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**A Review of
"Reevaluating Substance and Process Priorities
in Development Assistance"**

by

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for the Winrock Colloquium**

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Reevaluating Substance and Process Priorities in Development Assistance

N. C. Brady

for the Winrock Colloquium

OVERVIEW

The paper outlines Brady's views on development assistance progress to date, areas where progress has been less-than-desirable, and areas where the US ought to provide leadership because of its distinct comparative advantages.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PAPER

Brady defines substance as the changes and improvements we perceive to be needed to enhance agricultural development; and process as the methods and procedures we use to bring about these changes and improvements.

Areas of Greater Progress in Substance and Process

In the following areas, significant progress has been made, with USAID, US foundations, universities, PVOs, and private sector enterprises playing a major role:

1. Creation and transfer of improved agricultural technologies ("Green Revolution");
2. Human and institutional development;
3. Population and family planning;
4. Environment and natural resource conservation;
5. Women in development.

Areas of Less Progress in Substance and Process

1. Increased rural income and equity of distribution
2. Literacy and education for females
3. Private sector involvement and policy dialogue
4. Sustainable agricultural development and extension

The Most Critical Weakness of the Process

External and internal discontinuities, to which the AID system is subject, weaken the effectiveness of the development process. These discontinuities result from:

1. political changes or instabilities that occur in the recipient countries themselves;
2. our own political changes;
3. the natural impatience of the American public;
4. AID's rotating personnel system; and
5. the concept the AID is a "temporary" Agency, even though it celebrated its 25th anniversary last year.

"In facilitating our process, we must focus on consistency and follow-through to minimize the detrimental effects of discontinuities over which we have no control. AID has a well-developed programmatic system. As we strive to improve it, we must be careful 'not to throw out the baby with the bathwater.'"

Areas of Substance and Process Which Need Greater Attention

The US should provide leadership in programmatic areas in which we have distinct comparative advantages. Brady suggests human resource development; private sector enhancement; biotechnology and other modern technologies; university-building in Africa; and basic and applied research as necessary elements to enhance agriculture.

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REEVALUATING SUBSTANCE AND PROCESS PRIORITIES
IN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

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INTRODUCTION

The demanding topic I've been asked to address at today's gathering of national and international science and technology leaders imposes a high degree of humility. This humility has two primary sources. First, there is nothing I'm going to say that hasn't been said before. And second, some of you who have had much more hands-on experience will probably challenge my contentions.

Allow me to focus our attention on reevaluating substance and process in agricultural development assistance. For the sake of this discussion, let us define substance as the changes and improvements we perceive to be needed to enhance agricultural development; and process as the methods and procedures we use to bring about these changes and improvements.

Before giving my own particular view about the progress, or lack thereof, in both substance and process, I should emphasize that in general the United States has not done so badly in either area. In comparing America's efforts to those of other donor countries and international institutions, our success-to-failure ratio has not been bad. In fact, there are some areas in which we have demonstrated a distinct comparative advantage.

AREAS OF GREATER PROGRESS IN SUBSTANCE AND PROCESS

Let me first bring to your attention some examples of substance and process where significant progress has been made and where the United States has played a major role. As a point of clarification, when I speak of the United States, I am referring not only to A.I.D. and its predecessor organizations, but to the U.S. foundations, universities, private voluntary organizations, private sector enterprises, and other American institutions that have been major contributors to worldwide development assistance.

Agricultural Technologies

Alleviation of hunger is certainly a main substantive area in which we have made some progress. Despite rapid growth in world population, particularly in developing countries, the percentage of hungry people worldwide has actually declined. This has been accomplished through the creation and transfer of improved agricultural technologies that work -- a process called the "Green Revolution."

Please note that both creation and transfer of better technologies was required, not just transfer. Many in the development community believe that all the required technologies already are available and merely need to be transferred. My own first experience with that view took place in the Philippines in the 1950s. As a young professor at Cornell, I was sent to work on a U.S. aid-supported Cornell University project and was told: "You are not to do any research. Help them to reestablish their agricultural teaching capabilities, but don't get involved in research, it takes too long and we're a temporary Agency." This view was based at

least in part on the premise that the needed agricultural technologies already existed, and that if we spent 4 to 5 years helping the Filipinos rebuild their university, we could then go home and let them continue by themselves.

