



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C.

Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting
UN Commission on Sustainable Development -17
Opening Plenary
February 23, Morning Session

Extended Remarks Upon
Which Intervention is Based

Intervention Delivered by: **John M. Matuszak**, Division Chief, Sustainable Development and Multilateral Affairs, Office of Environmental Policy, Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science, U.S. Department of State

Introduction and Overview

Thank you Madam Chair. The long-term policy goals of CSD-17 are indeed daunting -- to increase agricultural productivity, stimulate rural development, use land within ecological capacity, manage drought and combat desertification, and promote sustainable development in Africa.

Let me begin with some clear messages from the newly elected President of the United States, Barack Obama, who in his inaugural address on January 20th of this year stated “To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds.” And a bit later in his speech to the nation and to the world he touched on sustainable development: “And to those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty, we say we can no longer afford indifference to the suffering outside our borders, nor can we consume the world’s resources without regard to effect. For the world has changed, and we must change with it.”

Further, the President has committed to fight global poverty and supports the Millennium Development Goal of cutting extreme poverty and hunger around the world in half by 2015. The goal is to help the world's weakest states build healthy and educated communities, reduce poverty, develop markets, and generate wealth.

It is timely that we have an opportunity in May 2009 at the CSD-17 to help shape global responses to issues that impact all countries, especially the most vulnerable. The current challenges -- economic crisis, climate change, food security and environmental degradation -- heighten rather than diminish the need for governments, communities and business to focus on sustainable development.

How can we solve our environmental and development challenges in a sustainable way?
Answering this question is our task for the May CSD-17 meeting.

The message from the CSD-17 Chairperson circulated prior to our meeting contained helpful ideas about priorities that provide a useful starting point for our discussion. Ms. Verberg

identified five areas that merit our attention: how to increase agricultural productivity in a sustainable manner; how to create an enabling environment for sustainable development; how to develop sustainable value chains; how to ensure market access; and, how to craft food security policies and effective food aid programs. She noted that the CSD-17 issues should be addressed with integrated strategies for poverty eradication, food security and sustainable natural resource management.

Real progress on these outcomes, as well as the more detailed outcomes we set for each specific CSD-17 theme, can be accomplished through sound policies and improved practices that:

- Support education, research and science
- Improve information exchange and communication using available technology
- Empower local communities and resource managers to pursue creative sustainable development decisions

This is the pipeline through which new ideas and knowledge must travel to result in changes on the ground. An attachment includes specific examples from US experiences that offer lessons to governments and other institutions about what works. Throughout our sessions this week, the US will highlight specific policies and programs that can be used as models.

Education, Research and Science – *to create solutions for sustainable development*

CSD-17 should encourage expanded support for agricultural research, education and assistance around the world. Using science and research as the foundation, countries can ensure that agriculture systems are economically viable and sustainable, meet the food needs of the world's population, and contribute to sustainable development and ecosystem services.

The US has long recognized the importance of agriculture and how knowledge supports agricultural development. US agriculture is among the most productive in the world, in large part due to the continuous contributions of the Land Grant Colleges and Universities to the knowledge needed by farmers. The Land Grant system provides education, not just to students from the US, but to people from all over the world. The US stated at the recent Madrid High Level Meeting on Food Security that investment in agricultural research is crucial to increasing agricultural productivity. In July, at the Hokkaido Toyako summit, G8 leaders acknowledged the important role that agricultural research and development play in stimulating world food production. The US is working with other donors to increase funding for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), for national research programs and for public-private partnerships.

We will hear many examples of how science, research and education contribute to sustainable approaches to agriculture, rural development, drought, desertification and Africa. Case studies that illustrate effective policy approaches and practical actions are included in the attachment.

Information Exchange and Communication – *to increase two-way communication on scientific information, user needs, and markets and economic conditions*

Innovations in communications and information technology have enormous untapped potential for empowering the poor and advancing sustainable development. Information technology can improve efficiency, effectiveness and transparency. CSD-17 should encourage creative ways to get information and solutions into the hands of users such as agricultural producers and land managers. We should ensure two-way communication that allows practitioners in the field (farmers, businesses, communities, and local government) to identify specific needs and pose site-specific questions. We should encourage investments in training, capacity building and new mechanisms of information dispersal.

