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ISN

Assessment of USAID/Lesotho Program Level Measurement Systems

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Submitted to:

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LESOTHO EXERCISE

Introduction and Background:

Under a Work Order, a team of two MSI consultants were requested to travel to Swaziland in December, 1989, to work for one week with staff from USAID/Lesotho, and one week with staff of USAID/Swaziland on their respective program logframes, indicators and measurements, in preparation for submission to AID/Washington of their respective Action Plans. The MSI consultants were accompanied by Mr. Neil Billig, the backstop officer for both Mission programs in AFR/PD.

After a one-day Team Planning Meeting in Washington, the team arrived in Mbabane and began work on December 5.

Three staff from the Lesotho Mission were available, the Deputy Mission Director, the Agriculture Officer, and the Program Officer. They had already begun to work together on the basic outlines of the objective tree, and had brought with them a partial draft of their LCDSS, as well as a draft of a Mission Order on Monitoring and Evaluation.

On the first day, the team worked with the Lesotho Mission staff and some members of the Swaziland Mission staff to lay out the purpose of the consultancy, and the basic premises of the strategic planning program log frame methodology. They then played the "Uganda Game" as a way of getting used to the methodology. After an initial joint meeting on the second day, it was decided that the best way to proceed was to divide the work between that relevant to Lesotho and that relevant to Swaziland.

Where We Started:

The USAID/Lesotho staff had already begun to do some work among themselves on the goal and sub-goal levels of the objective tree. Two of them had already had the benefit of attending the Non-Project Assistance Workshop led by Emy Simmons during the Scheduling Conference, and were thus familiar with the basic premises and definitions of the program log frame exercise.

A key area of concern was measurability. The staff were particularly eager to make sure that they could measure attainment of whatever they set themselves as strategic objectives. A related concern was the definition and scope of "manageable interest". With these two concerns paramount, the staff and the consultants

worked down from the goal to the sub-goal level, and then to strategic objectives, over several iterations, going up and down to make sure that the statements were placed at the appropriate level of generality "up" or "down" the tree.

Dwight Bunce, one of the MSI consultants, then input the results (from flipcharting with post-its) in a computer software format, so that everyone could see the various versions clearly. At almost each stage, each member of the Mission staff generated an alternative version of the tree. Each of these was input, so that they could be easily compared and some sort of consensus reached.

Key Methodological and Substantive Issues:

Several areas or issues arose which were difficult to resolve, and which were later raised again in the context of the Swaziland exercise. These were 1) the extent to which the Lesotho program is really a "normal" development assistance program, as against a seizing of a series of targets of opportunity, given the geopolitical relevance of the country and the closeness of the ties between its economy and that of the Republic of South Africa. If the main purpose of having a program in Lesotho is really a geopolitical and human rights one--supporting a Front-Line State under the Anti-Apartheid legislation--then is it appropriate to be doing the standard program log frame exercise for it? As well as being a general issue, this one re-emerged for the private sector especially, since the economies are so closely linked, especially where private sector interventions and policy are concerned.

A second issue related to the scope of innovation permitted by the OYB, and the history of the program to date. In the absence of the most recent guidance from the Bureau, it was not entirely clear how the program log frame exercise, the LCDSS submission and the preparation of the Action Plan were supposed to be linked substantively and in time. Unfortunately, the team from Washington was not able to answer these questions with certainty. This was particularly relevant regarding the potentially large "mortgage" represented by the education PID. If design went forward on the basis of the PID submitted and the review cable, then there would be relatively little money for the plan period left to do anything else.

Where We Wound Up:

Given the time available, which was really only two and one-half days, as well as AID/Washington guidance, the Mission staff felt that it was only appropriate to get to the target level at most, and to ask for a general idea of data sources and collection methods. Since the Mission had already made substantial progress with the Mission Order on Monitoring and Evaluation, the team tried to provide relevant comments on what had already been done, showing

how the strategic objectives could be measured with data already being gathered and analyzed, or with data that could be relatively easily collected and analyzed in the context of design work that was already planned. As one of the team members was asked to comment on the Mission Order, as well as on the partial draft of the LCDSS, she decided to combine both responses in one memo.

