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**REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES
OF THE IPC PROJECT
IN GUINEA-BISSAU**

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Introduction

The IPC experience in Guinea-Bissau over the two-year period just ending is perceived by the USAID Mission and the Guinean government to have made a significant contribution in support of ongoing policy reforms. Although a great deal remains to be done in each of the policy areas addressed, a solid foundation appears to be in place to carry on implementation, very much along the lines envisioned in the overall IPC approach. The effort is seen by AID and the Guinean counterparts as innovative for the way in which participation and ownership of the process have successfully been fostered. They believe this to be a significant departure from previous project experience and a critical element in enhancing chances for success of the Guinean policy reform agenda.

The reasons for this outcome relate to the successful application of IPC principles to i) build ownership through the facilitation of local problem solving and action, ii) pay attention to the external factors that influence policy implementation, and iii) focus on improving the congruence between these external factors and internal considerations of the responsible organizations. In addition, as in all policy change situations, unique characteristics of the Guinea context and of the individuals involved had considerable impact on the activities chosen and their outcomes.

The original IPC visit in January 1992 developed a plan of action for supporting a unit within the government to identify and guide the implementation of key economic and administrative policy reforms necessary to promote increased trade and investment. It became evident, however, that the creation of this unit was not then feasible, given the attention of the government on the proposed national elections. The decision was taken to initiate activities in the area that appeared most conducive to policy change--and least controversial--within the overall objective of improving the policy and regulatory climate for private sector economic expansion. Reform of the judicial system to create an independent judiciary as a separate branch of government met these criteria. Successful experience in this area led to IPC activities in support of reforming the rules and regulations of commercial activity and finally to the redefinition and rationalization of the role of government in agriculture and rural development.

The definitions of policy and policy implementation provide a useful starting point for analysis of what took place. Policy may be defined as formal governmental decisions concerning rule systems, resource flows and lines of authority that establish or alter the use of public and/or private resources. Policy implementation may be defined as the translation of policy prescriptions into action by developing the commitment, capacity and procedures needed to initiate and sustain the operational changes implied by a given policy. All three of the areas addressed by the project fit these definitions well. Judicial reform targets a fundamental change in the rules of government and requires greatly enhanced organizational capacity and entirely new procedures for an independent judiciary to function. Reform of the rules and regulations of commercial

activity redirects how central and local governmental bodies license and regulate business activity and necessitates major operational changes to translate the policy decision into action. The rationalization of the role of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDRA) attempts to alter the use of public and private resources. It requires a host of operational changes and the commitment and enhanced capacity of a large number of players in government and civil society.

Before turning to the analysis of what transpired in each of these areas, several caveats are necessary to properly appreciate the impact of government policies in Guinea-Bissau and the role of IPC in support of policy reform. Almost everything that took place over the past two years in initiating these policy changes was the direct result of Guinean efforts and initiatives. The support of the IPC external team members and the relatively meager financial resources provided by the project were designed to have a catalytic role in support of Guinean counterparts in deciding on the best course of action and in implementing their decisions. Events did not always move at the pace or in the precise direction that the external members may have envisioned, but the approach unquestionably contributed to genuine ownership of the policy change process.

Given the fact that the present comments are written as input into the ongoing IPC research process, most attention is dedicated to description and analysis of what the IPC team did rather than to all the events that took place in the Guinean policy implementation arena. This emphasis should not obscure the fact that while IPC can justifiably take credit for providing important insight and support at critical times to keep the process moving, it remains very much a Guinean effort and responsibility for its long-term success or failure remains with them.

It is also important to recognize that the current reach of government policies is limited. Reading documents of various projects (including IPC) and other analyses or recommendations of what should be done, it is easy to get the impression that government policy is directly responsible for what happens in the economy and in society. It very clearly is not. Most economic activity takes place outside of any government intervention. In discussing reform of the rules and regulations of commerce, for example, the vast majority of commercial transactions take place in the informal sector. Although this aspect is critical in redefining how the state can or should influence trade and investment, it is important to note that the current restrictive or bureaucratically dense commercial legislation has relatively little influence on most commercial activity in the local markets. Similarly, an independent and impartial judiciary is a fundamental element of the current democratization process. It will be some time, however, until the impact of this reform reaches a majority of the country's population.

