



COUNTRY PROFILE



L. LARTIGUE, USAID/GUINEA

Workers in Boke, Guinea, take cashew nuts out of their hard shells. A Global Development Alliance has been formed between USAID, Kraft Foods, and Guinean partners to increase cashew production, and to allow poor rural dwellers—local farmers and their families—to reap the benefits.

OVERVIEW

Guinea's land is rich in natural resources, but its people are among the poorest in the world. The United Nations Development Program estimates that a quarter of the population is undernourished, and the average life expectancy is 49 years. The absence of free and fair elections has resulted in weak democratic institutions, unchecked corruption, and lack of government accountability. Although Guinea has been a bastion of stability relative to its neighbors, which are only now emerging from years of conflict, that stability is fragile.



To help secure Guinea's future, USAID is focusing on advancing democratic values and promoting good governance that brings improved health, education and other services to the Guinean people. USAID also supports projects aimed at promoting sustainable management of natural resources, increasing food security and rural incomes, and addressing human rights issues such as human trafficking and female genital cutting.

PROGRAMS

GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

USAID's is working in Guinea to strengthen democratic processes and institutions, fight corruption, and help national and local government become more efficient and accountable. Legislative elections (expected in 2009) and presidential elections (expected in 2010) offer opportunities for Guineans to set their country on a democratic track. The 2007 establishment of the National Independent Electoral Commission to oversee the electoral process and ensure transparency and credibility has been one of the most encouraging developments. USAID has been on the forefront of supporting elections by strengthening the Commission's management capacity, promoting civic engagement, training election officials, supporting voter education especially for women and youth, and encourage women candidates. USAID-supported voter education efforts have already reached more than a quarter of a million people.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: HEALTH

USAID seeks to improve capacity for health service delivery so that Guinea can meet its Millennium Development Goals to reduce maternal

GUINEA SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1958
Population: 8.4 million (2002)
GDP per person: \$363 (yr)

Source: U.S. Department of State

USAID IN GUINEA

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COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

and child mortality, increase contraceptive use, and maintain a low HIV/AIDS prevalence—which is now only 1.5 percent. To combat HIV/AIDS, USAID supported 21 centers, which have tested and counseled more than 26,000 people. Three hospitals now provide USAID-supported obstetric fistula care, and more than 180 women were successfully treated for fistula in 2008. USAID education efforts spurred 300 communities to publicly declare their intention to halt the practices of female genital cutting and early and forced marriages. In addition, 88 percent of Guinean children have been immunized with the diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus vaccine; 49 health centers and 728 health workers now offer family planning services; and 92,900 contraceptives have been distributed to health facilities.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: EDUCATION

Although access to education has increased in recent years, the quality of that education has fallen. Only three in ten Guineans are literate, and 85 percent of second graders are unable to read grade-appropriate texts. In 2007, USAID distributed textbooks and teaching guides to every primary school in the country, and brought adult literacy training to over 12,000 Guineans, most of them women, who have traditionally been denied equal access to education. USAID is encouraging increased community involvement in education and is strengthening management of schools. USAID is also working closely with the Ministry of Education to establish a civic education curriculum that teaches middle school students their rights and duties as citizens, as well as the value of good governance.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Small subsistence farmers account for 90 percent of Guinea's rural population. However, many of these small farmers use practices that neither conserve resources nor meet their families' food and income requirements. USAID's goal is to increase farmers' access to and use of improved agricultural technologies, market information, and land management practices to boost their productivity and incomes. In addition, USAID is working to increase farmers' participation in the decision-making processes that affect their natural resource base, agricultural production, and livelihoods. USAID has improved the capacity of 220 local organizations to make use of improved agriculture and land management practices and supported the establishment of forest co-management contracts between the Guinean government and several forest communities.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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