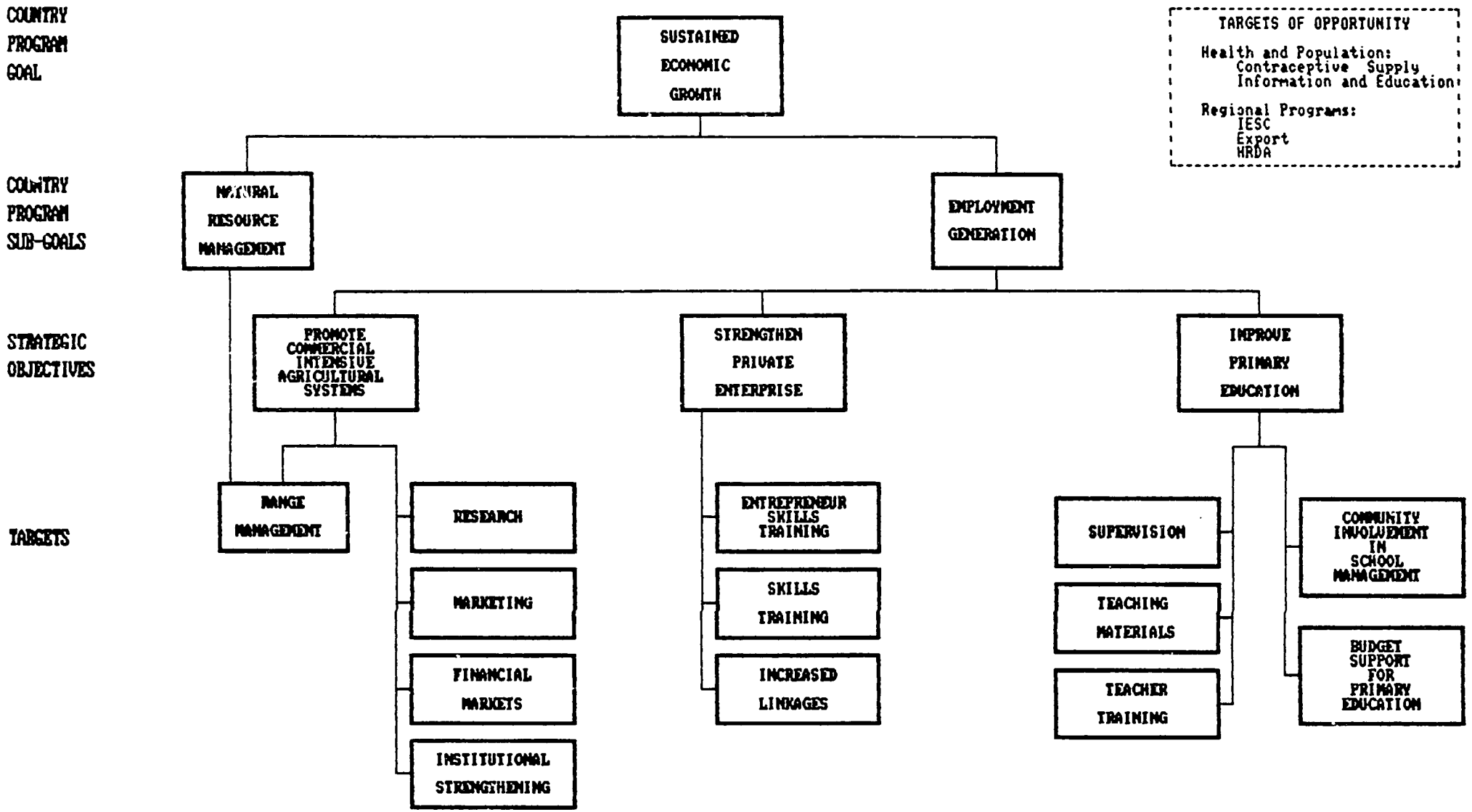
The other MSI team member spent the equivalent time teaching the software program and how to use it to generate an objective tree, to one of the USAID/Lesotho staff, so that the exercise could be continued on their return home. They indicated that this was very helpful, since they would be able to continue easily, and also because they intended to explain this methodology to the host government Planning Ministry officials with whom they work, and show them in which direction the AID program was heading, hoping to bring them along and/or get other suggestions and leads from them.

