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GENDER AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

July 27, 1995

A Workshop Hosted by USAID

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In Association with: Management Systems International, Inc.

The questions for discussion in the break-out groups attempting to develop recommendations for USAID are:

- 1) How much emphasis should be given to gender-specific activities in such priority areas as electoral processes, rule of law, governance and civil society? How can USAID advance gender-inclusive democracy in its economic/social sector programming? What particular kinds of project or non-project assistance --depending on country circumstances-- seem most relevant?**
- 2) What, if any, organizational adjustments might USAID consider to further encourage gender-inclusive democracy in Africa? (Some possible areas for discussion could include: general policy guidance, project design, implementation and evaluation requirements, and staff responsibilities and incentives.)**

4:15: PLENARY DISCUSSION

5:00: CONCLUDING REMARKS

USAID GENDER AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA WORKSHOP AGENDA

Date: Thursday, July 27, 1995

Place: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Conference Center
2400 N Street, N.W., 8th Floor
Washington, D.C.

WORKSHOP PURPOSE: As the African continent continues along the path of democratic transition and consolidation, an important developing issue is women's participation and influence in the governance process. The purpose of this workshop is to gather together African women leaders, USAID Washington-based and field personnel, other U.S. Agency and donor representatives, practitioners from the NGO community, and policy analysts and academics to discuss: (1) opportunities for, and constraints on, gender-inclusive democracy; and, (2) recommendations for effective USAID interventions.

8:45: CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

9:15: WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS: Chuck Costello, Director,
Democracy Center
John Hicks, Assistant Administrator,
Bureau for Africa, USAID
Prudence Bushnell, Deputy Assistant
Secretary of State for African Affairs

9:30: **SESSION 1: AFRICAN WOMEN AND THE CONTINENT'S DEMOCRATIC
TRANSITION**

Panel: Moderator: Prof. Aili Mari Tripp, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Panelists: Honorable Miria-R-K-Matembe, Ugandan Parliamentarian,
and Former NGO Leader
Prof. Maria Nzomo, Senior Visiting Fulbright Scholar,
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and
Kenyan NGO Leader
Prof. Akua Kuenyehia, Ghanaian Lawyer and NGO Leader
Honorable Dr. Inonge Mbikutsita-Lewanika
Zambian Parliamentarian and NGO Leader
Fatou Rigoulot, Gender and Development Regional Advisor
Regional Economic and Development Support Office,
Western and Central Africa, USAID

Purpose: The purpose of the first session is to understand how African women have been affected by the continent's ongoing democratic transition, and to discuss new opportunities for, and continuing constraints on, women's participation and influence in African politics.

10:45: BREAK

11:00: DISCUSSION

12:00: LUNCH (served at Conference Center)

1:00: SESSION II: USAID AND GENDER-INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE PROGRAMS

Panel: Moderator: Gary Walker, Vice-President, International Management and Development Group

Panelists: Stephanie Funk, USAID/Malawi, DECIDE Project
Prof. Anne Ferguson and Michael Bratton,
Michigan State University and USAID Zambia
Democratic Governance Project
Carol York, Asia Foundation Women in Politics Project

Purpose: Discuss the results of ongoing USAID gender-inclusive Democracy and Governance programs in Africa and elsewhere, and explore possible new USAID initiatives.

2:00: DISCUSSION

2:45: BREAK

3:00: SESSION III: BREAK-OUT GROUPS

Facilitators: Carol Peasley, Deputy Assistant Administrator,
Bureau for Africa, USAID
Jennifer Windsor, Deputy Director, Center for Democracy and
Governance, Global Bureau, USAID
Joan Atherton, Regional Development Officer, Office of
West African Affairs, USAID

Purpose: During this session the plenary will be broken up into three groups. Each group will be tasked with developing recommendations for programs and organizational processes to further gender-inclusive democratic governance in Africa and elsewhere. One of the groups will, in addition, focus particularly on Francophone and Lusophone Africa.

