

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Weekly Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

August 2, 2013

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Pakistan, U.S. Resume Strategic Talks

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer | 01 August 2013

Washington — The United States and Pakistan are resuming their Strategic Dialogue, with Secretary of State John Kerry extending an invitation on behalf of President Obama for new Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to visit the president at the White House this fall.

Kerry told journalists that the United States is committed to a long-term partnership with the Pakistani people.

“We are working closely with the new government in order to advance a shared vision of the future that is marked by peace, by stability and by prosperity,” Kerry said at the prime minister’s residence in Islamabad on August 1.

Kerry also said the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue is resuming “to foster a deeper, broader and more comprehensive partnership between our countries.”

“This revitalized dialogue will address in a realistic fashion all of the many key issues between us, from border management to counterterrorism to promoting U.S. private investment and to Pakistan’s own journey to economic revitalization.”

Strategic dialogues are significant bilateral relationships the United States shares with a select number of allies. The talks provide a means for addressing a broad range of issues, from security to energy to education and cultural exchanges.

Pakistani Foreign Affairs Adviser Sartaj Aziz told journalists at the briefing that Pakistani and U.S. leaders had intensive and frank discussions “in a very collegial atmosphere to strengthen the foundations of our friendship and to further build our partnership to achieve our shared goals in the future.”

The United States is Pakistan’s largest trading partner and a major source of foreign direct investment and economic assistance, Aziz added.

Kerry praised the election of Prime Minister Sharif as a continuation of “the march towards democracy in Pakistan.” Pakistan’s Parliament elected Sharif June 5, marking the first transfer of power from one democratically elected government to another in the country's history.

Kerry said the common interests between Pakistan and the United States outweigh any differences. He added that he came to Islamabad to speak honestly and openly

about any gap in the relationship and try to find a bridge.

Kerry also said the relationship is not defined by the threats both nations face, such as combating terrorism.

“It is about supporting the people of Pakistan and particularly helping at this critical moment for Pakistan’s economic revival,” Kerry said. “That has been a centerpiece of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s campaign, it is a centerpiece of his governing efforts, and it will be a centerpiece of our relationship.”

The partnership is about energy, education, trade and investment, he added. The United States launched an investment fund that is helping small- and medium-sized businesses to grow. The United States also is funding the rehabilitation of all four major trade routes between Pakistan and its neighbor Afghanistan, Kerry said.

Wind Power Advances in U.S. with First Offshore Lease Auction

01 August 2013

Washington — As part of the Obama administration’s comprehensive plan to move the U.S. economy toward domestic clean energy sources and cut carbon pollution, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Director Tommy P. Beaudreau July 31 held the nation’s first competitive lease sale for renewable energy in federal waters.

The provisional winner of the lease sale, which auctioned two leases for a wind energy area of 66,671 hectares offshore Rhode Island and Massachusetts for wind energy development, is Deepwater Wind New England, LLC. When built, these areas could generate enough combined energy to power more than 1 million homes, the Interior Department said.

“When you think about the enormous energy potential that Atlantic wind holds, this is a major milestone for our nation,” Jewell said.

The wind energy area is located 9.2 nautical miles south of the Rhode Island coastline and has the potential to support 3,395 megawatts of wind generation, the department said.

BOEM will hold its next competitive lease sale for offshore wind on September 4, which will auction nearly 45,648 hectares offshore Virginia, and is expected to announce additional auctions for wind energy areas offshore Massachusetts, Maryland and New Jersey later in 2013 and in 2014.

The July 31 auction is the result of a coordinated strategic plan to accelerate the development of offshore wind

resources that was unveiled in February 2011. As part of a “Smart from the Start” program for expediting commercial-scale wind energy on the federal Outer Continental Shelf, Interior identified wind energy areas well-suited for commercial development with minimal impacts to the environment and other important uses. Efforts to spur responsible development of this abundant renewable resource are part of a series of administration actions to speed renewable energy development offshore and onshore by improving coordination with state, local and federal partners.

As part of President Obama’s comprehensive Climate Action Plan, he challenged Interior to redouble efforts on the renewable energy program by approving an additional 10,000 megawatts of renewable energy production on public lands and waters by 2020.

