



Integrated Country Strategy

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Approved: March 9, 2022

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The overarching priority for this Integrated Country Strategy is to root democratization firmly in Côte d'Ivoire, a country which has never had a peaceful democratic transfer of power. The timing is propitious: the next presidential election is not until late in CY 2025. The regime professes to see democratization as key to fending off threats of coup d'état and Violent Extremist Organization (VEO) expansion, which increasingly menace West Africa. Top leaders – several of them U.S.-educated – articulate lucidly values the United States shares, such as democratic accountability, good governance, social peace, and earning the support of the population to withstand the strains imposed by VEOs and other stressors. Indeed, good governance - sustainable, equitable, and accountable – is the point of democratization.

The United States must not take this strategic vision for granted: our geopolitical rivals argue just the opposite, that the key to success is to crush all dissent. Their vision can be mighty appealing to those in power: it makes no demands of them, and it endorses ruthless action by them to hold onto power. Yet, the Ivoirian government continues to prefer the American model whenever possible. The leaders understand that their vision of a prospering country with the support of the people requires investment, and investors have a choice. They are therefore motivated to consider external perspectives when making their decisions. Further, they recognize that the values the United States promotes are sound values, i.e. a solid foundation for improving the common good. The American option is typically seen as the 'gold standard.'

Taking advantage of this opportunity, the U.S. Mission team will consistently emphasize that democracy that lasts is based on trust. Those who lead have the primary duty to show they are trustworthy, by refraining from abusing their power, by allowing and heeding criticism, and by delivering services equitably, not just to their supporters. Those who are out of power sometimes seem morally superior only because they lack the ability to abuse their position; they too have a vital contribution to make to democratization, by showing in deed and word that they are committed to respecting the rules even when the outcome disfavors them. All

the lines of effort of this ICS will be guided by this overarching vision of sound principles applied in practice.

Our four bilateral lines of effort (Health & Education, Security, Democratic Governance, Economic Growth) all converge on the same overall goal (the United States and Côte d'Ivoire being free and prospering partners) and are mutually reinforcing (e.g., a healthier, better-educated population will be more productive economically and resilient to external threats). We call them "investments" advisedly, even though we do not expect a financial return: it is a constant reminder that these uses of American taxpayers' money are meant to make Côte d'Ivoire a better place for its people and a stronger long-term partner for the United States. Cross-cutting American values (Inclusivity, Equity, Accountability) and vital issues (Environment & Climate) apply to all lines of effort and will be interwoven into all strategic objectives, including our management goals.

The United States should never forget that the American approach is much more demanding than that of our geopolitical rivals. Above all, if the United States seeks to prevail against competitors in Côte d'Ivoire, our nation must devote sufficient resources to the competition, and invest those resources wisely.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Côte d'Ivoire strengthens democratic governance, enhancing stability, transparency, and responsiveness to the needs of the population.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Côte d'Ivoire increases inclusive political participation and demonstrates respect for human rights for all people, including refugees, and protection of marginalized populations.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Côte d'Ivoire takes meaningful steps to combat corruption at all levels of government in order to allocate resources in response to population needs.

Mission Goal 2: Côte d'Ivoire secures its territory against internal and external threats while serving as a stabilizing U.S. partner in the region.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Ivoirian security forces improve their ability to secure their land and maritime borders, counter terrorism, and address illicit activities while respecting human rights and adapting to a changing climate.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Ivoirian judicial and security sectors improve their professionalism, focusing on reducing corruption and improving their accountability to the people of Cote d'Ivoire.

Mission Goal 3: Côte d'Ivoire provides reliable and sustainable public health and education services to its residents nationwide.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Côte d'Ivoire improves delivery, accessibility, and quality of basic public health services nationwide.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Côte d'Ivoire will build a stronger skills-based education system that is responsive to private sector needs and ensures the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Mission Goal 4: Côte d'Ivoire's economic growth is more evenly distributed, resulting in a more fair, climate-adaptive, transparent, and diversified economy.

