

REPORT
OF THE
SOCIAL WELFARE
TASK FORCE
TO
USAID/VN
USAID/W

R E P O R T
of the
SOCIAL WELFARE TASK FORCE
to
USAID/VN
USAID/W

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Washington, D.C.

Mr. Donald MacDonald
Director, USAID/VN
Saigon, Vietnam

Dear Sirs:

The Social Work Task Force submits, herewith, a report of its observations and recommendations concerning social welfare problems in Vietnam, and policies and programs that we believe should be considered in meeting those problems.

As you know, after two days of briefing in Washington, we arrived in Vietnam on July 24, 1967. From that date until our departure on August 17, 1967, we observed, studied, and discussed social welfare problems in Vietnam within the context of the country's present stage of social and economic development. We familiarized ourselves with the social goals and objectives as expressed by the officials of the government and the people. In all of this, we were constantly aware that the country is in the midst of a war.

Our activities included discussions with the Ministers of the Central government and the Regional and Provincial officials who are responsible for social welfare policies and the delivery of human services to their people. We consulted with appropriate officials and staff of USAID, CORDS, JUSPAO, the United Nations, International and American voluntary agencies. We were in contact with the executives and personnel of Vietnamese agencies and organizations. Most important, we had frequent opportunities to visit and talk with the Vietnamese people in the urban centers, the villages, hamlets, and refugee centers of the country. Our team divided into two groups and travelled for almost half of our stay in Vietnam in the four regions of the country, with two of us visiting Regions I and III, and two of us visiting Regions II and IV.

Obviously a rigorous study of social welfare problems in Vietnam was not intended and could not have been carried out in the period of time available to us. There are undoubtedly areas of social welfare that we have, of necessity, excluded from our observations. There are recognized limitations in our understanding of the history and complex culture of Vietnam. The observations and recommendation we submit in this report are based, however, on more than a casual excursion to Vietnam. They reflect the spirit, knowledge, and experiences of the officials of the Government of Vietnam which they shared with us willingly and with candor.

They reflect our contacts with the people of Vietnam both in and out of government, in the urban centers and in the villages and hamlets throughout the regions. They reflect, too, our interpretations of what we observed and heard from our International and American social welfare colleagues working in Vietnam. They reflect the cooperation, support, and candid sharing of information by the officials and personnel of our Embassy and AID in Vietnam. Finally, our findings and recommendations are based on the experience and professional judgment of the members of the Task Force, all members of which have had prior social welfare experience in developing countries.

It is highly unlikely that the Task Force would have found it possible to translate its observations and findings into what we believe are realistic recommendations without the background and expert consultation made available to us by the assignment by AID/W of Dr. Martha Branscombe as your official to accompany us. We are deeply grateful to her for her enormous contribution as a consultant and resource person.

No doors have been closed to us; no information we sought was withheld by anyone. We experienced the warm welcome and hospitality of the Vietnamese officials and people, and the generous support and cooperation of the USAID Mission to Vietnam.

We are awed and inspired that a people torn and suffering by the horrors of war can at the same time begin to direct their energies and resources to social development. The motivation and surge of the leaders of South Vietnamese with whom we were in contact, supported by great masses of the people everywhere augurs well for the future social and economic development of the nation.

It is our hope that our observations and recommendations will in some measure, assist and strengthen the social welfare goals and objectives so often expressed to us by the Vietnamese.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Social Welfare Task Force undertook this assignment at the request of USAID/VN. Its charge was as follows:

"The Task Force is to study social welfare problems in Vietnam and recommend to the US Mission and AID/W policies and programs to meet these problems. The task force will examine social welfare problems in both urban and rural areas and in terms of both immediate impact and longer range program responses."

"The task force will be asked to develop recommendations within the framework of inflation-imposed limitations on piastre expenditures and the shortage of trained Vietnamese personnel. While the task force will be concerned with social welfare problems, these will be considered in relation to other program areas including pacification, urban development, refugees, health, education, and labor."

"The task force will also be asked to take into consideration the activities of the US Mission and concerned elements of the GVN, especially the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Office of the Special Commissioner for Refugees. In arriving at its recommendations, the task force will also consider the activities and resources of the voluntary agencies and the United Nations."

The findings and recommendations of the Task Force rest on its conviction that social welfare represents a significant resource in improving the daily lot of men, women, and children in a nation; in strengthening their sense of total well-being; and in enriching their lives. In Vietnam social welfare has the potential for maximizing

the human return on the investment and sacrifice being made through the war for freedom of choice and self-determination. It is within this context, we believe, that sound social policies and programs are tools in winning the war and in Vietnam's nation building efforts.

The social needs defined for us as priorities by the Vietnamese people with whom we talked are a) security; b) social justice including land reform, elimination of graft and corruption, freedom from Viet-Cong taxation, and care of their widows, children, aged and disabled; c) education for children and adults; d) assistance and care for refugees; e) health care and facilities; and f) economic opportunity and security. Our observations support these social needs as identified by the Vietnamese, although in recommending policies and programs for meaningful national social development, our order of priorities may not be identical.

It is imperative and urgent that a broad concept of social welfare replace the present major thrust of doleing-out commodities and temporary provisions, as important as these are to people ravaged by war, poverty, disease, and illiteracy. In general, the major approach in social welfare at present is limited to remedial activities and subventions to support certain groups mainly through institutional facilities. While physical facilities are important in social welfare operations, they must be viewed as means to constructive ends. What is essential is a concept of social welfare which motivates and supports the will of people

to bring about individual and social change; strengthens the capabilities and involves people in self-help activities; and undergirds their well-being by a variety of social and economic measures and services. Obviously a broad spectrum of such services cannot be established in Vietnam until its people are secure and the economy can support them. It is essential, however, that priorities be immediately established in order to begin building the technical framework and to give direction to the social revolution that is taking place.

The Task Force is concerned with the means of broadening the present concept of social welfare in national policy development and in program execution, and it is particularly concerned about translating this concept into operations at the provincial and village level, of the country. Social development including social welfare must be firmly integrated with economic development. We believe that an appropriate level of technical and financial assistance on the part of USAID is required in planning for social development as well as economic development. In this respect there is an urgent need for both short-range and long-range social development planning that

- a) Establishes social goals and objectives
- b) Sets Priorities
- c) Outlines Programs
- d) Identifies Personnel Requirements

e) Estimates Financial Costs

f) Establishes Criteria for Review and Evaluation

There is a parallel need to strengthen the administrative structure and modernize procedures for effective implementation of social development plans.