Information has become a global resource that can be accessed literally anywhere in on the globe. Cell phones are making dramatic differences in conveyance of price and weather information in poor rural areas. The internet can make resources assembled in one country available to others. In the US, our new “eXtension” programs will facilitate the use of extension information from the entire U.S. land grant university system to users around the world. In regions with limited resources, such a program can use radio and cell phone technologies to answer basic questions on agriculture. Case studies that illustrate effective policy approaches and practical actions are included in the attachment.

Local Empowerment – *to help local people and institutions make sound sustainable development decisions*

Creativity and entrepreneurship at the local level are necessary building blocks for sustainable development. CSD-17 should encourage capacity building, technical assistance and knowledge exchange that support community empowerment and social inclusion (especially women, who often are not included in many official programs). These efforts should aim at strengthening opportunities to influence public policies, and make institutions more inclusive, accountable and responsive to public needs.

Empowerment takes many forms. We need to build policies that support land and resource ownership/property rights, which enhance incentives for farmers to improve their lands and resources and develop them sustainably. Farmers need access to credit, technologies, information and decision-making support, as well as access to markets to move beyond subsistence. Examples of policies and programs that engage and empower communities include development of agricultural cooperatives and encouragement of youth groups (e.g. the 4-H clubs in the U. S. are dedicated to improving rural and urban life and knowledge for youth). Communities that participate in their own development show a greater chance of success than those that do not. Case studies that illustrate effective policy approaches and practical actions are included in the attachment.

Opportunities for CSD-17

CSD-17 should advance sustainability policies and practices that catalyze actions that change people’s lives. This can be accomplished in three ways as described below.

Focus on special role of CSD

CSD should carefully define its unique contributions to the broad themes of CSD-17 and avoid duplication with other entities that already provide international leadership. Additionally, CSD should continue to focus on implementation and the practical real-world issues that make a difference in getting results on the ground.

The CSD serves as a critical forum for sustainable development. Within the UN system, it provides leadership through involvement of major groups, focus on partnerships, and most importantly by emphasizing actions that improve peoples' lives and protect the environment. We should measure our success by how well we mobilize implementation activities that advance our shared interest in sustainable development.

A key question for CSD-17 is: How can this 2-year CSD cycle actually result in changes on the ground and in people's lives? Let me suggest several ways:

- *Use case studies to learn which policies and practices are effective* -- CSD plays a crucial role in collecting and sharing lessons learned and best practices in implementation. The CSD Secretariat should continue its central clearinghouse function, and consider strengthening the matrix of lessons learned and case studies. We strongly endorse this approach – learning from experience, both successes and failures. The United States submitted 50 case studies to the CSD Secretariat during CSD-16 and will introduce many more in our interventions during this week and for CSD-17. We are pleased to see that other delegations are doing the same, and encourage major groups to do so as well. Our collective goal is to identify strategic case studies that are applicable in other regions and situations.
- *Build capacity for creative partnerships that get results on the ground* -- We also need to continue to learn how to design and operate partnerships that bring together the skills and resources of different governments, international organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector -- in the developed and developing world. The U.S. National Academies' Roundtable on Science and Technology for Sustainability convened a symposium in June 2008 to examine 11 case studies of multi-stakeholder partnerships. The symposium focused on the challenges that the partnerships have addressed and will issue a report this year with recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of sustainable development partnerships. USAID is currently participating in hundreds of partnerships in its international development programs. The USAID approach mobilizes ideas and resources of governments, businesses and civil society in public-private alliances to stimulate economic growth, develop businesses and workforces, address health and environmental issues, and expand access to education and technology. Innovative partnerships can improve social and economic conditions in developing countries when partnering organizations share assets and experience, leverage capital, and investments and work together to solve complex sustainable development problems facing government, business, and communities.
- *Engage public and private stakeholders* – Success for CSD-17 will be gauged by our ability to spur concrete action both in and outside the UN. The CSD can galvanize action from a wide range of public and private stakeholders, and foster increased coordination

and new alliances. One important step is to define unifying priorities that promote economic growth, social development and environmental stewardship.