The team promised to send them a diskette with the last versions of the objective trees from the current exercise, and also gave them diskettes of the software on the promise that they would buy it from the relevant supplier.

We would like to note that the Mission staff worked quite hard to get as far along as possible in a very short time, and that they took the exercise seriously. Like the Swaziland Mission staff, they were a bit in the dark as regards the ultimate guidance they were supposed to be following for CDSS/Action Plan preparation, but they were perhaps more open than the others to the utility of the exercise since they did not already have an approved LCDSS. We hope that this exercise will prove to have been of assistance to them in working through the logic underlying their country program, particularly as regards the issue of how to include regional and centrally-funded programs/projects in the objective tree, which was an issue of particular salience for them as well as for the Swaziland Mission, and one which the team was not in a position to resolve.

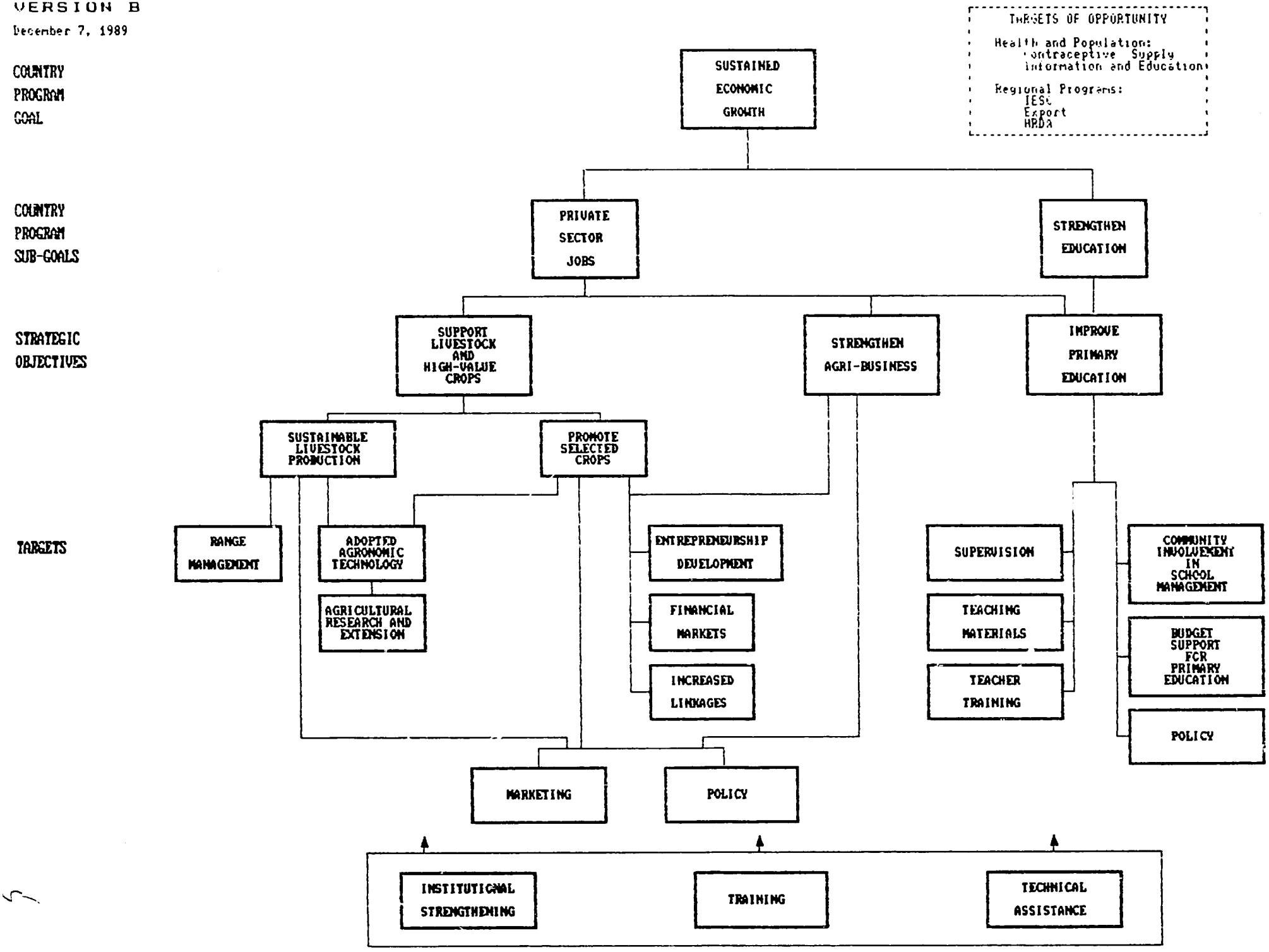
DRAFT OBJECTIVE TREE OF USAID/LESOTHO
VERSION A