Well, I took advantage of the fact that each senior student had to do a thesis project. I took those students into the farmers' fields in groups and we carried out simple fertilizer trials on rice crops with nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium fertilizers that was donated to the Filipino government by the United States.

If there was anything we learned in those two years, it was that the only benefits from the fertilizer applied to rice went to the company that sold it to the U.S. Government. The technology that was appropriate in Japan and California -- using fertilizer on rice -- simply didn't work on the tall slender tropical rices grown in the Philippines. The plants tend to fall over (lodge) before harvest. If you add fertilizer, they just grow taller and fall over sooner. In this instance, as in so many others, technology transfer just wasn't the answer.

The "Green Revolution," one of development's real success stories, began almost 30 years ago. The improved grain seeds that were needed -- primarily wheats and rices -- were developed. Water for irrigation, and chemical fertilizers and pesticides, also were made available to help farmers bring the new crops closer to their yield potential. Developing-country leaders ensured increased, sustainable production of food through policies that did three things: first, they made it economically feasible for farmers to use the new technologies and inputs; second, they supported the building

and maintenance of vital support institutions; and third, they supported the education and training of a critical cadre of expert scientists and technicians.

The high-yielding, fast-growing, semi-dwarf varieties of wheat and rice developed, respectively, at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) in Mexico and at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines, were first introduced in developing countries in the mid-1960's. National agricultural research institutions quickly used these new cereal cultivars on farmers' fields and in their own research programs. The result was a true revolution in food production.

Indonesia's national scientists, for example, have worked with researchers at the International Rice Research Institute since the 1960s to develop new rice varieties that are both high yielding and resistant to a major plant pest, the brown planthopper (BPH). Over the years, most of the successful crosses were made by national researchers in Indonesia. The area planted to high-yielding varieties of rice has increased from less than 500,000 hectares in 1968-69 (about 6% of the area planted to rice) to over 6,600,000 hectares in 1983-84 (almost 82% of the area) [Dalrymple].

Filippino researchers have had a special advantage in their proximity to IRRI. Rice hectarage in the Philippines planted to high-yielding new rice varieties increased from less than 3 percent (83,000 hectares) in 1966-67 to more than 85 percent (over 2,700,000 hectares) in 1982-83, with an emphasis on varieties developed at IRRI [Dalrymple].

Since the 1960s, Pakistan has carried out an intensive wheat improvement program involving Mexican dwarf-variety seeds from CIMMYT, training for researchers, and intensive testing and promotion of improved varieties. From a total of 3.9 million tons of wheat of traditional varieties in 1966, production rose to almost 11 million tons in 1980, with 75 percent of the wheat area planted to the new varieties.

Today, about half of the wheat and rice hectareage in Asia and parts of Latin America is planted with the improved varieties developed at national and international research institutions. In the United States, semi-dwarf varieties were grown on nearly 60% of the area planted to wheat in 1984 [Brady]. As new varieties emerge and the physical and economic conditions for their growth improve, the proportional use of high-yielding cereal varieties is sure to increase in both developing and industrial countries.

CIMMYT, IRRI, and the other international agricultural research centers (IARCs), have become a comprehensive mainstay of international agricultural research. Through A.I.D.'s Collaborative Research Support Programs (CRSPs), many of the U.S. Land Grant institutions, with their unequalled abilities in agricultural education, research, and extension, have become increasingly important players in this process.

Human and Institutional Development

Through these collaborative networks, developing-country researchers gain access to new technologies, and their countries are guided in developing the institutions and human resources necessary

to increase and sustain agricultural productivity. In the Asian countries already mentioned, as well as in Bangladesh, India, Thailand, and Sri Lanka, and in several Latin American countries such as Brazil and Peru -- institutions were built, hundreds of thousands of individuals received some technical training, and tens of thousands of young professionals received M.S. and PH.D. Degrees. Not only was their knowledge-base broadened, but their education and training was specifically tailored to the agricultural needs of their countries.

