly qualified by the end of school year 2005-06. No Child Left Behind provides federal funding to states and districts for activities that will strengthen teacher quality in all schools, especially those with a high proportion of children in poverty.

The United States funds three regional Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training (CETTs), which provide training in literacy instruction and school administration. By the end of 2007, over 18,300 teachers will have received training, reaching nearly 600,000 students in countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The regional centers in the Caribbean, Central America, and the Andean region have provided training to teachers from Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

Next Steps: The United States will fund the CETTs through 2009. By 2009 over 21,000 teachers will have received training, reaching nearly 700,000 students.

Sustainable Development and the Environment:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata, Declaration, paragraph 55, sub paragraph e) states that to build “a more solid and inclusive institutional framework, based on the coordination of economic, labor, and social public policies to contribute to the generation of decent work, which must comprise... a public policy framework for integral and sustainable development that can reduce poverty and inequality, advance human health, and protect the environment in harmony with international environmental agreements to which we are all party, including those that address endangered and migratory species and wildlife, wetlands, desertification, ozone depleting chemicals, and climate change.”

Concrete USG Action: The United States government pursues environmental cooperation with many countries, including our free trade partners. In May, 2006, the United States, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica conducted the first meeting of CAFTA's Environmental Affairs Council, and established a unit to investigate public complaints alleging ineffective enforcement of environmental law. In 2006, the United States committed \$18.5 million to CAFTA-DR environmental cooperation to improve environmental protection throughout the Region. Areas of cooperation include institutional strengthening for effective implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, biodiversity and conservation, market based conservation, and improved private sector performance. Current projects encompass diverse areas such as: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) enforcement, safe handling of hazardous substances, increased public access to information, urban air quality management, and conservation of coral reefs. Environmental cooperation efforts with Chile pursuant to the US-Chile Free Trade Agreement and the freestanding Environmental Cooperation Agreement include increasing the use of cleaner fuels, improving wildlife protection and management, and improving environmental enforcement and compliance assurance.

Through the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI) and the Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA), over \$2 billion of debt to the U.S. from countries in the region has been treated and reduced by over \$1 billion, while over \$400 million will be created for local civil society conservation and development programs by the time they are completed. To date, EAI deals have been completed in eight countries in the Hemisphere: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Peru, and Uruguay. TFCA deals have also been completed in eight countries in the Hemisphere: Belize, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama (two deals), Paraguay, and Peru. United States government technical assistance helps, inter alia, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia and Guyana to develop sustainable forest management policies and practices.

Working in 16 countries, the United States government's Parks in Peril program (PiP) has improved conservation in 45 protected areas covering over 45 million acres in the region. Civil Society Organizations strengthened in the PiP program are some of the strongest and most influential in Latin America and the Caribbean for implementing conservation. In 16 years, the program has leveraged over \$440 million. The United States government has assisted Uruguay, Brazil, Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Honduras, Paraguay, Colombia, Guyana and Ecuador build capacity on protected area management and biodiversity conservation. The United States

has conducted numerous national and regional trainings in Brazil to build capacity and regional networks for combating the illegal trafficking of wildlife.

The United States supported the Amazon Country Treaty Organization to produce in early 2007 a draft plan of action for Amazon Basin countries to reduce mercury contamination. The United States is also supporting efforts to reduce mercury contamination from artisanal gold mining in the Brazilian and Peruvian Amazon. The United States supports the international Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV), with participation of several countries in the hemisphere. The Fifth Global Partnership Meeting was held in Quito 15-16 February 2007.

The United States government is helping local governments in Guyana, Bolivia and Jamaica to develop Water Safety Plans to assess and optimize watershed and drinking water system management. In Guyana, the effort is integrated with support for developing a National Program of Action for land-based sources of marine pollution.

The United States supports a number of global partnerships to address climate change, with participation of several countries in the region. For example, we work with Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico in the Methane-to-Markets initiative; with Brazil, Canada, Colombia and Mexico in the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum, and with Canada and Mexico in the Global Bio-Energy Partnership. The United States has bilateral partnerships with Brazil, Canada, the Central America countries and Mexico with numerous cooperative projects to address climate change. The United States government funds the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) to increase understanding of global change and socio-economic impacts, and encourage exchanges of scientific data and training among scientists and policymakers.

