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A Newsletter of the United States Embassy, Nigeria

Challenges to Human Development:

HUMAN TRAFFICKING & HIV/AIDS



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CPAO's Note



U.S. Embassy
Country Public
Affairs Officer,
Claudia Anyaso

America Decides

I am writing these remarks 22 days after the Fourth of July, which celebrated 228 years of American Democracy, and on the opening day of the Democratic National Convention in Boston, Massachusetts on July 26. The Republicans will convene in New York at

Madison Square Garden from August 30 through September 2. We Americans, then, are entering a season of more intense conversations on politics and the direction of our country. In 2003, the USG provided technical assistance to Nigeria during its elections, and Americans were among the teams of observers who reported on those elections. Now we are inviting Nigerians and people around the world to join us in observing our presidential, congressional, and state elections in 2004.

It is a time I look forward to every four years as one of the hallmarks of our democracy – of course, there are many others. But elections are a time for discussing candidates – Bush/Cheney, Kerry/Edwards, and Ralph Nader —, for discussing issues – education, health care, the economy, national and homeland security, and national and family values – and for discussing the electorate – youth voters, women voters, minority voters, independent

voters, Republican voters, and Democratic voters. Some might say that every four years, the US holds a sovereign national conference in which the voters and their electors in the Electoral College have the last word on the direction and leadership of the country for the next four years.

This edition of *Crossroads* spotlights the central issues expected to dominate the 2004 race for the White House especially between the two front line presidential candidates – Bush and Kerry.

Also in this issue, we look at the problem of human trafficking and how this trade is fueling the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Traffickers use a variety of means including physical force to lure young girls into prostitution in big cities. The United Nation estimates that there are now 17 million women between the ages of 15 and 49 living with HIV/AIDS globally. That percentage of women among adults living with HIV/AIDS continues to rise partly because of the activities of human traffickers. Globally, young women are now 1.6 times more likely to be living with HIV/AIDS than young men.

In other news, the coal industry that made Enugu famous as a “Coal City” is closer to resuscitation following a U.S. grant to the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development to fund a feasibility study on coal resource development in Nigeria. On the education front, another batch of Nigerian scholars from Sokoto and Kaduna have left for the U.S. to study in high schools for one academic year. Indeed, this issue has something for everyone, so enjoy it. ❖

Quotable Quote

“Nigeria should take a cue from the U.S. on how political parties are funded ...at least, it will address the anomaly of god-fatherism where public office holders become mere puppets to their political godfathers.”

- Benjamin Okoh, Lagos.
Writing on Party Funding in the U.S.

Editor's letter

To *Crossroads* Readers

DEAR *CROSSROADS* READERS,

We are still building our on-line access to an expanded version of *Crossroads*. Our virtual community distribution list continues to grow by the day. Have you taken a few minutes to be added into this web-based subscription list? If you have not, then you need to send a functional e-mail address to the Editor. This simple procedure should lead to a partnership that will ensure a regular supply of your *Crossroads* into your mail box each time the newsletter is published. This new on-line distribution system gives you access to past issues of *Crossroads* with no delays in delivery of current issues. Our web-based *Crossroads* profiles back issues as far back as year 2000. Please send your comments and observations to:

The Editor, *Crossroads*, U.S. Consulate General,
Public Affairs Section,
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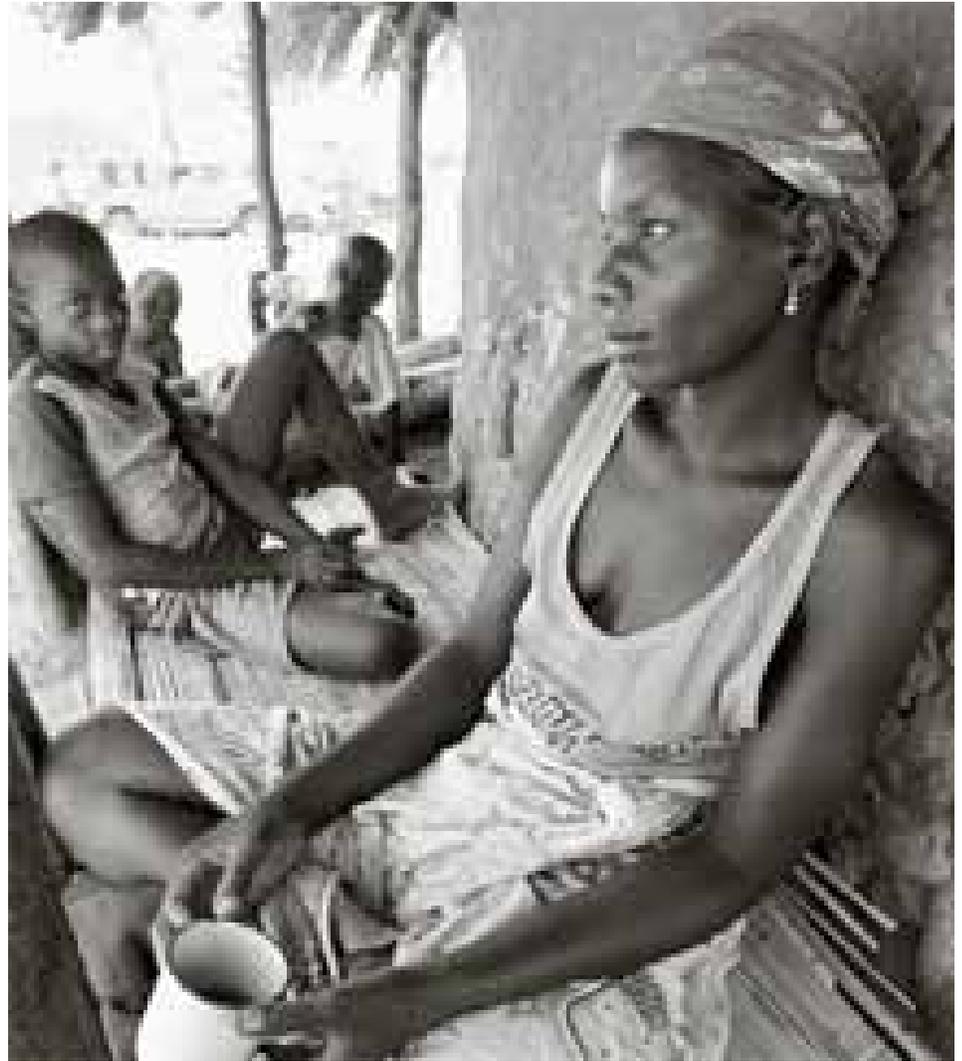
SOMETHING NEW!

Why the Traffickers Must Be Stopped

That HIV/AIDS is real in Nigeria is no longer in doubt. Likewise is the fact that a lot of Nigerians are still unscreened while some who know their HIV/AIDS status still live secretly with the virus. But what is worrisome however is the escalation of the spread by those engaged in human trafficking across borders.