Agriculture as the Driving Force in Development

It is with good reason that the international assistance community has emphasized the development of organizations that focus on agricultural improvements in research, irrigation, fertilizer use, finance, marketing, and so forth. A successful agricultural sector has been the driving force that leads to overall economic improvements in almost all developing countries. This is because 60-80 percent of the people in these countries live in rural areas and earn their livings by producing food. Technological improvements in agriculture lead to increased farm incomes, which create increased demands for farm and non-farm goods and services. These demands, in turn, expand employment both inside and outside of the agricultural sector [Mellors].

Population and Family Planning

Family planning is another area in which we have made significant progress. New contraceptive mechanisms -- pills,

interuterine devices, long-lasting subdural chemical implants such as NORPLANT^R, and others -- have been developed and widely disseminated. Efforts continue to develop a wider array of appropriate, inexpensive, easy-to-use contraceptive technologies, and to identify socially-relevant channels for distribution of family-planning information and materials. These endeavors have helped to slow worldwide population growth and have increased our ability to feed the human family.

Environment and Natural Resource Conservation

But, as world population continues to grow, albeit at a slower rate, A.I.D. and other U.S. Federal agencies, as well as institutions around the world, have become increasingly aware of the crucial need to conserve our planet's biological resources. Strategy conferences on Tropical Deforestation in 1978 and on Biological Diversity in 1980 led to the formation of Federal interagency task forces and amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act to address these issues. A National Forum on BioDiversity, co-sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Academy of Sciences in 1986, provided an opportunity for experts in ecology, tropical biology, conservation, economics, and other related disciplines, to review and assess the consequences of the earth's continuing loss of genetic diversity.

In keeping with its particular mandate, A.I.D. is working with developing countries to help them conserve their biological resources and habitats. Natural resource or environmental assessments are completed or in progress, some with support from the

Agency, in 28 countries, and national conservation strategies are completed or underway in 21 countries (IIED and IUCN).

Intensive efforts are underway to identify fast-growing, multi-purpose tree species that will be most suitable for use in reforestation and agroforestry efforts. The goals are to meet the basic needs of developing countries for fuelwood and other tree products; improve land, water, and human resource management; increase the employment and income generated by businesses that are based on forestry products; and identify tree species that may be most productive in farming systems that combine the cultivation of food crops and trees.

Women in Development

The contribution that women can and should make to development is receiving wider and more careful consideration in all Agency endeavors, and particularly in terms of agriculture. Women in developing countries are frequently involved in growing, harvesting, and marketing food, as well as in processing, storing, and preparing it for consumption by their families. The visibility and expertise of these women must be increased through better education and training, and involvement in a wider variety of activities that support and improve rural life in the developing world. A.I.D. is working to more-fully integrate women-in-development considerations into initiatives that involve not only food preparation and nutrition, maternal and child health care, and family planning, but also agricultural production and marketing, and micro-enterprise generation, as well as general preparation of the female members of society for new roles in the development process.

AREAS OF LESS PROGRESS IN SUBSTANCE AND PROCESS

The many exemplary ways in which we have been able to make a real difference in the substance and process of development offer considerable hope and encouragement to governments, private voluntary organizations, and the private sector. There are, however, several development areas in which our efforts have yielded less-than-desired progress.

Increased Rural Income and Equity of Distribution

The still-great inequities that exist in income and income distribution in so many countries, particularly in rural areas, is one such issue to which we are again giving increased attention. There have been, to be sure, some successes, primarily in what we refer to as "graduate" or "middle-income countries" -- those which have attained a per capita income level that precludes bilateral development assistance from the United States. In the much larger group of least-developed countries, per capita income is often far too low and undependable to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, and education. While most countries have not lost ground during the last twenty-five years, neither have they gained much.

Literacy and Education for Females

One major barrier to development in less-developed countries is lack of access by large population segments to at least a primary education. Although some progress has been made, there is one area that is often lacking in momentum -- female education.