Next Steps: The United States will continue CAFTA-DR environmental cooperation. Efforts are underway to establish goals for 2010 to ensure that environmental cooperation is sustainable. Some of the more than 80 projects currently underway include: improving governmental and private handling of chemicals and waste management, engaging both government and civil society organizations in CITES enforcement, holding workshops and developing best practice manuals for sustainable tourism within and without protected forested areas, and establishing private sector emissions inventories and pollutant release and transfer registries.

We are working to finalize Environmental Cooperation Agreements in support of bilateral free trade agreements, and accompanying work programs, with Peru and Colombia, and look forward to the future integration of Panama in our cooperative work with the CAFTA-DR.

TFCA is continuing to generate new deals including with Costa Rica, which is in the final stages of being declared eligible; future TFCA deals are expected in other countries in the region.

The Amazon Basin Conservation Initiative (ABCI) is a five-year, \$65 million U.S. government and partner-supported program to build conservation capacity and commitment across the Amazon Basin for effective stewardship of the Basin's globally important biological diversity and environmental services. This program envisions working in many of the countries of the Amazon Basin.

These are only a few of our many cooperative projects for social development.

Disaster Relief and Preparedness:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata, Declaration, paragraph 11 calls “for action at the national, regional, and international levels to strengthen disaster management programs, including through increased capacity for disaster preparedness, development of early warning systems, risk mitigation and post-disaster recovery, and reconstruction and technical and financial assistance as appropriate, particularly for disaster-prone countries, to reduce the impact of disasters.”

Concrete USG Action: At the Mar del Plata Summit, the President announced that three distinguished U.S. private sector leaders agreed to launch a nationwide effort to encourage private donations for relief and reconstruction in response to the three hurricanes that struck Central America and Southern Mexico. In addition to the initial donation by The Central America and Mexico Hurricane Relief Fund CEOs, nearly \$4 million were raised. As of the end of 2006, all the funds from The Central America and Mexico Hurricane Relief Fund have been dispersed to help those communities in need.

The United States government has committed resources to a variety of projects and ongoing programs to reduce the constant and significant risk of natural disasters in the Western Hemisphere. Examples of this assistance include providing, enhancing, and renovating observation and communications equipment and relevant training for twelve countries in the Caribbean, which includes a satellite-based natural hazard information network for the exchange of critical data amongst countries.

Additionally, the United States government concluded an agreement to strengthen the capacity of the University of the West Indies (UWI) Seismic Research Unit (SRU) to detect, monitor, and provide early warning of tsunamis and related geologic hazards for the region.

We are completing installation of nine seismic stations around the Caribbean to enhance the regional network, as well as to ensure the long term operations and maintenance. U.S. support of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) will enable the development and dissemination of public awareness and education materials for natural hazard warning protocols and procedures in CDERA participating states and throughout the region.

Between April 2000 and September 2006, the United States government provided \$1.6 million to the Caribbean Development Bank to establish a Disaster Mitigation Facility for the Caribbean. The six-year program supported activities that promote sustainable development through reduced risk and losses from natural hazards in the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean.

The United States is supporting the U.N. Development Program’s effort in Haiti to strengthen local and national response, preparation, and training capacities and to develop disaster prevention and mitigation projects through collaboration with Haiti’s Civil Protection Department.

The United States government has supported improved emergency preparedness and disaster mitigation through the provision of web-based environmental decision making tools and data. Remote sensing data and free geographic information systems (GIS) tools are freely available on-line at NASA's SERVIR website for use in calculating change. Central American governments relied upon the SERVIR website to meet their data requirements during several natural disasters, including hurricane Stan, floods, and fires.

United States will strengthen the quality and quantity of data available to our South American partners in time for hurricane season through the successful repositioning of an environmental satellite designed to help limit the effects of natural disasters. The Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES-10) provides a constant vigil for atmospheric conditions that trigger severe weather.

The GOES satellites provide meteorologists and hydrologists with detailed weather measurements and more frequent imagery – all used to develop short-term forecasts to help protect life and livelihoods. On March 8, for instance, Argentina was able to trace a low pressure development and then accurately issue a high-rainfall alert that helped safeguard people in highly-populated areas. Coverage is also contributing to fire detection in the Amazon rainforest of western Brazil. By significantly improving satellite detection of natural hazards such as severe storms, floods, drought, landslides, volcanic ash clouds and wildfires, the satellite shift will help protect lives and property throughout The Western Hemisphere. We hope that countries in our region will work together to ensure that the satellite data is disseminated and training is available to enable full use of the new information.