Finally, it is important to recognize the importance of external funding within public investment and government operations, and the importance of the ongoing structural adjustment program in setting economic policy and promoting or constraining certain

policy choices. The number and relative importance of externally funded projects (often providing conflicting signals) is very great. Virtually all public investment and a good share of operational expenditures are financed by projects. In the case of rationalizing the role of government in agriculture for example, implementation of government policy is pointless without attention to what donor projects do.

These caveats are not meant to downplay the importance of the policy reforms underway or the progress that has been made in each area. It is important, however, to maintain an appropriate perspective on the realities of the situation and the time horizon necessary for broad implementation and operationalization of the reforms to the point where most citizens' lives are affected.

Creating an Independent Judiciary

IPC support of judicial reform in Guinea-Bissau provided the basic model for the activities that took place in all three policy areas and illustrates the basic elements of the IPC approach. The external context was generally favorable to the policy, but implementation was stalled. Proponents lacked awareness of the need to engage and cultivate support and little progress was being made to move the separation of powers forward.

Unlike many policy initiatives, there was minimal outright opposition to judicial reform and considerable consensus that an independent judiciary was necessary for the transition to multiparty democracy and economic liberalization underway. While this was true in an abstract sense, there was little confidence in the capacity and performance of the existing judicial system, which consequently suffered from low prestige and budgetary allocations. Given the system's lack of autonomy and precarious working conditions, there was little motivation for society to invest the judiciary with more prestige and resources.

Perhaps partly in response to this lack of respect, many members of the judiciary were somewhat aloof, having a high concept of their ability, the professional status they merit, and potential role in society. It was obvious to them that the country needed a well equipped and well paid judicial system--and in their view this should have been obvious to the policy makers and donors as well. Why this had not been the case, or what might be done to rectify the situation, had received little reflection. A major task then, was to help the Working Group recognize the need to tap the latent public support for having a solid judiciary, particularly with regard to the institutional underpinnings of a market economy.

In its most narrow terms, the policy could be stated as the creation of an independent judiciary. The necessary constitutional change that establishes this principle, however, would only be the first step in the long road of implementing an operational court system to meet the needs of the country's new political and economic realities. The

mere separation of powers would only open the door for restructuring the courts, which would depend on complementary legislation, which in turn would only set the stage for improved performance. Improved performance would be forthcoming only if the elements of the system have adequate capacity to respond. Since improved performance is the justification for increasing resource allocation, implementation of the policy change in its broader sense would not progress unless capacity is simultaneously improved as the legal framework creating an independent judiciary moves forward.

As pointed out above, there was considerable inherent support for the ideal of an independent judiciary, but there had been little reason to trust important arbitration to an ill-equipped court system buffeted by political interference. The rules of the game of the Guinean economy were changing with economic liberalization and the court system needed to be improved to respond to the new rules--many of which were, and are, not yet in place. Merely catching up to the status quo and to the rest of government would not do. Consequently, it was necessary to think through and begin action on the steps necessary for the new organizational structure to function, and to increase institutional capacity and commitment to the new system. From the beginning, the IPC team worked with a Judicial Reform Working Group to carry out the two inter-related aspects of increased political support for implementation and increased institutional capacity.

In both the Guinean working group and the IPC team, the experience and the connections of the individuals involved played an important part in the process. The relatively small number of trained jurists in the country and the even smaller number of well paying positions for them creates a situation in which the key players often wear more than one professional hat. The Supreme Court justice most active in the working group was also the president of the Magistrates Association (AMAGUI); the vice president of the Bar Association (OAGB) was also the director of the television service; the head of the legislative department of the Ministry of Justice was also the lawyer for several of the more visible court cases involving the private sector; the legal counsel of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry was also the legal counsel of the Agricultural Producers Association; etc. With all of these individuals, and others like them, active in the working group, it became much easier to make certain that its plans and activities were widely disseminated and that it incorporated a cross section of views.