Since 2009, Interior has approved 46 wind, solar and geothermal utility-scale projects on public lands, including associated transmission corridors and infrastructure to connect to established power grids. When built, these projects could provide more than 12,700 megawatts – enough energy to power more than 4.4 million homes, Interior said.

At the same time, under the administration’s “all-of-the-above” energy strategy, domestic oil and gas production has grown each year President Obama has been in office, with domestic oil production currently higher than any time in two decades. Natural gas production also is at its highest level ever; and renewable electricity generation from wind, solar and geothermal sources having doubled, Interior said. Combined with recent declines in oil consumption, foreign oil imports now account for less than 40 percent of the oil consumed in America – the lowest level since 1988.

“Each of these renewable energy lease sales are significant steps forward in the president’s all-of-the-above energy strategy and call for action on climate change,” Beaudreau said. “Harnessing the enormous potential of offshore wind will create jobs, increase our energy security and provide abundant sources of clean renewable power.

Native Americans Seeing Improved Access to U.S. Government

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer | 31 July 2013

Washington – As the first Americans, Indian self-governance long predated the arrival of Europeans and the expansion of U.S. law over their homelands. Through treaties and legal rulings, tribes have maintained certain rights to self-government, and improved relations with the federal government are giving them a more effective voice on issues that directly concern them.

“This country recognizes Indian tribes in the Constitution. It recognizes tribes through treaties that were ratified by Congress, and it recognizes Indian tribes through court decisions which spell out the contours of that relationship,” said Jodi Gillette, the senior policy adviser for Native American affairs at the White House. The federal government recognizes 566 tribal nations.

Through the treaties, some of which date back to the British colonial period, “tribes are treated like governments,” she said, and they interact with officials in Washington on a “government to government” basis, similar to how the U.S. government relates to individual U.S. states.

Gillette’s position was created by the Obama administration in 2009 to advise the president on the development and implementation of policies that concern Native Americans across the federal government, including Congress, the judiciary and the 15 federal agencies that implement U.S. laws.

At the White House, Gillette works closely with Charles Galbraith, the associate director of intergovernmental affairs, who serves as the primary public liaison with Indian tribes and is responsible for advising tribes on how best to navigate the vast and complex U.S. federal system to achieve their goals.

Both Gillette and Galbraith are Native Americans. Gillette is a citizen of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Galbraith is a citizen of the Navajo Nation.

Galbraith said his background helps focus his efforts to make real improvements in the daily lives of people living on Indian reservations whose everyday problems can include less access to basic services and economic opportunities.

“Outside of Washington, people in the Navajo Nation don’t care about what political party you’re with, they care about clean water and opportunities for their kids, and a good education that will allow their kids to grow up and succeed and respect their culture,” he said.

Gillette’s position is the fulfillment of a 2008 campaign promise by President Obama. In the past, “we haven’t had anybody keeping an eye on the big policy issues and how that impacts tribes. So if nobody is paying attention and nobody is aware of this unique relationship, you can do some things that have unintended consequences,” she said.

She said indigenous people around the world often have a difficult time making their voices heard and having an influence on governmental policies that affect them. But in the United States, Native Americans have been able to

gain decisionmaking positions that directly concern the interests of their communities.

“A lot of people built this path, and it wasn’t always this way for us. The people I work with in the White House make me proud all the time because we all work together to make things better,” Gillette said.

Galbraith serves essentially as the “front door of the White House to tribal leaders,” he said, and communicates with them daily. Each tribe has different circumstances, with some in better economic condition than others and some tribes that do not have their own reservation land. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the challenges facing tribes, and each tribe has unique experiences and perspectives that affect their federal budgetary and policy priorities.

“We have a lot of success stories, but there is still a lot of work to do in areas that are critical to the health and long-term viability of Indian people – economic development, health care services, energy development, protection of cultural resources and sacred sites, and of course access to the justice system,” Galbraith said.

Gillette said tribal leaders were able to consult with the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and get his support for legislative changes that allow them to request a federal emergency or disaster declaration directly from the president of the United States rather than through state governors.

The legislation was signed into law in January, and tribes can now receive a more timely response and adequate damage assessments when their lands are affected by natural disasters, she said.

President Obama is the first U.S. president to be officially adopted into a Native American tribe, becoming a member of the Crow Nation in 2008. During his presidential campaign, he promised Native Americans he would regularly meet with tribal leaders, and has kept that promise through the annual White House Tribal Nations Conference.