We believe that USAID in its advisory and consultant role with the Government of Vietnam should make a major contribution toward these ends. In order to do so, USAID in Vietnam requires additional personnel with social welfare competence based on professional training and experience to provide it with the know-how required for this responsibility. The development and support by USAID, in full cooperation with the GVN, of experiments and demonstration projects at the provincial level, and in urban areas, staffed by trained American and Free World social welfare workers with Vietnamese counterparts, represents one immediate approach to evolving a broad and meaningful concept of social welfare adopted to the Vietnamese society.

We have observed that outside the city of Saigon the major focus of U.S. Government and GVN civilian activities, at present, is on short-term impact programs directed mainly toward security and emergency relief. While security is unquestionably of first importance and in large measure has dictated this short-term impact policy, we believe that it lacks the possibility of providing lasting social gains for the Vietnamese people. Moreover, the

glaring gap that follows such short-term impact programs incurs the risk of losing even short-term social gains. We understand the present strategy is premised on the expectation that following such short-term programs the essential long-range supporting services will be provided through the regular technical programs of the GVN. To date, however, the provision of such services has not been given high enough priority and consequently, the responsible ministries are hamstrung by insufficient personnel and other resources required to fill this gap.

In this connection, we were most favorably impressed with the laudable efforts of the U.S. and other Free Nations military forces in civil activities, but we must note that these efforts raise the serious danger of increasing dependency on the part of the Vietnamese and of perpetuating military influence, and that they fail to institutionalize genuine self-help efforts in the social fabric of the nation. These dangers are recognized by many of our military leaders. As rapidly as possible, therefore, these efforts should be transferred to Vietnamese direction and leadership with a genuine community development approach.

The problem of Vietnam's urban centers looms large and critical. Not unlike other developing nations, Vietnam is experiencing a burgeoning growth of cities. There is an ever accelerating flow of people from the rural areas to new and old urban centers in search of security, economic opportunities and improved standards of living. And as in other parts of the world, rapid urbanization generates

new demands for the already inadequate education, health, social welfare and other community services. It intensifies physical problems yet unsolved-lack or inadequate provisions for housing, water supply, sewage and garbage disposal, transportation, electricity, traffic regulations and fire protection. The impact of unplanned and uncontrolled urbanization processes on family and individual well-being and its pressures for human adaptation to new ways of life, with increases in disruption of family relationships, delinquency and crime as but indices of personal tragedy, makes it imperative to give immediate attention and high priority to the social aspects of urban planning and development. These common characteristics of rapid urbanization are vastly magnified in Vietnam by the conditions associated with prolonged military activities. As one U.S. official so aptly stated: "The war in Vietnam can only be won in the rural areas, but it can be lost in the cities."

Our observations in the country affirm the significant contributions, actual and potential, of United States, third country and international voluntary agency effort. We view

with grave concern, however, the failure of American voluntary agencies to coordinate their valuable social welfare activities systematically and effectively. We find coordination lacking particularly in relation to the goals, objectives, and policies of the GVN, and with respect to American voluntary agencies, in their relation to United Nations and to USAID efforts. Further, we would like to see considerably more effort made to promote and support voluntarism in social welfare among the Vietnamese people. Leadership in this respect might most appropriately come from the voluntary agencies now operating in Vietnam. We would hope for a planned transfer of foreign voluntary functions and services to appropriate Vietnamese voluntary auspices.

Serious question must also be raised concerning the tendency of a few American voluntary agencies to pursue policies that are not in accord with those of the GVN, and to pursue practices that would not be acceptable in most states of the United States. We hold that the primary responsibility for establishing and enforcing guidelines for voluntary efforts in the country rests with the GVN. We do believe, however, that USAID in its advisory and consultant role, has responsibility to assist the GVN, as requested in defining appropriate guidelines.

In our observation of social welfare activities under other than Vietnamese auspices, we observed the need for clarifying relationships between the United Nations programs, those of UNICEF, third countries, USAID and GVN efforts.

II. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Underlying all of our recommendations is the firm belief that the U.S. effort must commit itself to a strong social welfare component in its assistance to Vietnam. While we accept the basic need for giving attention first, to the problems of obtaining security, we are equally committed to a program which is concerned with the immediate and long-term aspects of social development.

In formulating our recommendations which are derived from observations elaborated in subsequent sections of this Report, the Task Force has consciously limited its consideration to those actions we believe are most urgently required to meet the immediate social welfare needs of critical sectors of the population and to strengthen the GVN capabilities for progressive development of basic longer-range nation building programs. Particular attention is also given to the current policies and priorities of USAID and the GVN, and notably to the restrictions imposed by the prevailing piaster limitations.

Within this context, our recommendations are summarized in two parts; first, those given priority for immediate action; and second,

those proposed for longer-range development or accorded a lower priority for action now.

A. Priority Action

1. The social welfare function should be given a higher priority by USAID, MACCORDS and the GVN to meet the immediate human needs directly or indirectly associated with the war and to assure progressive development of a national social welfare program broadly conceived as an integral part of the nation building effort. As a minimum, this calls for the following immediate actions:

(a) The Social Development Division of USAID should be staffed with sufficient professionally competent personnel to discharge the social function more effectively within the U.S. Mission and to provide more adequate advisory services to the GVN in its social welfare efforts. This also necessitates the participation of a professionally competent social welfare officer on an equal level with the directors of the other technical divisions in the policy and program development activities of USAID. As a first step to augment the present staff, advisors should be assigned with particular competence in the areas of: 1) community development and action; 2) urban social welfare planning and organization; 3) social welfare training coordination; and 4) stimulation of private initiatives and voluntary agency coordination.

(b) With USAID giving professional direction, there should be assigned under CORDS in each of the four regions a professionally competent social welfare advisor to serve as a counterpart to the Ministry of Social Welfare's Regional Chief. At the provincial level and for autonomous cities, the CORDS provincial refugee advisor, where available,

or another advisor in a related technical field with suitable qualifications should be assigned as counterpart to the Ministry of Social Welfare's Provincial Chief or responsible city official.

(c) The lines of responsibility within USAID and CORDS for liaison with the GVN for social welfare matters should be clearly defined and structured to the concerned ministries in order to avoid confusion or counteracting effects upon USAID social welfare advisory services.

(d) USAID should support GVN budgetary provisions for the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Commissariat for Refugees at increased levels to finance the personnel and material resources required to strengthen and further develop their programs at all levels, and particularly in those areas the Task Force is recommending be given priority.