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** Côte d'Ivoire increasingly supports entrepreneurship and sees a blossoming private sector.
- **Mission Objective 4.2:** Côte d'Ivoire increases trade and investments with the United States and within the region.

Management Objective 1: Expand as a regional Embassy platform while placing an emphasis on cultivating a culture of LE Staff empowerment, training, and innovation to improve the quality and continuity of ICASS services.

Management Objective 2: Embassy Abidjan improves the quality of life for a growing Mission community and the attractiveness of an assignment to Abidjan.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: Côte d'Ivoire strengthens democratic governance, enhancing stability, transparency, and responsiveness to the needs of the population.

Description: Emerging from decades of conflict and political violence, Côte d'Ivoire is poised to improve its political stability and enjoy continued economic growth. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees assessed that the fundamental and durable changes in Côte d'Ivoire justified a cessation of blanket refugee status for Ivoirian refugees outside of the country, as of the end of June 2022. The country has never had a peaceful, democratic change of government. The next presidential election is in 2025, leaving just three years for the government to invest in the gains made in 2021. Despite a decade of positive economic growth, the government must act more equitably on the population's needs through effective engagement that strengthens political inclusiveness, women's empowerment, social cohesion, and fosters nationwide reconciliation. It must also improve the provision of, and access to, basic government services like security, justice, public, and social services. It must reinforce the accountability of political and administrative actors who provide such services. While the country finds itself at an inflection point, longstanding habits of opaque political deals and systemic corruption if left unchecked could derail positive momentum and create vulnerabilities China and Russia can exploit. To address these concerns, Mission Côte d'Ivoire will invest in enhancing the constructive and solutions-oriented role civil society can play in holding the government and elected officials accountable, supporting activities that foster women's empowerment and inclusive political dialogue, and catalyzing the role media should play in amplifying the legitimate concerns of the people. Civil society's ability to effectively articulate and offer solutions to the government while also advocating for quality service delivery, respect for human rights (including international humanitarian law), and rejection of violent extremism remains crucial to the country's continued democratic development. The Mission will also leverage its strong working relationship with the government to address governance issues directly with decisionmakers. Strengthened governance will serve U.S. interests by creating a

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more stable country that is poised to project stability in the region resulting in a more reliable partnership with the U.S. in both political and economic terms.

Objective 1.1: Côte d'Ivoire increases inclusive political participation and demonstrates respect for human rights for all people, including refugees, and protection of marginalized populations.

(Links to the RDCS RDO 1: Democracy, Peace and Stability Enhanced.)

- **Justification:** Interethnic tensions, historic political grievances, competition over increasingly scarce land, and irregular migration from the Sahelian countries, compounded by a growing terrorist threat from the Sahel and very present climate change effects, add to the urgency of integrating marginalized communities and increasing protections of human rights. Inclusive political debate and engagement should seek to counter historic misunderstandings and mistrust that divide the population across regional and communal lines and isolate marginalized communities already at risk of being coopted by violent extremists.
- **Linkages:** Democratic governance is the Ivorian government's chosen defense against the insecurity it faces. Domestic and regional terrorist threats stemming from the Sahelian countries put at risk Côte d'Ivoire's considerable gains in democratic governance. The key to success is for the state to have the support of the population, especially long-marginalized communities vulnerable to being co-opted by terrorist and criminal networks. To catalyze the democratic pluralism gained in the legislative elections, the government must engage the opposition and civil society actors in constructive dialogue around governance and the allocation of services. This objective supports the Interim National Security Strategy to defend democratic values and invest in Africa as well as the Joint Regional Strategy, Joint Strategic Plan and regional development Cooperation Strategy goals to strengthen democracy.
- **Risks:** If Côte d'Ivoire does not develop a practice of inclusive democratic governance, it risks forfeiting its position as the economic engine of Francophone West Africa, losing ground to violent extremist organizations in the north, and at worst, returning to civil war. Depressed grassroots participation and continued uneven allocation of resources

to sub-national government officials will fuel intercommunal tensions and further distance the people from their government. The United States' global competitors are aware of this vulnerability and act quickly to respond to Côte d'Ivoire's limited resources and capacity to confront these simultaneous threats. Mission Abidjan can mitigate this risk by rewarding and publicly supporting open and constructive dialogue among a broad cross-section of political leaders, influencers (including civil society), and like-minded actors as the country heads towards the 2023 regional and local elections and 2025 legislative and presidential elections.