According to the 2004 US Trafficking in Persons report, more than 800,000 people are trafficked annually across international borders. Human trafficking and the spread of HIV/AIDS are linked in many cases. When women and sometimes girls as young as ten, are trafficked for commercial sex, the outcome is a fatal mix resulting in death in most cases.

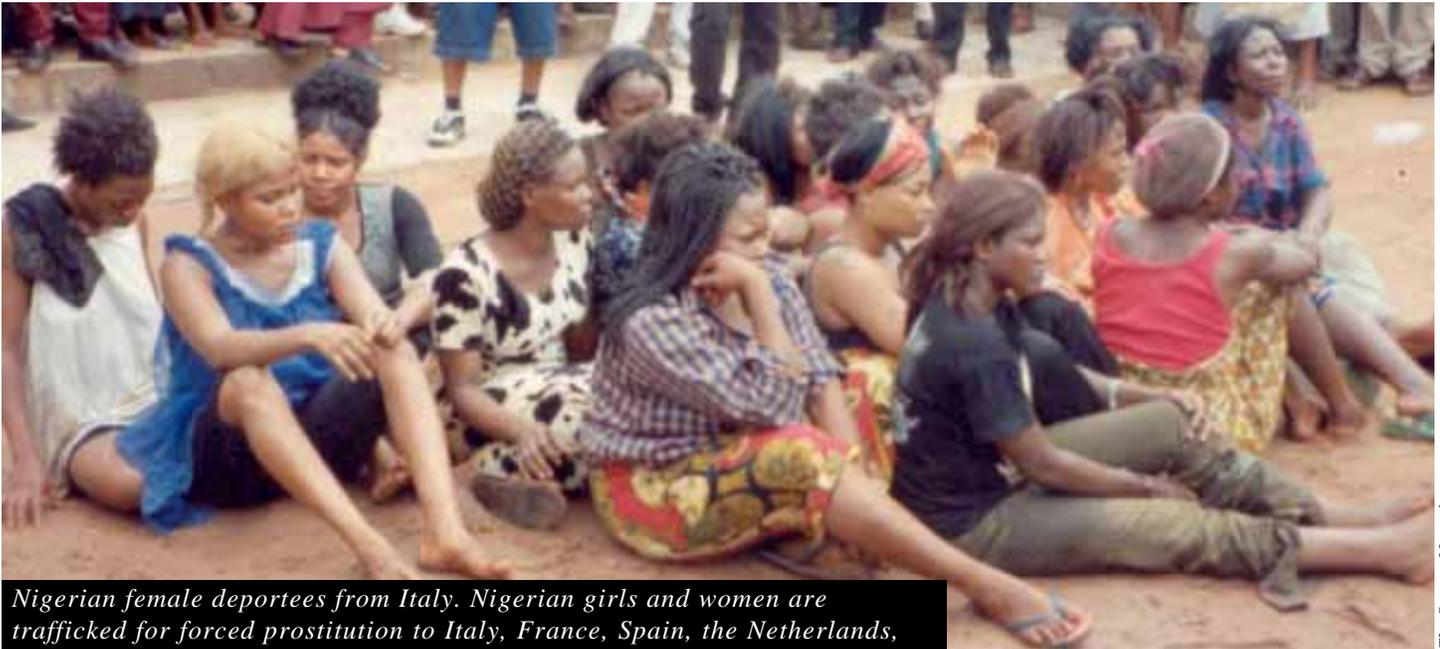
The HIV/AIDS pandemic started over two decades ago and at the end of 2002, about 40 million people were living with the virus globally. About 28 million are from sub-Saharan Africa. Today's HIV/AIDS crisis in sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria inclusive), is made worse by women's social, economic and biological vulnerabilities. The alarming infection rate among women and girls results in part from gender inequality and human rights abuses. By UN estimates, more than 4 million new HIV/AIDS cases were reported in 2003 alone and five countries - Nigeria, China, India, Indonesia and Russia, are countries that stand to be significantly affected by the new wave of this scourge. To further worsen the situation, a new trend has recently captured the attention of the public. The International Organization for Migration, based in Brussels, estimates that as many as 500,000 women were trafficked into Western Europe



for forced prostitution in 1996, and has identified Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic states as supply countries. Nigerian girls and women are trafficked for forced prostitution to Italy, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Cote d'Ivoire, and South Africa. Hungary, Romania, and the Czech Republic are primary transit countries, while the United States has now joined West European countries, especially the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Greece, as principal destinations. Human traffickers respect no boundaries and

neither does the spread of HIV/AIDS. To reverse the global trend, efforts must be geared to break the chains of poverty and gender inequality through education, empowerment and public enlightenment.

For a business that extracts \$7 billion in profits from its human cargo, concerted efforts - both local and international, will be required to checkmate the procurers, smugglers, and corrupt public officials with the ultimate aim of halting the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has become man's greatest affliction. ❖



Nigerian female deportees from Italy. Nigerian girls and women are trafficked for forced prostitution to Italy, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Cote d'Ivoire, and South Africa.

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Bad Mix: Sex Trafficking and HIV/AIDS

According to the U.S. Trafficking in Persons report released in 2004, women and girls who are trafficked – coerced, forced, or tricked into commercial sex are more likely to be infected with HIV/AIDS. Rosie, 25 and her friend Maggie 26, belong to this group of women. Rosie (not real name) has always dreamed of a good life. Her schoolmate and bosom friend Maggie, who just returned from Italy after a six-year sojourn, has all the trappings of wealth but without sound health. Lately, Maggie has been in and out of hospital for what doctors have diagnosed as symptoms of full-blown Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). In 1998, a man had approached Rosie and her friend Maggie with a promise of a better life abroad. While Rosie could not make the trip due to the

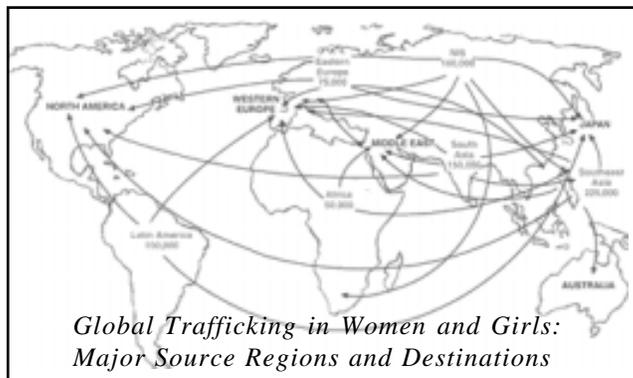
sudden death of her mother, Maggie traveled to Italy to discover that she had been bonded to a “Madam” as a commercial sex worker. “She told me then that I had been sold to her for \$10,000 and that I would have to ‘work’ to pay her back.” Maggie said.

The experiences of both girls are common today and partly explain why 43% of the 35 million people living with HIV or AIDS are women and girls. Also, due to both biological and social factors, females in particular are vulnerable to HIV and AIDS.

While not all trafficked women end up with HIV/AIDS, almost all of them are exposed to the infection.

