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PRESS RELEASE

USAID Provides \$4.4M to Increase Food Security in Senegal and Mauritania

As part of the President's Food Security Response Initiative, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is providing over \$4.4 million in assistance to help lower rates of malnutrition and increase food security in vulnerable households throughout Senegal and Mauritania.

USAID will provide \$1.9 million for vitamin- and nutrient-fortified food for children under five and women of reproductive age. Working with the National Fortification Alliance, this program will provide both countries with wheat flour that is fortified with iron, folic acid and zinc. Cooking oil will be also fortified with vitamin A in Senegal. The food will be manufactured by local companies, which will put money into local markets and help stimulate the local economy. This program, implemented by USAID partner Helen Keller International, will provide a sustainable, cost-effective way to ensure the intake of essential vitamins and minerals for Senegal and Mauritania's most vulnerable populations.

In addition, USAID is providing \$2.5 million through the United Nations to help the Government of Senegal develop an early warning system that tracks the early signs of poor nutrition in children and declining food security in the household.

"Early detection leads to earlier treatment," said Regina Davis, Principal Regional Advisor of USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance Regional Office for west and north Africa. "Through our disaster mitigation programs, USAID works to strengthen the underlying weaknesses that contribute to a malnourished population on both an individual and institutional level."

The United States is the world's largest food aid donor and provides approximately half of all food aid to vulnerable populations throughout the world. In response to the global food price crisis, in June 2008, the U.S. Congress provided \$770 million to USAID as part of the President's Food Security Response Initiative for international disaster and development assistance to address the needs of food insecure populations worldwide.

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for nearly 50 years.

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