- *Leverage other international forum* -- The CSD 16/17 themes overlap with many other important organizations with international clout (such as FAO on food security). Given limited resources, CSD should not duplicate other venues but seek to complement their programs and policies from the vantage of sustainability, in all its forms.

Set policy priorities for each thematic areas of CSD-17

CSD should define outcome-oriented priorities for each thematic area, and each policy recommendation should clearly address an underlying barrier to sustainability. A smaller number of targeted policy solutions are likely to have a greater impact than a longer list. To help guide follow-up actions from CSD-17, clear priorities are needed. These should include:

- *Agriculture* -- Promote enhanced productivity and sustainability of working landscapes, and link producers to markets by building strong value chains, and linking communities to the surrounding countryside.
- *Rural development* – Reduce disparities between urban and rural areas by empowering rural people and communities, expanding health care options, and building needed infrastructure for business development. And do so in sustainable ways based on local economic, environmental and social conditions.
- *Land* -- Support well-founded policy and effective administration of property rights that result in secure access to and sustainable management of land resources. Manage land resources within ecological capacity. Build capacity for land planning to prevent land degradation and loss of agriculturally productive lands.
- *Drought* – Support international collaboration to develop drought early-warning systems and information products specific to regions and sub-regions. Continue to improve drought forecasting to prepare local communities, inform planning decisions, and minimize economic, social and ecosystem impacts.
- *Desertification* – Support inclusive, bottom-up approaches that engage local people (such as community-based natural resources management and farmer-based land management) to improve land productivity and management of scarce water resources, and provide economic opportunities in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas facing desertification and re-occurring drought.
- *Africa* – Support African country plans to increase inclusive agricultural growth consistent with CAADP principles, including regional development and growth corridors. Address root causes of food insecurity so that: Africa generates surpluses of key food staples, African countries become net food exporters, and the power of agriculture stimulates broad based economic growth.
- *SIDS* – Continue cooperative efforts (consistent with Barbados and Mauritius strategies) on solutions to special challenges facing island governments and communities including crisis response, improved forecasting, mitigation practices and overall awareness; basic

monitoring; and work on specific island problems such as invasive species, erosion, ecosystem-based management, and natural resource protection.

- *Interlinkages* – Build capacity for using sustainability tools and information, including a more unified approach to research, education, and extension; new uses of geospatial and communication technology; management of land within ecological capacity; innovative market development tools (from microfinance to cooperatives to markets for ecosystem services); attention to youth and gender issues; and, sustainable consumption and production (life-cycle approaches for government and business decisions, and new indexes that inform consumer choices).

Create societal conditions for innovative approaches to sustainable development

Sustainable development is ultimately about improving people's lives. CSD-17 should champion good governance principles that create the conditions for sustainable development, including efficient management of each nation's resources and affairs such that it is participatory, equitable, accountable, transparent, and responsive to people's need. Progress on these issues, in parallel with attention to the specific sustainability issues for CSD-17, can lead to lasting change.

The sustainable development paradigm encourages governments to use its resources to address society's problems and affairs with sensitivity to environmental, economic and social outcomes. In support of these goals, MCC has approved over \$ 3.2 billion in agricultural-related investments in 17 countries, including \$ 2.2 billion specifically in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, and Tanzania. Through the Foreign Assistance Framework, the US State Department and USAID allocated \$487.7 million for agricultural programs in FY 2008 alone.

