

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## Top U.S. Official Cites Efforts to Counter Human Trafficking

*U.S. devotes \$20 million a year to fund anti-slavery initiatives*

By Jim Fisher-Thompson  
Staff Writer

Washington — The U.S. government spends millions of dollars a year to combat the international crime of human trafficking, says Ambassador Luis CdeBaca, director of the State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Whether it is involuntary servitude, sex trafficking or debt bondage, human trafficking has become a multibillion-dollar business — “a fluid phenomenon, responding to market demands, vulnerabilities in laws, weak penalties, natural disasters, and economic and environmental instability,” CdeBaca said during a May 12 panel discussion sponsored by the Center for American Progress, a public policy research group.

CdeBaca, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton’s top adviser on human trafficking, added that “traffickers thrive in the shadows and operate in zones of impunity. The global response must not only catch and punish the traffickers but also destroy their safe havens by fighting for rule of law, security and economic empowerment.”

The United States is doing its part, CdeBaca said. “We have funded law enforcement training efforts, prevention mechanisms such as public awareness campaigns, and shelters to protect victims from their captors.” So far this year, he said, his office has received more than 400 applications for anti-trafficking grants worth \$20 million.

CdeBaca cited the annual State Department Trafficking in Persons Report, which assesses conditions in 175 countries, as a “smart power tool” in promoting greater bilateral and multilateral cooperation. “More countries have implemented legislation, trained law enforcement, raised public awareness, implemented protective mechanisms for victims and, in the end, freed people from modern slavery,” he added.

However, CdeBaca stressed that the latest report, due in June, is a “diagnostic tool ... not a rebuke. It is a road map for engagement and cooperation.” To fulfill the role of leading by example, CdeBaca said, the United States, for the first time, will also be included in the assessment, based on the same human trafficking standards used to rank and analyze the other countries in the report.

According to CdeBaca, including the United States in the human trafficking report was “essential to our efforts to implement smart-power diplomacy. Because we know that human trafficking exists in the United States, from

young runaway youths being coerced by pimps, to men, women and children being forced to pick and harvest crops in the southeastern part of the country, to immigrants being held in domestic servitude.”

As traffickers use more modern technology and methods, CdeBaca said, the international community “must be equipped and able to deal with the fluid nature of this shadowy crime.” In the coming weeks, he said, “we will be working to ensure that there is a stronger global effort to punish forced-labor offenders with criminal penalties.”

On the subject of forced labor, CdeBaca said his office recently worked with “restavek” children in Haiti. Restaveks, from the French phrase *reste avec* (stay with), are poor rural children sent to cities to work mainly as domestic servants for wealthier families. “These restaveks, 65 percent of whom are girls between the ages of 6 and 14, work excessive hours, receive no schooling or payment and are often physically and sexually abused,” he added. According to UNICEF, at least 172,000 children live as servants in Haiti.

CdeBaca said that “at the Ouanaminthe border crossing in the countryside of northeast Haiti, teams have worked hard with very limited support and infrastructure to identify children at risk of being trafficked.” However, “there are still more men, women and children — throughout the countryside and within the temporary camps — at risk of trafficking and exploitation,” he added.

Despite the challenges of post-earthquake recovery in Haiti, CdeBaca said, “we stand ready to work with the government of Haiti to put the legal safeguards in place through a new anti-trafficking law, as well as new structures that are needed to guarantee that freedom.”

## Clean Energy Focus of U.S. Official’s Trip to China, Indonesia

*China, Indonesia seek energy production without greenhouse gases*

By Phil Kurata  
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke is leading the chiefs of 29 U.S. companies involved in clean energy production to China and Indonesia in search of new markets in the fastest growing sector of the global energy market.

The Locke trade mission May 15–26 will stop in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing and Jakarta. While in Beijing, Locke also will participate in the Strategic and Economic Dialogue with Secretary of the Treasury Timothy

Geithner, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk.

U.S. exports of clean energy technologies create a win-win situation for the exporting and importing countries, Locke said.

The technologies can “help both China and Indonesia and countries all around the world grow their own economies and meet energy demand in a way that won’t put our planet and way of life at risk,” Locke said. He noted that Chinese leaders are showing growing alarm at their country’s voracious consumption of fossil fuels. In the first quarter of 2010, sales of coal and oil in China jumped 24 percent, twice the rate of the country’s economic growth, Locke said.

Indonesia has aggressive aims to increase its renewable energy production from 7 percent of generating capacity today to 15 percent by 2025, hence the invitation to the Locke trade mission to make a stop in Jakarta.