The conference provides tribal leaders the opportunity to interact with the president and representatives from the highest levels of his administration.

“This is really the centerpiece of our engagement with tribal governments, that every year the president will meet with tribal leaders, and it’s something that has really driven our policies,” Galbraith said.

On June 26, President Obama signed an executive order creating the White House Council on Native American Affairs to promote prosperous tribal governments. The

council convened its first meeting July 29. Galbraith said the council will work “to better coordinate how the government works together to address tribal issues.”

Gillette said the president’s approach to Native Americans “has consistently recognized that our country has a painful history in relations with tribes and a lot of that relationship in the past has been from mistreatment, harm, and there have been broken promises.”

“Our job is to turn the page on that chapter, and partner with tribes in a way that will benefit not only tribes, but this country,” she said. “I hope that we can have prospering tribal communities that are unique and have a lasting relationship that looks like a partnership and is a true partnership with [the] United States government.”

EMPOWER Program Helps Advance Disability Rights Worldwide

31 July 2013

Washington – Sixty disability and civil society organizations from 20 countries have been selected to participate in the U.S. Department of State’s Professional Fellows EMPOWER Program for 2013.

“This two-way exchange program will expand the capacity of organizations in the United States and overseas to promote inclusive communities and advance disability rights around the world, a key theme of U.S. public diplomacy efforts globally,” the State Department said in a July 30 press release.

Participating countries include Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, India, Israel, Kenya, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Nigeria, Serbia, South Korea, Tajikistan, Ukraine and the United States. EMPOWER teams will focus on a range of topics including independent living, health care, law and policy, legal aid, inclusive education, recreation and sports, access to public services, and advocacy for all persons with disabilities, the department said.

In August and September, U.S. participants will travel to their partners’ home countries to gain an understanding of disability issues in their communities. In October, international participants will be hosted in the United States by Mobility International USA and their American counterparts to collaborate on projects that promote the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities.

The participants and their U.S. hosts will gather in Washington for a three-day conference at Gallaudet University October 31–November 2 to network with other leaders in their fields and share plans for long-term programming they will implement upon their return home.

“By placing persons with disabilities at the center of the U.S. Department of State’s efforts to promote more just, equitable and inclusive societies, emerging leaders like those on the EMPOWER program have an important role to play in strengthening democracy and promoting human rights around the world,” the State Department said.

Ending Child Marriage Helps Women and Their Nations

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer | 31 July 2013

Washington — The U.S. Department of State is developing a campaign to promote the prevention of child marriage as a main principle of U.S. foreign and development policy, in keeping with a law passed in March 2013.

Policy development experts in this area explained to a Washington audience July 31 why the prevention of child marriage is critical to improving the status of women and advancing prosperity in the developing world.

“Ending this practice is not just a moral imperative, but a strategic imperative,” said Rachel Vogelstein of the Council on Foreign Relations, “because it has broad implications for U.S. foreign policy goals.”

Vogelstein is a former adviser in the State Department’s Office of Global Women’s Issues and the editor of a recent publication, *Ending Child Marriage: How Elevating the Status of Girls Advances U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives*.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported research earlier in 2013 that 14.2 million girls annually, or 39,000 daily, will marry before age 18. By 2020, 140 million girls will have married too young, WHO reports; of those, 50 million will be under the age of 15.

Research clearly shows that early marriage ends a girl’s education. Girls without education don’t become productive, high-value workers who contribute to increasing their community’s prosperity. Without education, they aren’t aware of good nutrition and health habits, and this affects the children they bear, data show. They are more likely to be victims of gender-based violence, and more than twice as likely to be beaten by their husbands as older women, according to one survey.

For those well-documented reasons, the need for U.S. attention to prevention of child marriage has taken on new importance in the State Department’s annual evaluation of human rights practices worldwide and in action plans at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

“The strategy is first and foremost about changing

attitudes,” said Caren Grown, USAID’s acting senior coordinator for gender equality and women’s empowerment. The USAID vision aims to “change the attitudes of community elders, of parents, of men, of religious leaders, of key stakeholders in the population.” Grown said U.S. efforts must align with locally based initiatives to convince communities that child marriage perpetuates poverty and inhibits national development by denying opportunities for girls and the children they’ll bear.

