

BULLETIN

United Nations Development Programme
Washington Liaison Office



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The UNDP Washington Bulletin is a regular update of UNDP activities and events by the Washington Office.

UNDP RECEIVES \$19 MILLION GRANT FROM BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION Multifunctional Platform will empower woman and boost productivity in West Africa



Can one relatively small machine revolutionize women's work in rural West Africa? It already has, and now the Gates Foundation will help UNDP scale up its impact across the region.

A new four-year Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant to UNDP will establish 600 sustainable agro-enterprises in **Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal**. The initiative's centerpiece is the **Multifunctional Platform (MFP)**, an engine mounted on a chassis to which a variety of equipment can be attached, for example cereal mills, huskers, battery chargers, and carpentry equipment.

The MFPs are part of UNDP's poverty reduction and women's empowerment efforts designed to boost the productivity and income of West African women farmers using low-cost, mechanized power. As part of this project, UNDP and its extensive network of local NGOs will back targeted women's groups with literacy and management training and support.

Compared to developed countries where household chores can happen at the flick of a switch, in rural homes across Africa with no connection to the electricity grid, just preparing a meal is a laborious task for women. They spend up to six hours daily collecting firewood, fetching water, husking and pounding grain—with no time left for outside employment. Girls often perform poorly in school due to inconsistent attendance and find themselves forced to drop out to help their mothers.

The MFP takes domestic tasks like milling and husking sorghum, millet, maize and other grains—normally done with a mortar and pestle or a grinding stone—and mechanizes them, making them profitable economic activities. The platform can also generate electricity for lighting, refrigeration and water pumping, which helps provide clean water to communities along with improved health care and education services.

The benefits of the MFP have already been proven for over a decade in parts of West Africa. In Mali, for example, crushing 10 kilograms of shea nuts manually yields 3.5 kilograms of butter in eight hours in comparison to 4.5 kilograms in four and half hours using the platform. In Senegal, S. Sakho of Batantinty explains that before the platform was introduced in her village she rarely earned more than US\$55 from processing and selling shea butter. “With the platform I easily earn 100,000 CFA (US\$220) at the end of the harvest...the platform has improved my life. I spend the earnings for the children’s education and clothing,” she said.

The initiative is expected to contribute to the objectives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) regional energy access policy to meet the Millennium Development Goals, which was adopted in January 2006 with the aim of providing rural and peri-urban populations with energy services. It is hoped that the lessons learned from this initiative will serve as the basis to expand the approach across Sub-Saharan Africa, where an estimated 100 million people in rural areas could benefit.

DID YOU KNOW? UNDP’S WORK IN SOMALIA

As part of its crisis prevention and recovery work around the world, UNDP operates in Somalia under extremely difficult conditions, where it continues to play a key role in strengthening governance, bolstering the rule of law and security, and reducing poverty. While, due to the security situation, UNDP is obliged to run its operations from the Kenyan capital of Nairobi the majority of its 270 staff are based in sub-offices in Somalia itself. UNDP is represented in nine locations throughout Somalia, with key offices in Mogadishu, Garowe and Hargeisa. Below is an overview of UNDP’s recent work in the country.

Peace and Reconciliation

In July and August of 2007, UNDP gave technical and financial support to the National Reconciliation Congress that brought together in Mogadishu more than 2,500 delegates representing all major clans. Despite some shortcomings, the Congress created opportunities for political and social reconciliation and made possible parliamentary ratification of an amendment to the Federal Charter allowing ministerial positions to be held by non-members of parliament. As a result, the new Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Council of Ministers is now a broader and more representative body.

These efforts have complemented UNDP’s previous work, such as its facilitation of the first session of Somalia’s Transitional Federal Parliament in 2006, and its support of two key independent commissions—the Independent Federal Constitution Committee and the National Reconciliation Commission—through payment of stipends to commission members.