Similarly, the IPC team was led by the former US ambassador to the country who continued to enjoy unprecedented access to top policy makers, as well as personal relationships with key individuals built up over years rather than weeks or months of contact. This, and the only intermittent participation of foreign judicial experts, led to a situation in which the outsiders most involved in the process had considerable political and project implementation credibility, but little or none in the technical area of the reforms--which fell naturally to the Guineans in the working group. This proved to be a productive mix, facilitating the focus on implementation and diminishing the tendency to debate more abstract issues of comparative judicial systems.

Briefly, the main activities were as follows. The IPC team met with a number of individuals connected with or interested in the reform to listen to their views on the problems and possible solutions. These interviews led to the creation of a Judicial Reform Working Group, set up in September 1993, made up of the key individuals interviewed and others they recommended. Participants from several ministries, the supreme court, and private sector representatives were invited to attend the first informal session where the objectives and implications of judicial reform were discussed.

IPC team members presented an overview of strategic management and facilitated a discussion of how the concepts may apply to judicial reform. From this the group agreed on the need to develop an Action Plan, and the tasks of drafting different sections were distributed among the members, to be presented at the next meeting about a week later. Discussion of the importance of cultivating external support and getting the message across explaining why an independent judiciary is necessary found resonance and led to national television coverage of the next working group meeting. At this session, the draft Judicial Reform Action Plan (distributed two days prior) was discussed, changes recommended, and plans made for its distribution to a wider audience for feedback.

This pattern of activities was repeated for the other IPC activities in commerce regulations and agricultural strategy, i.e., interviews with key stakeholders, an initial working group meeting, the drafting of an action plan by working group members with support from the IPC team, the validation of the draft report by the working group and the development and implementation of the activities called for in the action plan. There were variations, of course, in the other areas that are discussed below, but the sequence of activities was similar and individuals that participated in more than one area were thus able to visualize and articulate the process to their colleagues much better than the external members.

A chronology and brief description of all IPC activities is included as an annex to this report. Several elements of the judicial reform action plan stand out that received most attention over the next several months. A key element was a training program for presentation to donors, primarily AID. Developing the plan with the working group provided a concrete exercise in helping the Guineans think through and articulate elements of the overall strategy. Rather than presenting a laundry list of possible training activities (as had been the standard practice) the group was forced to describe in some detail why the training was necessary, how each event would contribute to the overall reform effort, what the expected outcome would be, and how much it would cost. The need to justify to AID (or other donors) why the training was necessary and show how it fit within the overall effort provided an excellent model to illustrate to the Guineans the necessity of articulating the case for a strong judiciary to policy makers, donors, and the public.

The need to explain why improving the judiciary is a good investment was a new concept and did not immediately strike a responsive chord in the working group. It was much easier to get this point across and have it internalized when it was connected to the concrete necessity of justifying training for AID financing, from which they hoped to benefit personally. The emphasis of the IPC team in this case was perhaps greater on basic project management or planning concepts, rather than on strategic management per se, but the two were inextricably linked. In this sense, the first task of the working group was to link the policy reform and specific project support activities, using IPC and other donor-funded training and material support, to increase capacity as well as demonstrate prestige and commitment that could be brokered into increased internal political support. AID support through IPC and other projects in training and material was critical to maintain interest of the working group members, demonstrate success of their efforts, and provide evidence to the political community of the importance of the judiciary and this policy reform. Fixing the roof of the Supreme Court building, for example, may have seemed like a unique and unrelated event, but it likely was critical in maintaining momentum and demonstrating commitment.

The visit to Guinea-Bissau of Montgomery County Judge Peter Messitte in March 1993 gave an excellent opportunity to provide visibility to the working group and demonstrate the importance of an independent judiciary. Media coverage was excellent, attendance at the various public sessions was high, and the topics discussed were chosen to demonstrate the importance of an independent judicial system to a market economy and economic expansion. Without question the visit gave an enormous boost to the credibility of the group and helped a great deal in getting judicial reform on the country's political agenda.

