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134
Near East

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TO - AIDTO CIRCULAR A- 154

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FROM - WASHINGTON
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ E.O. 11652: N/A
 SUBJECT - Women in Near East

REFERENCE -

SUMMARY: The Near East Bureau has established a Committee on Women in Development, is hiring a Women in Development (WID) officer, and will be looking at AID programming at the project, country, and regional level as it affects the lives and life chances of women in the area. Missions are requested to provide information which will assist the Committee in its review and to provide AID/W with the name of the individual designated to act as liaison with the Committee. Missions are encouraged to review and assess programming and new project opportunities in line with PD 60 (Attachment A), and are invited to make specific requests or comments on ways of facilitating communications between the Committee and the Missions on this important matter. End Summary.

This airgram is to advise you of developments in the Near East Bureau which bear on the implementation of the Percy Amendment (Section 113, FAA, "Integration of Women in National Economies"), to share with you our thinking on improving our programming in this area, and to seek your comments and suggestions on ways that AID/W can assist Missions in developing programs that benefit, and benefit from the participation of, women in their country.

Attachments:
 A - PD 60
 B - List of Projects
 Send to List N

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RVanDusen:bpo

NE/TECH

29735 4/1/77

AA/NE:ADwhite

NE/TECH/HND:BTurner draft
 NE/NENA:ABuckland draft
 NE/DP:PSellar draft

NE/TECH/SP-RD:GLangley draft
 A/AID/WID:MPotee info

NE/TECH:DISSteinberg draft
 NE/ME:TMiller draft
 NE/CD:PGuedet draft
 SER/OIT:LMoganam info

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The Near East Bureau has established a Committee on Women in Development, on which all offices within the Bureau are represented. Members include Grace Langley, Chair (NE/TECH), Peter Sellar (NE/DP), Thomas Miller (NE/ME), Annette Buckland (NE/NENA), Barbara Turner (NE/TECH), David Steinberg (NE/TECH), Theodore Lustig (NE/CD), and Roxann Van Dusen (NE/TECH). The Committee's function is to develop Bureau strategies, in collaboration with Missions, for improving women's ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ opportunities for participation in their country's development, to undertake periodic reviews of country programs as they relate to the participation of women, and to identify and explore additional opportunities to benefit women throughout the Near East region. The Bureau has received approval to hire a women-in-development officer, and will develop a roster of consultants available to work on this important topic.

Both the creation of the Near East Bureau's Committee on Women in Development, and the hiring of a WID officer for the Bureau, represent something of a shift in perspectives within AID/W on ways of implementing Section 113 of the FAA. More specifically, it is a shift in initiative, from the central AID/WID office to the regional bureaus; and a shift in scope of activities, from programming narrowly focussed on women as sole project beneficiaries to a broader perspective ~~which~~ views Section 113 as an important element of overall social soundness concerns. Since it is the Bureau's belief that one of the most effective means of furthering the objectives of Section 113 is to ensure that the social soundness analysis of every project thoughtfully and meaningfully addresses the question of the project's impact on women, project review committees will be looking more closely at social impact statements in both project documentation and sector analyses with reference to the light they shed on the role and participation of women.

The Committee recognizes that many on-going programs in the Near East are making major contributions to improving the lives and life chances of women in the area, even if they are not designed specifically with this goal in ~~mind~~ mind. At its recent meeting (2/10/77), the Committee identified some 55 projects (see Attachment B) in the NE region which should have a positive impact on the lives of women. The projects are primarily in the areas of health, population, elementary and non-normal education, and participant training: in short, human resources development and social services. None is geared to income generation or improving the economic productivity of women, and only one, the Kabul University Dormitory for Women, was a capital development project specifically focused on women as beneficiaries. The Committee will be particularly concerned with exploring opportunities in these presently underrepresented areas.

The Committee, assisted by the Bureau's WID officer, will be focusing on three levels of programming: project, country, and region:

Project: The Committee will be undertaking a selective review of current projects to determine the extent to which women benefit from and participate in them. We solicit Mission assistance and cooperation in furnishing additional

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information to supplement formal project documentation in order to give the Committee the base it needs to understand the selected projects as they relate to women. In turn, the Committee will share information about on-going programs in other countries and regions. As noted above, the Committee will pay particular attention to the social soundness analyses included in project documentation and, where additional information appears necessary, will suggest possible areas for research that will feed into the project activity. Funds for perceived research needs and pilot activities can be made available to Missions in DA countries from AID/W, and, in FY 78, in SA countries as well (assuming appropriation of requested funds for the new SA regional PD&S project) in those cases where country funds are not available. The Mission is requested to provide AID/W with the name of the individual designated to act as liaison with the Committee, and to provide whatever additional information would be useful for the Committee's review of project activities.

Country: The Committee, assisted by the WID officer, will attempt to keep informed of the literature on women in each of the countries of the region, and will share this material, as it has already with USAID/Afghanistan, with the Missions. As noted above, the Committee intends to take a close look at sector analyses, both to understand how effective host country and AID's programming has been in reaching women, and to seek new opportunities for involving women in the country's development process. Once again, where additional information is required, the Committee will work with the Mission to develop limited research strategies that will improve understanding of the country and awareness of opportunities for development programs to benefit women.

Regional: There appear to be numerous opportunities for developing programs which are relevant to the needs and concerns of women throughout the region, and the Committee will be considering, and asking the Missions to consider, a number of proposals already in hand. One concerns the development of teaching materials appropriate for non-formal education programs for illiterate or poorly educated women; another has to do with technical assistance to light industries which employ women and in which women might be trained to take on managerial tasks. Still another is in the area of participant training. Having reviewed the record of female participation from the NE region in international training programs, the Committee is now considering a regional training program for women.

The Bureau recognizes that Missions are not always staffed to deal adequately with the analysis required under Section 113, FAA, and expects to be able to make contract and/or direct hire support available to Missions to assist in this process. Essential in most countries will be the inclusion of indigenous social scientists, especially women, to work on this problem. As noted above, modest funds for perceived research needs could be made available to Missions from AID/W in those cases where country funds are not available.

The Bureau does not want to burden Missions with lengthy questionnaires or formal reporting requirements. We do, however, have a number of questions

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concerning the interest of government, academics, private groups, and individuals in encouraging greater involvement of women in the economic development of their societies. Specifically, we seek Mission comments on such questions as:

- (1) What, in the Mission's view, are the primary obstacles to and opportunities for greater participation in and benefit from development programs by women?
- (2) What local institutions and resources might be involved and/or supported in the effort to integrate women into the national economy? Are there indigenous or foreign voluntary agencies whose programs could be developed with OPG or other grant support? Are there research capabilities that could be called upon?
- (3) What is the Mission's reaction to the idea of a regional participant training project for women? Are there other program areas for women that would be more likely to receive host government endorsement if carried out under a regional rather than bilateral project? Should the Bureau consider establishing not just a regional training program for women but other regional development activities as well? If Mission sees value of regional women's project, please respond NLT June 15 to permit preparation of PIDs for inclusion in FY 79 budget request.

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