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Office of Transition Initiatives

KENYA

July 2011

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) launched its Kenya program in June 2008, four months after Kenya's competing political parties adopted a peace accord and power-sharing agreement to stem devastating interethnic violence that followed contested December 2007 national elections. The agreement opened a window of opportunity for OTI to support national and local-level stabilization and transition efforts targeted at recovery and reducing political and social volatility and vulnerability to violence. The two principal political parties are now faced with the challenge of moving Kenya forward.

In August 2009, OTI re-targeted its objectives to give greater focus to a two-pronged effort supporting the institutional and grassroots reforms outlined in the February 2008 National Accord, including a constitutional review, youth employment, police reform, and land reform. As a result, OTI seeks to support key U.S. Government policy goals and contribute to a stable Kenyan polity that mobilizes citizens' participation around a national identity and political party platforms rather than ethnic identities. In pursuit of this goal, the program assists Kenyan state and non-state actors to more fully exercise their capacities and, thereby, support the following broad objectives:

- Enable public institutions to undertake fundamental reforms and to manage instability and uncertainty; and
- Mobilize the public, especially the youth and key change agents, to demand accountability and reform.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The program particularly aims to support youth, many of whom are unemployed and easy targets for ethnicity-based manipulation by politicians. In 2010, activities focused largely on mobilizing youth to call for reform and an end to impunity by politicians who exacerbated and capitalized on ethnic tensions during and after elections. In the run-up to the August 4 referendum on a proposed new constitution, OTI-supported partners worked with youth to encourage peaceful participation in the event and prevent a return to the sort of violence and displacement associated with the 2007 presidential election.

A current programmatic focus is mitigating the potential for violence as the International Criminal Court process, targeting for prosecution six prominent public figures, unfolds. OTI also continues to support both calls for and implementation of reforms required to enact the new constitution and that undermine ethnicity-based politics.

In addition to its youth activities, OTI seeks to enhance the legitimacy and transparency of the Kenyan Parliament. In 2009, OTI provided equipment and training to facilitate the live broadcast of parliamentary proceedings via television and radio. Citizens across the country can now better follow parliamentary activities and decisions and track the participation and effectiveness of their Members of Parliament.

FAST FACTS

Start Date	May 2008
FY11 Budget	\$6.5 million in TI funds; \$1.5 million in ESF; \$200,000 in 1207 funding
Partner	Chemonics International
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