Over the next several months a number of Guineans participated in training in Brazil, organized by IPC and the Brazilian judge Dr. Geraldo Og Fernandes who participated in Bissau in the initial working group meetings and action plan development. This training was complemented in Bissau by a review with IPC members of how the training was going to be applied in Guinea-Bissau and what steps were necessary for putting the new ideas in practice. This training/implementation discussion combination appeared to be particularly effective in the area of setting up small claims courts, where the idea took shape during the first training in Brazil and was carried out in Bissau under the leadership of the working group.

Although the working group always had the nominal lead in developing the other activities called for in the action plan, after the first Brazil training, the intensity of direct IPC involvement decreased and the effort became almost exclusively Guinean organized and implemented. Activities carried out included the acquisition and dissemination of the basic legal documents to all the judges and other key organizations, holding workshops on economic legislation in conjunction with the law school, drafting the complementary legislation regulating the judiciary, and in selecting and training the newly organized small claims court judges mentioned above. There were instances

where the IPC team offered support (e.g., for discussing and building a constituency for the draft legislation regulating the judiciary) but the working group counterparts preferred to carry out the activities on their own, which they did.

Overall, the IPC experience with the judicial reform policy in Guinea-Bissau supports the hypotheses of the IPC project. The successful constitutional change separating the judiciary from the executive branch gained important support from the political visibility provided in part by activities planned with IPC support. The real challenge, however, of implementing this policy reform depended--and continues to depend--on strategically aligning a strengthened institution with its external political and economic context in order to build a strong judicial system over time. IPC support appears to have been useful in providing insight for the Guineans on how to go about this. The working group members benefited from this exposure, used the attention and resources provided to increase visibility, successfully moved the reform to a higher position on the country's political agenda, and initiated steps to increase institutional capacity of the new system. Several members of the working group recently commented to the IPC team how valuable the initial work had been, even though they did not recognize it at the time, in helping them plan and justify specific actions to both improve the judiciary's institutional capacity and bolster its prestige in the eyes of the government.

In summary, several of the most important aspects of this process stand out:

- The most critical element of the implementation strategy was not countering opposition, of which there was little, but exploiting and cultivating the generalized if vague support for the policy. The key objective was to have the Guineans successfully articulate the reasons society should invest in an independent, efficient judicial system.
- The idea that lawyers and judges need to market and explain to policy makers and the public why they are important and deserving of increased resources was a difficult concept for the working group to accept at first, but understanding was greatly enhanced by developing a training program for AID and other donors, detailing what they hoped to accomplish and why.
- Although relatively small, the resources AID provided for training and material were critical elements in maintaining interest and generating government commitment. IPC process work alone, without the expectation of some early tangible benefits, would not have been as effective.
- Combining overseas training with the systematic review of how the new concepts or procedures were going to be implemented back in Bissau appears to have worked well.

- The partnership between Guinean judicial experts and IPC team members who were not specialists in the field provided a conducive setting in which the role of the outsiders was clearly supportive of the Guineans own policy objectives and aided in developing ownership and sustainability of the reform process.
- The process followed by the IPC team provided a reference for activities that took place in the other policy areas and allowed the Guineans to learn from each other and visualize how a similar process might be developed in the other policy areas.

Reforming the Rules and Regulations of Commercial Activity

IPC support in re-examining and reforming the government's rules and regulations of commercial activities followed a similar approach with several important modifications to expand the debate to a wider public audience. The first step was the creation of a working group, led by individuals in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This group met with IPC team members in a series of workshops and prepared an initial draft of an action plan. Following this, a study of the current rules and regulations was undertaken by an IPC consultant, who attempted to identify and describe the points of contact between the public and private sectors in commercial activity. The report (known as the "Garcia Report") was not designed as a product of the working group, but rather as the basis for discussion by a wider audience of government and private sector individuals.

After revision by the working group, this document was distributed and a series of workshops, or town meetings, were held in Bissau and four other cities in the interior to discuss the findings and systematically gather the input of traders, business people, and government officials on legislation, regulations, and policies that constrain private sector economic activity and on the changes required to facilitate commercial activity in the country. These participatory workshops were a great success and generated considerable interest among private sector representatives who were grateful for the opportunity to express their views and openly discuss the need for change. The original idea was to use these meetings as a preliminary stage in preparation for a larger, but still relatively small seminar in Bissau. Given the enthusiastic response of the participants, however, it was decided to hold a National Conference on Commercial Legislation under the joint sponsorship of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture.

