



## COUNTRY PROFILE



Photo: Abt Associates/Pilar Emilio Ramirez

Ramón Jiménez proudly shows the organic fertilizers used in his farm to produce organic coffee. Mr. Jiménez, along with more than 200 small farmers, have received training through a USAID-supported program to produce certified organic coffee. The program provides training in better management practices of coffee farms and prepares the farmers for external inspections. As a result, Mr. Jiménez has increased his annual profits by more than \$1,500.

### OVERVIEW

USAID's close partnership with the Dominican Republic has helped the country address many key challenges to development, including weak governance, inadequate rule of law, frail public institutions, and poor service delivery; poor quality and equitable access to public healthcare and basic education; environmental degradation; a growing gap between rich and poor; and the need to improve the business and investment climate and adjust to a rapidly changing global economy. USAID has also contributed significantly to mutual understanding between the United States and the Dominican Republic and to the geo-political stability of the Caribbean region.



The most recent World Bank Poverty Assessment reports that 43 percent of the Dominican Republic's population lives in poverty. Of this population, 16 percent fall into the extreme poverty category. Moreover, nearly 30 percent of poor Dominicans lack official identity documentation, which hinders their access to formal credit and basic public services such as schooling and healthcare. Other challenges to the country's development include low levels of public expenditures allocated to education, high interest rates, frequent electrical blackouts, institutional rigidity, shortage of qualified human capital, high maternal mortality rate, corruption, lack of accountability, and limited citizen oversight of government expenditures.

On March 1, 2007, the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement went into force for the Dominican Republic. To fully benefit from the trade agreement, improvement is needed in the efficiency and transparency in customs procedures, the protection of intellectual property rights, the enforcement of environmental and labor standards, sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations, fair trade practices and dispute resolution, and government procurement of goods and services. In addition, small businesses, including farms and tourism enterprises, have to become more competitive to survive and expand in an open global economy. The growth of investment and small businesses also are critical to increasing employment and reducing poverty in the country.

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1844  
Population: 9.650 million  
GDP (PPP): \$77.43 billion  
GDP per capita (PPP): \$8,100

Source: CIA, *The World Factbook*

### PROGRAMS

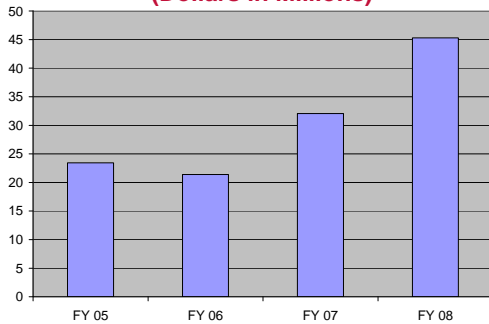
#### GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

USAID supports democracy and good governance in the Dominican Republic by improving electoral processes and strengthening civil society's responsible participation in the political system. The program helps a better informed and active citizenry demand more from elected officials by



## COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

**USAID Assistance to Dominican Republic  
(Dollars in Millions)**



increasing incentives for government officials to meet their obligations. The program, in turn, assists the Dominican people to evaluate the performance of those elected. USAID assistance is also reinforcing the rule of law, helping to reform and modernize the judicial system, and increasing access to equitable justice. A crucial component in support of more government transparency and accountability is USAID's technical assistance to public sector institutions and civil society groups to combat corruption and promote fiscal integrity and responsibility.

### INVESTING IN PEOPLE

USAID programs seek to improve the quality of life for Dominicans through support for widely accessible quality healthcare services and disease prevention. USAID assistance focuses on prevention, care, and treatment of communicable diseases, as well as improvements in primary healthcare services for underserved populations. USAID supports increased access to and use of basic healthcare services for sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS among vulnerable and affected groups. USAID also helps underserved populations gain access to quality reproductive, maternal, and child health services, provided by the public and private sectors. USAID supports activities to increase the efficiency and equity of basic healthcare services at the local level by strengthening systems and supporting public health policy reform. USAID programs also improve social and economic opportunities for the poor by enhancing teacher training for public primary school teachers in reading, writing, and mathematics, and by fostering active private sector and community participation in raising the quality of basic education in local public primary schools. Additionally, USAID provides at-risk and disadvantaged youth with opportunities to become productive and active citizens through basic education, vocational, and life skills training programs.

### ECONOMIC GROWTH

USAID is contributing to the Dominican Republic's ability to compete in global markets and reduce poverty through increased economic opportunities for targeted populations. USAID is providing technical assistance in economic policy reform, trade-capacity building, rural economic diversification and development, and regional competitiveness initiatives so that entrepreneurs and small businesses in rural communities become more productive and competitive in domestic and global markets. USAID's economic growth program is also safeguarding biodiversity and natural ecosystems through strengthened Dominican capacity to develop and enforce national environmental and natural resources laws and regulations; through increased public sector capacity at the national and municipal levels to identify and implement activities that promote environmentally sustainable economic growth; and through assistance to civil society groups that advocate for and contribute to a cleaner environment and greater biodiversity protection.

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