Strengthening the rule of law

UNDP’s strategic efforts are directed at strengthening the rule of law and security through support for the police and the judiciary. One of the main tenets of police support is capacity-building, including training on human rights and accountability as well as refurbishing training facilities and equipment such as vehicles as part of wider efforts to reactivate the Somali police force. Almost 3,000 police personnel have received UNDP-supported training to date. UNDP’s payment of stipends to members of the judiciary has allowed the administration of justice to move forward amidst crisis.

Governance and public administration

UNDP continues to offer technical assistance to key offices and ministries of the TFG, Puntland and Somaliland administrations. UNDP has been in discussions with the new TFG cabinet to determine immediate and longer term requirements, with activities to include assistance in the design of government structures and the provision of a minimum package of support to enable key institutions to perform their duties.

Local reconciliation efforts have resulted in the re-establishment of regional administrations in several areas, offering a significant peace dividend. Additionally, the constitutional process has been reinvigorated. UNDP, working in close collaboration with the UN Political Office for Somalia, is leading a consortium of international partners supporting the process.

Also, UNDP has been instrumental in drafting a gender policy and Women's Empowerment Bill stipulating 30% inclusion for women; ten district councils in Puntland have implemented the quota.

Taking stock to measure progress

Often overlooked, measuring indicators of human development is an important step in creating policies that lead reducing poverty. UNDP has completed a participatory community census for poverty assessment, mapping and monitoring, covering 7,400 settlements, 2,400 water points, 900 temporary nomadic settlements, and 8 major urban areas throughout Somalia. This produced socio-indicators and maps on livelihoods, security, access to health, and education.

For more information about UNDP's work in Somalia, click [here](#).

FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

UNDP and Fortis Bank Announce Agreements for MDG Carbon Facility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Uzbekistan, Macedonia, Yemen and Rwanda

This month UNDP and Dutch-Belgian finance group Fortis announced the first project agreements of the new MDG Carbon Facility, a joint effort to support greenhouse-gas-reducing development projects through the carbon-trading mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol. The MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) are specific 2015 targets, agreed by UN member states, for diminishing global poverty and achieving major advances in health, education, environment and equality.

Located in Uzbekistan, Macedonia, Yemen and Rwanda, the MDG Carbon Facility projects will use financing from carbon credits to benefit not only the environment, but also to further economic and social development in those countries.

The four project agreements consist of three methane capture projects located in Uzbekistan, Macedonia, and Yemen, and a renewable energy project in Rwanda. Having signed initial agreements, these projects are now undergoing a detailed due diligence process required by UNDP and Fortis.

The MDG Carbon Facility will operate within the framework of the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation, the market-based mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol that allow developed countries to meet their emission caps by purchasing carbon credits from developing country projects that contribute to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. Although these mechanisms have rapidly grown into a billion-dollar, international market for carbon credits, carbon projects have so far been limited in geographic reach, restricted mainly to the largest developing countries, and have focused primarily on technologies that generate limited benefit for long-term sustainable development.

Under the terms of the MDG Carbon Facility partnership, UNDP will help developing countries conceive projects intended to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and will ensure that these projects meet the Kyoto Protocol's agreed standards and deliver real, sustainable benefits to the environment and broader human development. Fortis will then purchase and resell the carbon credits generated by these projects. The proceeds from Fortis' purchases will provide developing countries and communities with a new flow of resources to finance much needed investment and to promote development.

The partnership between UNDP and Fortis covers an initial pipeline of projects that will generate 15 million carbon credits during the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period (2008-2012). **For more information, visit www.mdgcarbonfacility.org**

The U.S. Committee for UNDP will host a reception and program on March 31 to hear from UNDP Administrator Kemal Dervis and Fortis Bank executive Seb Walhain about the opportunities for private sector leadership in fighting climate change. For more information, please visit the U.S. Committee's website: <http://undp-usa.org/>

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UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners.

For additional information on the above news, please contact communications officer Cara Santos Pianesi at **UNDP's Washington Office** at 202.331.9130 or cara.santos@undp.org.

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