2. The massive dislocation of families, with all of the attendant social disorganization and disruptions of normal family functioning and social stability, must have top priority among the social welfare needs to be addressed by the Vietnam efforts. To move forward on immediate alleviation of this problem and toward longer-term planning for its progressive resolution, we recommend that:

(a) Immediate steps be taken by MACCORDS and the GVN to establish more expeditious procedures and more adequate facilities to assure that emergency needs of refugees are quickly met, including having readily available supplies and equipment essential to provide food, shelter, medical supplies, clothing, blankets and such other necessities as the local circumstances require. Likewise, the GVN should promptly improve the administrative procedure to expedite piastre payments to refugees

and consider providing benefits at a level more commensurate with their needs as soon as this is practicable.

(b) Steps should be taken to make social welfare as well as other basic technical services available to all "refugee" camps and other "temporary resettlement centers for refugees". Particular consideration should be given to providing community development teams (including, where possible, a community development worker, nurse or health worker, social welfare worker, home economist, physical planner and, as indicated, an agriculturalist) to stimulate and encourage self-help activities and strengthen the capabilities of "refugees" to cooperate and participate in their own resettlement and in reconstruction of their villages and community life.

(c) The Ministry of Social Welfare should expand its program of services and assistance to meet the urgent needs of displaced persons who either are not registered as "refugees" or are not entitled to benefits under the SCR, and those of persons classified as "permanently resettled refugees" but require further assistance or services after the termination of their "refugee" benefits. In this connection, the concept of the present Community Action program of the Ministry of the Social Welfare should be broadened to encompass a community development approach particularly in extending services to refugee resettlement centers, and at the village level for follow-up of the R.D. Teams' efforts in New Life Hamlets.

(d) With particular reference to refugees and displaced persons, the Task Force firmly believes that assistance must be provided in

cooperation with and through the appropriate GVN ministerial organization. We have observed a tendency on the part of some U.S. Government or voluntary agency personnel, in their concern to provide immediate and meaningful assistance to needy persons, to bypass the responsible Vietnamese authorities. No matter how attractive this direct approach may seem in the immediate circumstance, we believe it is self defeating and, in the long run, results in less rather than more meaningful assistance. We believe that the USG has both a moral as well as a practical obligation to support, advise, and assist the GVN in caring for its own citizens. Only in this way can we assist in the development of a stable society with institutionalized mechanisms for assisting its disadvantaged members.

(e) The Task Force is also concerned that the civic action activities of the military be developed and implemented in concert with policies and programs of the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Special Commissariat for Refugees. Efforts should be made to avoid civic action such as orphanage construction, which in the long run tends to engender bad social welfare and results in such undesirable phenomena as the abandonment of children. The Task Force also feels that civic action programs should be designed in such a way that they do not develop institutions, either in the physical or in the abstract sense, which the Vietnamese themselves, with their limited resources, will not be able to incorporate in their society after military forces have left Vietnam.

3. We are equally concerned with the special plight of a high percentage of the Vietnamese children living with or without their own families in circumstances which gravely threaten their immediate as well as their future potentialities for growth and development. Because children are the group in the population most vulnerable to the adverse consequences of war and social upheaval, we recommend the following actions:

(a) The GVN should further extend existing social services for families and children in their own homes and consider innovative approaches that might reach larger numbers in all parts of the country. Emphasis should thus be placed upon activities and services designed to help children grow up in their own families; to preserve or restore the integrity and strength of the family to reinforce the capacities of its members for self-reliance; and to enhance the family's capabilities to provide more adequate care and protection for their children. This would include, for example, providing additional community centers and day care facilities especially in urban areas and refugee centers and expanding their activities to include parent education with particular emphasis upon health, nutrition and child care; increasing the opportunities for vocational training for women and young people, expanding the child feeding programs through schools, day care centers, refugee camps and special centers, and linking such feeding programs with measures for health and nutrition education; establishing "homecraft/mothercraft" training programs for women and young girls which might be conducted in conjunction with community center programs,

maternal and child health centers, home economics extension services, or through other arrangements suitable to the locality.

(b) USAID should encourage the United Nations and UNICEF to sustain and, upon request of the GVN, to expand their present technical and material assistance to the family and child welfare program of the Ministry of Social Welfare taking account particularly of recommendation (a) above and the valuable contributions they are making in this field.

(c) USAID should encourage and support the efforts of the MSW to establish policies, procedures and guidelines to improve and maintain standards of child care and protection, including those for adoptions, orphanages and institutions and day care services; and should support the GVN position that Vietnamese children should not be removed from their families or their country except in unusual circumstances where this is in the best interest of the child. The latter applies to placing minor children in orphanages, inter-country adoption, or sending children outside of Vietnam for medical treatment or education.

(d) A demonstration project should be considered with a team, composed of a social worker, nurse, home economist, and community organization specialist working under the Ministry of Social Welfare in an orphanage or cluster of orphanages. The team would help to reorient orphanage programs with a view to returning children to their own families where possible, maintaining close relations between the child and his family or relatives while in the orphanage, and linking the children's families with other available social resources, thus insuring optimum planning for the children's future. This would build upon the

experience of the mobile teams now operating in limited areas under the MSW.

(e) The planned GVN program which calls for the expansion of simple but adequate family hostels, located near provincial hospitals, should be fully supported by USAID. The plan envisions construction of additional hostels to which would be assigned social welfare workers, who, in cooperation with the provincial hospital staff, will work with family members of patients while they stay in the hostels.

(f) USAID should continue to give special attention and support to GVN and voluntary agency programs which encourage the interest and involve the active participation of youth in reconstructing their country and society, and those which develop recreational opportunities and facilities for both youth and children of all ages.

(g) Consideration and study be given to the introduction, on a controlled experimental basis, into one or more refugee camps and urban areas, of a food coupon plan as an alternative to the present method of commodity distribution by the GVN (see Section III - F for details).

4. The particular stresses arising from the rapid urbanization occurring in Vietnam call attention to an urgent need to focus specific programs in this area. As urban pressures increase, this may necessitate some shifting of emphasis away from rural-oriented programs to those designed to deal with the social needs of urban populations.

It is recommended, therefore, that:

(a) USAID give particular attention to the social welfare component in urban development.

(b) The advisor with competence in urban social welfare planning and organization, recommended in item 1(a) above, participate with other USAID technical advisors in the metropolitan development council being established for Saigon and provide technical guidance as may be appropriate for other autonomous cities or urban areas.

(c) USAID encourage and support a more intensive attack upon the acute problems of housing, sanitation and inadequacy of community services in the vastly overcrowded neighborhoods and districts particularly in Saigon and the autonomous cities.

