

factsheet

USAID Office of Women in Development

In 1974, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) established the Women in Development (WID) office to help ensure that women participate fully, and benefit equally, from U.S. overseas development assistance. Under its current strategic plan, the WID office is supporting efforts to:

- **Enhance the economic status of women throughout the developing world.** Improvements in women's economic productivity and earnings are key to sustained economic growth. In addition, women's control of economic resources impacts directly on family health and nutrition.
- **Expand educational opportunities for girls.** Educated women have greater economic opportunities, lower fertility rates, and are more likely to ensure their own daughters receive an education.
- **Improve women's legal and property rights, and increase their participation in governance and civil society.** Advancing women's role in governance and expanding their legal rights helps to ensure broad-based participation in democratic society.
- **Integrate gender issues throughout USAID regional and country programs.** USAID efforts to achieve dynamic, sustainable growth will only succeed if the Agency's resources empower women as well as men to seize opportunities and make a difference for themselves, their families and their communities.

To help meet these objectives, the WID office has placed a top priority on strengthening its technical capacity. A highly-skilled team has been assembled to provide USAID missions and bureaus with technical support, research and analysis on gender issues. A communications and outreach team is providing a variety of useful resources, including a newsletter, country-specific gender profiles and management of an on-site resource center.

In addition to these activities, the WID office is undertaking new initiatives on specific issues that are critical for women's full participation in the development process:

- **The Girls' Education Initiative**, a joint effort with the Global Bureau's Center of Human Capacity Development, promotes basic education programs for girls in countries with significant gender gaps in primary enrollment.
- **The Women's Legal Rights Initiative**, launched at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, focuses on supporting women's political, economic and social empowerment through the promotion of women's legal rights, including research on women's legal literacy programs, advocacy training, and programs for community-based legal services for women.

###

WIDWorks **Office of Women** **in Development** **(WID)**

*U.S. Agency for
International
Development*
Room 3.08-042U
RRB
Washington, DC
20523-3801
Tel: 202-712-0570
Fax: 202-216-3173
E-mail:
dsediqi@usaid.gov