December 6, 1989



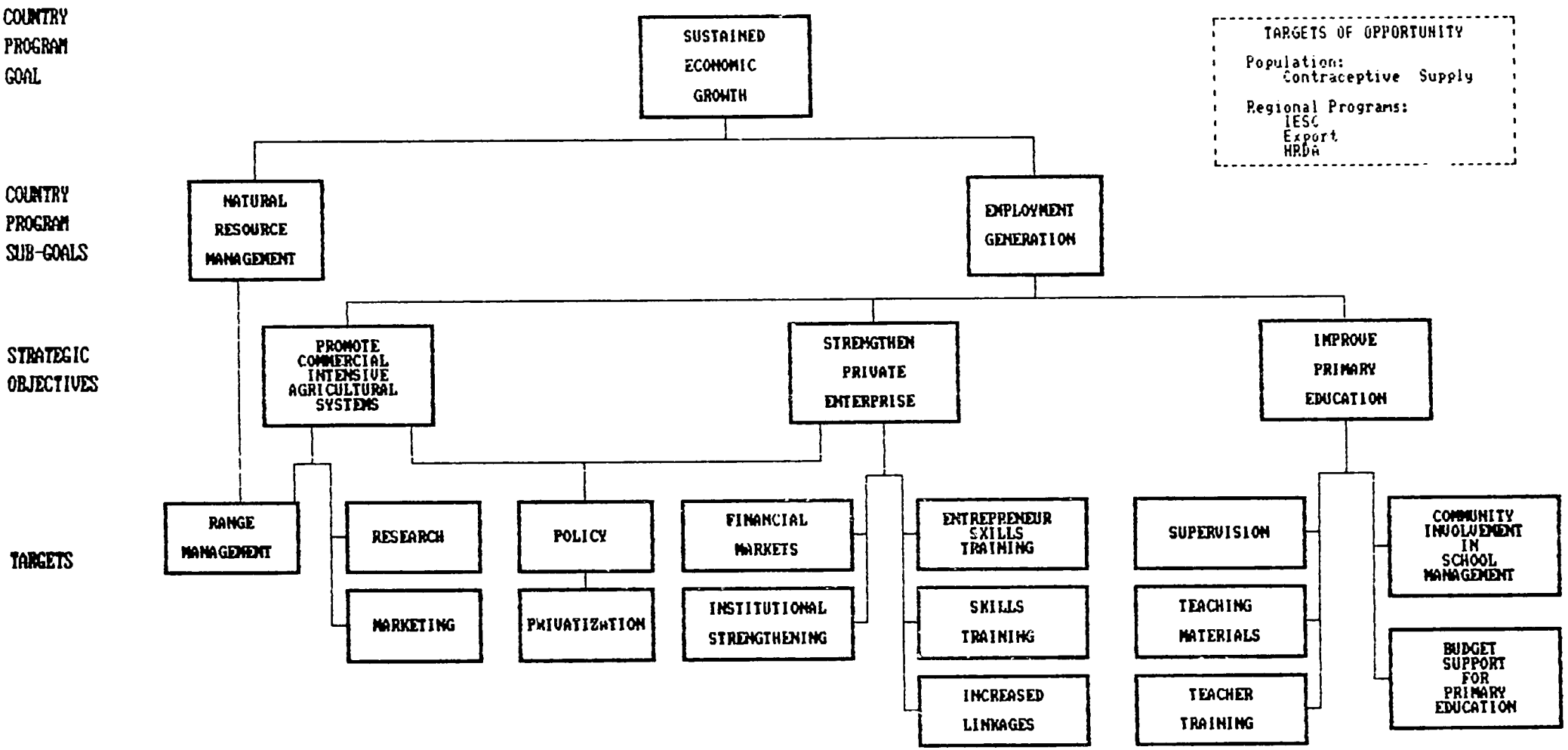
DRAFT OBJECTIVE TREE OF USAID/LESOTHO
VERSION B