At the same time the United States devotes new energy to child marriage prevention, Grown said, so do agencies in the United Nations system and the universe of nonprofit organizations devoted to international development and women’s opportunities. USAID wants to coordinate strategies and resources with these organizations to maximize effectiveness.

Child marriage occurs in most of the world and can become more widely practiced as a community undergoes some form of stress, such as conflict, violence or famine. Contrary to the global trends, parents may see a short-term advantage to the family of marrying off a young daughter, perhaps even receiving a dowry.

Governments may come to recognize the adverse consequences of the practice, even when it occurs in rural or isolated areas or among certain ethnic or religious groups. For example, the average age of marriage in Bangladesh rose by about eight years as industries expanded and increased the need for a capable labor force, influencing social norms on child marriage, research showed.

Findings like that, Grown said, can influence an economic development strategy to create a skilled and educated workforce “that gives women and men opportunities that actually could be an important catalyst here.”

In India, she said, the state of Haryana implemented a “conditional cash transfer” program. The scheme identifies a population of low-income families and gives the parents of newborn girls “a bond to cash in when that girl turned 18 years of age if she is still unmarried.”

While the strategy is still being evaluated, Grown said, it appears to be a promising initiative for changing social perceptions on the value of daughters. The World Bank is conducting similar programs in sub-Saharan Africa that show promise for discouraging child marriage.

In Ethiopia and Tanzania, USAID and partners are working through existing health assistance programs to help married teenage girls with family planning and counseling.

Noting the new U.S. foreign policy directive on the issue, Vogelstein cited a building momentum to reduce the practice of child marriage. More than 250 nonprofit organizations are working on the issue around the world, she said.

Astronauts Operate Earth-Bound Rover from Orbit

30 July 2013

Washington — Scientists have used remotely operated vehicles to explore ocean depths unsafe for humans. NASA and the International Space Station (ISS) crew have run two recent experiments to create a similar capability for astronauts orbiting other planets.

In one-day tests in June and July, ISS crew members operated the K10 planetary rover on the surface of Earth hundreds of kilometers below, around a robotic test area greater than 10,000 square meters at NASA's Ames Research Center in California.

"The initial test was notable for achieving a number of firsts for NASA and the field of human robotic exploration," said Terry Fong, Human Exploration Telerobotics project manager and director of the Intelligent Robotics Group, which designed and managed the tests. "Specifically, this project represents the first fully interactive remote operation of a planetary rover by an astronaut in space."

In two tests, the ISS astronauts successfully guided the robot over rocky, lunar-like terrain and deployed a simulated antenna. The tests pushed NASA telerobotics capabilities to new levels, Fong said.

"Whereas it is common practice in undersea exploration to use a joystick and have direct control of remote submarines, the K10 robots are more intelligent," Fong said. "Astronauts interact with the robots at a higher level, telling them where to go, and then the robot itself independently and intelligently figures out how to safely get there."

The K10 is a four-wheel-drive robot that stands about 1.5 meters tall, weighs about 100 kilograms and can travel at the pace of a slow walk.

NASA accumulated engineering data from the space station, the robot and the communication links as the tests were underway for later analysis. Another test will be conducted in August as NASA works to develop an entirely new capability with the potential to assist in planetary exploration of the future.

"During future missions beyond low Earth orbit, some work will not be feasible for humans to do manually," Fong said. "Robots will complement human explorers,

allowing astronauts to perform work via remote control from a space station, spacecraft or other habitat." This projects a human presence on the potentially dangerous surface of other planets, Fong said.

These first tests are simulating the deployment of a radio antenna on the dark side of the moon from an orbiting spacecraft. That capability would allow observations into deep space without interference from Earth's atmosphere and communications.

President Obama Says Mideast Peace Is "Possible and Necessary"

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer | 29 July 2013

Washington — As Israeli and Palestinian officials gather in Washington to discuss meetings about a future final peace status, President Obama says Middle East peace is both possible and necessary, and that Martin Indyk will serve as the U.S. special envoy for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

"The most difficult work of these negotiations is ahead, and I am hopeful that both the Israelis and Palestinians will approach these talks in good faith and with sustained focus and determination," Obama said in a July 29 statement.

He said the United States stands ready to support both parties throughout the process "with the goal of achieving two states, living side by side in peace and security."