Human Trafficking and Commercial Sex

A recent U.S. Government estimate indicates that approximately 800,000- 900,000 people annually are trafficked across international borders worldwide and between 18,000 and 20,000 of those victims are trafficked into the United States. This estimate includes men, women, and children trafficked into forced labor and sexual exploitation as defined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. This estimate does not include internal trafficking. The new figures were generated from a database that examined only reports of specific trafficking incidents, counts of repatriated victims, estimates for victims worldwide, and victim demographics derived



from analysis of information from the media, governments, non-governmental and international organizations.

For those trafficked for sexual exploitation, it is an almost inevitable death sentence for several reasons. First, because they are virtually or literally enslaved, trafficking victims have no ability to insist upon condom use and are vulnerable to dangerous sexual practices associated with transmission. Second, trafficking victims are forced to endure intercourse with multiple partners. And third, violence is common in commercial sex and particularly prevalent when women or children are forcibly subjected to sex against their will. Injuries and abrasions sustained during sexual contact

heighten physical vulnerability to AIDS transmission. Moreover, young girls with physically immature bodies, are highly vulnerable to injuries, that significantly heighten their risk of infection. Sex trafficked women are also prone to having other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) which heighten the risk of contracting HIV by up to a factor of 10.

Though the percentage of HIV transmission that can be attributed directly to trafficking has not yet been determined, it seems likely that forcing girls and women into violent, unprotected sex acts with multiple partners, is a significant factor in the spread of the AIDS pandemic. In Nigeria, research conducted by the Society for Family Health shows that the root causes of trafficking are

poverty, corruption, lack of education and employment opportunities and expanding global markets for sex and cheap labor. Poverty and unemployment are driving forces from the supply side in human trafficking from Nigeria. Many households rely on financial transfers from family members working in Nigerian cities or overseas to meet their day-to-day subsistence needs. The political and economic stresses that Nigeria has experienced during the past two decades, the declining value of the national currency, and limited options at home have made working abroad increasingly attractive to Nigerians. The consequences of trafficking can be gleaned from the significance of commercial sex transactions in the national AIDS epidemics in two other countries where trafficking is most prevalent, Thailand and India. At the height of Thailand's AIDS epidemic, more than 80% of HIV/AIDS cases could be attributed to women in the sex industry and their clients.

The sex industry, the trafficking of individuals into this industry, and sexual violence are contributory factors in the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. According to a recent report from the 15th International Aids Conference held in Bangkok, commercial sex work is one of the driving forces behind the AIDS pandemic in some places such as India, where HIV levels among sex workers in Mumbai (Bombay) exceeds 50%. A 1997 study in Sierra Leone showed that 70.6% of those engaged in commercial sex in Freetown were HIV positive, compared to 26.7% just two years earlier. One in nine South Africans is living with AIDS, and sexual assault is rampant, at a victimization rate of one in three women.

As reported by Human Rights Watch in its report on Thai women trafficked into debt bondage in Japan, statistics from Japan's National AIDS



Members of the Nigeria Police Force return rescued Beninois boys who were trafficked into Nigeria.

Surveillance Committee confirm the particular vulnerability of female trafficking victims and other foreign women to HIV/AIDS in Japan. From 1985 through 1997, non-Japanese females accounted for 34% of all HIV cases and 8% of all AIDS cases. Human Rights Watch goes on to note that a 1997 study presented at the Regional Meeting on Trafficking in Women in Asia and the Pacific found that more than 90% of all non-hemophiliac cases of HIV/AIDS in Naano and Ibaraki prefectures involved foreign migrants, with most of those infected coming from Thailand and other Asian countries. Meanwhile in Cambodia, as many as 40 percent of prostitutes are infected with HIV and the country has the highest rate of increase of HIV infection in all of Southeast Asia.

The vulnerability of trafficked



Joann Schneider, Deputy Director of the Office to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons.

women to sexually transmitted diseases is compounded by their inability to receive medical testing, treatment, counseling, prevention services, or other health care. Inability to speak or understand the language in a foreign land, poverty, indebtedness, and lack of freedom of movement may grossly impede access to health care. Moreover, as Human Rights Watch noted in its report on Japan, trafficked foreign women and girls are denied access to government-subsidized services for HIV/AIDS that are available to other citizens.

Both domestic and international efforts need to be combined to combat trafficking in persons and the HIV/AIDS spread. President George Bush describes human trafficking as “a special evil in the abuse and exploitation of the most innocent and vulnerable,” while U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell calls it “modern day sla-

very.” In Nigeria, despite internal efforts pioneered by the wife of Nigeria’s vice president Titi Abubakar and the First Lady of Edo State Eki Igbinedion are commendable, Joann Schneider, Deputy Director of the Office to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons, says Nigeria is not doing enough to prosecute and punish those perpetuating this “underground brutality.” During a media briefing in Lagos, Schneider stated that the criminal provisions in the comprehensive anti-trafficking law passed in June 2003 remain untested, despite government’s creation of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP). She added that the Nigerian Police reported 98 arrests of trafficking suspects, 44 of who remain under investigation, but there were no known prosecutions during the year and anti-trafficking efforts among the states appeared to diminish considerably. Such lapses continue to erode efforts of the government of Nigeria and has resulted in Nigeria's ranking on the Tier 2 Watch list. In the 2003 Trafficking in Persons report, Nigeria is seen as a country that does not face severe resource constraints, yet it commits inadequate funding and personnel to the fight against trafficking despite the fact that the country remains a source, transit, and destination country for trafficked persons.

Nigerian girls and women are trafficked to foreign countries for forced prostitution. If the likes of Rosie and Maggie must be rescued from the jaws of death, and from a trade that extract \$7 billion in profits from its human cargo, then, those who create

these victims and profit from their suffering must be severely punished. ❖

Combating Traffickers

The U.S. Congress last year strengthened anti-trafficking legislation and provided more than \$70 million in funding worldwide for efforts to end trafficking. These efforts include:

- Rehabilitation and work training centers for victims
- Special housing shelters for victims
- Law enforcement training and legal reform assistance
- Information and awareness campaigns
- Voluntary repatriation for displaced victims
- Training for immigration officials, medical personnel and social workers
- Combating sex tourism
- Rescuing victims from slave-like situations



Photos ©DOL, Faces of Change

U.S. Response to Trafficking in Persons in Nigeria

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is playing an active role in a coordinated U.S. Government and international effort to address trafficking in persons. USAID has programs in more than 40 countries that support a wide range of efforts. They include public education, capacity building for local civil society anti-trafficking groups, training for officials in the judiciary and other developing country government departments that are critical to the war on trafficking, victim assistance through shelters and counseling, and legislative reform to strengthen prosecution of traffickers.

In 2003 USAID/Nigeria granted \$500,000 to the International Office for Migration (IOM) to support a shelter in Nigeria for returned trafficking victims - mostly women deported from European countries. Activities include a database to track trafficking trends, an awareness campaign, and counselling including HIV/AIDS education.