December 7, 1989



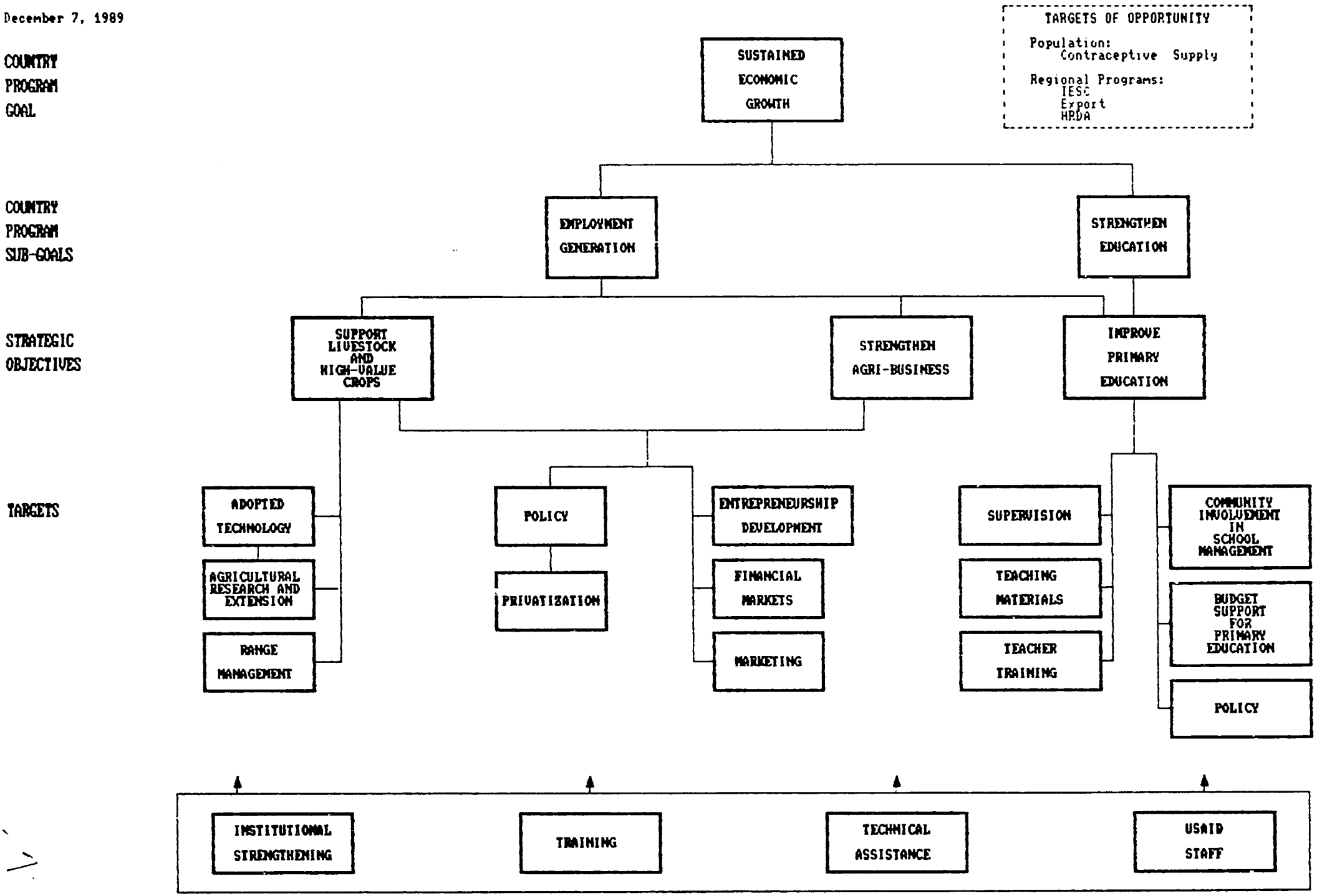
DRAFT OBJECTIVE TREE OF USAID/LESOTHO
VERSION A2

