



Highlights of [GAO-08-188](#), a report to Congress

Why GAO Did This Study

In enacting the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006 (the Act), Congress established 15 U.S. policy objectives to address the DRC's humanitarian, development, economic and natural resource, governance, and security issues and mandated that GAO review actions taken by U.S. agencies to achieve these objectives. In this report, GAO identifies (1) U.S. programs and activities that support the Act's objectives, (2) major challenges hindering the accomplishment of the objectives, and (3) U.S. efforts to assess progress toward the objectives. GAO obtained and analyzed agencies' program documents and met with officials of agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGO) active in the DRC.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of State, through the Director of Foreign Assistance, work with the heads of the other U.S. agencies implementing programs in the DRC to develop a plan for systematically assessing the extent to which the U.S. government is making progress in achieving the Act's policy objectives. The Department of State endorsed our recommendation. Several U.S. agencies provided technical comments that were incorporated, as appropriate.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-188](#). For more information, contact David Gootnick at (202) 512-3149 or gootnickd@gao.gov.

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Systematic Assessment Is Needed to Determine Agencies' Progress toward U.S. Policy Objectives

What GAO Found

U.S. programs and activities support the Act's policy objectives. In fiscal years 2006 and 2007, respectively, the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Health and Human Services, State, and the Treasury and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) allocated \$217.9 million and \$181.5 million for the DRC. About 70 percent of the funds were allocated for programs that support the Act's humanitarian and social development objectives, while the remainder was allocated for programs and activities that support the Act's economic, governance, and security objectives. Although U.S. agencies have not acted on the Act's objective of bilaterally urging nations contributing peacekeeping troops to prosecute abusive peacekeepers, U.S. multilateral actions address this issue.

The DRC's unstable security situation, weak governance, mismanagement of its vast natural resources, and lack of infrastructure are major interrelated challenges that impede efforts to achieve the Act's policy objectives. For example, the unstable security situation in the eastern DRC has worsened humanitarian and social problems and forced U.S. and NGO staff to curtail some efforts. The lack of roads has prevented deliveries of needed aid. DRC's weak governance structures prevent the country from meeting the requirements for debt relief and discourage private-sector investment, thus hindering economic growth.

The U.S. government has not established a process for systematically assessing its progress toward achieving the Act's policy objectives. While some U.S. agencies collect information about their respective activities in the DRC, no mechanism exists for assessing overall progress. State and USAID are developing a joint planning and budgeting process that may eventually assess all U.S. foreign assistance. However, State's Director of Foreign Assistance has yet to complete the fiscal year 2007 DRC operations plan, which does not include a comprehensive assessment of the collective impact of State and USAID programs and does not address activities funded by other agencies. While a National Security Council-sponsored interagency group discusses DRC policies and helps coordinate some activities, it does not include several relevant agencies and, according to key officials, does not systematically assess progress in the DRC.