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AID ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

Sector Council  
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UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY  
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
WASHINGTON, D C. 20523

THE ADMINISTRATOR

10 NOV 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE STAFF, AID/W AND OVERSEAS

SUBJECT: Agency Environmental Strategy

The attached Environmental Strategy paper is now an approved Agency document. It provides guidance for the development of Bureau and country assistance programs and reflects the many useful comments provided on an earlier draft by Missions and interested outside organizations.

The paper stresses that implementation of A.I.D. policy in environmental and natural resources management requires recognition of the cross sectoral nature of these concerns and a shared commitment by all sectors to address them in order to assure long-term economic productivity and sustainable development.

I am proud of the leadership which A.I.D. has demonstrated in this area but feel that more can and should be done to assure that all our programs are consistent with our environmental policy and strategy.

I would appreciate hearing from each of you on your progress in implementing this strategy.



M. Peter McPherson

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to define the Agency's environmental and natural resources strategy as it relates to policy objectives and to identify concrete steps to be taken and the resources required to implement the policy. The strategy paper is to be used primarily as a guide to all of the Agency and particularly AID Missions in planning country programs and projects and in allocating financial and staff resources. In order to monitor implementation of the strategy, Country Development Strategy Statements (CDSSs) and Annual Budget Submissions (ABSs) prepared by Missions will be reviewed annually by AID/Washington. While the primary audience is AID personnel, the paper will also be useful to host countries and organizations which receive AID funding as well as to others outside the Agency with more general interests.

The renewable natural resources of developing countries (LDCs) are currently subject to stresses of unprecedented magnitude. These pressures are brought about in large part by rapid population growth which results in increasing numbers of poor people struggling for food, fuel and other necessities of life. Because the health, nutrition, and general well-being of these people is directly dependent upon the quality, integrity and productivity of their soils, water, plant and animal life, the capability of governments and of the people themselves to manage their resources effectively over the long term is of paramount importance.

In order to respond more effectively to the variety of needs of the LDCs in the 1980s, AID must refine and improve the methods for planning and implementing sustainable development programs which incorporate concern for natural resource management and environmental protection as insurance of long-term economic productivity. Fundamental to the achievement of this objective is the recognition of the cross-sectoral nature of environmental and natural resource concerns and a shared commitment by all Agency sectors to address these concerns in pursuing development goals. The Sector Strategies for Forestry, Agriculture and Energy should be viewed as complementary to the Environmental Strategy. In addition, as world population growth is clearly a major cause of environmental degradation, the effectiveness of the Agency's policy and strategy in support of family planning activities in developing countries is critical to the achievement of the goals of this sector as well.

The common critical need in all regions is more effective management of renewable natural resources using integrated approaches to regional planning and project design. The goal of integrated planning is the preparation of a rational plan in which all development sectors have been assessed for their effects on all the resources in a given geographic area. It implies significant coordination among sectors and flexibility to modify activities to avoid resource depletion and assure long term economic productivity.

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AID's environmental policy focuses on three objectives: (1) ensuring the environmental soundness and long-term sustainability of all AID assistance programs and projects; (2) assisting LDCs through programs to build the institutional and scientific capacity to identify and solve their environmental and natural resource problems; and (3) promoting environmentally sound development projects funded by other donors. Within this context, assistance will be provided to LDCs to overcome human practices which result in degradation of renewable natural resources and loss of environmental quality. Full consideration will be given to programs directed at improved resource management through river basin planning and watershed management including maintaining productive forests and rangelands, stabilizing soils and establishing protected natural areas or reserves; improved industrial and urban pollution control; and integrated management of coastal areas for multiple economic development use. In addition, assistance will be provided to identify and conserve wild plant and animal species which contain the genetic resources necessary to sustain and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries production and which provide the raw material for future scientific and industrial innovation.