December 7, 1989



DRAFT OBJECTIVE TREE OF USAID/LESOTHO
VERSION B2

December 7, 1989



ANNEX

December 5, 1989

TO: USAID/Lesotho Team

FROM: Alice Morton, MSI

Subject: Comments on Losotho Draft CDSS and Evaluation Plan

The draft CDSS, which I realize is only partially complete, supplies a considerable amount of information which is congruent with the objective tree developed over the past two days. This is also essentially true for the alternative objective tree--"B"--since it has virtually the same content but organized differently. (Both versions of the objective tree, however, currently omit the policy dialogue input below the target level, and policy reform is currently an important part of the Mission's country program, and will continue to be so, at least for agriculture and privatization.)

The Evaluation Plan also shows that the Mission has received the message about country program level impact--"results"--and attempts to show how information generated at the project level and through separate studies and reporting mechanisms will be made available and used to determine these results. That is, the Mission is preparing itself to provide the kind of "tracking" which is a watchword of DFA implementation and reporting. I think that as you go along with the CPSP and program logframe preparation, you will be able to specify a few more data sources for your indicators in the evaluation plan. That is, the ag sector assessment, if the scope of work is carefully written, can give you some baseline data, as well as some information about specific problem areas, like marketing. Similarly, the PP preparation for the PEP will give you an opportunity to gather some more baseline data, which in turn may help you to clarify some of the indicators, e.g., for improved supervision. The socio-cultural analysis for the PEP can also be directed toward some of your future impact (results) tracking needs, again if the SOW is clearly defined to include that sort of information. When you receive the new PIIR guidance cable, you will be able to clarify the section on monitoring and reporting, which at the moment you have mixed with rapid data collection methods, (key informant interviews, sample surveys, group meetings, etc.), which should be clarified.

The CDSS seems to have several gaps at present in terms of either of the objective trees, which can probably be relatively easily filled, essentially be an enhanced overview section. In this section, the relationships which are latent in the program logframe between the country program goal and the DFA strategic objectives can be made more explicit, as well as linkages and synergy between activities in the various sectors which will together help to attain the strategic objectives that are clearly within the Mission's manageable interest. To some degree, these gaps can also be filled in by the Action Plan portion of the combined strategy-action plan document, the Country Program

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Strategic Plan, in which, according to the Guidance, "the strategy and structure are translated into operational terms".

The Guidance for the CPSP indicates that three types of analysis should be reflected in the strategy part of the document: 1) of the environment for sustainable broad-based market oriented economic growth with people level impact (improved quality of life for the next generation of Africans); 2) the key constraints to such growth and development progress, and 3) what the host government, local initiatives and other donors are doing to address these constraints. These are to be "coupled with an assessment of AID's own track record in providing development assistance to the country", and are supposed "to lead directly to the articulation of the strategy for AID activity over the next five to seven years". An outline of the CPSP is also provided, including six sections, three of which relate to the three analyses mentioned above.

On reflection, it seems a good suggestion for the Mission to reorganize the information and analysis presented in the current version in terms of the section headings provided in the guidance. This would not necessarily preclude the presentation within each section of information/analysis by sector, but would more clearly describe the inter-sectoral or overarching elements of the strategy, including those relating to policy. It seems from what we have learned from you that your program preferences genuinely correspond to the four DFA objectives (with the possible exception of food security), but that you are actually short-changing yourselves by using the present CDSS format.

