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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 14, 2012

Press Office: 202-712-4320

Public Information: 202-712-4810

www.usaid.gov

USAID and Geothermal Energy Association Announce Public-Private Partnership Initiative at AGOA Forum

Washington, DC – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Geothermal Energy Association signed a MOU agreement today to help develop East Africa's geothermal resources. At the annual meeting of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum, USAID's Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa, Michael Curtis, and Karl Gawell, Executive Director for the U.S. Geothermal Energy Association said the region's geothermal resources have the potential to address power shortages in East African countries along the Rift Valley.

"America is a leader in geothermal energy technology, and the utilization of this type of clean energy is relatively un-tapped in Africa. This partnership offers tremendous opportunities for U.S. geothermal companies to become major players in East Africa," said Michael Curtis.

Power is among the biggest challenges to developing Africa's infrastructure. Electricity is more expensive in Africa than anywhere in the world, and in response to recent droughts, many African governments have had to rely on more expensive, less clean oil-fired generation. There is also increasing interest by governments in the region to developing clean, renewable, alternative sources of energy.

"This partnership is not just between USAID and GEA, but between America and the people of East Africa. Developing the tremendous, virtually untapped geothermal resources of East Africa will have huge benefit to the region, and U.S. firms have the expertise and experience to help. Together, we can get the job done and bring clean, reliable power to millions of people," said Gawell.

To address these challenges, USAID plans to provide funding to make the world-class U.S. geothermal expertise available to the East Africa region, and in the process, allow U.S. companies to become more familiar with business opportunities in the East African marketplace. Under this win-win situation, East African countries will benefit from U.S. expertise, and U.S. companies will benefit from increased exposure and market reach into East Africa. The geothermal program ultimately aims to decrease the costs associated with grid-based power generation systems, train host country geoscientists and engineers, build host government and private sector capacity, create US jobs, and attract private investment into the region.

For more information about USAID, visit www.usaid.gov

For more information about the Geothermal Energy Association, visit <http://www.geothermal-energy.org/>

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