The new satellite coverage is a benchmark of the emerging "GEOSS in the Americas," a Western Hemisphere initiative designed to advance the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). Nine countries are formally engaged in GEOSS in the Americas, including Argentina, Brazil, Belize, Canada, Chile, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay and the United States, and more countries are expected to join later this year. Globally, 68 countries, the European Commission, and 46 global organizations are advancing GEOSS through the Group on Earth Observations (GEO).

The government of the United States supports many domestic activities that strengthen national disaster management programs, and helps U.S. communities become more resistant to natural hazards. Examples include the Community Fire Project protected Waikoloa Village in Hawaii. One of the largest fires ever recorded on the Big Island of Hawaii torched 25,000 acres of grassland in August of 2005. Fortunately for residents and property owners, a 30-foot firebreak cleared weeks before by volunteers and members of the Waikoloa Firewise Committee prevented the fire from engulfing the village.

Mitigation Assistance Clinics were one of the ways the State of Florida and the United States government responded to assist people affected by the hurricanes. Hazard mitigation specialists met with shoppers at major hardware stores to promote steps people could take to eliminate or reduce damage from future disasters.

The United States government made \$175 million in grant funds available to help hospitals and

health care providers in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi that are suffering economic pressure as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The government released \$1.5 billion to 32 states to help offset the medical costs of caring for thousands of Hurricane Katrina evacuees who sought refuge after the storm. The United States Congress set aside \$2 billion for this purpose in the Deficit Reduction Act signed into law by President Bush February 8. The balance of the funds will be used to cover future costs for the states. In turn, this funding will allow states to claim approximately \$4.5 billion in federal matching funds.

Building on more than \$125 million for screening and monitoring of more than 30,000 World Trade Center responders, the United States government recently completed the allocation of \$75 million in federal funds for monitoring, screening, analysis and medical treatment of emergency responders and recovery workers at the World Trade Center disaster site.

The United States government has also established the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) program in order to establish a national network of State-based programs that effectively facilitate the use of health professional volunteers in local, State, and Federal emergency response. In December 2006, the ESAR-VHP Program exercised four State ESAR-VHP systems to test State and Federal protocols for the mobilization of volunteer health professionals in response to a National emergency.

Since 2003, the U.S. government's Bioterrorism Training and Curriculum Development Program (BTCDD) has worked to provide education and training programs for community based health professionals, in an effort to increase the number of competent local (non-hospital based) responders during a mass casualty incident resulting from a terrorist attack, large scale natural disaster, influenza pandemic, or other public health emergency. These community-based healthcare providers will be able to recognize a terrorist event or other public health emergency; treat patients appropriately, including vulnerable populations, participate in a coordinated National, Regional, State, or local response, and be able to alert the Public Health system.

Cultural Preservation:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata, Declaration, paragraph 38 recognizes “the important link between development and culture and we agree that support for culture in its many dimensions contributes to, among other things, the preservation and protection of national heritage, the enhancement of the dignity and identity of our people, the creation of decent jobs, and the overcoming of poverty.”

Concrete USG Action: The President's Committee on the Arts & Humanities, The National Park Service and Mesa Verde National Park are inviting U.S. and international representatives of the public and private sectors, including native cultures, parks, arts, heritage, tourism and business leaders, as well as elected and appointed officials to forge a vision and design for Sister Cultural Parks. Using existing Sister Park collaborations of three World Heritage sites (Mesa Verde, Paquime and Monte Alban) and Belize's Caracol as a starting point, the conference will demonstrate models—training, investment, cultural, educational and other programs—that can

be used for future sister cultural park agreements built around cultural and heritage preservation, interpretation and tourism.

Ministers from Mexico, Belize and their U.S. counterparts framed a declaration of principles and cooperation in support of Sister Cultural parks. Using their wealth of cultural and heritage resources, these parks can work collaboratively to expand cultural exchange, understanding and conservation efforts, which are good for the parks, good for the communities and a model for international cooperation.

The Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation provides direct small grant support to heritage preservation in less-developed countries. The program has supported 379 projects worldwide, totaling \$9.5 million since being established by the United States Congress in 2001. Nearly \$1,661,000 has gone to heritage projects in the Western Hemisphere. Projects include technical support for the restoration of historic buildings, assessment and conservation of museum collections, archaeological site preservation, documentation to save threatened traditional crafts, improved storage conditions for archives and manuscripts, recording oral history, and documentation of indigenous languages. In 2006 the Ambassador's Fund supported projects in Paraguay, Belize, Colombia, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana, Guatemala, Jamaica, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Suriname, Haiti, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, and Honduras.

The Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act enables the U.S. to implement the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. The Act allows the U.S. to enter into Agreements with other countries that would impose import restrictions on archaeological or ethnological material when pillage of these materials places the nation's cultural heritage in jeopardy.

The United States has entered into cultural property protection agreements with Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. These agreements not only reduce the incentive for further pillage but also help countries protect their cultural heritage by encouraging the development of appropriate policies, inventories, management plans, training, public education, and cultural tourism and other sustainable and appropriate economic activities. They also seek to increase international access to cultural property by encouraging interchange of materials for scientific, cultural, and educational purposes. Finally, they are a means of recovering illicit cultural property in the U.S. and repatriating it to the county of origin. For example, in July 2005 the United States announced the seizure and return of a stolen 16th century Colonial period artifact, *el Altar de Challapampa*, to Peru.

Efforts to preserve heritage throughout the Western Hemisphere also include activities by such U.S. domestic agencies as the Institute for Museum and Library Services, The United States Library of Congress and its American Folklife Center, and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which support projects for digital preservation, including recent NEH grants to support the digitized preservation of recordings and written materials that document languages of Costa Rica, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, and Mexico.

Next Steps: Promote and strengthen World Heritage sites, focusing in particular on the "Sister Cultural Park" program as a model of international cooperation for sharing, presenting and

sustaining these sites' cultural and heritage resources. Expand protection of these sites by engaging the community and showcasing new tools to improve the experience of these sites, their protection and understanding.

Demonstrate models of education and outreach that address sustainability and economic opportunity by drawing on the living traditions of the arts and humanities of local communities and native cultures, which can be shared on a national and international basis

Develop and agree on a joint communiqué in El Paso to support subsequent opportunities that come out of the Mesa Verde conference.

In 2007 the United States will return more than 400 pre-Columbian artifacts to Peru. The items were recovered from dealers and private collections.

STRENGTHEN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata Declaration paragraph 1 states that leaders are “convinced of the necessity to deepen democracy and consolidate freedom in the Americas, in accordance with the principles contained in the Charter of the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Democratic Charter and their full application as the foundation of the hemispheric community.”

Concrete USG Action: We have provided direct assistance, and will continue to work, to give the OAS Secretary General the tools he needs “to devise proposals to address situations that might affect the workings of the political process of democratic institutions,” as called for in Ft. Lauderdale and Santo Domingo, and endorsed by the Heads of State in Mar del Plata.

Next Steps: We welcome the Secretary General's April 10 report on implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and look forward to working closely with member states and civil society to make the Inter-American Democratic Charter a relevant tool for action.

Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC):

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata Plan of Action mandate 64 asks countries to “identify, before December 2006, specific initiatives for cooperation, and the exchange of experiences in the development of technical skills in our countries that contribute to the full application of the provisions of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, and the strengthening of its Implementation Follow-up Mechanism (MESICIC), giving special consideration to the recommendations to that effect arising from the first round of said mechanism.”

Concrete USG Action: The United States supports and participates in the OAS Follow-up Mechanism. We continue to be a major contributor to the Mechanism, giving \$900,000 to it over the last three years. We will again make a contribution of \$400,000 in FY07 funds. The

MESICIC accelerated its timetable to review 12 countries annually rather than 8 annually; this enabled the Committee of Experts (COE) to conclude the first phase of review in March 2006, and issue the of Hemispheric Report on the implementation efforts of all 28 states party to the follow-up mechanism to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. The COE also agreed to the topics to be reviewed in the second round, and drafted a questionnaire. This will enable the second round of review to begin without delay.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of State funded a grant to the OAS, in the amount of \$1,042,750, to establish an Inter-American Anti-Corruption Fund to support OAS member states in fulfilling their commitments under the 1996 Inter-American Convention against Corruption. The Fund will assist member countries in implementing anti-corruption activities specified in the Country Report recommendations published by the COE to the MESICIC.

Next Steps: Commence the second round of 28 states-parties MESICIC process, addressing criminal provisions for acts of corruption, whistleblower protection, and probity and transparency in government procurement and government hiring, to conclude December 2008. The second round will also include review of each state's efforts to implement first round recommendations.

