

PRESS RELEASE



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 26, 2010

Press Office: 202-712-4320

Public Information: 202-712-4810

Email: USAIDPressOfficers@USAID.gov

<http://www.usaid.gov>

USAID Announces New Partnerships to Advance Entrepreneurship

WASHINGTON, DC --In conjunction with the Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship, USAID announced 13 new partnerships to advance entrepreneurship and economic growth in countries with significant Muslim populations.

“Policies and programs that nurture entrepreneurship build a foundation for economic growth, job creation, and poverty alleviation,” said Dr. Rajiv Shah, Administrator of USAID. “Economic growth based on private sector development has the potential to transform developing societies, enabling them to emerge from dependence on foreign aid and generate the resources necessary to finance their own development. That has direct benefits for all people of the world, including in the United States – which is why President Barack Obama chose to open our doors to share some American entrepreneurial spirit with people from around the globe.”

On June 4, 2009, President Obama delivered a groundbreaking speech in Cairo that laid the foundation for a new beginning with countries with significant Muslim populations worldwide. One of the seven goals he discussed was advancing economic opportunity. As a building block, the President announced that the United States would host the Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship. This two-day gathering (April 26-27) will provide an unprecedented opportunity to highlight the importance of economic and social entrepreneurship within those communities throughout the world.

USAID has a long-standing commitment to working in partnership with government reformers, entrepreneurs, associations, non-governmental organizations, media, and other stakeholders to help countries establish the foundation to achieve rapid, sustainable, and comprehensive economic growth. Our commitment to this objective is both broad and deep. In FY09, USAID engaged in projects supporting entrepreneurship in more than 80 countries.

USAID projects have translated into resources that entrepreneurs around the world have used to expand businesses, enter new markets, and hire new employees. With our assistance, reform-minded governments have reduced red tape, including dramatic drops in the time and cost to register a business in Egypt, streamlined customs procedures for exporters in Jordan, and capital market development in Kazakhstan. In Pakistan, USAID is working through local

organizations to assist 120,000 of the country's micro and small entrepreneurs, with a focus on rural and female producers, as well as communities affected by conflict.

Building on our sustained commitment to advance entrepreneurship and economic growth, USAID is proud to announce thirteen new partnerships, including the four highlighted below: **Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Investment Fund** – USAID is entering into a new partnership with Silatech, a not-for profit social enterprise based in Qatar, to set up an investment fund to facilitate access to finance for micro-, small- and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs) in the Middle East and North Africa. USAID intends to issue a credit guarantee to help attract private capital which will be invested in innovative start-ups, as well as existing businesses to help them scale up and become sustainable. Silatech's equity investment, along with the planned USAID guarantee and technical assistance, is expected to leverage \$250 million in financing for entrepreneurs in countries with a significant Muslim population.

World Bank Doing Business Report – USAID plans to partner with the World Bank and at least 15 reform-minded governments over the next two years to introduce reforms that will provide direct financial benefits to thousands of firms throughout the region. The project will benchmark performance on the quality of business regulation in a country, provide demand-based technical assistance to reform business regulations, and hold annual regional conferences to recognize reforming countries. Countries will be selected based on demand and demonstrated commitment to reform.

Cisco Entrepreneur Institute – USAID's partnership with Cisco will provide entrepreneurship education in up to ten countries initially. The content will be localized and translated to local languages, as well as delivered over an open source, Web and media enabled platform to allow for in-person and remote learning. The content will range from starting and growing a business to the use of Internet technologies to drive business growth. The partnership targets women, youth, and other underserved populations.

Global Impact Investing Ratings System (GIIRS) – USAID, the Rockefeller Foundation, Prudential, Deloitte and other partners will support the development of a global impact investing ratings system with potential to unlock significant investment capital for social enterprises. By providing comparable data and judgments about the social and environmental performance of private or mission-driven enterprises, GIIRS will allow companies, entrepreneurs, and fund managers to raise capital based on the social and environmental impact of their underlying businesses or portfolio companies.

USAID is developing additional partnerships in the areas of strengthening the business enabling environment, expanding capacity and knowledge, catalyzing market opportunities and access to capital, and building connectedness and business support. Please see the attached information for complete information on new USAID partnerships to advance entrepreneurship and economic growth.

USAID is an independent agency that provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance around the world in support of the foreign policy goals of the United States.

###