Objective 1.2: Côte d'Ivoire takes meaningful steps to combat corruption at all levels of government in order to allocate resources in response to population needs. (Links to the RDCS RDO 1: Democracy, Peace and Stability Enhanced.)

- **Justification:** Corruption is a tax on scarce government resources, it stymies development efforts, and undermines the population's confidence in its government. Corruption and patronage-based politics remain deeply embedded in all levels of the Ivoirian state, negatively affect the efficient and equitable allocation of resources, and create vulnerabilities ripe for Chinese and Russian exploitation. These, if left unchecked, could derail positive momentum. To reinforce democratic governance, the government must hold to account political and administrative actors who are responsible for providing services to local communities. Since virtually all press outlets are either government-affiliated or owned by politicians or other wealthy individuals, their role investigating, publicizing, and analyzing the effect of corruption on democratic governance is uneven at best.
- **Linkages:** Unchecked corruption benefits the few and the powerful, fueling resentment and mistrust creating vulnerabilities that link this sub-objective directly to security and economic growth goals. To maintain and build upon its role as an engine for economic growth and prosperity in the region, as well as a reliable partner in peace and security, Côte d'Ivoire must actively create transparency in decision-making through inclusive governance in which the opposition offers constructive dissent and solutions,

and the government responds by allocating resources to satisfy the people's needs. To advance stability and economic prosperity, it must also act decisively to eradicate petty corruption within the security forces, which, if left unchecked, threatens democratic gains, and gives power to terrorist and criminal elements seeking to distance the population from the government. This objective advances the NSSG Corruption Pillar, JRS Goal 3 Increasing Democratic Governance and Reducing Corruption.

- **Risks:** If Côte d'Ivoire does not address systemic corruption, which skews the allocation of scarce national resources, it risks increased political instability, youth uprisings, and extremist/criminal groups firmly establishing their grip on vulnerable communities, particularly in the northern region of the country. Together, this, at a minimum, stymies potential and, at worst, risks provoking elements of the population into joining violent extremists. Progress requires the government to strengthen anti-corruption controls and accountability, maintain a culture of protecting civil liberties and freedom of the press, and increase investments in the justice sector. Increased security concerns and lack of progress addressing petty corruption by security forces compound long-present public apathy and frustration. Uneven application of laws and regulations, including those aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change, will add to the uneven distribution of economic prosperity.

Mission Goal 2: Côte d'Ivoire secures its territory against internal and external threats while serving as a stabilizing U.S. partner in the region.

Description: Côte d'Ivoire currently faces a range of internal and external threats to its stability and security, to include violent extremism, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, piracy, and various forms of trafficking. Most recently, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has expanded into the country's northern territory, launching sophisticated attacks against Ivoirian security forces, and destabilizing an already vulnerable region wracked by poverty, criminality, environmental degradation, and a changing climate. The expansion of AQIM and its affiliates from Africa's Sahel region threaten the security of Côte d'Ivoire and other U.S. partners in West Africa, exacerbate regional instability that hostile foreign powers can exploit, and undermine the security of the American people. In the maritime domain, state-sponsored, industrial-scale IUU fishing in the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone is an especially salient threat, robbing Côte d'Ivoire of vital economic resources, devastating its marine and coastal ecosystems, and violating Ivoirian sovereignty. Compounding these security challenges are the deleterious effects of climate change, which add to uncertainties and stoke interethnic conflict, placing additional pressure on communities and government institutions in areas with limited capacity to respond.

