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The Coca-Cola Company and USAID to Expand Water Partnership in Africa

Today, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and The Coca-Cola Company announce a \$7 million joint investment in nine new water projects in Africa. The projects will be located in Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Ghana/Ivory Coast. Working together since November 2005, USAID and The Coca-Cola Company have supported water partnership activities in Bolivia, Mali, Indonesia, Malawi, Egypt, Thailand, Uganda and South Africa. The new projects in Africa provide locally-driven solutions to address the global water crisis, growing the global partnership's investments from \$3 million to \$10 million.

Issues of water scarcity, degraded water quality and lack of basic water and sanitation services present huge global challenges, especially to the world's poor. More than one billion people lack access to safe drinking water, and 2.6 billion people have no access to basic sanitation. There are growing shortages of water to meet human needs for food and economic activity and to ensure the sustainability of critical ecosystems. In an effort to tackle these enormous challenges, the partnership between USAID and The Coca-Cola Company was established in 2005.

Dr. Sharon Murray, Freshwater Program Manager with the USAID Water Team said of the partnership, "Our alliance with Coca-Cola is an excellent example of how a development agency can effectively join forces with a private sector partner to address our common concern about the global water crisis, bringing tangible benefits to communities in the developing world. We are excited about the launch of the second year of activities and our involvement in this successful water partnership with The Coca-Cola Company."

In its first group of projects, the USAID/Coca-Cola water partnership has improved water supply services, hygiene, household water disinfection and watershed management among 25,000 underserved residents near Jakarta, Indonesia; in Mali, 21,000 people have seen an increase in access to clean water, improved sanitation and hygiene, and 1,000 people have been able to carry out small-scale garden irrigation to increase nutrition and incomes. Around Malawi's spectacular Mt. Mulanje, residents are benefiting from clean water and soil conservation efforts. In cooperation with implementing partners in 16 countries, USAID and The Coca-Cola Company are helping more than 300,000 people who struggle for daily access to safe and sustainable sources of water. Planning is underway to expand and deepen the impact of the USAID/Coca-Cola partnership in future years throughout the countries where both organizations work.

"We are focused on water because it is fundamental to sustainable communities," said Dr. Dan Vermeer, Director of Global Water Partnerships at The Coca-Cola Company. "While water is a key ingredient in all of our beverages, we recognize it is a shared resource that we must protect and preserve in all the communities where we operate." He added, "Our relationship with USAID is a positive example of how public-private partnerships can provide localized support to those with the greatest needs for water and sanitation services while ensuring water resources are managed to serve future generations."

A multi-year effort, the partnership capitalizes on the strengths and experience of its partner institutions, which include USAID, The Coca-Cola Company and the Global Environment & Technology Foundation (GETF). These three partners work together on the collaborative development and implementation of water activities. The relationship demonstrates how government, business and the NGO community can engage to solve global water problems in innovative ways.

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