The Cairo Initiative
Investing in Egypt’s Development

June 2010

“Education and innovation will be the currency of the 21st century.” President Barack Obama

OVERVIEW

In his June 2009 Cairo speech, President Obama announced his vision for a new direction in the United States’ engagement with the Muslim world, to include support for workforce strengthening and human capacity building through enhanced exchange, training and scholarship programs, as well as through the promotion of science and technology advancements and entrepreneurship.

In pursuit of President Obama’s vision, shared by Egypt’s leadership, USAID/Egypt designed cross-sectoral activities under the rubric of the “Cairo Initiative”. It focuses on six areas that foster new opportunities for the Egyptian population and strengthen the ties between the U.S. and Egypt.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TARGET AREAS

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

USAID will partner with Egyptian institutions to provide Egyptian students with opportunities for quality education in Science and Technology. In collaboration with selected governorates, USAID will transform existing educational facilities into preparatory and secondary schools of excellence. These schools will serve as incubators to prepare gifted students to pursue higher education degrees in the fields of science and mathematics.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR TRAINING ACTIVITIES

USAID will fund short- and long-term training opportunities in Egypt and the United States for Egyptian middle managers. Training will address the gap in leadership and management skills, which is a primary constraint to improving institutional performance in Egypt.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

USAID will fund scholarships for Egyptians to attend local and American-based Universities to obtain their Master’s, MBA and PhD level degrees in the areas of Economic Reform, Science and Technology, Education and Health. Such a cadre of graduates will support workforce development within the Egyptian government and the private sector.

WORK SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

USAID will finance activities that include literacy, numeracy, technical and vocational elements. In order to better match the supply and demand of skilled labor, USAID will expand its support for Agricultural Technical Schools into Lower Egypt and the Delta; likewise, USAID will support improvements in the quality of Industrial Technical Schools.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Working with both private and public sector Egyptian stakeholders, USAID will promote the establishment of a business-friendly enabling environment and the development of entrepreneurial skills. Emphasis is placed on small and medium-sized firms with the potential for rapid growth and job creation. Areas of intervention will include access to finance, business-related training, research and development, and innovation.

YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY

USAID will support a comprehensive skills training and job placement program to improve the employability of Egyptian youth. Training focused on enhancing literacy and numeracy skills and English language proficiency, as will develop technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills of unemployed youth.

For more information, contact the USAID/Egypt Public Outreach Office at tel: (202) 2522-6557 or visit http://egypt.usaid.gov