Thus, either objective tree (program logframe) when completed, will include at the strategic objective level efforts directed toward sustained, equitable (broad-based),market-oriented growth but which are within the manageable interest of the Mission and its program and staff. It is also fairly clear that results, in terms of "people-level impact" will be achieved if the strategic objectives are attained. This is particularly true because the strategic objectives chosen in either model--and their respective targets--are fairly closely related to the program activities that the Mission is currently implementing or plans to implement. To use Dwight's terms, they are fairly narrow, rather than riskily broad, given the manageable interest concept.

At the goal level, there may be some issues that have to be addressed in the strategy part of the document. At present, the CDSS stresses very strongly Lesotho's dependence on the RSA and the SAG. However, with the exception of domestic employment creation, it does not clearly show how what the A.I.D. program does will mitigate that dependence. Thus, as Dwight has argued, one could probably justify a tree which did not have a DFA-type goal statement because the goal of sustained, broad-based market-oriented economic growth for Lesotho is dependent on so many things that are in fact outside the manageable interest of the GOL. Another alternative, given this reality, as Neil mentioned, would be to present the USAID's program as a non-traditional development program, and instead as a series of targets of opportunity, since RSA has so much impact on what happens in Lesotho.

However, you have argued strongly that what you are implementing and planning is a development program of a relatively traditional (or "normal") kind, and so going the whole route in the program logframe may be appropriate after all. That is, to the extent that this is a bilateral program with a sovereign

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government, it is legitimate to have a country goal, and to regard it as a full-fledged country program.

The constraints analysis provided in the CDSS includes a considerable amount of emphasis on public sector reform, as well as on increased private sector activity in "meeting the needs and demands of the general public". However, aside from the LAPSP and PEP (and some management training in the health sector), there is no indication that this is a constraint that the Mission is addressing. Since a considerable amount of weight is given to problems in public sector management--especially in the "public administration sector" section, there should be a commensurate indication of what other donors are doing to remedy this situation, if AID is not doing anything--e.g., about the civil service, reducing the overall workforce, improving financial control and budget systems. Similarly, since a great deal of attention is given to the problems of deficit financing by the government, and its impact on the economy as a whole (interest rates), as well as on government's ability to deliver services, information should be provided about how these constraints are going to be addressed so that AID inputs can be successfully absorbed and achieve results.
Perhaps in the final three sections, which are the equivalent of the action plan, the Mission can indicate more clearly what the rationale is for the non-project assistance component of the program and its relationship to the project assistance component. While obviously you are using these two approaches to support each other, this is not as clear in the Draft CDSS as it might be. Perhaps again, in the overview sections as well, this can be made more emphatic--discussing the relation between policy and programmatic interventions.

There are several other issues which are raised in the current draft which sort of wave red flags but are not currently further addressed. The first of these is a series of statements here and there that the Mission wants to do development more at the grass roots level than before, and that it is emphasizing decentralization. This was not mentioned at all in our discussions this week, nor does it appear to be the case from a quick reading of the PIRs. Perhaps you are doing some things in support of decentralization, and if so, perhaps this is a good approach, but then this should be clearly explained and demonstrated in the CDSS. As a cautionary remark, the DP experts believe to a certain extent that "people level impact" should be measurable at the strategic objective level--although it may also be present and measurable at the project level. You would probably be well advised to take this into account. A second is the problem of inflation and interest rates. If this is being addressed by the SAFA, or if not, this should be clearly stated. It should also be made clear if and how this will affect AID's resource allocations over the plan period.

Another issue is privatization of parastatals. While you mention in several places that this is desirable, and while we know that you are intending to work on it through LAPS and through other mechanisms, like policy dialogue and private sector strengthening, you don't currently give yourselves enough visibility in the present document on this score. Another is the problem of credit. You discuss the problem of the lack of financial intermediation, but aside from the target of developing financial markets which is in the program logframe, you don't as far as I can remember, indicate how you will address it. If you are seriously thinking about a women's bank, why not say so and indicate what policy and programmatic inputs you might have.