Biographies of Moderators and Panelists

Professor Aili Mari Tripp is a political scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has published widely on gender issues and civil society in Africa, with special emphasis upon the ongoing democratic transitions. She has done extensive field work in East Africa, and participated in the ARD/MSI Assessment of Democratic Governance in Tanzania for USAID.

Professor Akua Kuenyehia teaches law at the University of Ghana in Accra, Ghana. She is a women's rights activist who has been involved in designing and delivering legal services to poor women and children in Ghana for the past ten years. She has also run training programs for both grassroots women leaders and women in management positions, aimed at raising their awareness about both their rights and responsibilities. She has published many academic papers on her work. She is a founding and Board member of the Africa Regional network of women professionals working on the use of law as a tool for the empowerment of women, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF).

The Honorable Dr. Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika is a Member of Parliament in Zambia. She has been a founder of, and activist in, numerous rural developmental nongovernmental organizations. She was the first woman leader of a political party in Africa. An expert and former Lecturer in Early Childhood Development and Education, she has also served as UNICEF Regional Advisor for Childhood Development and Women Development in West and Central Africa.

The Honorable Miria-R-K-Matembe is a lawyer and a member of the Ugandan Constituent Assembly. She is a founder and past President of Action for Development (ACFODE), a women's organization in Uganda. Ms. Matembe has held several governmental posts including: State Attorney in the Ministry of Justice, member of the Ugandan Constitutional Commission and Parliament, and Councilor for the Kampala District Council. She was a Lecturer in Law and English for the Uganda College of Commerce and the Uganda Chartered Institute of Bankers.

Professor Maria Nzomo is currently Senior Visiting Fulbright Scholar at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She is on leave from the University of Nairobi, Kenya where she teaches Political Economy and International Studies. She plays a leading role in a number of women's movements and human rights organizations in Kenya, including the National Commission on the Status of Women (which she chairs) and the Kenya Human Rights Commission. She has published widely on issues of democratization, women's rights and structural adjustment in Africa.

Fatou Rigoulot is the USAID Gender and Development Advisor for West and Central Africa based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. An agronomist, she has been an agricultural research and extension specialist and a USAID Human Resources Development Officer in her native Senegal. She has also been Counselor to the Ministers of Rural Development and Agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire.

Gary Walker is Vice-President of International Management & Development Group, Ltd. (IM&D) He has more than 25 years of professional experience with global development issues, including nine years working in Africa. He has assisted in the identification, design, management, implementation,

and evaluation of donor projects in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, China, and Russia. His multi-disciplinary experience embraces development policy analysis, planning and programming, institution-building, agriculture and rural development, human resource development, and employment and small enterprise generation.

Professor Michael Bratton teaches Political Science and African Studies at Michigan State University. He is author of The Local Politics of Rural Development (1980) and co-editor (with Goran Hyden) of Governance and Politics in Africa (1992). He has worked in Eastern and Southern Africa for the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and carried out consulting assignments for the World Bank, German Technical Assistance, and USAID. He currently serves as the principal investigator for a series of monitoring, evaluation and special studies for USAID's Zambia Democratic Governance Project.

Professor Anne Ferguson is an anthropologist teaching at Michigan State University. She has specialized in the gender dimensions of agricultural research and natural resource management in Southern Africa. More recently, her research has focused on the implications for women of the political transitions underway in the region. She co-edits the Women in International Development Annual Review. She is the gender specialist for the USAID-funded Bean/Cowpea Collaborative Research Support Program and has analyzed gender dimensions for the USAID/Zambia Democratic Governance Project.

Stephanie Funk is a Project Development and Women in Development Officer at USAID/Malawi. She also served as the Democracy and Governance officer during Malawi's transition to a multi-party system of government. She has worked for USAID for seven years including assignments in the Office of Women in Development and the Africa Bureau.

Carol Yost is Director of the Asia Foundation's Women in Politics Program, which supports in-country and regional initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region to increase women's access to and influence on policymaking processes and decisionmakers at all levels, as well as to strengthen women's political leadership skills. She works with women leaders and women's organizations across Asia and the Pacific Islands, and has lived and traveled extensively in Asia and the Middle East.