The president said that during his March visit to the Middle East, he had witnessed a "profound desire for peace among both Israelis and Palestinians."

Indyk, who previously served as the U.S. ambassador to Israel and assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs, is bringing "unique experience and insight" to the role of special envoy that "will allow him to contribute immediately as the parties begin down the tough, but necessary, path of negotiations," Obama said.

Speaking with Indyk at the State Department July 29, Secretary of State John Kerry said the ambassador is respected by both sides, and has a deep appreciation both for the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the "art of U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East."

"Ambassador Indyk is realistic. He understands that Israeli-Palestinian peace will not come easily and it will not happen overnight," Kerry said. "But he also understands that there is now a path forward and we must follow that path with urgency. He understands that to ensure that lives are not needlessly lost, we have to ensure that opportunities are not needlessly lost."

The secretary praised Israeli and Palestinian leaders for their willingness to make difficult decisions and advocate for the discussions among their own governments in the face of tough criticism.

“Many difficult choices lie ahead for the negotiators and for the leaders as we seek reasonable compromises on tough, complicated, emotional and symbolic issues,” Kerry said.

“I think reasonable compromises [have] to be a keystone of all of this effort. I know the negotiations are going to be tough, but I also know that the consequences of not trying could be worse,” he said.

Indyk said his appointment as special envoy is “a daunting and humbling challenge, but one that I cannot desist from.”

Despite public skepticism over the prospects for peace, there is also a yearning for it, he said, and with U.S. support “we may yet be able to tell ... young Israelis and Palestinians who yearn for a different, better tomorrow that this time we actually made it,” Indyk said.

U.S. Supports Asia’s Balance of Economic, Environmental Goals

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer | 26 July 2013

Washington — Asian governments are showing heightened concern about addressing environmental problems and preserving existing natural resources, according to assessments presented to a U.S. Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee July 24.

At the same time, U.S. government agencies and international development agencies are working to support regional decisionmaking that preserves the region’s environmental resources as the nations pursue greater economic growth and prosperity.

“Some countries in the region have lost 70 to 90 percent of their natural wildlife habitat to agriculture and infrastructure development, deforestation, land degradation and climate change effects,” testified Daniel Reifsnyder, deputy assistant secretary for oceans and international environmental and scientific affairs at the U.S. State Department.

Reifsnyder said the United States is engaged in partnerships and assistance efforts to help East Asian governments make sustainable choices in decisions regarding climate change, air quality, deforestation, freshwater supplies, sanitation, wildlife trafficking and marine preservation activities.

In the last decade, Southeast Asia had one of the world’s

highest rates of deforestation, a practice with several adverse environmental impacts. Forests are leveled with fire, so smoke and ash emissions diminish air quality and contribute to global warming. Denuding the landscape can lead to land erosion and diminish water quality.

Reifsnyder said the United States is participating in a World Bank program for the region, Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, known as REDD+. The State Department official said Indonesia is a leader in this regional initiative, noting that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has committed to making significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

“The United States supports additional work on REDD+ in Indonesia in areas such as forest mapping and monitoring, peatland emissions and fires; low emissions rural development options and measuring, reporting and verifying emissions,” said Reifsnyder.

The United States is involved in other regional forestry conservation activities, which focus on restraining illegal logging.

The region’s water issues demand careful management to balance competing interests, officials said. Clean water supplies and sanitation must be extended to large populations lacking them without doing damage to watershed sustainability. Construction of massive dam projects is a typical solution to these problems, but projects elsewhere have shown that damming water supplies can harm downstream populations and cause other unintended damage.

Dam projects are now under consideration on the Mekong River, a waterway supporting the lives of 70 million people. The projects could threaten livelihoods and sustainable use of the resource but also provide opportunities to “promote cooperation and regional integration,” said Reifsnyder.

“In the case of the Mekong, we believe greater U.S. diplomatic and technical engagement could help strengthen existing regional institutions and drive the region toward better decisionmaking around large-scale infrastructure,” Reifsnyder said.

The United States helped the five nations in the Mekong basin form the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) in 2009 to boost regional cooperation on environment, health and infrastructure decisions. The Mekong River Commission, a U.N. body formed 50 years ago, provides another forum for regional talks on sustainable resource use.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is working through the LMI to identify environmental, economic and social effects of climate change in the

region, said Deputy Assistant Administrator Gregory Beck.

