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

- State/USAID ($142)
- DoD ($44.6)
- Treasury ($23.6)
- USAID ($173.7)
- HHS ($5.5)
- DOL ($9.6)
- DOD ($4.46)
- Less than 1% (1)

Funding allocations by category

- 44% Security
- 36% Governance
- 19% Economic/natural resource management
- 17% Social development
- 6% Humanitarian assistance
- 5% Other categories

Dollars in millions

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