This event was held in February 1994 and was organized by the working group and partially financed by IPC. Over 200 people attended the opening and closing sessions and 90 participated in all sessions over the three days, combining both plenary and smaller thematic work group sessions. The conference marked the first time an event like this took place where the government and the private sector had the opportunity

for free and frank dialogue of this nature, and was given considerable media attention in this regard. In addition, it was a unique situation for most Guineans to see high level government officials acknowledging that changes needed to be made in national policy and ministerial regulations, and listening to what the private sector had to say. Specific proposals for changes in laws and regulations were identified and responsibilities assigned for moving the reforms forward, again through the coordination of the working group. The proceedings were written up and distributed widely immediately after the conference.

It is important to note in the dynamics of IPC involvement that although the original study was identified as an IPC product (the Garcia Report) it served primarily to stimulate discussion. The subsequent transition to complete Guinean ownership of the process turned out to be quite successful. It was important to have a starting point for discussion that synthesized a variety of issues and views, and that was not identified with any Guinean group or ministry position. After the initial study, the IPC team was able to move quickly to a much less prominent role as facilitators of the Guinean workshops, and the working group was able to take the lead. The four town meetings and the national conference using a participatory workshop format were critical in making this transition. The original document was largely superseded by the deliberations of the Guineans, but it served an important purpose in getting the process going. There was also a willingness by both the Guineans and the outsiders to make this transition and to stimulate Guinean participation and ownership, developing specific recommendations beyond those contained in the original report.

Actively seeking a large audience, involving representatives outside of Bissau, and targeting wide public visibility all were important in creating a constituency for change. A good indicator of the success of this effort is the active participation of the Chamber of Commerce, whose leadership in Bissau was originally reluctant to take part officially in the conference and ended up organizing additional regional workshops and co-sponsoring the national event.

In summary, the main aspects of this IPC activity include the following:

- The main thrust of the activity was to identify policy and regulatory change to remove constraints to private sector economic expansion. The process was designed to elicit broad participation throughout the country in both the public and private sectors, and to create a constituency for this reform. These ideas were developed by the working group with IPC support and orientation.
- The IPC team prepared a study synthesizing the problems and the working group used the document as the basis for discussion by Guineans, rather than as policy prescriptions of outsiders.

- The series of regional participatory workshops and the national conference on this topic were highly successful in generating awareness of the problems and in developing proposals for policy and regulatory change. Although not all of the proposals will be enacted, there is clearly a mandate for change that will be difficult to ignore and the private sector is considerably more mobilized to exert pressure than it was prior to these activities.
- Most of work needed to enact the changes and to reorient and reorganize the government to carry them out remains to be done. This will require a somewhat different set of activities under the same rubric of strategic management of policy change. Nevertheless, the progress made by the Guineans with the support of IPC has initiated the process and provided numerous lessons in how to build consensus and political support for the changes proposed.

Redefining the Role of Government in Agriculture and Rural Development

The third component of IPC work in Guinea-Bissau began in January 1994 and concerns rationalizing the role of the Ministry of Agriculture in support of economic growth and rural development, getting government out of those areas better served by the private sector or civil society, and strengthening the remaining core functions that the public sector needs to provide. The approach taken by the IPC team was similar to that in the other areas, with modifications to take into account the special circumstances of this policy area.

Since 1983, the country has been moving away from a situation of pervasive controls to one of decentralized market-driven economic growth. Far from removing the need for public sector involvement, this market-led development strategy requires even more efficient and responsive supporting institutions. In agriculture (as well as other sectors) the government had attempted to do too much through the public sector, had assigned tasks to the Ministry for which it was ill-suited, and retained activities that conditions no longer warranted. At the same time, other activities in support of agricultural growth that only the public sector can provide were not being adequately carried out.