U.S. interests are best supported by a safe and prosperous Côte d'Ivoire able to serve as a regional leader in coastal West Africa, a strong U.S. security partner in Africa, and a stalwart against encroaching instability from the Sahel. To best assist our Ivoirian partners, U.S. Mission Côte d'Ivoire will take full advantage of initiatives like the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability under the Global Fragility Act to invest in the Ivoirian government's ability to secure its borders, build the government's capacity to address both external and internal threats, and professionalize its security forces, specifically focusing on improving their responsiveness and accountability to the population. We will work with like-minded partners in the region to achieve these objectives, encouraging international cooperation where possible and prioritizing activities and programs in areas where the United States enjoys a competitive advantage in knowledge and skill. In doing so, U.S. Mission Côte d'Ivoire will protect the safety

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and security of U.S. citizens and interests, build on our multi-faceted bilateral partnership with Côte d'Ivoire, and prevent its destabilization and exploitation by transnational threats and hostile actors.

Objective 2.1: Ivoirian security forces improve their ability to secure their land and maritime borders, counter terrorism, and address illicit activities while respecting human rights and adapting to a changing climate.

- **Justification:** Secure borders and effective security services that carry out their mandates while respecting human rights are essential for security, stability, and economic growth in Côte d'Ivoire. Unfortunately, Ivoirian security forces frequently lack sufficient communication, transportation, defense, and force-projection equipment needed to conduct operations. Further, different security services routinely experience challenges in cooperating in joint operations. To that end, U.S. Mission Côte d'Ivoire will assist the country's efforts to increase control over its borders, contribute to counter-terrorism initiatives, and improve information gathering, analysis, and response to illicit activities. U.S. engagement will also focus on deepening local, bilateral, and regional partnerships to enable the government to address the country's security challenges within established legal authorities, international norms, and respect for human rights. Collaborative action between Côte d'Ivoire and its regional partners in coastal West Africa is essential for addressing the shared threats of violent extremism, illicit maritime activities such as piracy and IUU fishing, and cross-border drug and human trafficking.
- **Linkages:** This objective supports JRS Objective 1.1 and 1.5, RDCS RDO 1, and is linked to improving democratic governance and economic opportunities in Côte d'Ivoire as security is a necessary condition for improvements in both areas. This objective is also linked to addressing environmental crime and the effects of climate change in Côte d'Ivoire. Many violent extremists and regional terrorist groups in northern Côte d'Ivoire are financially connected to the illicit networks behind activities such as wildlife trafficking, illegal gold mining, and unregulated logging. Therefore, dismantling these networks through counterterrorism and law enforcement operations will reduce both

funding for extremist organizations as well as the negative effect these crimes have on the environment in Côte d'Ivoire.

- **Risks:** The risks associated with not achieving this objective include continued expansion of violent extremism into Côte d'Ivoire and an increase in illegal activities within its borders, which could prevent the Ivoirian government from achieving the country's political and economic development goals and create vulnerabilities within Ivoirian society that U.S. strategic competitors and transnational threats can exploit.

Objective 2.2: Ivoirian judicial and security sectors improve their professionalism, focusing on reducing corruption and improving their accountability to the people of Cote d'Ivoire.

- **Justification:** Côte d'Ivoire's future security and prosperity requires professional security services that are transparent, apolitical, and accountable to the population. Since 2018, the Ivoirian government has made significant investments in its security forces, repairing internal rifts, and improving its capacity to respond to the needs of its population. However, Côte d'Ivoire's security sector still lacks adequate institutional transparency and accountability mechanisms, fostering an environment of impunity, fraud, and corruption within the police and military. This encourages petty corruption and racketeering by security forces which affects public confidence in both security services and the Ivoirian government's anti-corruption efforts. Addressing these issues is essential for Côte d'Ivoire's long-term security and stability. As such, Mission Côte d'Ivoire will adopt an innovative package of projects and programs that will assist the Ivoirian government in reducing corruption within its security forces, improving transparency, and implementing institutional mechanisms that encourage greater accountability to the people of Côte d'Ivoire.
- **Linkages:** This objective supports JRS Objective 3.4, RDCS RDO 1, and is linked to U.S. efforts to improve democratic governance, diversity, and inclusivity in Côte d'Ivoire. In many parts of the country, security forces serve as the most visible example of critical government services. By reducing security sector corruption and improving the Ivoirian

military and police forces' responsiveness to the needs of the people within its borders, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire can also realize more equitable delivery of these services, especially to historically marginalized groups.