Let me conclude by highlighting three important priorities that we believe will advance the CSD-17 agenda:

- *Support for education, information technology and science* -- Sustainable development can best be pursued with international and country policy frameworks that support education and scientific research, and that encourages application of current information technology and communication. Policies combined with investments in these areas will create the conditions necessary for measureable progress on each CSD-17 theme – from advances in agriculture and rural development to creating a sustainable agricultural economy in Africa.
- *Land management based on ecological capacity and property rights* – Secure access to and sound management of land resources are the foundation for sustainable economic development with poverty reduction. We have increasing scientific capability to understand the ecological capacity of land for different uses, and how to manage lands within these limits. We also understand how effective policy and administration of property rights is core to achieving secure access to and sustainable management of land resources. CSD should build capacity for land planning and management based on ecological conditions and production of ecosystem services, and expand capacity building on property rights.

- *Innovation and empowerment* – Fostering an enabling environment for sustainable development is vital to success. CSD should support capacity building for innovative entrepreneurs, promising new IT tools, and empowerment, with special attention to women, youth communities, and local institutions. Capacity building at the local level will be essential for successful implementation of the CSD-17 efforts.

Appendix: Strategic Case Studies

1. Education, Research and Science – *to create solutions for sustainable development*

Agriculture

Research and education on sustainable agriculture: The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program works to increase knowledge about, and help farmers and ranchers adopt practices that are profitable, environmentally sound, and good for communities. Small grants are awarded through a competitive process for research, professional development and educational opportunities, and for farmers and ranchers to test innovative ideas and share the results with their neighbors. Projects address crop and livestock production and marketing, stewardship of soil and other natural resources, economics and quality of life.

Rural development

Collaborative research on sustainable agriculture and natural resource management: The US encourages universities to collaborate with host country institutions to carry out integrated, multidisciplinary research. One excellent example initiated by USAID is the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program (SANREM CRSP) that promotes stakeholder empowerment and improved livelihoods through the discovery, organization, and dissemination of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management knowledge. Currently SANREM manages five long-term research activities in Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Mexico, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam. Activities include: technological innovation to reduce risks associated with climate change; new farming systems for marginal agricultural lands; forest management policies to ensure long-term sustainability; business models for African smallholders; public-private partnerships that protect water and other natural resources; and payments for ecosystem services.

Land

Plans for land use and management based on ecological potential and soil quality:

Sustainable development can best be guided by local, regional and national land use plans. Sustainable uses of land depend on the land's long-term potential to support ecosystem services, and on the current status of the land relative to its long-term soil potential. Land use planning processes can be improved by increasing access to soil information and integrating scientific and indigenous knowledge. The US has adopted the land-potential-based ecological site system for US rangelands, which use soil maps as the spatial framework. Several scientific advances since Agenda 21 support this approach, including a global soil map that is easily accessible and the growing field of 'soil quality', which provides a framework for the integration of indigenous and scientific knowledge.

Maintenance of soil quality through conservation tillage and crop residue management:

Sustained crop production can be achieved only through careful maintenance of the quality of soil. In most agricultural systems, conservation tillage combined with crop residue management provides many advantages over conventional moldboard plow systems that turn over the soil. Advantages include reduction of soil, increased water infiltration and soil moisture, increased

soil carbon, improvements in soil quality and structure, enhanced biological (e.g., earthworm) activity, and increased soil aeration, reduced runoff of fertilizers, pesticides, and sediment (which improves water quality), energy savings, and increases in farmer profit (through reduced costs of energy for plowing and increased yields). The widespread adoption of crop residue management and conservation tillage in the U.S. (about 60% of cropland) has resulted from education, public policies and programs, and economics.

Drought

Research to overcome barriers to micro-irrigation: Micro-irrigation has great potential for improving irrigation efficiency and nutrient management, but continued research is needed to overcome barriers to adoption on an international scale. Micro-irrigation provides many unique agronomic (and water and energy conservation) benefits over traditional irrigation. A coordinated research program within US government and universities may help expand the use of micro-irrigation, which can save money for farmers and reduce environmental impacts.