“Innovative companies like these [U.S. companies] bringing emerging technologies to a dynamic new market are going to play a big role in meeting President Obama’s ambitious goals laid out in his export initiative, because this administration understands the math,” Locke said, briefing reporters in Washington May 12. President Obama recently laid out his National Export Initiative, which calls for doubling U.S. exports and creating 2 million jobs in the next five years.

“Energy is a \$6 trillion market, and green energy is the fastest growing sector. The race to develop the new technologies the world will one day rely on is a race that this nation [United States] and all the developed nations must engage,” Locke said.

The commerce secretary said the United States seeks to become the production hub for clean energy technology, which it will export to the rest of the world. He noted that 8,000 components and 200 tons of steel are required to make one wind turbine.

In 2009, the United States exported \$8.4 billion worth of power generation equipment to China, accounting for 12 percent of all U.S. exports to China, according to the U.S.-China Business Council. Regarding U.S. exports to Indonesia, machinery accounted for 12 percent of the total in 2008, according to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. The office did not have a specific figure for power generating machinery.

Commenting on U.S. exports of high technology to China, Locke said the U.S. government is moving to eliminate restrictions on many items deemed to no longer pose a threat to U.S. security if possessed by other governments.

At the same time, the U.S. government will clamp tighter export restrictions on a shortened list of technologies considered to be essential to U.S. security. The secretary said 95 percent of all U.S. exports to China require no export license. Of the goods that do require licenses, the secretary noted that 98 percent of them are approved. In assessing U.S. trade disputes with China and Indonesia, it is important to keep in mind that the disputed items involve only a minute fraction of the total trade volume, Locke said.

### **Youth Organization Challenges Stereotypes**

*International secondary school partnerships teach cooperation, service*

By Keida Kostreci  
Staff Writer

Washington — In 2002, Jess Rimington, then a secondary school student, participated in the Children’s Earth Summit, held in conjunction with the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

As one of the U.S. students chosen to represent her country at the summit, Rimington noticed that many of the students held misconceptions about the United States. Some of the participants wanted to oust her and the other U.S. representative from the proceedings because they perceived that Americans were not committed to the goals of the conference.

“It worked out in the end, but the episode left me feeling the need to break stereotypes,” she recalls.

Rimington, now 24 and a graduate of Georgetown University in Washington, is the executive director of One World Youth Project (OWYP), an organization she founded in 2004. Its goal is to foster communication and understanding among young students around the world by encouraging community service toward achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations in 2001, set targets for reducing extreme poverty and child mortality, fighting disease epidemics and other development challenges by the year 2015.

OWYP pairs middle and secondary schools in countries including Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, the Czech Republic, Kosovo, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Turkey and the United States. Community service is included in their schools’ curriculum and through videoconferences they exchange ideas and experiences about their work toward the Millennium Development Goals. To date, 67 schools have paired up in 26 countries.

"We provide the tools to communication between the students, but the program itself is a tool to facilitate this communication, not an end," Rimington says.

Jennifer Ehidiamen, OWYP school partnership and communications director from Nigeria, says that students are excited to communicate with people from different cultures.

"They begin to understand common challenges and become globally aware," she says.

To achieve its goal, OWYP depends on partnerships with universities and their students, who give their time and efforts to facilitate contacts between younger children through so-called University Hubs.

One of these students is Kenyan-American Martine Randolph, a campus coordinator at Georgetown University. She says that the Millennium Development Goals are so broad that almost every challenge communities are facing could fall under them. This, in turn, helps the organization to fulfill its vision.

Dan Porterfield, an English professor at Georgetown University who also is the university's senior vice president for strategic development, serves on the Advisory Council for OWYP.

"I think it is an extremely powerful, affective experience for a young person to understand that there are other people in other parts of the world that have the same ideas, hopes and dreams that they have, and to be able to effectively communicate with those people," Porterfield says. "It is an essential component of education in the 21st century for students to be able to experience relationships with students from different parts of the world."

The project would not have been possible without the contribution of volunteer coordinators in other countries. One of them is Behar Xharra, a regional ambassador for OWYP, who, after studying in the United States, returned to his native Kosovo to help rebuild the country, which has a recent history of ethnic hostility and violence.

He has developed a hub at the University of Pristina in collaboration with Georgetown University. The hub has established a partnership between middle schools in Kosovo, Canada and the United States.

Xharra says one of the common challenges for his generation is to gain an understanding of different cultures, identities, ways of life and values.

"We live in such an interconnected world and are becoming more and more globalized, yet we have not been able to bridge the gap of knowledge and

understanding of one another," he says.