The Fund will continue to support initiatives, including developing national plans of action that will have a practical impact in assisting countries interested in the development of comprehensive programs to combat corruption in their national territory.

Fighting Corruption:

The Summit Mandate: In the Declaration of Nuevo Leon, "we recognize that corruption and impunity weaken public and private institutions, erode social values, undermine the rule of law, and distort economies and the allocation of resources for development. Therefore, we pledge to intensify our efforts to combat corruption and other unethical practices in the public and/or private sectors, strengthening a culture of transparency and ensuring more efficient public management."

Concrete USG Action: The total number of prosecutions brought, and convictions won, by the Justice Department's Public Integrity Section and by the 93 U.S. Attorneys' Offices has increased in recent years. Over the five-year period from 2001 to 2005 (the most recent period for which data is available), the Department charged 5,749 individuals with public corruption offenses nationwide and obtained 4,846 convictions. Compared with the previous five year period (1996-2000), these figures represent an increase of 7.5% in the number of defendants charged and a 1.5% increase in the number of convictions.

The number of defendants charged by the Public Integrity Section in the 6-year period from 2001 to 2006 increased by 52% over the 8-year period from 1993 to 2000, and the number of convictions increased by 31% over the same period. In investigating and prosecuting these cases, the Department works closely with the FBI, which currently has 639 agents dedicated to public corruption matters, up from 358 in 2002.

Next Steps: The U. S. Department of Justice will continue to aggressively investigate and prosecute public corruption all levels of government.

Denial of Safe Haven:

The Summit Mandate: In Nuevo Leon, we committed “to deny safe haven to corrupt officials, to those who corrupt them, and their assets; and to cooperate in their extradition as well as in the recovery and return of the proceeds of corruption to their legitimate owners.”

Concrete USG Action: In January 2004, President Bush issued Presidential Proclamation 7750, which enables the U.S. to deny or revoke visas to individuals who engage in corrupt practices that affect specified U.S. national security goals. Since then, the United States has denied or revoked the visas of dozens of corrupt individuals from throughout the world, thus preventing them from enjoying the proceeds of their corruption in our country. Also, in May 2005, the United States sponsored with the OAS and G-8 a workshop on asset recovery for OAS countries, to help them learn the essentials to putting together a sound asset recovery case when working with major financial centers. Finally, in August 2006, the President announced the National Strategy to Internationalize Efforts to Combat Kleptocracy, whereby the U.S. is stepping up efforts to prosecute corrupt actors and work with our partners in investigations, prosecutions and asset recovery.

Next Steps: The United States will continue to enthusiastically implement Presidential Proclamation 7750 and respond to requests for assistance in pursuing prosecution of corruption cases. The United States is also providing \$250,000 in support for a Symposium on Corruption that Peru is hosting through Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and in cooperation with the OAS.

Creating Opportunity Zones:

The Summit Mandate: We agreed in Mar del Plata Plan of Action mandate 68 to “strengthen in our countries mechanisms for the participation and collaboration in governance by civil society organizations, the private sector, and the citizenry at large, specifically in the development of public policy for the generation of employment and the fight against poverty, including local governments.”

Concrete USG Action: The Opportunity Zones (OZ) Summit initiative is based on public-private partnerships aimed at local development and strengthening grassroots democracy. The President committed the United States government to assist five countries to define and offer the regulatory environment for OZ and help to establish five Zones by the next Summit of the Americas.

The OZ idea was inspired by the long experience of self-defined, self-governed integrated community development initiatives supported in the United States through Enterprise Zones,

Empowerment Zones and Renewal Communities and managed mainly by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The United States government lead is the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), and they have made arrangements with four perspective countries, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and Argentina, for sites visits to various different U.S. Empowerment Zones or Renewal Communities.

On the domestic front, since 1994, HUD has designated, through the Renewable Communities and Empowerment Zones projects, 70 communities to share an \$11 billion tax-incentive package that encourages entrepreneurs to invest in their communities, open new businesses and expand existing ones, and hire tens of thousands of local residents.

Next Steps: The Honduran delegation is requesting a return visit to Honduras by the directors of the Renewal Communities they visited in the United States to explore concrete Opportunity Zone sites there, at a time yet to be determined. Meanwhile the IAF will pursue finding the fifth and final country for creating an OZ. An initial exploratory visit to Peru or Colombia may follow before the end of the summer.