Desertification

Dryland health assessment: A protocol for rapid evaluations based on local and scientific knowledge: In 1997, the US National Research Council recommended the development of new rangeland assessment protocols that could be used to guide policy and management for multiple objectives, including livestock production, watershed protection and wildlife. In response, an interagency team of scientists developed a qualitative assessment protocol “Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health” that integrates local and scientific knowledge. Seventeen easily observable indicators are used together with optional quantitative measurements to generate baseline assessments of land health. A soil and climate-specific “reference sheet” ensures that land is always evaluated with respect to its true potential. The reference sheet integrates local and scientific knowledge. This protocol is now being used to inform policy and management at locally on ranches on a national scale.

Africa

Improved agricultural management practices: Ridge tillage has improved food production and water capture in the Sahel of West Africa. In the Sahel, ridge tillage (*Aménagement en Courbes de Niveau* or ACN) provides an alternative soil management system that increases rainfall capture, crop yields, biodiversity and drinking water supplies, and reduces drought risk for crops. Ridge tillage has resulted in: increased yields of millet, sorghum, peanuts, cotton and maize by 20 to 50 percent; increased soil carbon, which further stabilizes and increases yields, as well as sequesters atmospheric carbon in the soil; improved biodiversity; and recharge of groundwater due to decreased rainfall runoff. Improved soil management and water capture help increase agricultural productivity and has a real, measurable impact on their livelihood of Sahel farmers. Technology of this type must be appropriate to the specific agro-ecosystem and culture of the area, and benefits must substantially outweigh costs. Researchers from four countries will continue to quantify the effects of ridge tillage on crop production, soil carbon sequestration and groundwater recharge, and assist in dissemination of the technology to other farmers in the Sahel. A sustained effort to spread the technology to other countries in the Sahel is also ongoing.

2. Information Exchange and Communication -- *to increase two-way communication on scientific information, user needs, and markets and economic conditions*

Agriculture

Extension services to get information to people: The U.S. Cooperative Extension System is the largest non-formal educational system in the world, which has served millions of clients in the areas of commodity production; food preservation and storage; food safety; natural resource management; farm management; small business development; livestock management and health; sustainable agriculture; public policy and regulatory compliance; aquaculture; horticulture; diversity; food and nutrition; community asset building; international programs; and life skills and leadership for young people through 4-H. New extension priorities include geospatial technologies, disaster relief, global climate change, financial security, and workforce development. A new web-based approach (“eXtension,” pronounced e-extension) – was launched last year.

Rural development

Technology to improve financial services for rural populations: Expanding access to finance in rural areas is critical for sustainable development, yet challenging due to transaction costs associated with dispersed populations and weak or missing infrastructure. The use of new technologies to reach rural populations can yield a variety of benefits to finance-providers and their customers. If implemented in a cost-effective and customer-friendly manner, technologies such as ATMs, Point-of-Sale mechanisms, and Smart Cards can reduce transaction costs and expand the financial products and services. Use of appropriate technologies can improve access to rural financial services, including credit, savings, payments, and remittance receipts. Our foreign assistance programs (USAID and MCC) will continue to promote these relatively low-cost technologies. It is critical to work closely with host country governments to help develop an appropriate regulatory environment – one that is responsible, but does not stifle development of the new sector through over-regulation.

Land

Information to better secure land rights and enable investment: In Madagascar, the MCC is supporting investments in GIS-based graphic information tools which overlay boundary information regarding land rights issued by distinct government entities onto digitized aerial photographs. In the new system, regional authorities and local governments will use a single land rights map tool for land tenure management. Better and more accessible graphic information documenting land tenure reduces land conflicts, improves environmental stewardship, yields a more effective and more transparent tool for economic development planning, and enables publicly available information to drive better governance. For example, some local governments are exploring ways to link their new local land rights maps to their land tax collection systems, and the maps are also generating a venue for the land tenure and environment ministries to improve their operational coordination.