Break-Out Group Two: Choate Room

Jennifer Windsor, Facilitator

Peter Accolla
Adrienne Allison
Melanie Bixby
Gretchen Bloom
Gary Bombardier
Tim Bork
Michael Bratton
Nadereh Chahmirzadi
Roberto Figueredo
Patrick FN'Pierre
John Hicks
Curtis Huff
Jerry Hyman
Pat Isman
Carmen Lane
Wendy Lawrence
Shelby Lewis
Laura Libanati
Patricia Mantey
Jane Martin
Sylvie Morel
Wanjiku Muhato
Mihir Munchi
Julie Nenon
Binaifer Nowrojee
Mariya Nzomo
Connie Paraskeva
James Polhemus
Shelly Rojano
Helen Soos
Cheryl Strumbras
Janet Tuthill

Break-Out Group Three: Butler Room

Joan Atherton, Facilitator

Mark Blackden
Brenda Bowman
Zoey Breslar
Prudence Bushnell
Herschelle Challenor
Stephanie Funk
Keith Klein
Akua Kuenyehia
René Lemarchand
Aileen Marshall
Moussa Okanla
Jane Parpart
David Peterson
Mary Reintsma
Fatou Rigoulot
Ruby Sandhu-Rojon
Kole Shettima
Elise Fiber Smith
Carolyn Somerville
Gary Walker
Cheryl Williams

SESSION III: BREAK-OUT GROUPS
3:00pm - 4:15pm

Break-Out Group One: Root Room A

Carol Peasley, Facilitator

Gloria Braxton
Yolanda Comedy
Louis Coronado
Chuck Costello
Anne Ferguson
Larry Garber
Paula Goldman
Joan Goodin
Gary Hansen
Charles Hill
David Kaeuper
Lisa Vene Klasen
Jenna Luche
Francis Luzzato
Miria-R-K-Matembe
Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika
Jill Merrick
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Sigifredo Ramirez
Yolanda Richardson
Gayle Schwartz
Christine Sheckler
Robert Shoemaker
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I. Opening Speakers

**Chuck Costello, Director, Center for Democracy and Governance
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John Hicks, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Africa, USAID

Prudence Bushnell, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs

II. Panelists

**Honorable Dr. Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika
Zambian Parliamentarian and NGO Leader**

**Akua Kuenyehia
Professor
Ghanaian Lawyer and NGO Leader**

**Honorable Miria-R-K-Matembe
Ugandan Parliamentarian and former NGO Leader**

**Maria Nzomo
Professor
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**Michael Bratton
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Carol Yost
Director
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III. Moderators/Facilitators

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Yolanda Comedy, G/DG

Roberto Figueredo, G/DG
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Paula Goldman, G/DG
Gary Hansen, G/DG
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Laura Libanati, G/DG
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Wanjiku Muhato, USAID/REDSO/ESA

Africa's Women Make Power Moves Female Officials Fight Hostility to Break Grip of All-Male Rule.

The Washington Post, February 28, 1995, FINAL Edition

By: Stephen Buckley, Washington Post Foreign Service

EMBU, Kenya - Unassuming and soft-spoken, Agatha Muthoni Mbogo, 24, defies the image of a revolutionary. Yet, six months ago, she did a most revolutionary thing: She ran for mayor of this city of 66,000 people -- and won.

Mbogo's victory was even more startling because she was voted in by her colleagues on Embu's District Council, all men. For the thousands of women in this farming area two hours northeast of Nairobi, Mbogo suddenly became a symbol of the increasingly potent political force women have become in Kenya and across Africa.

The multiparty movement that gripped Africa during the late 1980s and early 1990s has galvanized women across the continent, leading to a bevy of political groups and spurring hundreds of women to run for office. African women are still years from political equality with men, who continue to dominate local and national legislatures as well as most countries' major policy-making positions. But, for the first time, women like Mbogo have gotten a foot in the door to political power.

Since 1992, when Kenya dropped its single-party system, women have won 50 local political posts, doubling the positions they held before. The League of Women Voters, founded in 1992, now has 7,882 members. Six women were elected to the National Assembly, the most ever.

