

# Aiding Poor Countries Can Help Us At Home

(NAPSA)—Economists say that investing in poor countries can bring big dividends—not just for profits, but for peace as well. In fact, analysts now say the benefits of helping developing nations range from fulfilling an important social responsibility to possibly helping to stop terrorism before it gets a chance to start.

The idea to foster economic and social stability in poorer countries by providing loans and advice began in 1944 when the U.S. helped establish the World Bank.

The World Bank has helped contribute to some significant changes since its creation. Between 1980 and 2001, the proportion of people living in poverty in the developing world fell by half. In addition, over the past few decades, life expectancy in developing countries has increased 20 years, the number of children dying before the age of 5 has been reduced by 50 percent, and adult illiteracy has been halved to 25 percent.

Today, the World Bank is leading the reconstruction of the tsunami-stricken countries in Asia. It is also the world's largest funder of education programs in developing countries, and a major force in the global fight against AIDS. Additionally, the World Bank is the largest funder of biodiversity projects meant to help protect the environment. These efforts and results have had positive repercussions that can be felt not only in other countries, but in the U.S. as well. Here's how:

- **National Security**—Many of the issues that developing countries face—violent conflict, pollution, disease—are not contained by borders. By addressing these pressing needs in developing areas, the World Bank helps support U.S. national security interests.

- **Jobs and Revenue**—The U.S. Treasury estimates that exports to markets where the World Bank operates are responsible for creat-



**Fighting global poverty is one of the keys to combating terrorism.**

ing or sustaining millions of U.S. jobs each year. Additionally, over 40 percent of U.S. exports are to developing countries where the bank has lending programs.

- **Anti-Corruption**—Since 1996, the bank has launched more than 600 anti-corruption programs in nearly 100 countries. It also has strict safeguards in its programs to ensure the money it lends goes where it belongs.

- **Investments**—The bank works to cultivate a climate that will make it easier for U.S. companies to effectively compete in the developing world. Additionally, the World Bank is a significant source of direct procurement of goods and services for U.S. businesses. From 1998 to 2003, it contracted an average of \$300 million per year to U.S. companies.

- **Leadership**—Because of its leadership role at the World Bank, the U.S. is able to ensure that bank loans are sensitive to issues important to Americans—such as environmental protection and government transparency—and that these loans address goals that the U.S. and 188 other countries are committed to reaching together.

For more information, visit [www.worldbank.org/usa](http://www.worldbank.org/usa).