

Highlights of [GAO-08-562T](#), testimony before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus

Why GAO Did This Study

During the last decade, conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)—one of the world’s poorest countries—led directly or indirectly to the deaths of an estimated 5.4 million Congolese. A U.S.-supported peace process began in 2001, and the country’s first democratically elected president in 40 years was inaugurated in 2006. However, conflict in the country has continued.

In enacting the Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006 (the Act), Congress established 15 U.S. policy objectives that address humanitarian, social development, economic and natural resource management, governance, and security concerns in the DRC. The Act mandated that GAO review U.S. programs in the DRC that support these policy objectives. In this testimony, based on its December 2007 report, GAO identifies (1) U.S. programs and activities that support the Act’s objectives, (2) major challenges hindering the accomplishment of the objectives. For its report, GAO obtained and analyzed program documents for seven U.S. agencies—the Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Defense (DOD), Health and Human Services (HHS), Labor (DOL), State, and the Treasury and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). GAO also met with officials of these agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGO) active in the DRC.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/gettrpt?GAO-08-562T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact David Gootnick at (202) 512-3194 or gootnickd@gao.gov.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Major Challenges Impede Efforts to Achieve U.S. Policy Objectives; Systematic Assessment of Progress Is Needed

What GAO Found

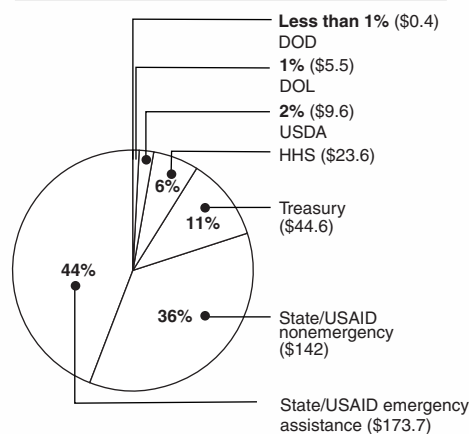
In fiscal years 2006 and 2007, respectively, seven agencies allocated a total of about \$217.9 million and \$181.5 million for the DRC. About 70 percent of these funds supported the Act’s humanitarian and social development objectives and about 30 percent supported its economic and natural resource management, governance, and security objectives. Agencies’ programs and activities included, for example, USAID’s provision of emergency supplies, food, and water and sanitation improvements to vulnerable populations; Treasury’s provision of interim debt relief; and State’s provision of training and other assistance for professionalizing members of the DRC’s military.

Several major, interrelated challenges—an unstable security environment, weak governance, mismanagement of natural resources, and lack of basic infrastructure—have impeded efforts to achieve the Act’s policy objectives. For instance, weak and abusive DRC security forces have worsened humanitarian and social problems, forcing U.S. and NGO staff to curtail some efforts. At the same time, corruption and other governance problems have impeded efforts to reform the security sector and hold human rights violators accountable. Meanwhile, mismanagement of natural resources has fueled continued conflict and corruption, and a lack of basic infrastructure has hindered progress in humanitarian, developmental, and governance programs.

The U.S. government has not established a process to assess overall progress toward the Act’s policy objectives. As a result, it cannot be assured that it has allocated U.S. resources in the most effective manner. In its December 2007 report, GAO recommended that the Secretary of State work with the heads of the other agencies implementing programs in the DRC to develop a plan for systematically assessing the U.S. government’s overall progress in achieving the Act’s policy objectives. State agreed with GAO’s recommendation.

U.S. Funding Allocations for the DRC, Fiscal Years 2006-2007

Funding allocations by agency



Dollars in millions

Sources: (Left to right); GAO analysis of executive agencies’ data; GAO analysis of executive branch data.

Funding allocations by category