This political progress has been mirrored across the continent. Uganda has the first female vice president in its history. Burundi's foreign minister is a woman. Rwanda's prime minister, killed in last spring's massacres, was a woman. In Tanzania, at least 15 percent of the National Assembly seats must be held by women. South Africa became one of the continent's first nations to explicitly protect women's rights in its constitution.

"Women across Africa have similar problems, and we realize that if we are going to solve those problems we must have representation in the making of our nations' laws and policies," said Lilian Mwaura, chairman of the National Council of Women of Kenya.

The increased activism has had a price, however, as governments frequently break up meetings of women's groups, and female politicians are often harangued about their personal lives.

None of that deterred Mbogo, who said she has long dreamed of a career in politics. She launched that dream in 1992 by running for Embu's council, facing the daunting obstacles that often plague African women vying for political office.

She had little money. She had no political experience. She had no transportation. She faced a torrent of questions about her personal life.

"My opponent kept insisting that I was going to get married to somebody in another town and move away," Mbogo said. "I kept telling the people, 'Give me a try. Let us try a woman.' "

Mbogo also faced ignorance among the town's women, many of whom initially balked at voting for her. She gave speeches before women's groups and trudged from door to door, spending ours at a time giving a combination stump speech and civic lesson.

"I was overjoyed when she won, because men elected her," said Lydiah Kimani, 47, an Embu farmer and political activist. "It was a step forward for us because it seemed to be a victory over this stereotype of women can't lead."

Civic education of Africa's women has become a top priority for political activists. The League of Women Voters, for example, has held dozens of workshops in rural Kenya to help women understand the procedures and philosophical underpinnings of a multiparty system.

Jael Mbogo, a veteran political activist, said that many women, especially in rural areas, have not been taught the basics of political participation. "They are taught to vote for the one who gives you a half-kilo of sugar" during the campaign, said the 51-year-old activist, no relation to Agatha Mbogo. "We must teach them that it is better to learn how to catch a fish than for someone to put the fish in your hand."

Women politicians and activists say they are bucking deeply engrained cultural mores. Those mores teach that African women cook, clean, take care of children, plant and harvest crops and support their husbands. They typically do not inherit land, divorce their husbands, control their finances or hold political office.

Yet political activism among Kenyan women is not a new phenomenon.

During the struggle for independence in the 1950s, Kenyan women often secretly outfitted fighters with weapons and spied on the positions of colonial forces.

But after independence, political leaders shut them out of power, a scenario repeated across the continent. Today, women make up 60 percent of Kenya's electorate but only 3 percent of the National Assembly. They produce 60 percent of the nation's food, but earn one-third of the typical male worker's salary. No Kenyan woman has ever held a cabinet post.

Against that backdrop, Agatha Mbogo began her political career. After winning her council seat, she asserted herself by declining a spot on the education and social services committee after a colleague called it "a woman's committee." She instead joined the town planning committee, a much more visible assignment.

Then last year, she decided to challenge Embu's mayor, a veteran politician. Mbogo said she had become frustrated because the donor groups that provide substantial aid to Kenya's rural areas "did not want to come here. We weren't seeing things done for the community. The donors'

money seemed to be going to individuals."

After a fierce campaign, the council elected her, 7 to 6. She said women in Embu exulted. Men were puzzled; some were hostile. They asked, "How could all of those men vote for a woman?" she recalled.

Samuel Muraguri, 49, a council member, admitted that years ago, he would not have voted for a woman. "I grew up during a time when people did not accept that women could lead," he said. "That is what we learned in school. That is what we learned at home. Now, we have been educated."

Mbogo has not met with the kinds of verbal and physical assaults that other female politicians have been subjected to. Some said their supporters are sometimes attacked with machetes and clubs after rallies.

Last June, Kenyan police attempted to break up a women's political meeting near Nairobi, insisting it was illegal. When the 100 women, including a member of the National Assembly, refused to go, officers beat them with batons and fists, witnesses reported.