Drought

Putting earth observation science and technology into practice, SERVIR system: Natural resource managers and decision-makers in developing countries often lack access to satellite data and mapping information to analyze problems and formulate solutions. Earth observation and mapping technologies, can be used to address issues related to agriculture, biodiversity, climate change, disasters, ecosystems, energy, health, water, and weather. The SERVIR system leverages satellite resources and integrates satellite data with geospatial information. Previously inaccessible data is now available via the internet, along with decision-support tools for interpreting the data, online mapping, and a three-dimensional, interactive visualization of the earth. Operational since 2005, the SERVIR system has been used to monitor the weather, forest fires, and ecological changes, as well as respond to severe events such as red tides, tropical storms, and flooding. SERVIR was initiated for Central America, but is expanding to Africa where it will link with the well-established Famine Early Warning Network (FEWS-Net).

Desertification

Management of natural resources and desertification in Africa: In Namibia, wildlife-based enterprises (mostly in the tourism sector) managed by rural Namibian communities contributed to significant increases in both rural revenues and large mammal populations. USAID's "Life in a Finite Environment" (LIFE) program in Namibia was initiated in 1993 with the World Wildlife Fund to assist the Government of Namibia provide rural poor with economic opportunities through wildlife- and veldt-based enterprises. Today, 50 member-managed Conservancies cover 14.4% of Namibia's land surface, home to 12.8% of the population. Animal populations have increased for a number of large mammals (elephants, oryx, kudu, cheetah, springbok, and wildebeest). The proportion of women on the Conservancies committees grew from 30% to 37% between 2003 and 2006. In this example, rural people built opportunities using innovative natural resources management technologies to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of climatic changes, while pulling themselves out of poverty and up the economic ladder.

Africa

Creating markets and market access via communication networks: USAID supports a variety of projects in West and East Africa that use information and communications technology to improve regional markets; improve market access for smallholder farmers; and, increase food security by linking together existing regional efforts to generate, disseminate and make commercial use of market information. In East Africa, the Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network (RATIN) combats food insecurity, enabling more poor households to buy food by informing them about which markets have affordable and competitive prices. The West Africa system is Tradenet. RATIN and Tradenet use a variety of technologies to link buyers and sellers, including cell phones, radio, TV, print media and the Internet. Better information and communication technology can supply traders with improved early warning marketing and trade information that lead to more efficient and competitive transactions in food trade between surplus and deficit regions in East Africa.

Small Island Developing States

Continued technology transfer and capacity building for Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS): Tsunamis are the most difficult of all the natural hazards to prepare for, detect, analyze, and warn against. During the two-and-a-half years following the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the USAID (with other U.S. government agencies) worked with the international community, governments, communities, and other partner organizations to strengthen the region's capacity to detect and respond to tsunamis and other natural hazards. The USG efforts helped establish protocols and standards for regional warning system interoperability. Accomplishments to date include: installation of detection systems; upgrading of communication networks; adoption of policies and procedures to ensure that tsunami advisories are disseminated rapidly and accurately; training of thousands of people. This system now provides a foundation of critical importance to Small Island Developing States in the Indian Ocean, but will require additional technology transfer and capacity building to ensure the tsunami warning system becomes and remains fully operational.

3. Local empowerment – *to help local people and institutions make sound sustainable development decisions*

Agriculture

“One-stop information” on sustainability for farmers and ranchers: One important way to encourage adoption of sustainable agriculture practices is to provide tailored technical assistance that is free, up-to-date, and easy to understand. Having a “one-stop” approach simplifies access to the latest information on production practices, alternative crop and livestock enterprises, innovative marketing, organic certification, and highlights of local, regional and national sustainable agriculture activities. In the US, the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service (ATTRA) is a unique service provided through a public/private partnership that offers a “one-stop shop” for farmers and ranchers -- the only national program to provide one-on-one technical assistance on sustainable agriculture and marketing to all 50 states.

Expanded credit -- Loan guarantees for private-sector agricultural development: USAID uses the Development Credit Authority to issue partial credit guarantees to encourage lending by financial institutions in developing countries. The inability of creditworthy borrowers and profitable businesses to obtain critically needed financing to access credit can diminish job opportunities, stifle expansion of local businesses, and prevent investment in inputs, especially in the agricultural sector. Worldwide to date, more than \$1.3 billion in domestic financing has been made available through USAID-guaranteed loans, over \$250 million of which has gone to the agricultural sector. On average, for each dollar USAID spends, local financial partners lend over \$30 dollars in private capital. The unwillingness of banks in developing countries to lend on the basis of potentially profitable business and investment plans, rather than collateral, can be overcome by partial loan guarantees. To make these guarantees truly effective and sustainable, they should be coupled with technical assistance to improve both borrower and lender skills to reduce the risk of loan default. This change in banking practice creates true sustainability that harnesses the strength of existing local financial resources.