Africa, for example, has special problems in this regard. If there is any one thing that is limiting development in that continent, it is lack of access to education, particularly for girls and young women. Only about one-third of African mothers can read and write. Quite apart from the developmental consequences for their children, this lack of literacy severely limits their access to health, population, nutrition, agricultural, and other information that would help them to improve their own lives and those of their families and communities. Education -- the simple ability to read and write -- gives people a fighting chance to learn new technologies and make some beneficial changes.

Private Sector Involvement and Policy Dialogue

Notwithstanding some of our successes in fostering appropriate environments for business and market development, we must begin to put even greater emphasis on the involvement of the private sector in development, both in the United States and in the countries we assist. The private sector of the U.S. agricultural community has a vast store of knowledge and expertise to offer in the production, processing, and marketing continuum. Private-sector efforts in developing countries can reap important benefits from access to the knowhow of successful U.S. entrepreneurship. Access and exposure to American business acumen can be a powerful stimulant to the development of new enterprises and to new market reform initiatives. In this regard, it should be emphasized that minority-led enterprises can perform important catalytical roles, much in the same way that female entrepreneurs can help enhance the

economic potential of women in developing countries.

To help their citizens take advantage of this valuable assistance, developing countries must design and implement policies that facilitate free access to markets for inputs and outputs at satisfactory and stable prices. Agricultural development, in particular, is stimulated by a healthy business-oriented environment in which farmers and other entrepreneurs have such access.

The task before us is by no means simple, nor does it lend itself to quick solutions. Because economic and political policies do not always have the same goals, we must help developing country leaders to recognize the less-obvious, longer-term benefits that only market-development oriented economic policies can generate. This learning process must involve not only culturally knowledgeable political and economic analysts, but also scientific researchers and technologists, in addition to the leaders themselves.

Sustainable Agricultural Development and Extension

Developing country officials must also be made far more aware of the ecological consequences of poor development choices. Beset as they are by day-to-day crises, developing country leaders tend to give insufficient attention to the longer-range destructive effects of inappropriate practices, particularly in agriculture and forestry. As the earth's population increases and more land area is used to produce needed food, fuel, and fiber, attention to natural resource conservation becomes ever more vital. Clean water, productive soil resources, and habitats for our unique and irreplaceable flora and fauna become scarce and must be husbanded

if agricultural productivity and healthful human and animal life is to continue.

We must give greater attention to farming systems that can be maintained in the many areas where tropical soils are fragile and more easily leached of their valuable nutrients, and to plant species that can thrive on such fragile soils. A.I.D. has helped to introduce the "farming systems research and extension" (FSR/E) approach into developing country agricultural research to improve coordination and cooperation among researchers, extensionists, and farmers. This comprehensive approach helps prioritize research and allocation of scarce research funds, increases the potential for successful transfer of innovative technologies through on-farm testing, and helps overcome existing gender, age, cultural and economic biases in all stages of technology research and dissemination. FSR/E and similar innovations that can successfully transfer improved technologies contribute to resource conservation which is crucial to sustainable development.

THE MOST CRITICAL WEAKNESS OF THE PROCESS

Ultimately, the effectiveness of the development process is weakened by discontinuities, both external and internal, to which the A.I.D. system is subject.

First, there are the many discontinuities that result from political changes or instabilities that occur in the recipient countries themselves. Second, there are discontinuities resulting from our own political changes (shifts in the congressional mandate), the fluctuating concerns of an administration, and many

other changes that impact on the Agency's direction and emphasis.

Third, discontinuity can be precipitated by the natural impatience of the American public. When the long-term needs and goals of some development endeavors are modified to respond to shorter-term concerns of public opinion, the potential positive impacts of the programs on, for instance, fostering long-term agricultural market-development designs, may be severely damaged.

A fourth kind of discontinuity comes about because of A.I.D.'s rotating personnel system. In the field, in particular, individuals who implement programs are rarely the people who developed the original design. Because they each have a unique set of experiences and motivations, this may lead to somewhat different interpretations of a specific project's format and intent. Finally, there is discontinuity that can be attributed to the concept that A.I.D. is a "temporary" Agency, even though it celebrated its 25th anniversary last year.

