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Office of the Comptroller General  
of the United States

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## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Chuck Young  
GAO Office of Public Affairs - (202) 512-4800

### **GAO LISTS TOP “URGENT ISSUES” FOR NEXT PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS; UNVEILS NEW TRANSITION WEB SITE**

Washington, D.C. – (Nov. 6, 2008) – Acting Comptroller General Gene Dodaro Thursday released a list of 13 urgent issues the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has identified as among those needing the attention of President-Elect Obama and the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress during the transition and the first year of the new administration and Congress. The list is the centerpiece of a new Web site GAO launched Thursday that is designed to help make the transition an informed and smooth one across the federal government.

“With the serious challenges related to financial markets and the economy, the financial crisis facing the nation, two wars under way, and the first transition since 9/11 and the creation of a Department of Homeland Security, this is absolutely a unique time,” Dodaro said. “GAO has combed through all of our recent work to help identify where our work can help address urgent challenges facing the nation now, to assist new appointees in every agency zero in on the challenges of that particular agency, and to help identify areas with the potential to save the nation billions of dollars. The new Web site is designed to be easy to navigate and to find information since this is a period when appointees have limited time to learn about their new positions and the challenges that come with making a successful transition from campaigning to governing,” Dodaro said. Amendments to the Presidential Transition Act in 2000 included GAO as a resource to incoming administrations, specifically identifying GAO to serve as a source of briefings and other materials.

The 13 “Urgent Issues” GAO identified based on its work that require urgent attention and continuing oversight to ensure the nation’s security and well-being are (listed alphabetically):

- Caring for Service Members
- Defense Readiness
- Defense Spending
- Food Safety

(more)

- Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan
- Oversight of Financial Institutions and Markets
- Preparing for Large-Scale Health Emergencies
- Protecting the Homeland
- Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting
- Retirement of the Space Shuttle
- Surface Transportation
- The 2010 Census
- Transition to Digital TV

In addition to the urgent issues, the new GAO Web site ([http://www.gao.gov/transition\\_2009](http://www.gao.gov/transition_2009)) will include sections on:

#### Agency-by-Agency Issues

Each agency faces a range of distinctive major challenges affecting its mission, budget, and programs. Here, GAO summarizes its work at 28 federal agencies. This section allows new appointees to quickly and easily review GAO's findings and recommendations on challenges facing each particular agency.

#### Major Cost-Saving Opportunities

A number of opportunities exist to limit costs and reduce waste across agencies and programs, as well as increase collection of revenues already due the government. GAO discusses about 50 such opportunities.

#### Management Challenges Across the Government

Agencies share a number of management challenges to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness and address current and emerging demands.

#### Long-Term Fiscal Outlook

This section describes the federal government's long-term fiscal challenges.

#### Examples of Upcoming GAO reports on Major National Issues

GAO's forthcoming work focuses on a wide range of key federal policies and programs.

GAO, the investigative arm of Congress, helps meet legislators' need for timely and reliable information on a wide range of government activities. The agency seeks to improve the performance of the federal government and hold it accountable to Congress and, ultimately, the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates how well programs and policies are meeting their objectives; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make sound oversight, policy, and funding decisions.

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