He believes that it is crucial for young generations to use all the existing mechanisms — including modern technology and programs such as OWYP — to learn more about one another.

"Only in this way can we become more tolerant, understanding and peaceful than all other generations," Xharra says.

### **Haiti Project Aims to Rescue Rich Culture from Earthquake Rubble**

*Smithsonian Institution-Haiti pact will preserve nation's historical record*

By Eric Green

Special Correspondent

Washington — Widespread death, destruction and desperation befell Haiti following its massive January 12 earthquake. Among the many ongoing efforts of the United States and its partners to help Haitians rebuild is a new project to rescue from under the rubble the country's rich artistic treasures that are a source of pride and sustenance to the Haitian people through difficult times.

The Smithsonian Institution-Haiti Cultural Recovery Project is designed to help Haiti restore its cultural heritage, which is part of the Haitian people's "humanity and identity," said Richard Kurin, undersecretary for history, art and culture at the Smithsonian in Washington.

Kurin, who signed a memorandum of understanding for the project with the Haitian government on April 20, said Haiti's culture is "something that has given the Haitian people strength over centuries, and certainly in the aftermath of the earthquake" helps them survive "with dignity."

Saving lives and providing food, water, medical care and shelter following the earthquake rightly has been the highest priority for the Haitian government and the international humanitarian community, Kurin said. But "Haiti's rich culture, which goes back five centuries, is also in danger and we have the expertise to help preserve that heritage," he said.

The agreement calls for the project to last 18 months to November 2011. But it will take years of additional work to repair the many cultural institutions damaged in the earthquake, such as museums, archives and libraries, and to recover architecture, sculptures, paintings, books, film and video, sound recordings and other media.

With so much Haitian culture and tradition tied to those threatened artistic masterpieces and records, the project is akin to saving Haiti's history, Kurin said. The effort includes working at the destroyed Nader Gallery in Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince, where only 1,000 of 10,000 paintings and artworks might be salvaged from earthquake-related wreckage.

Kurin said he hopes to have the Haitian people involved in the project "every step of the way" and to eventually take over the project. The goal is to have Haitians employed and trained in the recovery and restoration of Haiti's cultural heritage.

Haiti's heritage and traditions were celebrated at the Smithsonian's 2004 Folklife Festival in Washington, which marked the 200th anniversary of Haiti's independence in 1804.

#### SAVING CULTURE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Rachel Goslins, executive director of the U.S. President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, which is a partner in the project, said the effort will rescue "irreplaceable artifacts of Haiti's cultural legacy" for future generations.

"Priceless paintings will be pulled out of the rain, religious artifacts and frescoes will be excavated from rubble, and archives from five centuries of history, strife and human perseverance will be saved from mold and rot." A nation's art and history give its people a sense of identity, and once artifacts such as art works, religious icons and historic documents are destroyed, they can never be recreated or replaced, Goslins said.

To have the resources to help Haiti recover its artifacts before they are lost forever is a "great honor" for her and the United States, Goslins said.

First lady Michelle Obama, honorary chairman of the President's Committee, has been involved in and provided support for the project since its founding, Goslins said.

Also aiding in the project are other U.S. government cultural agencies, including the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

#### PRIVATE GROUPS HELPING HAITI SALVAGE ARTIFACTS

Corine Wegener, president of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, a Minnesota-based nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that is responding to Haiti's cultural preservation needs, said that after the

earthquake saving lives had to take top priority. But following that initial humanitarian response, her group, along with its U.S. partner organizations and the U.S. State and Defense departments, planned a strategy to help their colleagues in the Haitian arts community work together to organize emergency salvage and preservation assistance for what remained of Haiti's culture.

A key private donor is the New York-based Broadway League, a U.S. trade association for the theater industry, which is providing funds to start the project.

#### HONORING HAITIAN ARTISTS

Lorraine Mangones, executive director of an independent Haitian foundation called FOKAL (for La Fondation Connaissance et Liberté, or the Knowledge and Freedom Foundation), which works with the Smithsonian on identifying and rescuing private collections materials, said that while the earthquake destroyed much of Port-au-Prince and the cities of Leogane, Petit Goave and Jacmel, the disaster's victims, while in great need of humanitarian aid, "must also look ahead to the future by preserving traces of our past, which signals who we were and who we are."

Mangones said Haiti's painters, sculptors, musicians, architects, writers, dancers and craftsmen are needed in the country's recovery from the earthquake.

At the same time, she said, "we must honor them by preserving their work, their gifts to us, their testimonies of our identity, and our collective singularity as a nation."

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