Over the next five years (2004-2009), USAID/Nigeria plans to provide approximately \$3 million to support anti-trafficking efforts. USAID/Nigeria's proposed anti-trafficking program will address the following areas:

*** Policy dialogue**

The government of Nigeria has made some progress in moving towards compliance with the requirements of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, but remains a Tier 2 Watch List country. Continued dialogue with government is essential to moving Nigeria to full compliance and



USAID Nigeria Director Dawn Liberi, (second right), briefs the media on US efforts in combating and monitoring trafficking in Persons.

attaining Tier 1 status. The Mission has programs with the National Assembly and State Legislatures that provide suitable platforms and points of entry for policy discussions.

*** Information dissemination and public awareness.** It is crucial to address the overall climate that at least informally sanctions or legitimizes international trafficking

for sexual purposes by raising public awareness and educating at-risk individuals and their communities on the risks and realities. Publicity campaigns and sensitization are also needed to educate members of the public, particularly in sending communities, on child trafficking issues and the desperate plight of children in domestic service.

Direct support. Support to vulnerable and returned victims of trafficking, both children and adults may include any or all of the following (1) secure shelter and protection; (2) access to medical and legal advice, including HIV/AIDS awareness; (3) counselling support: psycho-social, trauma, employment; (4) Vocational and technical training; literacy and numeracy skills; and (5) business development assistance including access to microfinance services.❖

Quick Facts:

* Between 1999 and 2000 over 1180 trafficked girls were repatriated to Nigeria. This does not include those who were not caught, the dead and the maimed, and those sick with AIDS.

* Between 18,000 and 20,000 persons are trafficked into the United States alone.

* Females younger than 18 years old, account for approximately 30 percent of total sex trade.

Strategies Against Sex Trafficking and NGOs Response

To show its strong commitment to fighting sex trafficking, the U.S. State Department, in partnership with a non-governmental organization - War Against Trafficking Alliance, hosted a conference on "Pathbreaking Strategies in the Global Fight Against Sex Trafficking" recently.

The conference was designed to recognize activists from around the globe who had devised practical solutions to the problem. More than 400 American and international participants including victims, journalists, jurists and members of faith-based organizations, met to discuss the most successful strategies against sex trafficking and to suggest innovative methods to combat traffickers and rescue victims. Some of the ideas that were suggested by the conference participants fall under three categories - Protection of the Victims; Prosecution of the Traffickers; and Prevention of Future Abuses.

Protection of the Victims

- Pass comprehensive national anti-trafficking laws that prosecute traffickers and provide for the safety and privacy of the victim
- Incorporate local customs and circumstances into anti-trafficking legislation.
- Enforce international conventions at the local level.
- Bring international pressure against nations that violate or exploit women and children by permitting forced marriages, of widows to brothers of deceased husbands, genital mutilation and selling of children for future marriages.
- Protect victims, even those not willing or able to leave their situations immediately.
- Establish more halfway houses to provide adequate reintegration and

counseling for returned victims. Establish deportation points to arrange for the victims' safe travel and reception in the home country.

- Ask victims what they need; what might help them and help law enforcement.

- Recognize the importance of faith-based organizations (FBO).

- Encourage government/FBO cooperation.

Prosecution of Traffickers

- Assign specially trained female officers to anti-trafficking in persons units and hot lines.

- Provide trafficking victims who serve as witnesses adequate safety, privacy, legal, social and economic assistance, and a right to residence in the prosecuting country.

- Review the prosecution process and streamline wherever possible.

Prevention of Future Abuses

- Strengthen individual country assessment reports.

- Pursue all means, formal and informal, to undertake cooperative measures bilaterally and multilaterally with regional and global partners.

- Adopt national plans of action for each country and harmonize the approaches into a regional multi-year anti-trafficking action plan.

- Examine more closely the policies of donor countries to strengthen the coherence, integration and reinforcing efforts of all of the anti-trafficking work undertaken.

- Continue to develop numerical data on all forms of trafficking in persons to formulate national policies regarding protection, prosecution and prevention requirements.

- Fund research that will directly assist practitioners.

- Conduct research on the demand side and develop adequate strategies to

reduce demand for trafficked persons. Address these issues in the context of a culture of male privilege.

Several faith-based organizations, and NGOs are addressing this modern day slavery by way of advocacy with little or no cost involved. Here is a summary of some of the anti-trafficking measures.

- * local vigilante or watchdog committees to assist authorities to rescue victims.

- * educating residents in trafficking-prone areas of the dangers of trafficking.

- * establishing child rights clubs in schools.

- * running nationwide public awareness campaigns, road marches, posters.

- * strengthening partnerships with non-governmental and international organizations.

- * assist victims using international, national and local sports, drama and music events to get across the message of trafficking.

- * educate drivers (especially long-distance drivers), motorcycle operators popularly known as *Okada* and transport unions of the dangers in trafficking and unprotected sex.

- * acknowledge countries using respected local women to help in the struggle to combat trafficking.

- * educating communities on how to reintegrate, assist, and accept trafficked victims back into their home communities.

- * educating children on the importance of watching out for one another.

- * rewarding those who help uncover the perpetrators.

- * providing trained counsellors to identify and talk with likely trafficking victims at airports. ❖

Foreign Visitors Return to U.S. After September 2001 Attack

By Jon Schaffer
Washington File Staff Writer

After several years of staying away, travelers from around the world are finding the United States high on their list of places to visit, according to the U.S. Commerce Department.

During the first five months of 2004, more than 14.5 million international visitors traveled to the United States, the department reported July 29. This is a jump of 17 percent from January-May 2003.

The number of visitors from countries other than Mexico and Canada increased more than 20 percent to about 7.7 million during the first five months of 2004. If the trend contin-

ues, such visits will climb to nearly 19 million this year. This would compare with just over 18 million in 2003, 19.1 million in 2002 and 21.8 million in 2001.

Earlier this year, the Commerce Department projected that the number of international travelers visiting the United States would return to nearly peak levels by 2007. Prior to the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, international visits (excluding those from Mexico and Canada) averaged more than 24 million annually in 1996-2000.

The department reported that, while travelers came in increasing numbers from all parts of the world, the largest regional percentage gains during the year came from visitors from

Asia, up nearly 30 percent, and from Europe, up 18.5 percent. Visitors were up by more than 12 percent from the Middle East, by 10.5 percent from Eastern Europe, by nearly 11 percent from South America, and by 8 percent from Africa.

Of the 14.5 million visitors to the U.S. so far this year, nearly 5.5 million were from Canada, 1.5 million from Japan and 1.4 million from Mexico. Notable increases in January-May 2004 from the same period in 2003 were seen in numbers of visitors from China, 33 percent; Australia, 32 percent; Argentina, 26 percent; Germany, 22 percent; and Brazil, 20 percent. Visits from Canada are up 15 percent and from Mexico, 9 percent, from the first five months of 2003. ❖

9/11 Attacks Prompts Intelligence Overhaul

By Merle D. Kellerhals, Jr.
Washington File Staff Writer

Responding to recommendations contained in the report by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the 9/11 Commission), Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Pat Roberts unveiled comprehensive legislation to revamp the 15-agency U.S. intelligence community.