- **Risks:** Ivoirian security services' and institutions' failure to improve transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to population needs risks exacerbating societal grievances that motivate violent extremism among disenfranchised populations and render them vulnerable to exploitation by domestic, international, and transnational bad actors.

Mission Goal 3: Côte d'Ivoire provides reliable and sustainable public health and education services to its residents nationwide.

Description: The USG is the largest investor in Côte d'Ivoire's health sector with direct investments already over \$1.7 billion since 2003. The USG works closely with other like-minded donors to advance strategic objectives in the health sector. To date, Mission Côte d'Ivoire is unaware of substantial Chinese or Russian investments in Côte d'Ivoire's health sector. The USG will continue to invest in the Government of Côte d'Ivoire's (GoCI) efforts to reach HIV epidemic control (through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief – PEPFAR), eliminate malaria (through the President's Malaria Initiative – PMI), and strengthen maternal and child health and family planning services through new bilateral initiatives. Given the critical importance and impact of emerging pandemics such as COVID-19 on global health and development, and more broadly on economic growth and national stability, we will continue to strengthen Côte d'Ivoire's ability to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to infectious disease threats through the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA). The USG will also support the GoCI in its efforts to achieve universal health coverage with an emphasis on sustainability planning and domestic resource mobilization while focusing on an accountable and transparent health care delivery system.

U.S. government investments in Côte d'Ivoire's education system strive to create opportunities for the youth bulge that needs access to marketable skills. The primary focus of USG activity is

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through the Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact to build vocational skills training centers in underserved, but economically viable areas. The Public Affairs Section continues to invest in educational exchange, teaching English, and supporting student access to internet and other informational resources through a wide network of American Spaces and Shelves. The USG's timely and focused COVID-19 investments also ensure that schools remain open enabling a long-term return to more robust economic activity.

The GoCI measures the population's improvement in basic household wealth, health, basic education attainment, and prevalence of gender-based violence through the Côte d'Ivoire Demographic and Health Survey aimed to be done every five years. USG investments in this and other GoCI periodic population-based surveys measure progress in the country's health and education status.

Objective 3.1: Côte d'Ivoire improves delivery, accessibility, and quality of basic public health services nationwide. (Links to the RDCS RDO 3: Governments, Institutions, and Partners Catalyzed to Strengthen Health Systems).

- **Justification:** Mission Côte d'Ivoire is focused on supporting the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in the delivery of essential health services in a manner that is transparent and evidence-based so that public actions and resources capably address the needs of all the population. Over the medium- to long-term, Mission Côte d'Ivoire aims to ensure that the approach we support will be sustainable by the Ivoirians after the United States has drawn down its assistance.
- **Linkages:** This goal is linked to democratic governance and economic growth. According to the African Development Bank, education and health are the Government of Côte d'Ivoire's two largest budget items related to basic public services (not including budget items related to the military, debt, or institutional administration). By improving the effectiveness of education and health services, Mission Côte d'Ivoire will help the Government of Côte d'Ivoire improve public financial management and maximize the impact of its largest public expenditures. These investments in basic services demonstrate the GoCI commitment to the well-being of its population and

improves Ivoirian allegiance to the state – an important factor in peace and security. Importantly, improving health and education status is also linked to economic growth in that it creates a larger and more productive workforce. This objective links directly to the Interim National Security Strategy, BBW3, and JRS Objectives 4.1 & 4.4 by investing in public health and education and responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

- **Risks:** Without improved accessibility to and quality of health services, the Ivoirian population will continue to experience preventable death and diseases. Shortened life expectancy, absenteeism, and recurrent out-of-pocket health expenses all contribute negatively to the domestic economy and government delivery of basic services, making the country more vulnerable to non-state actors who threaten violent extremism. Mission Abidjan can mitigate these risks by directing health- and education-related investments to augment and amplify Ivoirian efforts to narrow the gaps between population needs and services currently available.