Agnes Ndeti, a National Assembly member who was not at that gathering, said she no longer holds large political meetings. "I meet with two or three women at a time because that is the only way I can do it without the police bothering us," she said. Mbogo generally receives warm greetings from Embu's men, and many say they are now glad the council chose her.

Donor groups are funding projects again in Embu. A new market is going up downtown. A 200-bed maternity ward is being added to the hospital. A dormitory-style home has been built for the dozens of street children who once terrorized the city.

Mbogo is especially proud of the market and the maternity ward because "they touch areas that have an impact on women."

At the current market, hundreds of sellers, shaded by umbrellas, lay out fruits and vegetables on burlap sheets. Lucy Wanjiku, 35, who sells potatoes, said she likes the new mayor because "I feel like if I have a problem, I can go to her office. The other mayor shouted. He did not want to hear my problems."

Nearby, Joseph Kariuku, 32, said he found Mbogo a refreshing change. "I am tired of men," he said, watching over his pile of onions. "They give us so many promises, but they don't deliver the goods. As long as she keeps giving us what we want, she is all right."

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Women and the State in Africa

Jane L. Parpart

In recent years the African state has received considerable attention, but rarely from the viewpoint of gender, which has been subsumed within class, ethnic affiliation or religious persuasion, under the assumption that these identities, rather than gender, define access to the state. This paper challenges that assumption, asserting the particularity of the relationship of women to the state in Africa (and elsewhere) and consequently the need to study gender-state relations, as well as other social divisions, in order to understand both the nature of the state and the place of women in it. We are concerned with women's access to the apparatus of the state, the consequences of their underrepresentation in the state, and the mechanisms women have constructed to cope with their slim hold on the levers of power.

Since economic, social and political power are frequently intertwined in Africa, we shall refer to economic and social realms when discussing political power. It is important to recognize, however, that political power also includes the capacity to force people to do things which may be against their wishes. Authority, while related, is not power, but rather the culturally accepted belief that a person (or persons) have a legitimate right to wield power. This distinction is important in Africa, where women have tended to exert power indirectly, rather than directly, through positions of authority. Women's indirect power has been achieved through a variety of activities, such as withdrawal, calling upon the supernatural, control over food, manipulation of men and collective action. Direct authoritative power held through elected or appointed offices, with its concomitant control over resource allocation, has been less available to women. As a result, despite our concern with female access to authoritative political power, the paper will of necessity examine indirect power or influence as well.¹

Women and the State in Precolonial Africa

In precolonial Africa women experienced a wide range of relations with the state. In some societies patriarchal authority severely limited women's political and economic power. Women were protected as long as they paid

obedience to patriarchal power. Among the Tswana, for example, women remained legal minors all their lives. Access to land depended on the goodwill of their husband's family. Women were barred from the ward or chiefly court and thus rendered politically powerless. Severe beatings by fathers and husbands received no social censure. Although nominally protected by a web of obligations and dependencies, women who opposed male dominance lived in fear of abandonment and poverty.² Shona women also lacked legal rights, being essentially the wards of whichever male they lived with. "Good" women were deferential and obedient to men.³ Islamic societies, though guaranteeing women certain inheritance rights, constrained many female economic and political activities through *pardah*, or ritual seclusion. Most women had to manage their property through men. In precolonial Mombasa, for example, women rarely held public positions of authority and were prohibited from holding religious offices.⁴

However, in many precolonial societies some women did wield considerable influence and even authority. In these societies women usually controlled certain economic tasks. For example, although men had more authority in hunting and gathering societies, women controlled certain important economic tasks and exerted considerable influence over group decisions.⁵ In agricultural societies where women controlled certain productive areas, such as farming, marketing or trading, their power and authority seem to have been largely based on this very control. In matrilineal societies women often had considerable security of land tenure. Among the Tonga in Southern Zambia, for example, although a woman's wealth was often in her brothers' custody, she had her own fields and granary as well as control over grain production. This control over land enabled women to command the labor and allegiance of sons and sons-in-law and facilitated access to political power. Some women even became village headwomen.⁶