Rural development

Cooperatives -- member-owned and market-oriented: Agricultural co-ops are a successful rural development model that allows for increased economic benefits and the ability for members to direct and control their own development. Cooperatives (co-ops) are member-owned, democratic, community-based businesses. The USAID Cooperative Development Program strengthens the development of cooperative systems in developing countries and emerging democracies by utilizing the expertise and resources of long-established U.S. cooperative organizations, their members, and volunteers. Current focus is on credit, housing, agribusiness, technology transfer, democratic institutions, rural telecommunications and electrification, private enterprise development, and insurance protection sectors. The peer-to-peer approach between established cooperatives in the U.S. and those in developing countries ensures that practical solutions are found to on-the-ground implementation problems.

Encourage youth development through a “learn-by-doing” approach: 4-H programs (the four “H’s” stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health) seek to promote positive youth

development, facilitate learning, and enhance quality of life by encouraging youth to work in their communities. Though a major focus has historically been on agriculture, 4-H today encourages members to learn about many topics, such as youth leadership, youth-adult partnership, geographic information systems, and public speaking. The 4-H program in U.S. has helped develop citizenship, leadership, and life skills of youth through mostly experiential learning programs. The 4-H program model, run by the US Department of Agriculture, can be adapted to different countries to fit the unique and specific goals of their youth and culture. The 4-H International Toolkit is a global education resource designed to be a “start up” tool for countries wishing to begin 4-H-like youth development programs in their own communities, towns, cities or countries.

Land

Gender and property rights: giving women a place at the table: Women’s access to land and natural resources has been recognized as an important development issue, touching on issues of justice and economic empowerment. Secure property rights for women can alter income opportunities, the dynamics of intra-household decision making, and women’s overall position in the household and community. The Living In a Finite Environment (LIFE) Project was initiated as part of a regional USAID program on natural resource management, with a goal to support existing initiatives to devolve resource rights to local communities and to promote sustainable natural resource management on communal land. A particular strength of the LIFE project was that it consciously promoted women’s participation and empowerment as part of the strategy for strengthening the community-based conservancies that were established to manage natural resources. As a result, the conservancies better considered women’s interests when developing resource management plans, and women’s access and use rights to resources were strengthened. USAID continues to refine approaches to land and property rights programming such that gender considerations are integrated into programming design and are an inherent objective of programming interventions.

Empowerment Through Recognition of Local Land Rights: A USAID-sponsored program has been working with East Timor’s government to help it develop land policies and laws to establish clear land tenure and property rights. An important step in that process was to study how land rights are exercised by communities themselves. Government recognition of such traditional systems can help formalize and improve them. With a legal basis for the system, participants have an outside forum to air grievances, and investors can identify the legally recognized representatives for negotiations and contracts. This encourages the community and the traditional owner to manage their resource in a sustainable way and protect it for future generations.

Incentives and technical assistance for conservation on agricultural lands: Targeted conservation programs can help farmers and ranchers meet environmental challenges on their land. Keys to success include a focus on national environmental priorities (such as water quality, soil erosion, or wetland protection), deploying a range of options for financial incentives, and provision of technical assistance. To get high farmer participation, voluntary incentive programs depend upon making payments large enough to offset the costs of implementing the improved practices or for production that may be lost. In the US, natural resources conservation programs (e.g., Conservation Reserve Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program) help

farmers reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters. Public benefits include enhanced natural resources that help sustain agricultural productivity and environmental quality while supporting continued economic development, recreation, and scenic beauty.