In facilitating our process, we must focus on consistency and follow-through to minimize the detrimental effects of discontinuities over which we have no control. A.I.D. has a well-developed programmatic system. As we strive to improve it, we must be careful "not to throw out the baby with the bathwater."

AREAS OF SUBSTANCE AND PROCESS WHICH NEED GREATER ATTENTION

There are several areas of substance and process which should receive greater attention. In future efforts, the United States ought to provide leadership in programmatic areas in which we have distinct comparative advantages.

Human Resource Development

One obvious area is human resource development. Our American institutions of higher education, including our Land-Grant and Historically Black Colleges and Universities, are unrivaled as a channel to educate foreign nationals who come to the United States to study toward advanced degrees. We are also well-equipped, through our own vast, successful experience with public education, to help other countries increase the impact of their educational dollars, and provide more accessible and appropriate education and vocational and technical training opportunities for their citizens.

We are also capable of doing far more in helping to increase the opportunities for women to participate in the development process at all levels. In this endeavor, we are joined by the international agricultural research centers and other research institutions that are becoming increasingly conscious of the valuable role and potential contribution of women in agricultural production and marketing, as well as in scientific and advisory positions within the agricultural research system.

Private Sector Enhancement

Another area in which the United States has a distinct comparative advantage is private enterprise generation. We do not recommend private-sector growth for ideological reasons alone. For many aspects of a country's economy, private enterprises, both large and small, can provide goods and services more cheaply and efficiently than can the cumbersome systems of the public sector.

In addition, as has been so graphically demonstrated in the People's Republic of China in recent years, it is human nature to work harder and with more enthusiasm when the extra effort increases personal income and the quantity and variety of accessible goods and services.

Such tangible incentives are just as enticing for other very poor nations whose people -- farmers, craftspersons, technicians and others -- would like to have greater control over their own productivity and success, but who are impeded by the maze of old and new regulations and by other barriers intrinsic in so many public sector endeavors. In recent years, for example, the Agency has carefully examined the circumstances that limit or support very-small-scale business (micro-enterprise) success, and determined that where credit is a product of the private sector, through local savings, new, small-scale businesses are more likely to thrive. We are working to disseminate this kind of valuable knowledge and have begun to see some fruitful results in both rural and urban communities where these lessons have been put to good use to stimulate economic output through well-managed savings and credit systems.

Biotechnology and Other Modern Technologies

The newer research technologies must be acknowledged as very important tools in development research. Used to augment more traditional modes of research, the methods of modern biotechnology make it possible for researchers to very rapidly develop new, highly-useful technologies. Research supported by A.I.D. is already using the new methods to develop improved animal vaccines,

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increase biological nitrogen fixation, produce plant varieties that can tolerate stressed soil and environmental conditions, and many related efforts. The door is now open to innovations not even dreamed of only a few years ago.

U.S. Soil Taxonomy is another recently-developed tool that is proving to be very useful in developing countries. Combining soil classifications along with crop, water, weather, pest, and management-practice information in computer simulations, researchers can predict crop success and identify optimum combinations for given locations in a fast and cost-effective manner.

Valuable information about weather, natural vegetation, soil, and forestry conditions is also becoming increasingly available through satellite imaging. The products of this new technology can help environmentalists and other development professionals to track natural resource trends so that they can predict potentially hazardous conditions in a manner that allows for remediation.

As more scientists are trained in the new disciplines, and as the methods themselves become more cost-effective to use, we will be able to increase their application to the most pressing development problems.

In many countries of Asia and Latin America, a combined use of these and more traditional technologies have moved development forward dramatically during the last twenty-five years. But much remains to be done, and vast areas, particularly in Africa, will require new development and investment strategies to overcome problems with which we have not yet come to grips.

University Building in Africa

Africa is the continent that can now most clearly benefit from an increased ability to generate and apply improved agricultural technologies. The variety and magnitude of agricultural constraints in that region are probably the worst in the world and have contributed to a decline in per capita food production over the last 20 years. Farmers in many parts of Africa must produce crops under different and very difficult conditions that often include low and unpredictable rainfall, acid and infertile soils, and unique and hard-to-control animal and plant pests.