The strategy to implement AID policy has six components which should be viewed as a mutually reinforcing set of activities that can be applied selectively according to individual country needs: Environmental Analysis, Improving Host Country Environmental Policy, Building Human and

Institutional Capabilities, Technology and Information Transfer, Environmental Research, and Cooperation with Other Donors.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Ensuring the environmental soundness and long-term sustainability of all AID-assisted projects has special status. Formal Environmental Procedures (22 CFR Part 216, Regulation 16) have been adopted by the Agency<sup>1/</sup> and have been codified in Section 118 of the Foreign Assistance Act. Environmental analysis is most effective when incorporated at the earliest possible stage in project identification along with economic, social, institutional, energy, and other technical analyses.

The Procedures have proven adequate in providing systematic environmental review and should require no further modifications. Minor procedural clarifications will be addressed through internal memoranda from the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC). Project design guidelines for environmental soundness of generic activities such as irrigation<sup>2/</sup> will be formally adopted by the Agency in accordance with the provisions of the

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<sup>1/</sup> Revised Environmental Procedures issued October 9, 1980.

<sup>2/</sup> Other environmental guidelines already available which could be formally adopted are: "Environmental Guidelines for Rural Development" and "Environmental Guidelines for Aquaculture."

Environmental Procedures (Section 216.6(d)). Modifications necessary to treat problems specific to local ecosystems can be prepared by Regional Bureau and field environmental staff.

Additional environmental guidelines should be developed as a priority for the energy and agricultural sectors by the responsible technical offices in the Bureau for Science and Technology.

The responsibility for environmental analysis and review is shared by all Agency personnel who originate projects along with designated environmental officers in Missions and Regional Bureaus. Central responsibility for policy and oversight for the environmental assessment process lies with the Agency Environmental Coordinator in the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC). Adequate project design funds must be allocated for this purpose. The involvement of host-country national and local governments and non-governmental organizations is necessary to incorporate the perceptions and priorities of the cooperating country into the review process and to strengthen their capacity to factor environmental analysis into all aspects of their planning.

A major focus of the environmental assessment process is the identification of significant issues, i.e., "scoping" which brings together various disciplines and organizations at an early stage of project planning to identify priority problems, sources of data and expertise, and to develop a work plan to resolve issues. In addition, programmatic and technical alternatives to the proposed project must

be examined and realistic mitigation activities identified. The often overlooked economic contributions of productive resources such as wildlife, wetlands, and genetic and recreational resources will also be identified and, where possible, quantified.

When alternatives and mitigations are proposed, an analysis will be made which examines capital and operational costs and institutional and personnel requirements. Projects with identified environmental concerns and those with mitigation plans will include a component to monitor environmental impacts and/or the effectiveness of the mitigation plan and flexibility in project design to allow for mid-term corrections. To achieve this, adequate environmental baseline data may need to be collected during project design or prior to project implementation. Project design must include adequate funding for all of the above activities. Respective donor and host country responsibility will be specifically identified in project documentation for administration, funding and implementation of environmental mitigation, monitoring activities and training.

While the analysis of environmental impacts of projects will continue, the Agency will place greater emphasis in the future on improved planning and identification of projects which incorporate sound natural resources management objectives and practices.

#### IMPROVED COUNTRY POLICIES

In the past 10 years, most developing countries have created new governmental agencies with environmental responsibilities,

or have added this responsibility to existing ministries. All such units face constraints in national and local policies, legislation and regulations. In addition, they have the difficult task of influencing the policies of other sectors, such as agriculture and industry, and the agencies responsible for national development plans and budgets. They also compete with these better established institutions for funds and personnel. Carefully targeted technical assistance is needed to assist governments to develop their own national environmental and natural resource policies which will be supported by other sectors and which will contribute to sustainable economic development.

Both direct and indirect methods will be used by AID to influence host-country government environmental and natural resource policies. Among the direct approaches are the "environmental profile" and "natural resource sector assessment" processes, providing assistance to the LDC grass-roots conservation groups, and linking policy modification as a condition to loan approval. Other approaches include expanded host country participation in AID's environmental assessments, providing long-term environmental advisors to governments at both national and provincial levels, and support for study tours and information dissemination.