5. Recognizing that short-term impact programs in rural areas cannot achieve the lasting results essential to gain the allegiance of the people to the GVN or even to guarantee sustained security, the Task Force recommends that:

(a) USAID and GVN give a higher priority to the immediate extension of essential supporting technical services into rural areas and particularly to new life hamlets to assure follow-up support when the R.D. teams move forward.

(b) USAID provide advisory services and support to the Ministry of Social Affairs in establishing a broader community development program for rural areas designed to reverse the negative features of rural life and introduce change in the traditionally rigid patterns of village isolation that intercept GVN efforts to gain the confidence and support

of the rural population. Reference is made to such advisory services under recommendation 1(b) above.

(c) Consideration be given by USAID and the GVN to setting up a model rural development program in a selected province where there is a high degree of security to be tested and modified as experience indicates for extension to other areas as circumstances permit. For this purpose there should be a multi-disciplinary team of experts working with Vietnamese counterparts.

6. A prerequisite for strengthening and extending the social welfare efforts in Vietnam on the lines we are proposing is the availability of manpower sufficiently trained and appropriately deployed to staff social welfare programs at all levels of administration and services operation. The Task Force believes that a high priority must be given to meeting the urgent immediate training needs and laying, at the same time, foundations for longer-range manpower and training development, and, therefore, recommends that:

(a) The GVN with the technical assistance of the United Nations give paramount consideration to the preparation of a coordinated national plan designed to progressively meet immediate and longer-range personnel requirements for GVN and voluntary agency social welfare programs, including further extension and upgrading of existing training programs and development of new ones as appropriate.

(b) USAID should recognize, encourage and fully cooperate with the United Nations, which, upon the request of the GVN, is the

primary source for technical assistance in the area of social welfare training. This calls for the coordination of any USAID assistance in this field with the GVN-UN social welfare training programs; provide financial support of only those voluntary agency training activities or projects planned in cooperation with and designed to complement or supplement the GVN-UN social welfare training plans and programs; support and assist, as may be appropriate, the GVN-UN efforts to establish national criteria for different types and educational levels of training programs and to coordinate the social welfare training activities of Vietnamese and foreign voluntary agencies with national plans for social welfare manpower development.

7. Considering the number of foreign voluntary agencies operating a variety of programs in Vietnam and the importance of enhancing the cumulative impact of their experience and resources upon the urgent needs and national program development, the Task Force recommends that:

(a) The members of the Vietnam Council of Foreign Voluntary Agencies undertake to strengthen the effectiveness of the Council as a device to facilitate cooperation and bring about coordination of program planning and operation among its members in the several fields of their activities and for establishing arrangements for better communications and closer relationships between its members and the GVN technical services. Particular emphasis is placed upon the necessity for coordination between foreign voluntary efforts in

the social welfare field and those of the GVN at all levels of administration, especially the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Special Commissariat for Refugees which have expressed their concern in this matter. Cooperation at the technical and field levels of the Ministry could be maintained without infringing upon the independence of voluntary agencies.

(b) The GVN should establish guidelines and criteria as a basis for agreements with foreign voluntary agencies for their entry and continuing operations in Vietnam. Such guidelines and criteria should assure that the objectives, policies, programs and standards of practice are consistent with the goals, policies, programs plans and aspirations of Vietnam. Responsibility for establishment of such guidelines and criteria and for approval and monitoring of such agreements should be vested in the ministry or ministries directly concerned with the technical areas of the agency's program.

(c) The U.S. Government in consultation with American voluntary agencies concerned should consider appropriate action to assure that the objectives and policies of American voluntary agencies and organizations undertaking any type of activity in Vietnam are basically in accord with those of the GVN and that their professional practices, while adapted to the circumstances in Vietnam, do not violate generally accepted standards and are in compliance with any Federal and state laws or regulations that might be involved in carrying out their objectives.

(d) USAID should support and provide advisory services to the Ministry of Social Welfare in its efforts to establish and implement guidelines and criteria for national and foreign voluntary agencies operating programs in the social welfare field and to develop arrangements for more effective cooperation and coordination of voluntary agency programs with those of the GVN in this field. In this connection, USAID should also provide technical consultation for U.S. voluntary agencies to facilitate their cooperation and the coordination of their social welfare efforts with those of the GVN in this field. Reference is made to the recommendation under 1(a) above calling for a social welfare advisor with particular competence in this area.

(e) As one condition for contracting to finance any voluntary agency social welfare program or activity, USAID should require that the voluntary agency confer with the GVN ministry concerned in the planning stage for such project or program and continuously undertake to coordinate implementation with related GVN efforts.

B. Longer-Range Development

1. The GVN in its programs for family and child welfare should:

(a) Move towards a system of adequate family income support.

(b) Encourage the growth of Vietnamese voluntary agencies, and their exploration of new types of services and cooperative efforts.

2. USAID should provide, upon request of the GVN, consultation, and make available experts on a short-time basis for study and consultation on specific programs for family and child welfare.

3. USAID should give increased emphasis to assisting recreation programs and facilities for children and youth under government and voluntary auspices in both rural and urban areas.

4. The GVN should reconsider existing legal prohibitions and examine the potential values of family planning not as a population control measure, but as a means of providing, on a guaranteed free-choice basis, the opportunity for responsible parenthood and improved quality of care of children essential to the development of their potentialities.

5. As soon as practicable, it is proposed that USAID-GVN consider setting up a model rural reconstruction and development program in a selected province where security conditions are optimal. The major purpose would be to test innovative approaches to channeling the supporting technical services required to follow up the short-term efforts of R.D. Teams in New Life Hamlets and in areas without such impact programs.

6. A pilot project should be established in a selected provincial or district hospital to demonstrate the ancillary value of social welfare services to medical care particularly in hospitals associated with medical education institutions, and to explore appropriate relationships between more specialized medical social services and social welfare services also recommended under the Ministry of Social Welfare for hostels accommodating families of hospital patients.

7. The improvement in the quality and quantity of medical services and the extension of preventive health programs complemented by social services for the civilian population should be accelerated.

8. Longer-range economic planning should be initiated to assure the availability of income through employment to all persons able and available for work when war-related employment opportunities no longer exist.

9. Consideration should be given to the coordination of existing forms of financial assistance and provision made to assure continuing assistance as long as need exists, for more adequate benefits, and for the most humane possible methods of administration.

10. Long-range planning for the progressive development of an insurance-based social security system should proceed as quickly as possible. Consideration should be given to immediate coverage at least for employed workers as a measure for inflation control as well as future benefits for the workers.