Many Asians feel that the most important long-term outcome of development assistance was the building of university systems, sometimes very similar to the American land-grant model, that gave them the capacity to carry out their own agricultural research, educate their own researchers and technicians, and become the guardians of their natural resource base.

We are now beginning to mount a similar 20-25 year effort in Africa. Within this plan, African countries will develop the capacity to generate improved agricultural technologies that will help them feed growing populations while they conserve their natural resource base and educate their own teachers, researchers, and extensionists.

In addition to taking advantage of concepts that have been proven valid elsewhere -- including policy dialogues, involvement of women, institutional development, sustainability, and private enterprise generation -- this effort accesses the skills already available in established research institutions such as the

international centers, the CRSPs, and various national and regional programs. Finally, it employs the new development agendas that are particularly appropriate for Africa's unique problems such as agroforestry, encouragement of very small-scale enterprises, particular attention to overcoming some of the most damaging plant and animal pests that are unique to Africa.

A.I.D.'s plan for Africa is comprehensive. We plan to strengthen national agricultural research systems in about 8 core countries. At the same time, strong applied research capacities will be built in neighboring countries so that local scientists can borrow technologies and adapt them to local needs.

Stimulated through a Special Program for African Agricultural Research (SPAAR), critical cadres of scientists from different countries will network their efforts to improve four to six priority commodities. And, perhaps most important of all, in four to six of the countries in which we are strengthening the agricultural research systems, we will provide long-term assistance to build strong faculties of agriculture.

BASIC AND APPLIED RESEARCH: NECESSARY ELEMENTS TO ENHANCE AGRICULTURE

Not only in Africa, but throughout the developing world, research, both basic and applied, is needed to improve all aspects of agricultural production, processing and marketing. The high-input systems that created the green revolution elsewhere depend on continued research to combat new, more-tenacious plant pests. No single improved crop is ever a permanent solution. Lower-input

systems that may be more appropriate in fragile environments often require very dedicated development of technologies, as well.

Research efforts are yielding improved crop varieties -- salt tolerant rice and oats, aluminum and drought resistant sorghum, and viral-resistant bean lines to mention a few. Ruminants, important in Africa because they are smaller and easier to raise, are also receiving research attention. Vaccines and other treatments for a number of sheep and goat diseases have been discovered in recent years including a rapid diagnostic test and vaccine for contagious caprine pleuropneumonia, a disease affecting at least 48 million goats in West Africa and Asia, and a treatment for a severe white muscle disease that could save over one million lambs per year.

Depending on a developing country's own research capacities, the international research centers, U.S. and overseas universities, and public and private research institutions offer assistance or collaboration as appropriate. While most of the African countries will require technical assistance for many years to come, the Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Initiative is a good example of scientific collaboration between countries at somewhat different levels of development in which research capabilities are high.

In all of this, the United States continues to focus on endeavors for which we have a critical advantage. As developing countries, such as India, become more adept at disseminating what they have learned in the development process, we encourage them to assist other less developed countries. We also encourage countries to work together on common problems with marginal support. In the larger donor community, we try to foster open channels and the kind

of cooperation that gets the most "bang for the buck" out of every development dollar.

Only a few decades ago, the United States was virtually alone in the development assistance field. The format of our aid effort set the pace for participation of other industrial countries as their economies reemerged from the catastrophe of World War II. Likewise, many of the developing nations we helped in the 1950s and 1960s, such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, Israel, and the Philippines, are now innovative contributors to or collaborators in the substance and process of helping other emerging nations. Many of those countries have developed critical areas of expertise in which they excel -- such as in construction of roads and buildings -- which should be and are being harnessed in the assistance arena.

In the wake of second World War, we had the critical advantage of being a catalyst for positive change. As we look back, we know that the substance and process of our American contribution were the keys to the doors of development. When we first unlocked those doors, we did not know and greatly underestimated the needs of the countries behind them. Today the problems and solutions are somewhat different, and they are part of a global picture we helped to build. Today, we know what is behind the door. The progress we have made should be an inspiration as we lay the groundwork for the global challenge ahead.

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