Objective 3.2: Côte d'Ivoire will build a stronger skills-based education system that is responsive to private sector needs and ensures the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized populations. (Links to the RDCS RDO 4: Vulnerability of Targeted Populations Reduced).

- **Justification:** Years of conflict and uneven governance has led to several generations of Ivoirians with inadequate training and education to compete in the global economy. Lagging infrastructure is consistently outstripped by the fast-growing youth population. Although Côte d'Ivoire spends 4.4 percent (2018) of its GDP in government education spending, it's 7% enrollment rate of girls in secondary schools is well below comparator countries in its income group. While Côte d'Ivoire may be higher than the average for its region (4.0%), it remains lower than the average for its income group (4.5%) and doesn't sufficiently meet public demand for education services. In Côte d'Ivoire, a child who starts school at age 4 can expect to complete only eight years of school by her 18th birthday. According to the Human Capital Project, a child born in Côte d'Ivoire today will be 38 percent less productive when she grows up than she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health. This is lower than the average for Sub-Saharan

Africa and lower middle-income countries. Between 2010 and 2020, the HCI value for Côte d'Ivoire increased from 0.30 to 0.38. Without proper education, the largely young population of Côte d'Ivoire faces precarious economic prospects, and businesses in turn have a hard time finding qualified, productive labor that can help sustain their and grow their businesses. U.S. investments in this area will help the government close the education gap and support economic development goals.

- **Linkages:** Education is inextricably linked with democratic governance and economic growth. Improvements to the delivery and accessibility of education should improve other public services and government functions as lessons learned and skills developed in the management of the education sector transfer into other sectors, especially within the context of using data to improve transparency and service delivery. Mission Côte d'Ivoire, through the MCC Compact, will incentivize government's investment delivery and accessibility of education services to contribute to a stronger governance framework within Côte d'Ivoire. This directly links to JRS Bureau Objective 4.4.
- **Risks:** The continued inability to adequately educate Côte d'Ivoire's burgeoning youth population will lead to greater instability, reduced economic growth, and greater long-term poverty as fewer resources must be stretched to feed more undereducated families. This scenario raises the risk of political instability, exploitation by international trafficking networks, and violent extremism as desperate households look for ways to survive. This risk can be mitigated by supporting communities and the private sector in their efforts to advocate for their education needs to government.

Mission Goal 4: Côte d'Ivoire's economic growth is more evenly distributed, resulting in a more fair, climate-adaptive, transparent, and diversified economy.

Description: In the decade ending in 2020, Côte d'Ivoire has retaken its position as the economic engine of francophone West Africa. Its national budget tripled (between 2011 and 2019), and GDP averaged better than seven percent growth. This positioned the country, specifically its economy, to weather better than its neighbors the COVID-19 pandemic, most notably by registering positive GDP growth of 1.8 percent at the height of crisis. Even with these gains, 60 percent of its population is under the age of 35 and lacking in the skills and education they need to be competitive in a modernizing economy; they doubt jobs and economic opportunity will be available for their future. Women are not empowered to fully participate in the economy, and their full inclusion would be an accelerator for growth. A large percentage of the population is employed in the informal sector, creating a burden of higher taxation and lower productivity on the formal sector. Economic growth has also come at the cost of environmental degradation, reducing overall quality of life, and contributing to climate change. Though the country's economic outlook is promising, the poverty rate remains high at 39 percent, and a wide income disparity exists between Abidjan and the rest of the country. It is therefore important to ensure that economic growth is sustainable and benefits the entire population.