The environmental profile provides a comprehensive picture of a country's environment and natural resources and their management. It identifies problems and priorities and presents options for resolution. The

process appears to be most effective in influencing national policies when the profile is conducted by a host country institution (as in Ecuador by a non-governmental organization) or by a joint AID/host country government team (as in the Dominican Republic). A natural resources sector assessment is based on the AID concept of Sector Analysis. As with other sectors, such as agriculture or health, it provides a method whereby the host country can identify information gaps, institutional constraints and implementation needs. It becomes the basis for discussions with host-country officials on policy and program initiatives.

A second means to influence environmental policy is the provision of assistance to conservation groups in LDCs which have organized in response to the continued degradation of their country's environment and natural resources. These groups can carry out national awareness campaigns, establish local chapters, and sponsor grass roots activities such as tree planting and training in soil conservation measures. By providing assistance to these organizations, AID has enhanced their effectiveness in promoting public participation in formulating national environmental policies. Finally, in some cases, linking formal policy statements, policy modifications or passage of environmental legislation as a precondition to a loan or grant is also a viable means available to AID to influence national policies.

Attention will also be given to less direct methods of improving national environmental policies. First, greater emphasis should be

placed upon host-country participation in the Environmental Assessments funded by AID, both those required by the Environmental Procedures and those which are conducted as a matter of policy. The benefits of this involvement include: (1) increased host-country appreciation of the value of assessments with the possible adoption of this approach at a national level, (2) the identification by the host country of projects which mitigate some of the negative environmental impacts; and (3) the means to assist governments early in the planning process to define more sustainable development options.

Another option which AID has found effective involves funding environmental advisors, on a long-term basis, to governments at the national level and at the provincial or local level, particularly where Missions have local government or regional area development programs which could incorporate natural resource and environmental management.

The AID natural resource assessment and profile processes will be continued and their effectiveness enhanced through increasing the role of the private sector and local institutions. This can be partially achieved through greater use of local contractors and personnel in the various stages of the processes. Future activities should emphasize an evaluation of effectiveness of those processes on the development and implementation of environmental policy with particular attention to support for the formation of national policy analysis research units. All activities which are developed to

support improved country environmental policies should be closely coordinated with and supplemented by programs which build human and institutional capability as outlined in the following section.

#### BUILDING HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITY

Economic development has been severely constrained by the limited awareness of the public and private sectors of many developing countries of the benefits and methods of environmental planning and integrated natural resource management and by a critical shortage of technical people and experienced institutions. In recognition of the complexity and severity of natural resource management problems and the relative newness of this area, long-term AID commitments are required to build both human and institutional capability through a combination of training and institutional strengthening activities.

Training activities will focus on three audiences: trainers at all levels, including primary and secondary school teachers of natural sciences and environmental education; operational, planning and management staff of national and local government organizations; and policy-level officials, environmental and natural resource administrators and lawyers. In countries where cultural practices of subsistence people tend to be the primary cause of environmental stress, emphasis should be placed on training in conservation techniques at the local level.

In the development of in-country training and educational capacity, certain subject areas are basic: ecology, resource economics, and human ecology; integrated resource planning and management; environmental sciences including health and engineering; environmental law, policy and administration; and environmental awareness and education. Critical topics emerge as common themes in need of special attention. They include: water resources management including watershed protection and water pollution control; environmental risk analysis; environmental assessment; ecosystem inventory and monitoring; natural resources economics; and resource rehabilitation, protection and development; and the proper handling, use and disposal of pesticides and other hazardous chemicals. Critical shortages exist in all of these fields for most countries.

Training should be conducted, as far as possible, within the host country or within the region. However, there is a definite need for overseas degree and non-degree training in those fields poorly represented in countries. In addition, there is considerable scope for transfer of environmental and natural resources management expertise using U.S. institutions, including state and county-level bodies. Traditionally, there has been little interaction of staff among various sectors (i.e., health, agriculture, energy and population) as a consequence of institutional barriers within government agencies and universities. These barriers can be reduced by Mission support for interdisciplinary training centers.

Institution-strengthening activities will be aimed at the relatively new host-country environmental and natural resource institutions, both operational and training, in order to provide staff the experience to improve their professional competence. As the list of potential institutions to be strengthened is very large, AID's resources will be directed towards organizations whose goals and programs complement Agency policy and strategy for institution building. Examples include: government ministries; universities; private firms; and non-profit groups, both national and regional.