The Ministry had produced a number of "strategy" and "needs" studies with the assistance of various donors over the past four years, most recently the September 1993 strategy paper prepared for the World Bank and the December 1993 Agricultural Sector Diagnostic Report put together with the help of FAO. These documents call for a wide range of ambitious responsibilities and activities that are clearly beyond the present or near term capabilities of the MDRA.

The more fundamental issue that influences all policy and program implementation--and that is almost entirely absent in any of the documents--is that the government has virtually no independent operational capacity. Nevertheless, there is considerable potential to expand agricultural production, productivity, and rural incomes in Guinea-

Bissau. There is a lot that needs to be done to create conditions for this growth, with a definite role for the Ministry to play in formulating policies and directing investments to create this enabling environment. Roles, responsibilities, and resources all have to be redirected, however, for this to happen. Achieving these changes is a very complex challenge, exacerbated by the bureaucratic baggage of the post-independence era, the near total lack of Guinean operational funds, and the enormous weight of donor projects in public investment and institutional operations. There was considerable agreement on where the Guineans want the sector to go, but little attention or understanding of how to actually get there.

There was awareness within the Ministry that change is necessary and that the status quo would not continue. Rather than continue to prop up an oversized bureaucracy, 1) several donors reduced their programs and are looking for ways to place less reliance on the public sector; 2) several relatively healthy local NGOs began to have an active role in agriculture, often through the expertise of former MDRA staff; and 3) several Ministry departments had begun to experiment with commercial operations as a means of maintaining services.

This situation had created a generalized, if vague, sense that a new arrangement needed to be worked out between the public sector, private sector, and civil society to rationalize efforts aimed at improving agricultural production and family income. This background is similar to the IPC experience working with the judiciary, in which there was general agreement that an independent judiciary was necessary, but relatively little attention (and even less action) on how to go about achieving this objective in a meaningful way. The IPC process of using a working group to define the steps that go into creating an independent judiciary or reforming legislation affecting commercial activity and then addressing each had gone fairly well. Changing the role of government in agriculture and rural development presented a similar opportunity. Given the enormous weight of the agricultural sector in the life of the country, this change was expected to have significant impact and spill-over effects.

There was clearly a need for defining realistic agriculture and rural development priorities and for redirecting Ministry resources and strengthening its normative role to mobilize all of society's resources to achieve these goals. The context appeared to offer an excellent opportunity for a series of innovations that would gradually and systematically move toward major policy change. Bold new measures from the Government in redirecting resources or trimming the bureaucracy were not anticipated over the short term, however. No one in government was prepared to look seriously at policy measures that create political losers right before the national elections.

On the other hand, if pressed the Ministry would no doubt have been happy to ratify specific policy positions regarding the cashew export tax, the rice import tax, a new organizational structure, or other issue likely to be included in a national strategy planning exercise. There was a danger that for lack of more thorough analyses and

public discussion, this could have served to formalize views counter to the more pluralistic and market-driven approach that was emerging.

Given this context, the IPC team presented the agricultural strategy work as refining the existing strategy in light of the changes that had taken place since it was written, concentrating on identifying concrete implementation strategies. This facilitated acceptance and avoided confusion by Guineans and other donors who may otherwise have seen the IPC work to be just another donor-supported strategy paper and a non-productive reworking of previous or even ongoing work. The main idea of the initial explanation of what the IPC team was doing was concentration on implementation of the existing strategy and programs. This provided a useful opening, lowered tensions, and elicited positive response.

A team was created of two IPC consultants, two Guineans from the MDRA planning unit (GAPLA), and a former Ministry staff member now working for the TIPS project. This group interviewed an array of individuals in government, NGOs, and the private sector, explaining its interest and asking for their appraisal of what should be done to facilitate implementation of government programs or society's broader objectives in their area. The team also told them that a working group would be formed to discuss the issues and they were asked if they would like to participate.