Societies that permitted women to accumulate wealth often had political institutions which not only protected them but also enabled them to exert influence. These groups gave women a sense of solidarity and self-worth along with the capacity to protect female interests in the community. Some societies even developed dual-sex systems which gave women a formal role in the political process.⁷ In Yorubaland, for example, the *Iyalode* had jurisdiction over all women and represented women's concerns on the king's council, an institution otherwise dominated by men.⁸ Among the Ewe of Ghana an elected Queen Mother had a council of elderly women as advisers and a linguist to speak for her—exactly as did the male chief. Thus, although women could only speak to the council of male elders through the Queen Mother and the males kept decision making and initiatives in their own hands, women (especially from powerful lineages) had a representative who could seek to influence male councils.⁹

Some women held high political office, either through heredity or election. Their authority never or rarely equaled that of male officials, but they nonetheless wielded considerable power and some authority. The Queen Mother was often an important position, as evidenced by her role among

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the Asante, Baganda and the Zulu, to cite a few examples. These women not only influenced male-dominated councils; they often had important ritual roles, especially those concerned with fertility and social survival. While women chiefs were rare, they did exist. Among the Mende and Serbro of Sierra Leone, women held chiefships on the same basis as men. As we have seen, influential Tonga women set themselves up as village headwomen. Able women acquired power in a number of African societies. For example, Queen Amina of Hausaland was a famous ruler and warrior in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, and Nzinga of Angola led one of the earliest and most effective resistances against the Portuguese.¹⁰

Women also exerted power through religious roles. Some women were ritual specialists in women's affairs. The *omu* among the Igbo of Nigeria, for example, used medicines and rituals to ensure the safety and success of the marketplace where women traded. Women were often in charge of puberty rites, marriage ceremonies and other aspects of the life cycle.¹¹ They acted as mediums and members of spirit possession cults. Some led resistance movements against the early European intruders. Nehanda, a Shona priestess, was hung for her role in the 1896 uprising in Southern Rhodesia. In Kongo a priestess of the cult of Marinda, Dona Beatrice, established her own version of Christianity and led a rebellion against the pro-Portuguese Kongo leadership. This rebellion mobilized discontent so effectively that the Kongo king had her and her infant son burned to death.¹²

Thus, while some precolonial African societies severely constrained women's political and economic power, many others awarded women clearly defined and accepted political roles which permitted them to wield power despite fairly minimal authority. In addition, societies that awarded women political power generally also permitted them some control over the economy.

Women and the Colonial State

For most African women (with the exception of some urban women) the colonial period was characterized by significant losses in both power and authority. Colonial officials accepted Western gender stereotypes which assigned women to the domestic domain, leaving economic and political matters to men. As a result, although many African men suffered under colonialism, new opportunities eventually appeared for them, while women's economic and political rights often diminished. Colonial officials ignored potential female candidates for chiefships, scholarships and other benefits. Many female institutions were destroyed, often more out of ignorance than malice. In Igboland, for example, the male *obi* became a salaried official, while his female counterpart received nothing. Similar reductions in female political power occurred all over Africa during the colonial period.¹³

This loss of political power was frequently associated with diminished access to land and labor power. Colonial development policies focused on men, who were, in the eyes of colony officials, the farmers and producers

of Africa. When land rights were reorganized, "legitimate" heads of households, namely men, usually received the land titles. Marcia Wright carefully documents how women in Mazabuka, Zambia, lost both their economic and political power during the colonial period. Similarly, in Western Kenya new property laws reduced women's rights to land. In Zimbabwe and South Africa colonial "reform" resulted in the transfer of women's land to men. Colonial authorities assisted male farmers while often dismissing female farmers as mere subsistence food producers. When colonial officials wanted to encourage African cash crop production, they offered male farmers technical training and assistance but ignored women farmers. As a result, male farmers were more able to accumulate surplus and thus increasingly dominated the rural areas.¹⁴