The government launched its 2021-2025 National Development Plan (NDP) in which it allocates resources to strengthen the private sector competitiveness and address corruption. Corruption, in particular, dampens foreign investor interest and hobbles efforts to more equitably distribute economic growth. The government intends to aggressively shift up the value chain its commodity-export-dependent economy. The United States is one of Côte d'Ivoire's leading trading partners based largely on U.S. imports of cocoa for the chocolate supply chain. Côte d'Ivoire is the United States' largest francophone Africa trading partner, and the United States is one of Côte d'Ivoire's top five trading partners with 2020 two-way trade totaling more than \$1.2 billion in 2019. The United States is well positioned to benefit from and contribute to Côte d'Ivoire's impressive growth especially as U.S. firms are expected to invest in Abidjan, the country's economic capital that serves as a regional business hub. Initiatives such

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as Build Back Better World and Prosper Africa offer tools and incentives to promote competitive markets, increase U.S. private sector participation especially in infrastructure development, and address the climate crisis through smart, sustainable infrastructure solutions.

Objective 4.1: Côte d'Ivoire increasingly supports entrepreneurship and sees a blossoming private sector. (Links to the RDCS RDO 2: Inclusive Broad-based Economic Growth Advanced).

- **Justification:** Since 2012, much of Côte d'Ivoire's impressive economic expansion has been financed by public sector spending on infrastructure. Côte d'Ivoire's Strategic Plan CI-2030 aims to "consolidate [economic] recovery and accelerate the market towards emergence." To achieve sustained economic growth, interventions will require dynamic participation from the private sector, and the NDP has the stated goal of mobilizing 70 percent of the financing from the private sector to realize the plan. To promote this private sector-led growth, Post will draw on tools available, such as the Build Back Better World initiative and Prosper Africa to support the country's infrastructure needs and goals.
- **Linkages:** This goal is linked to democratic governance as the private sector and investors seek a stable, level playing field in which to operate. Bureaucratic hurdles, over-regulation, and new tax requirements disincentivize informal businesses from making the jump to formal, though that would allow them to compete in government procurement processes. It is also linked to security, as growing risks emanate from the Sahel and the terrorist and criminal groups operating in northern Côte d'Ivoire and along its border. Economic growth is also linked to climate change goals, as openness to foreign investment facilitates climate smart investments and the public-partnerships and private investment will be necessary to achieve climate goals. Efforts to support women's economic empowerment will have a tremendous impact on sustainable and inclusive economic growth. This objective advances JRS Objective 1.1 and 1.3; JSP Strategic Objective 2.2; and NSSG Expanding Economic Prosperity and Opportunity Pillar.

- **Risks:** If Côte d'Ivoire's economy fails to maintain and exceed current GDP growth rates, it risks falling short of the population's demand for jobs and economic opportunity. Sustainability and broad inclusion in the benefits of growth are critical to avoid disenfranchised and frustrated youth becoming increasingly vulnerable to extremist groups and criminal alternatives for income generation. A faltering economy would also provide additional incentives for the government to look towards strategic competitors like Russia and China for economic assistance.

Objective 4.2: Côte d'Ivoire increases trade and investment with the United States and within the region. (Links to the RDCS RDO 2: Inclusive Broad-based Economic Growth Advanced).

- **Justification:** Mission Côte d'Ivoire is confident that expanding trade and investment is a critical way to deepen ties between our two countries while also providing direct benefits to Americans through better-paying jobs in the United States. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement entered into force in January 2021 without fanfare, but its potential for increasing intra-African trade and investment could transform the continent from being a net exporter of raw commodities in exchange for finished industrial goods by diversifying and building real trade linkages among African member countries. Trade also plays a catalytic role in improving the overall business environment by making conditions more appealing for private investment. Mission Côte d'Ivoire will work to expand trade and investment by supporting policies that promote a more open and competitive business climate, by helping Côte d'Ivoire move beyond the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and by supporting an increased U.S. commercial presence in the country.
- **Linkages:** Increased two-way trade and investment strengthens bilateral cooperation and helps to make U.S. global competitors less attractive, which links this Objective directly to democratic governance and security. Côte d'Ivoire represents untapped potential for U.S. investors, who currently comprise a small proportion of the country's foreign direct investment. The country has the third largest economy in

ECOWAS and the second largest port in West Africa, demonstrating its status as a regional economic powerhouse. Abidjan has been a strategic location for companies to base their operations for all of francophone West Africa, and the government is keen to promote the country as a dynamic entry point into the sub-region. This objective advances JRS Objective 1.2; JSP Strategic Objective 2.1; and NSSG Expanding Economic Prosperity and Opportunity Pillar.