Roberts said August 24 that the proposed legislation would divide the CIA into three separate intelligence agencies, and rearrange agencies currently assigned to the Defense Department. To date, Roberts' legislation is the most sweeping of the bills now under consideration by several committees and the White House.

The plan is contained in a 139-

page draft bill that will be introduced in the Senate when senators return from their August recess on September 7. For legislation to be considered by Congress it must be formally introduced and placed on the legislative calendar.

"Our bill proposes a path to implement the important ideas recommended by the 9/11 Commission," Roberts said in a prepared statement. "Our work was guided by the 9/11 Commission's work, as well as the Senate Intelligence Committee's decades of work on intelligence reform, including our inquiry into the U.S. intelligence community's prewar intelligence assessments on Iraq."

However, Roberts' bill, which is supported by eight members of his committee, drew criticism from a number of sources.



September 11 Commission chairman Thomas Kean, left, and vice chairman Lee Hamilton discuss the Commission's report.

President Bush said he would examine the senator's plan, though he had not seen it yet. "There's a lot of ideas moving around," Bush said August 23 at his Texas ranch. "We've got a lot of smart people looking at the best way to fashion intelligence, so that the president and his cabinet secretaries have got the ability to make good judgment calls on behalf of the American people." ❖

■ <http://www.9-11commission.gov/> ■



U.S. Elections 2004 Update

The Democratic National Convention



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Two former U.S. presidents and one former vice president officially opened the 44th Democratic National Convention July 26 at the FleetCenter in Boston.

The convention, attended by approximately 35,000 people, of which 4,353 were delegates and 15,000 were members of the press. Former presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter joined former Vice President Al Gore on the opening night of a four-day gathering expectedly culminated in the nomination of Massachusetts Senator John Kerry and North Carolina Senator John Edwards to the 2004 Democratic ticket.

Delegates greeted the speakers with raucous cheers, explosions of applause and thousands of swaying “Kerry-Edwards” signs. Rather than criticizing the Republicans, the speeches tended to stress themes of unity and, especially in Al Gore’s speech, the fact that “every vote counts.”

Continuing the positive tone, Clinton said, “We Democrats will bring the American people a positive campaign, arguing not who’s good and who’s bad, but what is the best way to build the safe, prosperous world our children deserve.”

■ <http://www.dems2004.org/> ■

Bush vs. Kerry: How Republicans, Democrats Stand on Key Issues

Here’s a quick look at where Sen. John Kerry and President Bush stand on the central issues expected to dominate the 2004 race for the White House.

ECONOMY:

Bush: The president has repeatedly called on Congress to make his tax cuts permanent, saying failure to do so would amount to a tax hike and threaten prospects for a robust economic recovery capable of generating new jobs. Congressional analysts say that making the tax cuts permanent would cost about \$1.3 trillion over the next 10 years.

Kerry: Kerry has called for a repeal of the Bush tax cuts for Americans earning more than \$200,000 a year, in order to pay for broad health care reform. However, he would retain the tax cuts for the middle class. He says he can halve the record half-trillion dollar budget by the end of one four-year term, even while spending \$72 billion a year to extend health care to 27 million of the 40-plus million uninsured. His campaign has provided no details.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Bush: Bush, who pulled the United States out of the Kyoto protocol on greenhouse gas emissions, believes the threat of global warming should be addressed through new economic growth and efficiency. He also favors oil exploration in Alaska’s Arctic Na-

tional Wildlife Refuge and backs legislation that would seek to reduce air pollution and acid rain by offering major polluters access to market-based incentives to reduce harmful missions.

Kerry: Kerry favors U.S. participation in an international climate change program to curb global warming and would cut mercury emissions by American utilities and plants. To encourage more renewable energy sources, Kerry wants to create a renewable energy trust fund to reduce oil consumption by 2 million barrels per day, which is roughly the amount imported from the Middle East. Kerry also backed Senate legislation to impose stricter mileage standards on gas-guzzling sport utility vehicles and automobiles.

FOREIGN POLICY

Bush: After straining relations with major European allies and the United Nations over war in Iraq, Bush has shifted his foreign policy focus to the spread of democracy by pushing a Greater Middle East Initiative that would aim to resolve the region’s political, economic and social problems through democratic reform. The presi-



U.S. Elections 2004 Update

dent, criticized for the failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, is also pursuing a policy that seeks to unravel the black market in nuclear components and block programs in North Korea and Iran, countries he has labeled an “axis of evil” along with prewar Iraq.

Kerry: While insisting he would never cede U.S. security to any other nation and would use force when required, Kerry envisions “a new era of alliances” to replace what he sees as the White House’s go-it-alone approach to foreign policy. He has pledged to restore diplomacy as a tool of U.S. foreign policy, treat the United Nations as a “full partner” and pursue collective security arrangements. His inner circle of foreign policy advisers features prominent Democratic veterans, including some figures from the Clinton days.

POST-WAR IRAQ

Bush: After seeing his plan to bring democracy to Iraq through regional caucuses scuttled by a leading Shi’ite cleric, Bush has succeeded in brokering an interim constitution for the oil-rich Arab nation and pledged to work with Iraqi leaders and the United Nations to prepare for full Iraqi sovereignty by June 30. The administration expects U.S. troops to remain in Iraq indefinitely as a security measure against insurgents and sectarian violence.

Kerry: He voted in 2002 in favor of the war against Iraq, but has since attacked the administration for misrepresenting the military threat posed by Baghdad and for mismanaging the post-war occupation. He later voted against the appropriation of \$87 billion for the U.S.-led effort, a move that has led some critics, including

some in his own party, to accuse him of hypocrisy.

TRADE

Bush: Bush, an avowed free trader, has embarked on a series of trade agreements with countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa. But his administration has also faced charges of protectionism over steel tariffs that the World Trade Organization ruled illegal, and its reluctance to trim import barriers that protect U.S. sugar, dairy and beef industries.

Kerry: Kerry has promised a 120-day review of all existing U.S. trade agreements upon taking office, and favors using the World Trade Organization to challenge China’s currency practices. He also has pressed for stronger labor and environmental language than Bush has required in growing collection of bilateral free trade agreements with countries around the world.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Bush: Bush, a staunch defender of Israel, backs the stalled “road map” to Middle East peace that calls for creation of a Palestinian State alongside Israel by next year. The White House has also expressed concern about Israel’s construction of a security barrier through Palestinian territory, ostracized Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and cautiously embraced Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s proposal to dismantle Jewish settlements in Gaza.

