

## **CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING ON BURUNDI**

### **STATEMENT OF THE U.S. DELEGATION**

**Paris, France**

**October 27, 2009**

The United States joins with the other development partners of Burundi in congratulating the Government and people of Burundi for the remarkable progress you have made in establishing a base for sustainable development under the most trying of circumstances. In the short nine years following the signing of the Arusha Accord, you have succeeded in consolidating peace, putting in place the instruments of democratic governance, and reversing the disappointing performance of your economy to which the long civil war subjected you. Despite the difficulties you have succeeded where many other nations facing similar challenges have failed. We honor your commitment to bring lasting peace to the Burundian people and pledge to stand by your side as you progress forward to social equity and economic growth.

Our vision of Burundi is of a nation-state whose future potential is defined by the creativity and dynamism of its people. Burundi can and will find its niche among the nations of Eastern and Central Africa where it will flourish in partnership with its neighbors for the betterment of its people. Economic progress and social justice will evolve in Eastern and Central Africa as Burundi and its neighbors mold an economic and political relationship which supports systems which harmonize shared goals, seek enlightened dispute resolution, and create economic opportunity through accommodation and joint effort. One day Eastern and Central Africa will succeed in creating an economic zone that is capable of producing products and services that will successfully compete in world markets on par with other economic zones in Asia and the Americas. The successful models are there for us to examine – Singapore, Botswana, Dubai, South Korea, and Indonesia. There is a formula to be discovered that will enable Burundi to realize its comparative advantage. It is the privilege and duty of all of us to help find and finance that formula.

The real work of development, as we all know, begins at home. Establishing functioning democratic systems and responsive public and private sector institutions will provide the stimulus needed to mobilize the energy and shared goodwill that focus Burundi's attention on creating increased employment and incomes through trade – internal and regional; and investment -- foreign and domestic. Free, fair, and credible elections in 2010 will demonstrate to Burundians, and to the world that Burundi is governed through the consent of its people. This will help Burundi to find methods to capitalize on the diversity of opinions and interests of its population and consequently achieve its development agenda with more vigor. Your international partners too are able to support you more effectively in the absence of contentious domestic debates over human rights records, political disarray and disregard for rule of law. Therefore we will support the efforts of the Government of Burundi to create a political and

economic governance environment that allows democracy in all its aspects to flourish. This will in turn, help us to support Burundi in meeting its development objectives. In this context as well, we urge Burundi to address general issues of prolonged pretrial detention, judicial independence and efficiency, and impunity of security forces. Specifically, we encourage the quick resolution of outstanding human rights issues such as the murder of Ernest Manirumva and the Muyinga massacre.

The U.S. commitment of \$9.7 million to support the Priority Assistance Program (PAP) presented at the Donor Roundtable of May 2007 has been quadrupled. In Fiscal Year 2008, U.S. commitments to development exceeded \$18 million and in Fiscal Year 2009 total commitments exceeded \$38 million.

With these resources we will continue our support for economic growth through programs that support: Agribusiness development specifically to the coffee, horticulture, and dairy value chains; the establishment -- with the financial support of the Dutch Government -- of a business incubator to promote entrepreneurship; strengthening the Faculty of Agriculture and Agribusiness at the University of Ngozi; and a loan guarantee program to encourage a commercial bank to provide credit to the agriculture sector. In the health sector USAID is initiating two major new multi-year programs to: help prevent malnutrition in pregnant women and children under two years old; and support the national malaria program of the Ministry of Health in conjunction with assistance provided by other international donors. These programs will be complemented by our continuing work in maternal-child health, HIV/AIDS, and family planning. In support of the Government's efforts to promote good governance we will continue our work with other donors in support of land tenure reform, provide technical assistance to the Ministry in charge of Good Governance and Privatization, and provide assistance to the Independent Election Commission and civil society to help prepare Burundi for the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections of 2010.

An Obama Administration Fiscal Year 2010 budget request to Congress is seeking approval for development commitments to Burundi in excess of \$47 million. While that amount cannot be pledged under our laws in advance of completion of the congressional appropriation process and before formal agreements are negotiated with the Government of Burundi, our intentions are clear. As long as Burundi continues on a clear path to democracy and protects the human rights of its citizens we will continue to seek ways within our means to support your development aspirations.

Lastly, we would like to express our gratitude to the World Bank staff for hosting the Consultative Group Meeting and to the members of the Government of Burundi and the private sector for their contributions to this successful exchange. We hope it will be the first of many in a continuing effort to support the emergence of Burundi as a true development success.