11. It is hoped that the Vietnam Council of Foreign Voluntary Agencies will strengthen its staff services and increase the effectiveness of its efforts to discharge its present functions, and give further consideration as well, to expanding its functions in order to make available the cumulative experiences and knowledge of its members.

12. Foreign voluntary agencies should plan and operate their programs with a view to encouraging Vietnamese voluntary initiatives and to the transfer of their services to Vietnamese leadership and direction as rapidly as feasible.

13. USAID-GVN should stimulate and support initiatives to promote Vietnamese voluntary social welfare efforts, and encourage development of a dynamic partnership between government and citizen activities aimed at human well-being and social reconstruction.

14. USAID should confer with the GVN about the possibility of providing buildings and equipment needed for the proposed National School of Social Welfare and other GVN training programs.

15 USAID should consider providing assistance upon their request to private Vietnamese educational institutions for expansion of existing social welfare training programs or for the development of new ones taking into account the overall program requirements for social welfare manpower.

16. Budgetary provision should be made by USAID for operational research, particularly for the conduct of studies in depth of the effects of massive dislocation upon family life and the traditional social institutions in Vietnam; the needs of children and the most effective methods of meeting those needs; and research into the characteristics, attitudes, motivations and economics of urban groups.

17. In addition to actions directed toward major needs affecting a large proportion of the population, a range of other social needs and problems must be faced. These include the more specialized needs of particular groups, such as the aged, the physically and mentally handicapped, the chronically ill, and juvenile delinquents, as well as the larger social questions of adequate provision for income maintenance and a modernized framework of social legislation. Under prevailing circumstances, no clear delineation of priority among these needs is possible, but they place demands upon longer-range social welfare development plans and beginning provisions for improving existing services must be made as rapidly as possible.

III. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND PRIORITIES

The immediate challenge to Vietnam in developing a comprehensive social welfare program, in the judgment of the Task Force, lies in shifting the emphasis of current programs to focus upon acute needs, and at the same time to lay the foundations for longer-range programs geared to over-all national development. The challenge is the more rigorous in that all civilian efforts are conditional upon security and serious limitations of skilled manpower, financial and other resources.

These considerations underscore the necessity for identifying problem areas that should be given highest priority in planning social welfare programs and for exploring the most practical ways of executing them. It is in this context that the Task Force attempted in this part of the Report to analyze in more detail the several areas of most urgent need referred to in the Introduction and to propose possible actions for immediate and longer-range program development.

A. Refugees and Displaced Persons

The massive dislocation of people caused by the exigencies of war presents the most acute social problem, the urgency of which is intensified by their implication for the total war effort. The refugees and those individuals and families displaced from their homes because of war dangers, whether from the VC terrorists or RVN-US military operations, have suffered the effects of being separated from their homes and belongings, their land, family graves, and sometimes family members.

Since January 1964, there have been one million nine hundred thousand registered refugees, of which 950,000 are still considered in the "temporary" category. In addition, it is estimated that an even greater number have left their homes or have been forced to do so, to seek refuge with relatives or some haven in nearby towns or cities, or have migrated in search of employment.

The members of the Task Force visited a number of refugee camps and resettlement centers in all four regions. There is a wide variation in the standards and conditions of living - they range from those with new, well designed housing, water supply, garden space, and access to employment opportunities, to those best characterized as overcrowded, ramshackle hovels or tents in squalid surroundings with no prospects for self-support. Some called "temporary" at the outset are still occupied, sometimes by the initial occupants. A new group of 2,000 refugees were observed who had just arrived in a secure area and for whom neither shelter nor food had been provided. Emergency action was being taken to bring in tents and food, but it was expected that it would take two weeks before they would be housed in an organized fashion in temporary shelter. It was the second time these refugees had been forced to leave their hamlets which were 12 kilometers down the road.

The CVN through the Special Commissariat for Refugees is operating the program for emergency refugee care and resettlement. In spite of the inadequacies observed, we were impressed by the organizational achievements of the SCR in the period since its establishment.

The USG provides logistical support for the SCR, including cement, roofing, commodities, medical aid, sanitation, and transportation. A number of American and other foreign voluntary agencies are making significant contributions to the refugee program by supplying additional material, food, and personnel. Mention should also be made of the significant assistance to refugees through the G.I. and other Free World military civic action programs.

Eligibility for refugee assistance from SCR is conditioned upon registration. However, even when registered, many refugees experience a long delay in receiving plaster payments and, particularly those not in camps, frequently never receive assistance from SCR. Furthermore, assistance for refugees through SCR terminates after a period of three months by which time they are presumed to be resettled. This is irrespective of whether the refugee has in fact been resettled or is still in a camp.

Technically, the Ministry of Social Welfare has responsibility for meeting continuing needs, but to date this Ministry has been unable to discharge these responsibilities due to lack of funds and personnel. Consequently, aside from sporadic voluntary agency activities, refugees are left "on their own" after the termination of the three month period.

From the social welfare point of view an even more serious need, and gap in service, exists in the case of those individuals who have on their own initiative sought haven in private arrangements and are not registered as refugees.

While these individuals, as well as untold numbers of other persons displaced as result of war-related conditions, might be eligible for assistance from the Ministry of Social Welfare, as indicated above, budgetary provisions and staff for this purpose are totally inadequate.

The problems caused by the gap in responsibility might be alleviated if there were closer liaison and joint planning between the Commissariat for Refugees and the Ministry of Social Welfare in Saigon and also at the regional and provincial level. This could perhaps pave the way for merger of the two GVN agencies as soon as this becomes feasible. For the present, what seems clear is that both registered refugees who do not receive assistance from the Commissariat for Refugees and other displaced persons should be entitled to assistance from the Ministry of Social Welfare on the same basis as other eligible residents. It is recommended, therefore, that the Ministry of Social Welfare be provided funds and personnel to meet the needs of those displaced persons who do not fall in the technical category of "refugees" and those refugees still displaced and needy after their "refugee" benefits terminate.

As to the U.S. involvement, MACCORDS is taking steps to improve their supporting operations through additional staffing and more adequate stockpiling and distribution of supplies. It appears, however, that higher priority should be given to refugees in the MACCORDS operation and assistance should be extended beyond the short term, emergency period. It is strongly recommended that immediate steps be taken by GVN to increase the amount of benefits and to improve the administrative procedure for piastre payments to refugees and by

MACCORDS and CVN to assure the immediate provision of emergency aid, such as tents, canvas, prefab buildings, medical supplies, clothing, soap, upon their arrival at the camps.