Kerry: Kerry says he would breathe new life into the moribund Middle East peace process and name a special presidential envoy to the Muslim world, who would seek to encourage moderate elements. ❖

The Republican Convention



Republicans officially launched their campaign for the White House August 30 with the opening of the 38th Republican National Convention and began the formal nomination of President Bush and Vice President Cheney as their candidates.

An estimated 50,000 Republican delegates, campaign officials, family members, and media converged on Madison Square Garden for the Republican’s first ever convention in New York City. Outside, protestors against the Bush administration’s policies, as well as supporters of the president, staged large demonstrations.

With the nomination assured, convention officials are using the four days of meetings to focus on President Bush’s plan for building a safer world and a better America and to energize the party’s workers for the 64-day campaign ahead. The general election will be held November 2.

“The 2004 Republican National Convention will celebrate the courage, resolve, and compassion of the American people and the president’s vision to build a safe and more hopeful America,” said Mark Wallace, the Bush-Cheney ’04 campaign manager. ❖

<http://www.georgebush.com/>

Non-immigrant Visa Appointment Scheduling Goes On-Line

In its continuing effort to improve services to visa clients, the United States Mission to Nigeria is pleased to announce a new, web-based non-immigrant visa appointment scheduling system. As of 11 August 2004, Nigerian applicants for non-immigrant visas can schedule their own appointments instantly on any computer with Internet access by going to our mission's web site: <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>. Applicants can continue to submit appointment requests by mail until 31 August 2004; however, we recommend an immediate switch to the web-based system for the following reasons:

1. Appointments are scheduled immediately.

Applicants will no longer have to wait for their mail to arrive at the Consulate and then for a confirmation

by return mail.

2. Appointments may be made at a lower cost.

Courier mail services may be significantly more expensive than internet time.

3. Appointments may be scheduled at the applicant's convenience.

Applicants will be able to see and choose from our entire range of available appointment dates and times.

4. Appointments may be made easily.

The web-based system is user-friendly, and instructions are printed at each step in the process. An instruction sheet is also available at <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/wwwhcwebinstructions.html>

5. Applications are more secure.

Nigerian applicants should be

aware that the new system does not allow two appointments to be made simultaneously for a single passport. A previous appointment date must pass before a new one is scheduled. In addition, each applicant must have a separate passport, and so parents will need to get separate passports for each of their children. The current systems used for drop box, petition-based visas, expedited student appointments, and other special cases will not change.

The Consular section will be readily available to assist users with the transition to the new system. Inquiries can be made both by e-mail at lagoscons2@state.gov or consularabuja@state.gov and by phone at 1-261-5697 / 5699 in Lagos or 9-523-0916 / 0960 / 5857 / 2235 in Abuja. ❖

Quick Steps to a Visa Appointment



To make your appointment, please follow these instructions. You will need to follow each of the steps in the order given, or you will not receive a valid appointment date. Each applicant will need to file for a separate appointment, and each applicant will need a separate passport:

1. Go to the U.S. Mission to Nigeria website at <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>.

2. Click on the “**Visa Appointment**” link in the upper right corner. You will be taken to the non-immigrant visa application appointment page.

3. Click on the “**Make a Visa Appointment**” link in the upper right corner.

4. Read the important instructions in the middle of the page, and then click on the “**I understand**” button to proceed.

5. After you click the “**I understand**” button, instructions will appear in the middle of the page to explain how to fill out your DS-156-application form on-line. Once you've read the instructions, click the “**Prepare Application**” button. Wait until the form fully loads; then, fill out your DS-156, and click the “**continue**” button. Wait until your form is displayed as an Adobe Acrobat file (You will need the Acrobat Reader in order to continue). The reader is available

Brian Browne is New U.S. Consul General

A new U.S. Consul General has arrived in Nigeria to replace Ms. Robyn Hinson-Jones, who completed her assignment in mid-July. He is Brian Browne. Mr. Brown was born on February 8 in Huntsville, Alabama and resides in West Palm Beach, Florida.

He graduated from the Elliot School of International Affairs, George Washington University with a B.A. in International Politics in 1980. He also attended the national Law Center, George Washington University where he received a J.D. in 1983.

Mr. Browne practiced law for five years in Southern Florida, specializing in commercial litigation. He joined the Foreign Service in 1988. His first assignment was in Panama



Brian Browne

in 1988-89 as a Consular Officer. After Panama, he was assigned to Lagos from 1989-1991 where he served in the Consular and Political Sections. From 1991-1994, Mr. Browne served in Liberia

as Political Officer and Acting Political Counselor. From 1994-95, he worked in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor as Staff Assistant and Acting Special Assistant. He served in the office of the Secretary of State as a Special Assistant from 1995-96. He was assigned as the Liberia Desk Officer from 1996-98.

In 1998, Mr. Browne was the recipient of the Una Chapman Cox Fellowship. In 1999, he was appointed Deputy Chief of Mission to the Gambia, where he served until 2001. From 2001-03, he was the Political Counselor in Abuja.

He attended the National War College from 2003 to 2004 where he received a M.SC in National Security Strategy. ❖

for free at www.adobe.com). You will need to print this form and save the barcode number that appears on the third page.

6. On the left side of the screen, you should see a menu with three (3) steps listed. You will now need to click on the **“Step 2: Make Your Appointment”** link. The next screen to appear will allow you to select an appointment date from all available dates. When you click on the **“Choose Your Date”** button, a calendar will appear with available dates in yellow and closed dates in blue. Find the available date that you want, and click on it. Next, click on the **“continue”** button to submit your choice.

7. Fill in the appointment time that you would like, and then enter your



name exactly as it appears on your passport. Provide an e-mail address in case of emergency. Now, enter your passport number. You will only be allowed into your appointment with the passport bearing the number entered here, and only one appointment at a time can be scheduled per passport number. Finally, enter the barcode number that appears on the third page of your DS-156 form, and click the **“submit”** button.

8. A confirmation page will appear

with your appointment details. You **MUST** print this page and bring it to your interview. You will not be allowed into the Consulate without this important sheet.

Click on the **“INSTRUCTIONS”** link in order to get an information sheet describing all of the documents you will need to bring to your interview. We recommend that you print and keep this sheet. Supplemental and family forms are included here as links: read the instructions to find out whether you need to print these out and bring them to your interview as well. You can also read these instructions by clicking on the **“Step 3: Prepare for your interview”** link on the menu on the left side of the page. You are now finished and ready for your interview. ❖

YES program: Second Batch of Students Depart For the U.S.

Sixteen Nigerian students from secondary schools in Kaduna and Sokoto departed Nigeria for the U.S. in late August. These students are participants in the 2004/2005 Youth Exchange Scheme (YES). This program is funded by a \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of State and is administered by the Iowa Resource for International Service (IRIS) organization in the U.S.

Last year 18 students were selected from each of the two states including six females and a physically challenged student, who is dumb, but very brilliant. The students are from diverse religious and socio economic backgrounds.

This second batch that left Nigeria, is expected back on June 5, 2005 after a full academic year in the United States. On their return, participants are expected to form peace clubs in their respective schools to promote religious pluralism and tolerance among Nigerian High School students.