The responses of those interviewed provided an interesting although fragmented mosaic of the situation and the problems of the agricultural sector. The next task of the IPC team was to produce a synthesis of these views. Each of the sections of the paper incorporated the views of those interviewed and did not add any new policy prescriptions. Instead, the document was designed to combine their comments into a larger, more coherent picture of the overall situation. This paper was called "Vias de Implementação da Estratégia do Sector Agrário" or "Paths to Implementation of the Agricultural Sector Strategy." The paper was distributed ahead of time to about a dozen of the Guineans interviewed, who were invited to take part in a meeting of the working group to discuss the document. These individuals represented the technical leadership of the Ministry and representative of key NGOs and producer associations.

This working group met the following week in a meeting chaired by the head of GAPLA. From the start, the meeting was clearly theirs. The "Vias" paper was presented as a synthesis of the views each had expressed in the interviews, and the IPC participants emphasized that their main interest was to verify that what they had written was in fact what the group agreed to, and to reach a consensus on how to move forward. This produced a lively discussion in which each had the chance to defend his or her own views as well as see what emerged as the need for a major redirection of the role of government in agriculture. Participants commented that it was the first time the technical leadership of the Ministry had the chance to sit down and discuss issues of this nature, and to take a proactive stance in defining what the Ministry should do, rather

than react to the demands of projectized activities. It clearly was an empowering experience for them.

The basic theme of the document is the creation of an enabling environment for the expansion of economic activity and investment, through appropriate policy and program measures, redefining the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry, the private sector, and civil society to carry them out. This rationalizing process involves both strengthening new partners to take over certain government operations (e.g., firms, associations, and NGOs) and redirecting and strengthening the role of the Ministry in its basic functions. These are defined as agricultural policy management, the generation and transfer of information, and essential services (generally through the orientation and support of other executing agencies).

In addition to laying out guidelines to move in this direction, six specific areas were identified that appeared to offer the best current opportunities for getting this process going. They are: i) strengthening the relationship between the extension coordination unit and NGOs that are carrying out extension activities, ii) spinning off the sale of agricultural inputs to private sector operators, iii) commercializing certain plant protection, animal health, and irrigation services eventually leading to privatization, iv) implementing a national seed policy in which the private sector has the lead, v) taking measures to rationalize donor project investments, improve sustainability, and increase their contribution to national programs, and vi) assigning a leading role to the farmers' association in overcoming constraints to fruit production and export marketing.

The working group established sub-groups to address each of these areas and subsequent IPC visits worked with them to follow through on implementation. An important aspect of this work was close collaboration and information sharing with other donors in order to emphasize that this was the Ministry's program and not AID's, and to take advantage of ongoing projects that may support the objectives of the rationalization process. An example of this is the collaboration between the sub-group on livestock services and the Pan-African Rinderpest Campaign Project (PARC) financed by the European Union. PARC is working toward the goal of establishing private veterinary services to take over government operations. This collaboration facilitated a trip by Guineans to Senegal and Mali to visit similar, more advanced experience along these lines.

This sub-group returned from the visit and organized a series of meetings around the country, similar to the activities carried out in the commercial legislation area, to discuss the livestock services issues. The sub-group subsequently held a national conference to both discuss the outcomes of these meetings and plan for implementation of the new national policy. This methodology, following the IPC approach, was also taken up by the Guineans in the area of agricultural credit policy, outside of any IPC involvement.

In all of the specific technical areas, IPC support has emphasized the themes of strategic planning for implementation, identifying with the Guineans the key elements necessary for moving forward and devising strategies for achieving them. In the case of privatization of irrigation and plant protection services, for example, a key element will be financing startup activities; in the case of veterinary services, a critical element is the development of a professional association to lobby for the changes and regulate the profession to maintain quality control. The action plans outlined in the "Vias" paper are underway and are following quite closely the original ideas put forward by the working group. Enthusiasm remains high, as do expectations that more can be accomplished under the new administration. It will be necessary to maintain and increase the level of political support for the reforms that until now have been promoted by the technical leadership of the Ministry. The working group members are aware of this and the strategies for each area emphasize the need to generate support and demonstrate the political and economic viability of the changes. This will remain a major challenge over the next year.