“The project also assists highly vulnerable populations in ecologically sensitive areas to increase their ability to adapt their livelihoods to climate change impacts on water resources, agricultural systems, biodiversity and ecosystems,” Beck said.

In Indonesia, USAID is working with the government to bring safer water and sanitation to more than 2 million people. Beck also described significant progress toward safe water systems in the Philippines, with loan and construction projects underway that will potentially help another 2 million people.

With this regional activity underway and future sustainability in the balance, Senator Ben Cardin, a Democrat from Maryland who chaired the hearing, said Singapore stands out as a leader that “has invested in proactive government reforms to implement best practices in environmental planning, despite water scarcity, population growth and rising sea level challenges.”

Cardin described Singapore as a “cleaner, greener, and more prosperous” nation that can contribute greatly to a regional dialogue on preserving environmental resources while promoting economic development.”

Multilateral Banks Honored for Excellence in Development

26 July 2013

Washington – The United States recognized exceptional development projects and initiatives undertaken by the multilateral development banks at the second annual Development Impact Honors ceremony, held in Washington on July 25.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew presented the awards before an audience of policymakers and leaders in development and business.

“The projects we are honoring today are new high-impact approaches to international development, and they reinforce our values – whether it is developing clean energy sources, advancing women’s economic equality, promoting food security or helping the most vulnerable populations,” Lew said, according to a Treasury Department news release the same day.

“There has never been a more critical time to focus on international development,” Treasury Department Under Secretary Lael Brainard, who also spoke at the ceremony, said in a blog post the same day.

“Multilateral development banks (MDBs), in particular, exemplify the critical role that development initiatives play in promoting economic growth and reducing global poverty,” Brainard said.

Projects were judged in a number of areas, including their effectiveness, the focus and quality of their work and their success in overcoming development challenges. Many of the projects specifically focus on empowering vulnerable groups such as women and youth through programs that provide economic opportunities and health support.

The following honorees were selected by an interagency group of senior U.S. officials from more than 40 development projects nominated for the award:

- Côte d’Ivoire Project – Emerging from Conflict – Gender-Based Violence Recovery (African Development Bank). This project helped to bring the problem of gender-based violence out of the shadows and allowed more effectively coordinated care for victims. It used a holistic approach to modify social perceptions, change behaviors and involve men in the fight against gender-based violence. It directly assisted 3,500 women and girls and reached 1.5 million people to advocate against perpetrators of gender-based violence. It supported 250 women’s associations that are now generating economic opportunities for women.
- Uganda Community Agricultural Infrastructure Program (African Development Bank and International Fund for Agricultural Development). By involving communities in the planning, building and maintenance of new agricultural infrastructure, this project took an innovative approach. It used local contractors, built community capacity, created jobs for rural youth and women and collected fees to fund community maintenance crews. It helped build nearly 4,000 kilometers of rural roads, 74 rural markets and scores of agro-processing units such as coffee hullers and maize mills. It raised farmers’ incomes, cut transportation costs and travel times, and reduced post-harvest losses.
- Bhutan Green Power Project (Asian Development Bank). This project exemplifies a well-designed initiative that simultaneously meets the goals of economic growth, rural development and environmental protection. Bhutan partnered with the private sector to create a hydropower facility with no dam or reservoir, to replace fossil fuel-generated power with clean sources of energy. It extended hydroelectricity grids to more than 8,700 rural households and facilities and installed solar power systems for schools, health clinics and community centers in remote, mountainous terrain.
- Mexico Training and Employment Program, Phase II (Inter-American Development Bank). This project enlisted

private employers into a program to provide on-the-job training, providing hundreds of thousands of people with stipends for training, helping obtain employment for 1.5 million people and creating a website where 7 million could search for information on employment or training. Approximately 70 percent of the beneficiaries were women, and the project also provided training for vulnerable groups such as youth, older workers and disabled workers.

- Post-Earthquake Assessment Project – Haiti (World Bank Group). This project helped re-establish basic services following the disastrous effects of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. It relied on about 300 national civil servants, training them to conduct expert-level assessments while retaining them under the authority of the Haitian Ministry of Public Works to promote the long-term strengthening of national institutions. These individuals rapidly evaluated more than 400,000 buildings, paving the way for reoccupation and rehabilitation of the devastated region.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov>)