In addition to the students, two High School teachers have been selected to join the students. One will join the students at the beginning of the program and stay for five weeks while the second teacher will be joining them towards the end of the program to also stay for five weeks. The teachers will serve as parental and clerical surrogates for the students, to assuage parental concerns about faith and faith-based practices.

Dedi Setiadi, an Indonesian student participating in the YES program, admits that his opinion of the U.S. has not always been positive. "In the beginning, I was critical of the U.S. and its policies toward different

countries," he said.

In an interview, Dedi said his views changed after a year of living with a Mexican-American family in the United States. "This country is very diverse. I didn't see prejudice," Dedi observed.

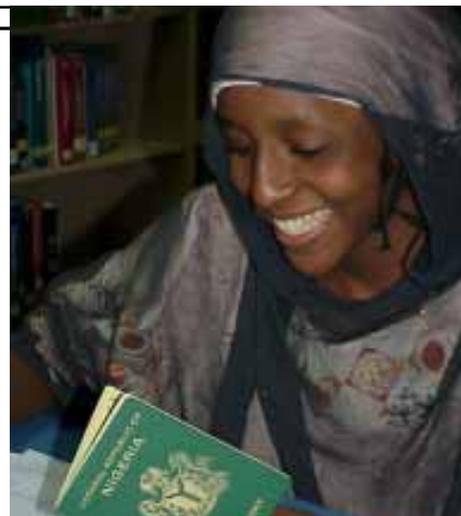
He appreciated learning about his host family's culture and sharing aspects of Indonesian culture. When he returns home Dedi plans to help other Indonesian students learn about the United States.

Dedi came to the U.S. through the State Department's YES program, which brings secondary school students from countries with significant Muslim populations to the U.S. for an academic year. The students attend an American high school and live in the home of an American family.

"These students will take a better understanding of American society back to their communities and correct misperceptions about the United States," Robert Persiko, chief of Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' Youth Programs Division, said.

"It's different than anything I've seen on TV," Sarah, a Muslim student from Turkey, said of the program. "I thought everyone was for the war (in Iraq) and that they didn't like Muslims because of terrorism. I found people who didn't really care. I mean a lot of people didn't even ask what religion I was. They really wanted to know me as me."

Sarah spoke enthusiastically about her experiences living with a host family in North Carolina, and recounted how she and her friends shared common experiences of growing up, even though they lived in



Fatima Abdullahi Suleiman from Sokoto, fills out a visa forms at a pre-departure orientation session.

different countries.

"Americans respect others' beliefs," said Titis Andari, another student from Indonesia who stayed with a family in San Jose, California. "They saw me as a person and were interested in my faith as a Muslim. I was not only able to learn about American culture but also to share with my friends and host family about Islam."

She discussed the difference between the views of individual Americans and the policies of the U.S. government, saying: "Before I came, I believed all Americans loved war. But during my stay here, I saw how some Americans supported the war in Iraq, and some did not; and how American society allowed many differences of opinion."

Students in the YES program live with American host families from diverse backgrounds, attend school, and participate in activities to learn about American society and values, acquire leadership skills, and inform Americans about their countries and cultures.

Patricia Harrison, assistant secretary of state for educational and cultural affairs, has said the YES program is vital to expanding communication between the people of the United States and partner countries in the interest of promoting mutual understanding and respect. ❖

For the Physically Challenged, Help is on the Way



Judith Ekaete (standing third from right) in a group photo with committee members of the InterAction Group at the Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability conference in Washington, D.C

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is moving with alacrity to address concerns and challenges that place the provision of healthcare services including HIV/AIDS awareness programs within the reach of physically challenged persons. This follows the result of a finding presented by Judith Umoh Ekaete, Executive director, Family Centered Initiative for Challenged Persons (FACICP) to inquiries made by the U.S. State Department, Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator on disability issues in the prevention and treatment of HIV.

The query was prompted by U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, (D), Iowa noted for sponsoring a bill that required that US funds used in Afghanistan and Iraq should follow the USAID policy on inclusion of people with disabilities. His efforts also led to a special clause being added to the Millennium goals that requires countries to establish certain criteria for the protection of and respect for the rights of people with

disabilities as a condition for continued selection for receiving US funds.

As Nigeria's representative to the Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability in Eugene, Oregon, Ekaete



Judith Ekaete poses with U.S. Senator Tom Harkin (D), during an advocacy visit to the latter's office.

had been asked to report on how inclusive health issues were to those who were physically challenged in Nigeria. She recaps her findings in these words: "In September 2003, I had the opportunity of attending the Women Institute on Leadership and Disability (WILD 2003) conference organized by Mobility International USA in Eugene, Oregon. After 3 weeks of training we were asked to meet with at least 5 US based international development organizations or their partners in our various countries as a follow up assignment.

"I observed that in all the organizations I visited, I found that people with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, were totally excluded from reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and other developmental programs." The exclusion she said, stretches from reproductive Health/HIV/AIDS sensitization and awareness raising programs, to the non-disability friendly way their reproductive health services were rendered. Ekaete also discovered that the access needs of people with disabilities to public programs and services were grossly undermined. "None of the reproductive health/HIV/AIDS leaflets or flyers were in accessible format for the blind to read nor did they have sign language interpreters to convey the message." Ekaete said

Not finished with her observation, the FACICP director said women with disabilities had never been invited to

the regular reproductive health workshops held by family health providers at health centers or at various local communities. To buttress the total exclusion, Ekaete noted that nobody with disabilities was working for any of the five organizations as development workers on their reproductive health/HIV/AIDS programs.

Popularly called “Mama Mainstream” because of her enthusiasm and commitment to improving the quality of life of physically challenged persons in Nigeria, Ekaete concludes that “It is he/she who wears the shoes that knows where it hurts most. If the government and other organizations do not begin from the design

stage to include the physically challenged in healthcare program planning, then it becomes very difficult to meet the peculiar needs of physically challenged persons during implementation,” she said.

FACICP is a non-profit, non-governmental civil rights advocacy group registered with the Edo State and engaged in the promotion of issues of women and children with disabilities nationally and internationally through advocacy, research, reporting, counseling and documentation. The organization posits that the family is an essential support mechanism for physically challenged women and children.

The group affirms that the rights

of women and children with disabilities require special protection, and special opportunities to facilitate health and normal development. It seeks to find practical means of defending and promoting the empowerment of women and children with disabilities so that they can lead worthy lives.