In summary, the main points of the IPC work with the Ministry of Agriculture include:

- The development of a multi-faceted approach to developing a new agricultural strategy and redefining the role of the public sector was chosen as a somewhat indirect route to combine what was desirable with what was feasible. Producing a new grand agricultural strategy, or a policy calling for major cutbacks in MDRA staffing would not have worked. Rather, it was more productive to approach this rationalization process through a series of concrete actions that take advantage of current forces for change that lead to the desired policy outcome.
- Ownership and enthusiasm were successfully built through the use of a working group, originally set up to ratify and improve a document synthesizing the individual views of a spectrum of interested individuals. IPC played an important role in putting together this synthesis that illustrated the larger issues confronting the Ministry that had not been apparent to the individual technical experts. As in the case of commercial legislation, the transition from IPC taking the lead on the document to having it become a genuinely Guinean guide to implementation was challenging, but the participatory approach used made this transition smooth and successful.
- The approach modeled by the development of the Vias paper itself was picked up on quickly by the Guineans, as were many of the strategic management concepts presented, in developing the action plans for each technical areas identified in the "Vias" paper.
- Success so far has been good in working with other donors and in strengthening the Guineans leverage in dealing with new or existing projects to make them consistent with the overall rationalization policy goal.

- As in other areas of IPC activity, it has been important to provide some support to the Guineans in implementing activities in their action plans (like study tours to visit similar experiences or support for conferences) in addition to support in planning and improving the management of policy change. Concrete actions and benefits are necessary early on in order to show commitment and demonstrate the feasibility of making changes. Although what IPC has to offer has been well received and is valued by the Guinean counterparts, momentum would not have been maintained if some outside support for the activities had not been forthcoming to get implementation off the ground. Among other activities planned for the coming year, advising Guineans on how to secure credit for new commercial ventures replacing government services will be critical in this regard.

Conclusions

In summary, the unique characteristics of the Guinea-Bissau IPC work relate, in one form or another, to three aspects:

1. The policies in question were only broadly defined at the outset (i.e., create an independent judiciary; redirect commercial legislation and regulations to make them more supportive of private sector economic activity; and redefine the role of government in support of agricultural development).
2. There was a generalized, although vague, consensus that each of these policies was necessary, and there exists little explicit opposition. There was general agreement that an independent judiciary would be a good thing, that most commercial regulations were at best irrelevant, and that the existing model of government/donor project intervention in agriculture was unsustainable.
3. In spite of this agreement, minimal progress was being made in any of these areas, little thought had been given to what implementation actually meant in operational terms, and none appeared to be genuine priorities of the government.

The underlying theme of the IPC work was to work with Guinean counterparts to alter that situation to i) move the discussion and analysis of what needed to be done beyond the level of vague political discourse, ii) get the changes on the country's active policy agenda, and iii) approach implementation strategically so that concrete, incremental changes would take place, including creating enhanced institutional capacity to carry out the reforms.

In carrying out these activities, the lessons that emerged from the IPC experience in Guinea-Bissau include the following:

1. It is possible to translate a vague consensus that a policy would be beneficial into concrete support for specific changes through a systematic process that helps a core working group analyze the external environment and plan and carry out specific activities to enhance political support and create momentum and a constituency for change.
2. The core of these working groups can be made up of technical people, but as the process moves forward it is important to have them actively develop wider public participation and higher level political support.
3. Outsiders can contribute to this process in a way that keeps the leadership and ownership with the national counterparts while at the same time allowing the outsiders to provide insight and knowledge from other countries' experiences that their counterparts do not have.
4. Although external support for the process of strategic management of policy change is valuable, if possible this type of assistance should be complemented by other resources that support the specific implementation steps or institutional improvements identified.
5. Given their importance and financial weight in government operations, donor projects and donor-financed public investment must be tied in to this process so that "government policy" extends to the signals that donor projects provide.
6. Incremental changes that by themselves may appear relatively small in scope and impact can provide successful experience and models to build on, so that over time the changes introduced (e.g., in the way policy makers view what is possible or desirable, how different groups work together, what the role of government is in specific sub-sectors, etc.) can add up to broader policy change and socio-economic impact.
7. Strategic management concepts are useful tools for conducting this process although they must be presented in ways that related directly to the local context and problems in order to be readily assimilated and acted upon.