Several general guidelines govern institution strengthening. High priority will be given to upgrading existing operational or training institutions, although the creation of new institutions would not be precluded.

High priority will also be given to combining on-the-job and specialized training for LDC natural resource and environmental management institutions, which would build institutional capacity in both training and operational units. This can be accomplished by identifying or facilitating linkages between operational and training units within a host country and by identifying or facilitating similar linkages between a U.S. training institution and operational unit, such as a state or local government agency responsible for environmental management. Opportunities will then exist for long-term exchange of host country and U.S. personnel for a wide range of collaborative activities including on-the-job

training in the U.S., placement of a U.S. manager in an LDC operational or research unit, and development of long and short-term curricula in LDC operational and educational units.

Assistance should be provided to host-country institutions, particularly those with responsibilities for regional planning, food production, industrial processing and manufacturing, and transportation, in order to provide them with a fuller understanding of the importance of the renewable natural resource base to their programs. Private sector candidates for assistance include the commercial banks in need of technical resources for assessing potential adverse impacts of projects they finance and host-country consulting companies which can be employed as capabilities develop to engage in environmental assessments. Other areas of opportunity include providing information on current environmental practice to U.S. companies which work in the Third World, encouraging these same companies to use and train host-country nationals, and assisting private host-country companies to monitor and control their own pollution.

An additional priority is support of non-governmental voluntary organizations (NGOs). They fulfill a unique role in assisting governments to identify critical issues, carrying out environmental education, developing suitable local technologies, and disseminating useful information.

Missions and Regional Bureaus will develop regional or country-specific programs in training and institution building that improve

the sustainability of the natural resource base and environmental quality. Country programs will be supplemented by resources from the Bureau for Science and Technology, particularly in the area of curricula development and training courses for the priority common themes identified earlier, and in the provision of technical assistance.

#### TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Indigenous capability to respond to environmental issues is dependent not only upon improved human and institutional capacity but also upon the availability of the technology and techniques needed for appropriate response. An AID priority is to assist the LDCs in developing this indigenous capability. The AID approach will be twofold, providing the U.S. technical expertise while assisting the LDCs to upgrade their own capabilities. Technology is both "hardware" (e.g., pollution control devices, new seed varieties) and "software" (e.g., resource management systems, data collection and analysis techniques).

Some of the areas related to natural resources management and environmental protection where the U.S. has a predominant capability include watershed and coastal resources management; soil and water conservation; natural resource inventories; remote sensing and data management; integrated pest management; air, water, and solid waste pollution control and monitoring; wildlands and wildlife management; and integrated, multiple-use resource planning. The major repositories for this

technology and expertise include (1) firms which offer technical services, training, management expertise, and environmental hardware (e.g., wastewater treatment systems, data management systems); (2) manufacturing firms with in-house environmental staff skilled not only in design and construction but also in implementation and day-to-day operation of environmental protection systems; (3) PVOs and environmental organizations with a great diversity of interests, skills, and experience; (4) U.S. public sector entities at the federal, state, and local levels; (5) universities and research institutes; and (6) professional societies.

U.S. firms will be made aware that the LDCs represent a potential market for their technical services and products and should be encouraged to develop that market where appropriate. Trade fairs, equipment displays, or seminars on environmental technology could be sponsored by the Agency's trade and development program to bring these technologies to the attention of local officials. These activities can help open markets for smaller U.S. manufacturers and suppliers of environmental technology, as well as provide a means for the development or strengthening of local and regional trade associations.

In many LDCs, the private sector plays a significant role in such major industries as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and transportation. There is a need to improve the capacity within these industries to use appropriate environmental technology and procedures and to select, adapt, and

use productive technologies suitable to the ecological and environmental circumstances of the host country. U.S. manufacturing firms with in-house environmental capability can provide skills in a number of areas.

PVOs and environmental organizations have a great diversity of technical expertise ranging from environmental education to wildlife protection. They will be encouraged to share their techniques and special staff expertise, to assist LDC counterpart institutions to promote public environmental awareness and to provide technical assistance to local governments. AID can build on its longstanding relationship with the PVO community by registering and working with more conservation and environmental groups.

