

## Development: Helping People Help Themselves

### New Challenges, New Opportunities

For the first time in history, we have the capacity to manage our world to fulfill basic human needs. Investing in a higher quality of life for everyone is not only the right thing to do, it also promises to be the foundation for a better, safer world. Even though our ability to make a difference is greater today than it has ever been, many people still lack the means to improve their own lives. Helping them find a foothold in our global society is the challenge of our time.

### What is “Development?”

Development is a buzzword in the policy community that means helping people provide for themselves and their families and affording them the capacity and rights to take part in society. It can take many forms. Development is building a road to help a farmer in Peru bring his goods to market. It is offering primary education for Kenyan children that will give them the tools to compete in the global economy. It is providing mosquito nets that help infant Liberians protect themselves from malaria. Development can even be a \$30 loan to a Burmese woman that allows her to start her own business producing energy by burning coconut shells. In whichever form it takes, development stands for giving people the means to independence.

### A Smart Investment

The money we spend on ending poverty comes back to us many times over. In the short term, for every dollar we spend to help people lift themselves out of poverty, we get two dollars in return. But the value of our investment is even greater than that. As the saying goes, “give a man a fish, feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime.” By giving people livelihoods, we give them a stake in the success of their respective societies. People who can support themselves are less likely to tolerate corruption in government or business and more likely to organize peacefully to represent themselves. Most importantly, they form strong states that make excellent trading partners, military allies, and friends in the war against terrorism.

### Development Works

We’ve mostly figured out how to help people reach self-sufficiency. We know, for example, that for each year a girl is in school, her children are 5-10% less likely to die as infants. We know that countries winning the fight against HIV/AIDS will have healthy workforces that can power economies, feed hungry populations, and defend borders. If we coordinate our know-how, we can help whole countries recover. Fifty years ago, South Korea was the beneficiary of American help; today, Madagascar is on course to follow a similar path to prosperity.

As President Bush has rightly pointed out, development only works when countries that need help have a plan to use aid money wisely and donor countries make serious financial commitments to help. Many countries – both donors and recipients – are answering this call. Many recipient

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*Last updated September 22, 2005*

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countries have introduced national strategies and identified capable local partners to help in the effort. And a number of our European allies are substantially increasing the amount of money they spend on development, eventually gearing up to spend 0.7% of their gross national incomes. Americans are a generous, principled people, and we should support these important contributions by stepping up our own investment in development.

## U.S. Position

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President Bush has slowly increased America's investment in people in poor countries, but has not yet matched the commitment level of our allies. Despite Americans' tremendous generosity of spirit, the U.S. government still invests remarkably little to help people achieve self-sufficiency – far less than 0.7% of its gross national income.

## About Citizens for Global Solutions

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Citizens for Global Solutions envisions a future in which nations work together to abolish war, protect our rights and freedoms, and solve the problems facing humanity that no nation can solve alone. This vision requires effective democratic global institutions that will apply the rule of law while respecting the diversity and autonomy of national and local communities. We work to build political will for our vision in the United States by educating Americans about our global interdependence, communicating global concerns to public officials, and developing proposals to create, reform, and strengthen international institutions such as the United Nations.