Changes to Ekaete’s concerns are becoming noticeable. Recently Pathfinder, a US funded family health organization, is for the first time in Nigeria funding a physically challenged woman to study issues and concerns affecting this group of persons under the International Fellowship Program organized by Ford Foundation in the U.S. ❖

Nigeria Gets U.S. Grant to Revive Coal Industry

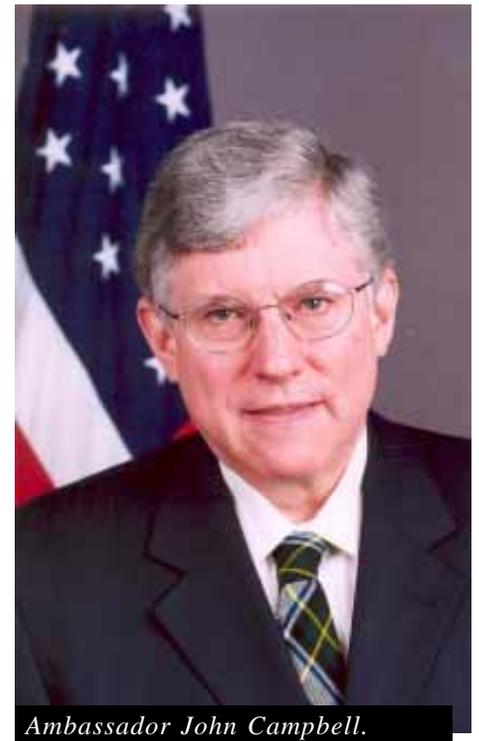
On July 20, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) awarded a \$410,800 grant to the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development to fund a feasibility study on the coal resource development in Nigeria. The U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, signed an agreement conferring the grant on behalf of the U.S. Government in a ceremony held at the U.S. Embassy in Abuja. The Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Odion M. Ugbesa, signed the agreement on behalf of the Nigeria government.

The Federal Government of Nigeria is seeking to reinstate coal as part of the country’s energy supply, specifically for energy deficient interior regions of the country. In addition, coal might be used as a substitute for household cooking fuel in order to reduce dependence on wood and help to prevent further deforestation. The study will provide an analysis of ways to meet current and future demand from the

anticipated increased use of coal for power generation. At the same time, U.S. mining sector expertise associated through the grant will provide a significant technical assistance desired by the Nigerian government and endorsed by the World Bank. The World Bank is embarking on a \$75 million mining sector restructuring program, thus timing is favorable for the USTDA assistance.

The feasibility study will review mine sites, prepare reserve estimates, investigate the rehabilitation of coalmines, and study mineral processing options. The selected U.S. contractor will conduct a market study, a preliminary environmental impact and mitigation analysis, and an economic analysis. A U.S. contractor will be chosen by the grantee through a competitive, USTDA-facilitated bid.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds



Ambassador John Campbell.

various forms of technical assistance, feasibility studies, training, orientation visits and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment. USTDA’s strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment and sustainable economic development. ❖

Nigeria and 69 Other Countries to Benefit from New U.S. Aid

The U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has identified Nigeria and 69 other “candidate countries” as beneficiaries to the Corporation’s supplemental foreign aid funding in the fiscal year beginning October 1.

At the MCC public forum on July 27, Chief Executive Officer John Applegarth, said the corporation’s board intends to determine which of these “candidate countries” will be eligible to apply for Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) funding. Criteria for selecting candidate countries is based on their relative performance in ruling justly, encouraging economic growth and investing in programs that directly help their people.

Applegarth said each eligible country’s proposal to the MCC should include an explanation of how the country decided on the development priorities for which it seeks MCA funding. The MCC wants the content of proposals to clearly include input



CEO Paul V. Applegarth discusses components of the MCC initiative at the public meeting.

from civil society and business sectors and not just reflect the decisions of a small number of government officials, he said.

Proposals also should indicate how an MCA-funded project would not duplicate or obstruct a project funded by another donor, he said.

The MCA is based on the principle

The Millennium Challenge Account is based on the principle that foreign aid works best when a recipient country takes ownership of its development programs and creates an environment for economic growth.

that foreign aid works best when a recipient country takes ownership of its development programs and creates an environment for economic growth, Applegarth said.

MCC staff recently visited all 16 countries eligible to begin receiving FY04 MCA funding to explain the consultative process to representatives of governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), private businesses and the media, he said.

As a result of those visits, he said, countries now have a better understanding of the flexibility they have in developing their priorities and of opportunities to try “something new and different” to achieve their development goals, he said.

The 6-month-old MCC has also been meeting with other international donors to ensure aid efforts are complementary, Applegarth said.

Applegarth said that as the MCC moves forward it welcomes input from NGOs and other interested parties. The corporation also is stressing that its processes are transparent to the public.

“We need transparency to build confidence in what we’re doing and how,” he said.

The 2005 candidate countries have a maximum per capita annual income of \$1,465 and are legally eligible to receive U.S. aid, Applegarth said. ♦

\$100 SEVIS Fee for Students from Sept 1

A fee of \$100 for students and exchange visitors registered in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) will go into effect on September 1. Michael J. Garcia, Department of Home Security Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said the new fee is to defray the cost of the program as mandated by Congress and to fund a new SEVIS “Customer Service” website that allows student and exchange visitors to check their SEVIS registration and payment status online.

SEVIS is a web-based program

for maintaining information on international students and exchange visitors and their dependents in the United States, administered by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and used by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers at ports of entry.

As of July 2004, roughly 770,000 students and exchange visitors (F-1, M-1 and J-1 visa categories), along with 100,000 of their dependents, were registered with SEVIS.

SEVIS has simplified what was once a manual process, resulting in more accurate and timely data, faster processing and fewer delays. ♦

■ <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/> ■



Consulate General of the United States of America
 Public Affairs Section
 2, Broad Street
 P.O. Box 554 Lagos - Nigeria
 Tel.: 01-2632577, 2633560, 2633395
 Visit our Website at <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/>
 or

Embassy of the United States of America
 Public Affairs Section
 7, Mambilla Street
 Maitama District,
 P.O. Box 5760
 Garki, Abuja
 Tel.: 09-523-5226/7

Photo cover: A victim of
 sex trafficking at a press
 conference. ©AP-WWP

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Editorial Team: CLAUDIA ANYASO (Country Public Affairs Officer), ATIMENEIDA GEORGE (Public Affairs Officer), STORM P. JACKSON (Information Officer), IDIKA U. ONYUKWU (Editor).

E-mail us at: crossroads@state.gov or visit our Website at: <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/>

Sept Events	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
					1 <i>U.S. study classes (Lagos and Abuja)</i>	2	3
	5	6	7 <i>Media Briefing every Tuesday (Lagos)</i>	8 <i>U.S. study classes (Lagos and Abuja)</i>	9	10 <i>Sept. 11 Commemoration (Lagos & Abuja)</i>	11
	12	13	14	15 <i>11th ASAN Conference</i>	16	17 <i>Paralympic Games begins in Athens</i>	18
	19	20	21 <i>International Day for Peace</i>	22 <i>U.S. study classes (Lagos and Abuja)</i>	23	24	25
2004	26	27	28 <i>Redesigned \$50 notes Issued</i>	29 <i>U.S. study classes (Lagos & Abuja)</i>	30		

Please note that ALL events on this calendar are STRICTLY by invitation. For enquiries please call the telephone numbers listed above.