Essential services should also be provided as quickly as feasible to seize the opportunity to lessen the social shocks of displacement, to begin the process of long-range planning with refugees and displaced persons for their resettlement and to facilitate adaptation to the inexorable forces of social change, as well as to give visibility to the CVN concern for the people. Even while the initial emergency arrangements for food and shelter are underway the individuals and families could be involved in working out their own future plans.

The self-help philosophy seems to be inherent in the Vietnamese way of life. More guidance, stimulation and encouragement would promote community action programs which could carry over to the task of nation building. More adequate nourishment for children, education for mothers on nutrition, hygiene, and child care would serve as measures to promote higher levels of physical health. Literacy classes, vocational training, education for the children would prepare them for a future offering wider potential for individual achievement in line with anticipated country manpower needs. Community center programs, day care service and counselling on personal problems could strengthen family life during this period of stress so as to preserve one of the greatest resources of the country in its search for stability and nationhood. Help with resettlement plans, whether on a group or individual basis is essential to

offer hope to people who for so many years have been isolated from a national purpose and have not known stability.

Augmentation of the current CORDS operation by strengthening the social welfare element would go a long way to achieve these goals. It is recommended therefore that the Refugee Division of CORDS draw upon the technical guidance now available and proposed, in the Social Development Division of USAID, and that, as recommended elsewhere in this report, social welfare advisors be assigned to each region, as counterparts to the Ministry of Social Welfare's Regional Chiefs, and as a technical resource to CORDS Regional Deputies and Refugee Advisors. In this way, as the emergency situation subsides, an administrative framework would exist to carry forward long-range social planning and programs.

It is further recommended that teams of community development workers (including, where feasible, suitable combinations of workers from the fields of health, social work, home economics, physical planning and agriculture) be assigned to work especially with groups of refugees no longer considered in "temporary status". Provision and training of such teams by the SCR should be stepped up. Assistance for this purpose should form a more significant part of voluntary agency activity for refugees, e.g. the current Community Development Foundation and Vietnam Christian Service programs in this area.

And finally, it is recommended that research in depth be undertaken as soon as possible to determine the effects of displacement on family life and the social structure in Vietnam. We understand

that some surveys have been made to obtain demographic and other data. As a basis for future social planning, however, more thorough analysis of such data and information regarding the dynamics of changes in process are essential, especially as this group now comprises more than 20% of the population.

B. Children, Families and Youth

The social needs of children, families and youth in Vietnam present a stark picture. Any country at this stage of economic development is handicapped by lack of resources to provide the basic necessities of life, much less adequate health, education, housing and other attributes for higher levels of living. Family solidarity and the cultural pattern of extended family relationships, however, are a major source of strength among the Vietnamese people. Disruption of families caused by the massive dislocation of the population and other effects of war are therefore tearing assunder the fabric of Vietnamese life and threatening the future of the younger generation.

The increasing number of widows and orphans was repeatedly cited to the Task Force as one of the great problems. Catholic Relief Services recently estimated that there were 10,000 full orphans in South Vietnam and 82,000 widows. This, however, reflects only the circumstances of a small fraction of the whole child population upon which the impact of the total situation falls heaviest and takes the more acutely and permanently damaging toll.

Because of the traditional family structure and customs, most of the orphans are absorbed into families of relatives. Although the GVN position favors measures to keep children with their families, there has been an increase in the number of orphanages in the past five years, established largely by non-GVN groups. The rising number of widows has put a strain on the resources of the Veterans Affairs Administration, Ministry of Social Welfare and other GVN agencies, in providing benefit payments, food, clothing, housing, vocational training, and health facilities.

Data obtained from a survey made by the Refugee Division of CORDS and processed through the GVN National Institute of Statistics, showed that children between the ages of one and fourteen represent 48% of the refugee population.

Historically, the Vietnamese concept of welfare envisaged assistance only for certain dependent groups chiefly through distribution of commodities and institutional care. The Task Force visited a number of such institutions, one of which was established as early as 1889. Pitiful sights of listless malnourished babies were seen. One orphanage in the Saigon area has 1,500 children in it. Most of the orphanages and other institutions in Vietnam are operated under private and predominantly religious auspices. Only three of the 84 orphanages now caring for children are government operated. In most instances, however, the government has responsibility of setting standards and supervision of voluntary institutions and in most instances provides some subsidy for them.

Although limited social welfare programs are operated by several Ministries, these are generally secondary to their primary function, and the heaviest responsibility for meeting the needs of families and children rests with the Ministry of Social Welfare. With the assistance of a UN Child Welfare Advisor, and with aid from UNICEF, much has been accomplished in recent years to raise the standards of children's institutions and services under both government and private auspices.

Recognizing the need for new approaches, a serious effort is also being made by the Ministry of Social Welfare, again aided by the UN and UNICEF, to establish day care centers and other services to improve child care and alleviate family stress which otherwise might necessitate separation of children from their families. The Ministry advises that at this time they are operating 63 day-care centers serving 6,000 children and have budgeted for nine additional ones during this year.

In order for the situation of children to improve more rapidly, however, it is recommended that the GVN give priority to problems of children and families by:

(a) Establishment of further services to help children grow up in families, such as expansion of day care, vocational training for family members, and additional community centers (especially in urban areas).

(b) Expansion of programs in child feeding through schools, day-care centers, orphanages, refugee camps, and by increasing provisions for health, nutrition and child care education.

(c) Upgrading and reorienting services of existing orphanages and institutions whether under government or voluntary auspices.

(d) Moving towards a system of adequate family support.

During this period of war, the plight of orphaned children has drawn worldwide attention. Various forms of aid are being offered by foreign organizations, many of them American, and although well-intentioned, they do not always take into account the traditional values and cultural patterns of the country or generally accepted child care methods. For instance, whereas the Vietnamese are making valiant efforts to safeguard the care for children in their families and under improved conditions, some American agencies are urging large scale inter-country adoption programs or establishing additional unneeded orphanages. One organization had a representative in Vietnam visiting orphanages to locate 2,000 teenage orphans to come to the U.S. for three years vocational training.

It is recommended, therefore, that more comprehensive guidelines be established by GVN, centering responsibility for their implementation in the Ministry of Social Welfare in regard to:

(a) Children placed for adoption within or outside the country.

(b) Standards for existing orphanages and criteria for establishment of new ones by indigenous or foreign organizations.

(c) Programs involving the movement of children out of Vietnam, whether for medical treatment, education, vocational training, or foster care.

