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PRESS RELEASE

The U.S. Embassy Grants US\$ 54, 290 to Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Groups

On Thursday, September 24, 2009, Chargé d'Affaires Virginia M. Blaser of the Embassy of the United States of America, Mauritius, signed grant agreements with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups on behalf of the United States Government aimed at funding eleven Self-Help projects, two of which are also being assisted through the Democracy and Human Rights Fund.

The Ambassador's Special Self Help Program was established in 1968 by the United States government with the intent to improve basic economic, social, and environmental conditions at the community level and encourage grass roots initiatives to solve problems.

Self Help activities, by definition, involve a significant contribution by beneficiaries of the funds, while the U.S. Embassy contribution serves primarily to assist those beneficiaries in achieving their goals. The Democracy and Human Rights Fund Program operates on this same principle of helping dynamic organizations advance democracy and human rights through funding effective and sound programs.

List of beneficiaries 2008-2009:

Self Help allocation - \$30,000

DHRF allocation - \$24,290

1. **Shelter for Women and Children in Distress**
Funds will be used for the setting up of a vegetable garden
2. **EDYCS Epilepsy Group**
Funds will be used for the provision of residential training for women suffering from epilepsy, as community leaders, to help them fight social discriminations and stigmas.
3. **Group Hope** (to Note: also benefitted from DHRF funds)

Enhancing powers of expression of some 150 neglected or abandoned children in rural remote areas.

4. **Kids and Teens Association**
Funds will be used to purchase bookshelves, learning tools and books for ZEP school children, after school hours to improve educational level.
5. **Cité Briquetterie in Collaboration with Women**
Funds will purchase equipment and learning tools for a day care centre for children after school hours.
6. **Groupe Elan**
Funds will be used to set up an integrated agricultural farming unit. Beneficiaries will be ex-detainees and ex-drug addicts and their families.
7. **The Warm Heart Foundation**
Funds will be used to partly finance the setting-up a primary school in the area of Petite Rivere Noire, one of the pockets of poverty.
8. **Centre D'Education et de Développement pour les Enfants Maltraités (CEDEM)**
Funds will be used to conduct three preparatory meetings, two residential workshops for 15 mothers and 3 staff with a view to improve parenting skills of mothers, and family members who have a risk of violence.

Cedem has also obtained DHRF funding for a program to raise public awareness and train teachers on how to deal with abused children with special needs.
9. **Prévention, Information et Lutte contre Le Sida (PILS)**
Funds will be used to empower 50 people living with HIV through training sessions about their rights, provision of therapeutic games, nutritional sessions to help them ask for their right to access quality service.
10. **L'Association pour la Promotion de la Sante (APSA)**
Funds will be used to provide healthcare education network on diabetes across the island.
11. **Association des Parents de Déficients Auditifs**
Funds will be used to provide parents of deaf children with the opportunity to learn the language of sign through the medium of DVDs.