U.S. federal agencies are an important source of expertise for AID environmental and natural resource activities. AID will continue to use this expertise through existing interagency agreements and identify other areas of expertise available from federal agencies which can contribute to AID goals. The expertise available at the state and local level is an underused resource. The scale of these government units is often more analogous to LDC institutions. An effective method of transferring this expertise has been to arrange participant observation visits for LDC representatives to state or local agencies to gain experience in the practical administrative, economic, technical and political problems faced by that agency. Reciprocal visits might also be useful when a specific agency function is under development.

Universities and research institutes have long been used as a source of specific skills to address specific problems. Where appropriate, Missions can also call upon them for the development of teaching and research methodologies in local universities or research institutes. Transfer of this methodology, particularly at the university level, will help establish a base of competent personnel who will move into positions of influence in the future. The investment must be complemented by availability of Mission funds to support graduate research on in-country priority problems.

Representatives of U.S. professional societies in the environmental sciences should be enlisted to assist establishing counterpart organizations in LDCs. Professional societies can provide, as they do in the U.S., a forum for discussion and updating of technical skills as well as source of reinforcement for professional consciousness and commitment.

AID should focus on the appropriate host-country private and public sector institutions that have responsibilities in the area of environment and environmental technology. Whenever possible, Missions should employ local technical consulting firms in order to give them broader experience in environmental activities. Where local capability is inadequate, efforts will be made to enhance it through such mechanisms as providing firms with relevant current literature, conducting training seminars for personnel in environmental techniques generally and AID environmental

requirements specifically, or teaming local firms with outside consultants. In many areas South-South transfers of technology are also appropriate and will be facilitated.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

The Agency will fund environmental science research that is (1) of direct use in AID-funded and managed development programs and (2) directly supportive of AID policies.

In unexploited, forested areas of the humid and sub-humid tropics, basic research is critically needed to improve our understanding of how these systems respond and have responded historically to human intervention. Data are needed on such topics as: impacts of forest clearing on water cycles; likely phases of plant succession; patterns of soil regeneration; and the uses of little known but potentially important plant and animal species.

In contrast, development problems of arid and semi-arid ecosystems are related to the fact that these areas have long been settled and overexploited and resources tend to be degraded. Research is needed in settled, arid and semi-arid environments to guide development in reclaiming degraded soils, restoring site productivity, multiple uses of rangelands for food, fodder and fuel, and monitoring the impacts of irrigation. Unsettled marginal lands and watershed settlements in arid lands require research on such topics as the utilization of native plants and the appropriate use of ground water.

In addition, research is needed to guide development in heavily populated rural areas undergoing agricultural intensification, modernization and diversification. Research is also needed in rapidly growing urban areas on water, wastewater and solid waste management systems with low operations and maintenance requirements.

All environmental science research financed by AID will place strong emphasis on the economic and social feasibility and acceptability of proposed natural resources management measures. It is important to identify socio-cultural practices that contribute to environmental degradation or protection. These considerations are particularly critical in areas of LDCs where over-population is undermining the rationale of traditional resource management systems and where new, sometimes radical measures are needed to halt degradation and maintain productivity of soils and vegetation.

The Agency will attach priority to site-specific, applied research that adapts techniques which have already been proven in the laboratory or in other field sites, recognizing that the prospects for payoff are high with relatively limited, short-term investment. Priority will also be given to research identified during an Environmental Assessment which would address an information gap critical to project implementation, and to innovative economic research on the costs and benefits of resource management options and incentive structures for implementing them.

The Agency will also attach priority to research on policy-related

environmental concerns. Research topics include forestalling the loss of germplasm worldwide, technologies for averting or reversing desertification, and technologies for land regeneration. These require a commitment of funds beyond the average life of projects.

An important consideration in determining the availability and level of funding for environmental research projects will be the extent to which the research is linked to broader efforts to strengthen host country technical expertise and institutional capability in natural resource management. Research will be conducted to the fullest extent possible through institutional networks in LDCs and within regions. U.S.-based technical assistance will be required in many cases to help in designing and implementing specific research initiatives, but such assistance will usually be short-term, collaborative in nature, and supportive of host country institution-building activities.