The channelling of the interest and concern in children of U.S. voluntary agencies and private groups, into sound programs which offer lasting benefits to children and families in Vietnam, and which are consistent with longer range GVN plans, is a matter calling for immediate attention and USG policy consideration. It is recognized that the GVN has requested the United Nations to provide the primary advisory services, in the field of family and child welfare. Nevertheless, we feel that AID should strongly support the efforts of the GVN and provide supplementary technical services if requested by the Ministry of Social Welfare, including the short-time services of consultants for studies or other specialized programs. Specifically, the Task Force recommends that AID support the efforts of the Ministry of Social Welfare in establishing and maintaining standards for child care by:

(a) Discouraging and withholding support from agencies with programs for inter-country adoptions which are not a part of a service offering alternative plans for children, within Vietnam.

(b) Supporting programs for day care rather than establishment of additional orphanages as the answer to temporary need.

(c) Endorsing the position that children should not be removed from their families and country for medical care, education, vocational training or foster care except in the most unusual circumstances, as dictated by the best interest of the child.

We do not want to imply that many voluntary agencies are not carrying out excellent programs to support the Vietnamese efforts.

The Task Force had the opportunity to see some of these in action, and were very much impressed.

In addition to those projects underway it is recommended that consideration be given by voluntary agencies for a demonstration project to be undertaken by a team composed of a social worker, nurse, home economist and community organization specialist working under the direction of the Ministry of Social Welfare. Such a team working with Vietnamese counterparts will build upon the experience of the mobile teams now functioning and being trained by the Ministry of Social Welfare. The team would work with one or more orphanages beginning with a case study of each individual child in care; attempt to locate the family or relative if possible and work toward a plan to return the child to family life wherever feasible. Such a team might also provide consultation to the orphanage staff, particularly on child care, nutrition and liaison. This experience might lead to the orphanage developing auxiliary services for children, eventually becoming a multi-purpose agency serving broader needs of children and families.

The Task Force, in its review of the needs of Vietnamese children, was struck by the need for family planning. Although at this time Vietnamese law prohibits artificial birth control the Task Force recommends that this issue be reconsidered by the GVN at the earliest possible date. Family planning should be seen not as a population control measure but as a means of ensuring that resources are made available, after appropriate public health

education, on a guaranteed free-choice basis, to assure the opportunity for responsible parenthood and to provide quality care of children essential to the proper development.

Considering the paucity of statistical data and factual information about the conditions of Vietnamese children and family life, it is recommended that AID, in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Welfare, undertake a study in depth of the needs of children which could serve as a basis for long-range planning.

Although the above discussion of children and families has been inclusive of children of all ages it is felt that attention should be drawn to special problems pertaining to youth - teenagers and young adults. The future of the nation may well rest with this group who are maturing at a time of social revolution, of military turmoil, and a period in history where youthful aspirations are being loudly expressed around the world. This group is the source of future leadership and can be a dynamic force in their country's development, or an element of anarchy which could impede progress for a generation.

Although youth in the rural areas are suffering deprivations, the major problems are faced in the burgeoning urban areas. Many youths of secondary school age did not benefit from elementary education, therefore find themselves unskilled and with inferior educational equipment to meet current day demands. Although the employment situation is artificially stimulated by war related activity, it can be anticipated that unemployment could become a

serious problem unless steps are taken now to offset it.

The war refugee and family separation conditions have encouraged youth to move to cities, often alone, and it is reported that there are gangs of wandering youth in certain of the slum areas in Saigon and other cities. Juvenile delinquency has increased, particularly among boys. The presence of large numbers of foreign troops has resulted in a mushrooming of bars, "bar girls", and prostitutes. There is a "strip" of bars and cafes outside any military area in all parts of the country. This will undoubtedly leave scars on the fabric of family life.

Youthful veterans demobilized from service in the armed forces have difficulty getting training and relocating in civilian life. Most male youth serve a period in the armed forces, often drafted before they have vocational skills or settled in a stable family situation. Returning veterans who have suffered physical handicaps however, benefit from special programs under the Ministry of Veterans Affairs providing vocational education and training.

The GVN Ministry of Youth and Sports shares concern for problems of youth with the Ministry of Social Welfare. The Ministry of Education has assisted in the impressive summer programs for teachers and high school students who for the past two summers have gone by the thousands into villages and hamlets to help in constructing schools, playgrounds, and community centers. One of the dramatic voluntary efforts of a youth group is that which has been carried out in a Saigon slum clearing and reconstructing a shanty section into a secure and lively neighborhood.

The hostels movement is growing in popularity. A number of hostels have been constructed in towns for high school students who live in more remote areas. Task Force members visited several of these, some constructed with funds from the Ministry of Social Welfare, and operated under the auspices of the local Parent Teachers Association. More hostels are needed for girls however, and there is an acute need for some residential arrangements for girls coming alone to the big cities.

Considering the important role of youth in nation building, the Task Force recommends increased emphasis by both the USG and GVN to programs for youth. USAID, in particular, should encourage and support the allocation of increased budgetary and personnel resources by GVN, and should continue to supply material resources to encourage self-help projects which involve Vietnamese youth in the reconstruction of their communities and their country.

Programs of community and neighborhood centers should be reviewed to see if they could have more significant programs for youth. Vocational training programs based on projected future manpower needs, should be encouraged and expanded. Vastly increased emphasis and support should also be given to the development of playgrounds, recreation facilities, and organized recreational programs in both urban and rural areas.

C. The Growth of Urbanism

One of the most dramatic developments in Vietnam, though to date one of the most ignored, is the rapid increase in urbanism. In a land pictured in rural settings with waterbuffalo in rice

paddies an urban explosion is occurring.

Most obvious is the Saigon/Cholon area which in 1954 had less than 500,000 people. It now has an estimated population of more than two million. To a lesser degree but exhibiting the same growth clusters are the areas surrounding Hue, Danang, Nha Trang, Qui Nhon, Vung Tau, Can Tho and Cam Ranh.

This growth results primarily from the original flight of nearly one million refugees from North Vietnam between 1954 and 1956 and the thousands of people seeking more secure areas from the war zones.

Basically, Vietnam is experiencing the same inevitable development facing all the nations of the world, that is, the increasing flow of rural people into metropolitan areas seeking economic opportunities and higher standards of living. There is no indication but that this trend will continue in spite of stated hopes by some that once the war is over, most new urban dwellers will return to the land.

This influx has created a host of problems in housing, water supply, sewage and garbage disposal, traffic congestion, and fire hazards. Increases in family disorganization, in health problems, in delinquency and in crime, are some indices of personal tragedy, resulting from this rapid urbanization.