It seems that at present, you do not give enough emphasis to the private sector dimension. Presently, you have two sets of two pages each of language on the private sector. As we have continued our discussion over the past two days, it appears that you are actually intending to do more in the private sector across the board than you indicate in the current draft. Not only is this sexy, it is also probably likely to be fruitful, and as you have indicated verbally, with a relatively small resource commitment, you feel that AID can leverage a good deal of other-donor resources. This does not come through clearly. Here again, you are perhaps missing a chance to show the complementarity between what you are doing on the policy reform side and what you are doing in technical projects, e.g., in agriculture. Also, curiously enough, you don't make much of the fact that most of the primary education you are supporting is carried out in a private sector context. In Haiti, the mission has gotten a considerable amount of mileage for supporting the same sort of private-public mix in education, but by placing the emphasis on the private sector side. Perhaps you may wish to rethink some of the presentation of the PID elements as well along these lines, since the way you are expressing things now, you are de-emphasizing the private sector aspect, and emphasizing your continuing support to the MOE, and policy reforms for the public sector contribution to education, except for the community self-help and management component. There seems to be a certain undertone of regret that schools are 90% private sector owned and operated, perhaps because you believe that the parents and children aren't getting good value for their 23% share of the cost per pupil. If you are really serious about getting communities to commit further resources to school construction and furnishing, you should show clearly how they will be able to come up with these additional resources and have a guaranteed return in terms of better, more efficient education. As you know, there are many countries where the community has built the school, or allocated the land for the school, and no teacher (or building and teacher) was ever provided. If you really believe that parents cannot pay any more than they are already paying, and if you also believe that their money is being ripped off already, then this management component should not be expressed in self-help terms, as it is in the PID, although this would make it easier to measure.

An area where what you are intending to continue doing is less clear (or in which the relationship between what is said in the draft and what is reflected in the program logframe is less clear) is health. The only thing you include in objective tree is the provision of contraceptives. However, you also have had a successful rural water program, with cost recovery, a successful CCCD program, and have been working to strengthen service delivery capacity and management in the MOH. There needs to be a clear indication of when and why you are going to stop doing this, and thus why it doesn't appear in the objective tree. Is another donor working on cost recovery in health? Is there a possibility that private sector distribution for contraceptives is a possibility in Lesotho (a la SOMARC or through CBD, which you mention?); also, you are apparently going to be going on with training and IEC for FP into the plan period, so these have to get in their somewhere, even if they are represented only through buy-ins to centrally-funded projects. This is why IEC appears in the targets of opportunity box in Model B of the objective tree.

A final comment, which relates to our discussions of the agriculture-marketing-private sector nexus, is that from what you have said, I really believe that what you should do first is emphasize marketing for non-traditional, high value

crops. If you believe that it will take five years to develop these markets, unless you also think it will take five years to have something for farmers to adopt in this area, and for them to adopt it, then you shouldn't emphasize crop production before the markets are reasonably secure. Also, you should indicate what the timeframe is for the privatization of input supplies (Coop Lesotho) and development of processing or other agribusiness activities, so that it will be clear that you are, indeed, promoting commercial, intensive agricultural systems. There is also a question, as has been mentioned, about whether or not small farmers who have really been absent from farming for most of their adult lives, and who are what you term "residual" farmers at that, whether they will take the risk to do so, whether they will have credit available if they decide to take the risk (apparently not, from what your analysis indicates), and also whether they are likely to be able to manage high value intensive crop production, meet necessary quality standard, and market these crops in a timely manner and at prices that will make such production sustainable. There is also the question of the impact of this approach, and income that hopefully will be generated by it, on women who have been nominal heads of household. If you are serious about the women's bank, then this may be much less of an issue.

I hope that this is helpful. You have convinced me that you have some good program ideas which are based on an analysis of your prior program successes and failures. (Since the rural water supply cost recovery program was so successful, why aren't you doing anything to build on this or generalize it to more of the country?) It is based on a quick reading of the draft, which I do not have before me as I am writing this. I do think, however, that some of these are the sorts of issues that might be raised in an AID/W review as the document reads in the present version.