#### COOPERATION WITH OTHER DONORS

AID will continue to work directly and within the U.S. Government to encourage other bilateral and multilateral donors and United Nations agencies to recognize the importance of addressing the complex interactions in management of the environment and renewable natural resources for sustainable economic growth. AID will continue to provide these organizations regularly with examples of environmental policies and procedures and with technical information such as environmental profiles, guidelines, assessments and other studies. Continued

emphasis will be placed on cooperating with international and regional organizations and other donors on training and on exchange of training materials and technical experts.

When AID is involved in multiple donor-financed projects, Missions will insure that specific delegations of authority and responsibility for oversight of environmental concerns are made to a specific host-country technical organization, donor, or to a joint technical committee. These responsibilities should include assurance that environmental concerns are addressed during project implementation, that monitoring is adequately conducted, and that interim evaluations are used to fine-tune the project. Administrative, financial and implementation responsibility for monitoring mitigation activities and for evaluation must be specified in project documentation.

In instances where regional projects, such as river basin development, are being designed involving several countries, and where potential region-wide environmental impacts are not being examined, AID will take the leadership role in assisting to initiate necessary basic studies. This will serve to stimulate further action by other donors or by the affected governments and to foster regional planning and information exchange across borders.

AID Missions will encourage host country governments to sponsor periodic meetings with all donors to discuss environmental aspects of existing projects, to coordinate national and donor activities

affecting the environment, and to plan future programs and projects.

As a programmatic priority, AID will continue to encourage donors and host countries to initiate integrated pest management programs and to move away from using environmentally persistent, bio-accumulative pesticides and move toward less persistent compounds. Donors and host countries should be encouraged to improve pesticide storage and disposal practices. Highest priority should continue to be given to the promotion of integrated pest management where pesticides are only one option in the context of a larger crop protection program and used in combination with other control techniques.

#### AID RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY

The Agency has a small technical, direct-hire staff with full time environmental responsibilities which is supplemented by personal and institutional contracts both in the U.S. and overseas.

An evaluation of AID personnel resources needed to carry out this strategy and to deal with the growing numbers of project and non-project responsibilities reveals gaps which need to be filled through hiring of additional technical personnel. Key positions, such as the field regional natural resources/ environmental advisors should be direct-hire personnel. Equally important is the identification of direct-hire environment and natural resource advisor positions at Missions with rapidly expanding programs in this area. The Sector Council for Energy and Natural Resources will identify these key

direct-hire positions and will also make recommendations on career paths for technical personnel which will include rotational assignment opportunities in Missions, in AID/W with Regional Bureaus, and with central technical offices in the Bureau for Science and Technology. Where an increase in the number of direct-hire personnel is not possible and personal services contracts must be used, a contractual commitment of 3-4 years will be required to provide minimum continuity.

Professional development will be supported by convening annual meetings in Washington of Mission and Regional and Central Bureau environmental and natural resources staff to permit exchange of information and discussions of technical issues. The meetings will be planned well in advance to assure wide participation. In addition, longer-term, specialized training opportunities should be offered to field and AID/W personnel with environmental and natural resource management responsibilities.

Since most professional recruitment in the Agency takes place through the IDI program, Missions should make better use of this resource by identifying training opportunities and positions to which IDIs with technical skills in natural resources and environmental sciences can be assigned. Applicants with these skills should also be considered for work in the areas of agriculture, economics, project management, program development, rural development, etc. The IDI recruitment process also needs to be enhanced.

In addition, in the recruitment of other professionals, the Agency will try to assure that applicants for all positions have an appreciation, through their educational background or other evidence, of the importance of environment/development linkages.

As the environmental sector strategy can only be implemented with the collaboration of all the other sectors, short in-house training programs will be initiated and regularly offered by PM/TD which will enhance that involvement. Special emphasis will be placed on upgrading the skills of field staff identified as Mission environmental officers who have responsibilities for implementing Regulation 216 through periodic 4-5 day training sessions in the Regions. Wherever feasible, AID personnel will be encouraged to attend natural resources and environmental training programs developed for host countries.