The prevailing system of civil government in Vietnam is not equipped to handle these problems of urbanism adequately. In all of the nation there are only six municipal governments, i.e. in

Saigon, Hue, Danang, Dalat, Cam Ranh and Can Tho. An area like Nha Trang, for example, having nearly 100,000 people is administered by two villages and nine hamlet governmental systems.

Public administration authorities are attempting to remove these limitations of municipal government so that the provision of all services can be improved. Even in those cities having a municipal governmental framework, however, little has been done to comprehensively approach the plight of the urban area. Nor is there any government structure around which to organize the delivery of social welfare services. Several measures are indicated.

First, is the need for some basic research as to the nature of population composition and social problem clusters. USAID is developing for the first time a metropolitan development council for Saigon bringing urban planners together with economic, health and governmental authorities. For example, a sample census of the Saigon/Cholon area is being conducted for the first time. Notably lacking in this approach, however, has been the social welfare component which would analyze the degree of family breakdown, delinquency, prostitution, dependency, disorganization of social institutions, and other symptoms of social deterioration, as well as the human implications of physical and economic planning, the measures required to promote social integration, citizen participation in adapting traditional institutions to directing social change, and to prevent further social disintegration and malfunctions.

A second measure calls for a comprehensive approach to neighborhood development. We find, for example, in some of these urban clusters that neighborhood community centers are being built without reference to the importance of involving the interest and participation of the people to be serviced or to their relation to health facilities, neighborhood self-help organizations or other social programs. There is evidence in some of the Districts in Saigon, notably District 8 and District 6, of creative self-help programs being generated by volunteer youth groups. The potential for replicating such neighborhood community development projects is enormous. Some voluntary agencies are assisting in such programs, but these efforts might be amplified and further extended by other voluntary agencies.

A third response to this problem is to encourage a series of demonstration-training projects at the neighborhood level. Some of these can be promoted through the municipal government agencies, but equally important are the voluntary efforts illustrated by the voluntary youth groups mentioned above. Such projects would offer practical training for community leaders and provide field work instruction facilities for social welfare training programs.

It is recommended that USAID give particular attention to the social welfare component in urban development. Specifically, a specialist in urban social welfare planning and organization should be attached to the Social Development Division of USAID. His responsibilities should include participation in the work of

the Saigon metropolitan development council and advisory services, as appropriate, for other urban areas. His role would also be to stimulate various projects on a demonstration basis in collaboration with governmental and voluntary agencies.

The most urgent need is in the Saigon area, but similar projects should be considered in other urban clusters. Repeating again what a top U.S. Official has said, "the war in Vietnam can only be won in the rural areas, but it can be lost in the cities".

D. Rural Development

Probably nowhere in Vietnam is security of such crucial importance to national development as in the rural areas of the country. The more than one thousand villages which are made up of numbers of hamlets contain a major portion of the Vietnamese population and give the country its essentially agrarian character. The social needs of the rural areas are staggering whether we observe housing, sanitation, water supply, health, education, income or the opportunities for cultural environment. Fortunately for the Vietnamese people, the inherent strengths of the extended family as the primary social institution, which continues to obtain to a high degree in the rural areas provide the basic forms of care, protection and support for its members. The absence of external social supports and provisions, however, are sorely lacking or grossly inadequate and threaten to negate the traditional and existent family strengths. Further, the widespread and repeated dislocation of rural families and destruction or disruption of their homes and community life due to the exigencies of war are making an incalculably

damaging effect on the family structure and on the family life..

The Task Force observed the rural reconstruction program going forward in a number of new life hamlets and the responsiveness of the people to the energetic efforts of the R.D. Teams. The urgency of these short-term impact programs is unquestionable. We were, however, forcibly struck by the gap between this phase of the pacification program and the extension of the supporting technical services essential to maintain the security achieved and to sustain the demonstrated interest and commitments of the GVN to improvement of the conditions of the people in rural areas. Consequently, when the R.D. Teams are moved on to another area, usually after three or four months, there are no provisions to fill the vacancies.

This gap results from the low priority accorded the longer-range program of the technical ministries which lack the resources to follow-up the impact programs operated through the Commissariat for R.D. with the assistance of MACCORDS. Furthermore, there is little evidence of joint planning or coordination between the CRD and the technical ministries aimed at bridging the gap or making more effective use of existing resources to initiate the longer-range development phase. One illustration of the resulting loss of momentum is the fact that the workers trained under the R.D. program to get schools started and set up dispensaries do not meet the minimum training requirements for such personnel to be taken over and paid by the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education. The seriousness of this problem was brought to the attention

of the Task Force in some instances by CORDS regional advisers in these fields.

To avoid perpetuating the self-defeating consequences of this situation in rural areas, the USG and GVN should reconsider the present policies with a view to expeditious extension of supporting technical services into the secure rural areas.

Until quite recently the governmental structure of Vietnam with its concentration of authority and resources in Saigon has made it impossible for people in the villages and rural areas to have a feeling of contact with their government or a sense of partnership with it in self-improvement and overall social change directed toward achieving shared goals.

To offset these rigid patterns of village isolation and other negative impacts on the lives of the great majority of the Vietnamese, it is essential that their interests and aspirations, and the improvement of their lives have a high priority in the nation's current programming and in longer-term economic and social planning. Land reform measures and the introduction of an improved agricultural system are imperative; essential social welfare and health services must be provided; economic opportunities coupled with realistic education both for children and adults and suitable vocational training are basic. Above all, the steps already in progress to re-establish and strengthen local government at the village level, with resources made available to it to respond to the social needs of people, must be expedited. Measures must be

initiated through community development and action to involve those in rural areas in genuine self-help programs designed to improve social conditions and develop their human resources, as well as for economic development.

To assist the GVN in strengthening and expanding its community services program into rural areas and particularly to extend its technical support to refugee resettlement areas and new life hamlets, the Task Force strongly recommends that USAID provide advisory services and support to the GVN in this area. A social welfare adviser with special competence in community development and action should be assigned to the Social Development Division of USAID to advise the Ministry of Social Welfare in the development of program plans and exploration of suitable methods of stimulating citizen participation in community development and action programs in rural areas, including guidance for regional and provincial social welfare and SCR personnel, establishment of cooperative relationships with other GVN agencies as indicated and assistance in marshalling the cooperation and assistance of voluntary agency resources interested in this field. Consideration should also be given to establishing arrangements between the Ministry of Social Welfare, the SCR and Ministry of Rural Reconstruction to facilitate coordination and joint planning for transition of the impact programs to longer-range programs for community development and action.