- **Risks:** Failing to increase trade and investment linkages with the U.S. means a missed opportunity to promote both U.S. and Ivorian economic growth and prosperity. Lack of participation of U.S. economic actors cedes the ground to global competitors with less transparent ways of doing business and less interest in supporting stability, good governance, and human rights.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: Expand as a regional Embassy platform while placing an emphasis on cultivating a culture of LE Staff empowerment, training, and innovation to improve the quality and continuity of ICASS services.

- **Justification:** In recent years, Embassy Abidjan has successfully regularized management services and internal controls following a prolonged period of political uncertainty and unrest in Côte d'Ivoire. USDH and LE Staff positions are now filled with qualified staff, who are better equipped with technology tools – one positive outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic – for increased productivity, mobility, and workplace flexibilities. Mission Côte d'Ivoire's Management team provides the full range of ICASS services and support to nearly 600 employees and Eligible Family Members (EFMs) representing eight USG agencies. As the Mission grows as a regional Embassy platform, focus should be placed on LE Staff training and empowerment to foster innovation, climate-conscious growth, professionalism, accountability, and continuity in the provision of quality ICASS services, while contributing positively to the development of Côte d'Ivoire's human capital, nurturing a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and reducing the Mission's carbon footprint.
- **Linkages:** This objective supports all other ICS goals by providing the ICASS platform that will facilitate Mission programming to achieve interagency goals. LE Staff empowerment initiatives will also extend to all LE Staff throughout the Mission. It directly supports the AF JRS Bureau Management Objective.
- **Risks:** Not achieving this objective puts at risk all of the aforementioned ICS goals, as well as support for smaller missions throughout Africa that are growing to depend on the stable, regional platform Mission Côte d'Ivoire provides. While the team could continue to provide some levels of service with current skills and staffing, the quality of this platform will significantly degrade overtime resulting in failures in other Mission objectives. This will be mitigated with interagency collaboration on long-term planning

documents like the MRR, annual ICASS support reviews, and inclusive budget planning for adequate staff training.

Management Objective 2: Embassy Abidjan improves the quality of life for a growing Mission community and the attractiveness of an assignment to Abidjan.

- **Justification:** A Mission focus on improving the quality of life creates an environment in which employees can do their best work, encourages extensions, and attracts well-qualified bidders. While Mission Côte d'Ivoire is regaining its status as a regional hub, it remains a Historically Difficult to Staff post with recruiting challenges. Access to safe, outdoor recreational space that provides opportunities for the Mission community to come together is vital to building Mission morale. The availability of quality K-12 education is also a key element of recruitment. The USG-sponsored school has rapidly increasing enrollment and plans for facility upgrades but has room to improve in terms of communications, staff development, and consistency in the quality of instruction across all grade levels, particularly at middle and secondary school levels. The quality of post's housing pool has steadily improved over the past several years, but Mission growth will require continued efforts to find and maintain affordable, safe, and modern housing near the Embassy in an increasingly competitive real estate market. Mission Côte d'Ivoire recently received approval to develop the Embassy Annex, located near Mission housing, into a recreation center for the Mission community.
- **Linkages:** This objective supports all other ICS goals by providing the conditions that will attract well-qualified staff to lead and implement Mission priorities. It directly links to the AF JRS Bureau Management Objective.
- **Risks:** A return to political instability and/or deteriorating economic, security, or health conditions in Côte d'Ivoire would impede achieving this objective. Not achieving this objective would jeopardize U.S. Mission Côte d'Ivoire's ability to have motivated, well-qualified personnel to achieve all other bilateral priorities and strategic objectives.