Green infrastructure helps communities balance conservation and development goals:

“Green infrastructure” is the natural life support system of strategically planned and managed network of wilderness, parks, greenways, conservation easements, and working lands with conservation value. These areas support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources, and contribute to the health and quality of life for communities and people. In the U.S., the growing interest in green infrastructure is helping communities identify which lands to conserve and which lands would best accommodate development. One example of how green infrastructure can be encouraged is the research and technical assistance provided by USDA’s National Agroforestry Center. Agroforestry intentionally combines agriculture and forestry to create integrated and sustainable land-use systems. Agroforestry takes advantage of the interactive benefits from combining trees and shrubs with crops and/or livestock, through practices such as alley cropping, forest farming, riparian forest buffers, silvopasture, and windbreaks.

Drought

Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS Net) – The USAID funded FEWS Net program collaborates with international, regional and national partners to provide timely and rigorous early warning and vulnerability information on food security issues. FEWS Net professionals in Africa, Central America, Haiti, Afghanistan and the US monitor and analyze relevant data and information in terms of its impacts on livelihoods and markets to identify potential threats to food security. Once these issues are identified, FEWS Net uses a suite of communications and decision support products to help decision makers act to mitigate food insecurity.

Desertification

Community-based natural resource management: Drawing on experience gained during the 1930’s dust bowl era in the US, and during the great Sahel droughts of the 1970’s, USG foreign assistance programs encourage community-based natural resource management to improve land productivity and provide economic opportunities for communities facing recurring drought and desertification. USAID and its development partners focus on (a) bringing about policy and institutional reforms that transfer resource rights and management authorities from the government to rural communities, (b) offering organizational and enterprise management training that help communities manage resources according to democratic and business principles, and (c) supporting action research that pioneer natural forest regeneration and soil and water conservation. These experiences demonstrate the transformational potential of a rural population empowered by greater rights.

Africa

Gender-informed nutrition and agriculture activities to combat hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition: When given access to and control of increased household resources, women

have shown that they will use these resources to improve the well-being of their families, especially their children. The USAID Gender-Informed Nutrition and Agriculture Alliance (GINA), implemented in Uganda, Mozambique and Nigeria, has proven effective in reducing hunger and poverty. The program employs a gender-focused, community-based approach to improving household food and nutrition security, with a particular emphasis on the well-being of children under five. The focus on gender roles has enhanced the status of women as producers and processors of food. As a result, women's control over their assets as well as the size of their assets increased. Women's mastery of new technologies introduced by GINA improved their management, negotiating and marketing skills.

Building agricultural value chains: Attention to agricultural value chain and market facilitation can reduce costs of agricultural inputs and create new jobs. The USAID-funded Production, Finance and Technology (PROFIT) project revitalized the agricultural inputs industry for Zambia's smallholder farmers using a value chain and market facilitation approach. The program helped firms market products to smallholders, by: demonstrating the large untapped value of smallholder markets; redesigning input firm business models to make them more cost effective; and, shifting from a product focus (selling inputs) to a service focus (selling services and advice). Future activities are planned to: assist commercial firms to manage growing distribution networks; accelerate the shift to service provision and other innovations.

Small Island Developing States

Integrated strategies for protecting whole water ecosystems: Protecting coral reefs by stabilizing hillsides in Jamaica offers a useful case study. Eighty percent of Jamaica's land surface is hilly or mountainous, and is extremely vulnerable to land degradation, erosion, and pollution. Coastal waters are impacted by silt and nutrients that damage coral reefs. Conversion of forests to other uses and indiscriminate disposal of waste in industrial and urban areas has degraded both the island's terrestrial and marine ecosystems. A stronger link between upland watershed and coastal activities and management is needed to protect the quality of Jamaica's prized coastal waters. The USAID-funded Ridge to Reef Program has improved technologies, policies, and capacity-building for environmental management. Integrated strategies for protecting whole water ecosystems, together with local capacity building, can help set clear environmental priorities and ensure implementation of sustainable management plans. A participatory approach to setting priorities, with extensive stakeholder and community consultations, can ensure local support and ownership of needed management actions.