IAF and HUD will continue to emphasize a comprehensive approach, from teaching mayors how to set up bonds and taxation increase for local priorities, to the training of local residents, private-public partnerships, low interest loan possibilities on bonds, and local hires.

In the United States, the administrative leaders of each Renewal Community and Empowerment Zone will continue to work closely with government, business, and local community representatives to implement strategic plans and courses of action to improve social and economic conditions throughout the designated areas.

Implementing the Declaration on Security:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata Plan of Action mandate 61 states, "Taking into account the theme of the Mar del Plata Summit and bearing in mind that our concept of security is multidimensional, to promote through concrete actions, at the national, sub-regional, hemispheric, and global levels, the implementation of the commitments identified in the Declaration on Security in the Americas.

Concrete USG Action: In addition to national efforts to fully implement the Declaration on Security of the Americas the United States has undertaken two initiatives.

1. The United States will be providing to the OAS a comprehensive report on steps it has taken to implement the Declaration on Security in the Americas. We encourage other states to undertake a similar commitment.
2. In order to promote greater awareness of key Hemispheric Security agreements and political commitments among the hemisphere's policy makers and implementers in Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Defense and Ministries of Public Security, the United States

has provided to the OAS some financial assistance to produce a comprehensive publication in all languages that could be used in upcoming and future meetings in the hemisphere to promote implementation of the Declaration on Security.

The publication seeks to promote greater public awareness of the hemispheric security work of the OAS; strengthen interagency coordination among the ministries responsibly for implementation of various commitments and foster greater synergy among the various hemispheric security meetings and fora.

Next Steps: The report on the steps the United States has taken to implement the Declaration on Security in the Americas will be posted on the OAS website. We encourage other states to undertake a similar commitment.

Strengthening of Democracy in Haiti:

The Summit Mandate: Mar del Plata Plan of Action mandate 66 states, “To cooperate with solidarity with the Haitian people in their efforts to revitalize the democratic institutions, fight poverty, and foster equitable socio-economic development, including, the creation of decent work through, among others, greater support from the international financial institutions and cooperation agencies, and implement disarmament, demobilization, and reinsertion programs (DDR), with the support of MINUSTAH and the Special Mission of the OAS for the Strengthening of Democracy in Haiti”

Concrete USG Action: The United States has directly supported the new democratic government of Haiti in democracy building, anti-poverty and job creation assistance, and stabilization initiatives. Total U.S. assistance between 2004 and 2006 totaled over \$600 million. The substantial USG investment of \$178.2 million in FY06 was instrumental in leveraging the \$750 million pledge from the international community to support the new Haitian government. U.S. programs funded more than 120,000 loans to micro enterprises; provided \$24 million to support electricity generation; and created over 200,000 short-term jobs.

To strengthen democracy in Haiti, the United States gave more than \$34 million since 2006 to strengthen the Haitian justice system, increase Parliament’s capabilities, institutionalize the Electoral Commission and strengthen civil society, political parties and media. The United States provided \$46 million in equipment and training to the Haitian National Police (HNP) to help it develop into a responsible law enforcement organization capable of respecting and protecting the human rights of all Haitians.

Approximately 47% of the population receives basic health services through 100 NGO health clinics and 30 Haitian government health clinics funded by the United States government. Over 77,000 individuals have received care and support through the President Bush’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The food assistance program has distributed 34,000 metric tons of emergency food relief, equivalent to 850,000 food rations. Responding to the devastation of Tropical Storm Jeanne in 2004, a \$34 million program repaired homes, schools, and other public buildings. In February 2007, the United States approved Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through

Partnership Encouragement Act (HOPE) trade preferences for Haiti, providing another engine of private sector growth. It also continued to support the OAS Special Mission in Haiti and MINUSTAH, through financial assistance and political backing, in their efforts to promote democracy, development, and stability.

Next Steps: The President's budget request for fiscal year 2007 includes over \$198 million for Haiti. The United States in 2007 and 2008 will continue to assist the transformation of Haiti into a stable, prosperous, and democratic nation, which contributes to stability and development in the region. The United States will continue supporting a UN peace-enforcing mission to ensure security, restore democratic institutions and foster long-term stability in Haiti. U.S. assistance, in line with Government of Haiti objectives and coordinated with the OAS and other international donors, will continue to strengthen democracy, governance and the rule of law; foster broad-based economic recovery; and address critical humanitarian and social needs.