Women frequently continued to work on the land, but their control over the products of their labor declined. They often produced cash crops without reaping the profits, while, of course, continuing to grow food and perform domestic duties for their families. Marjorie Mbilinyi reports that in Tanzania "rich peasant wives . . . often lived like poor women, not sharing in the wealth they created."¹⁵ In Zambia, Shimwaayi Muntemba discovered that men "uniformly and consistently returned only a small proportion of agricultural income to their wives, in amounts varying between one-tenth and one-quarter of the total income."¹⁶ In Southern Zambia prosperous farmers gained labor power through polygamy, but wives were often treated "less as partners than as farmhands." Wives still clung to marriage because divorce entailed abandoning all marital property.¹⁷

Thus, while traditional structures protected most women from absolute starvation, rural life was increasingly onerous for many women during the colonial period. Pushed by patriarchal authoritarianism and rural drudgery, and pulled by rumored economic and social opportunities in the towns, many enterprising women voted with their feet and moved to the urban areas. Despite opposition from government officials and chiefs, many women managed to migrate to towns and once there to support themselves. Of course some found men to support them, but this arrangement was always uncertain, for divorce and desertion were rampant.¹⁸ Most women recognized the need for some economic autonomy. Educational barriers limited opportunities for white-collar jobs, teaching and nursing being the exceptions. All but the most unskilled and irregular wage labor remained a male preserve. Consequently, women were shunted into the informal sector, where they sold goods and services, including their bodies. Some became wealthy, especially the market women in West Africa, but the majority worked long hours merely to survive.¹⁹

The few success stories should not lead us to underestimate the problems faced by African women in colonial towns, but at the same time we must acknowledge the degree to which women successfully challenged both African and colonial authority in the towns. Ga woman dominated the expanding Ghanaian trading system during the colonial period.²⁰ The Lagos Market Women's Association (LMWA) was established in the 1920s, and it

For most women the colonial state was something to avoid or to deal with indirectly, usually through male patrons. Women had little opportunity to participate in the state as civil servants or, later, as representatives. As we have seen, women's organizations pressured government, but for the most part could effect only limited change. Most women had to work out their solutions on an individual basis. They jockeyed for power within the household, changed husbands, moved to the city, entered trade and fought to improve the lives of their children. Alliances with powerful men and with male-dominated institutions, such as trade unions and separatist churches, provided some support. But for most women economic and social security had to be continually won, because both male-dominated institutions and the state were uncertain allies.

However, these individual and collective protests against colonial domination show that many African women tried to resist encroachment on their rights and that individual women, female political institutions and ad hoc groups of women could mount effective protest against colonial and patriarchal domination. Thus, although women often lost authority and power during the colonial period, the loss was neither even nor linear. Despite efforts to contain them, some women achieved economic prosperity, and many more economic autonomy, even if minimal. Women were thus willing, if often unsuccessful, combatants against colonial and patriarchal domination.

Women and the Nationalist Struggles

African women were often given the opportunity to prove their mettle as political activists during the nationalist struggles. Many responded to the challenge with commitment, enthusiasm and effective collective action. Women played a prominent role in the early nationalist struggles in West, East and Central Africa. In Zambia, for example, women's branches of the nationalist parties (first the African National Congress [ANC] and later the United National Independence Party [UNIP]) organized rural and urban protests. The UNIP Women's Brigade participated in literacy drives to aid voter registration and helped organize town funerals, mass demonstrations, rallies and boycotts to prove UNIP's power.³⁴ In Cameroon women used a traditional practice, *anlu*, revamped into a well-organized association, to render the paramount chief and his executive council ineffective, to unseat the ruling party, the Kamerun National Congress (KNC), in the 1959 election and to help get the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) into power.³⁵ In Nigeria market women's support or rejection of political candidates became a key factor in political life. Oyinkan Morenike Abayomi, leader of women's organizations from the 1920s, established the Nigerian Women's Party (NWP) in 1944 in order to protect women from being cheated by Nigerian men and the government. She believed women, even wealthy women, suffered from lack of representation in government circles and set about to rectify that situation. Ultimately, the party foundered from com-

petition with the more militant Abeokuta Women's Union and the more radical nationalist movements. But Nigerian women continued to be important members of the new nationalist parties.³⁶ In Guinea women helped Sékou Touré gain power by donating money to the nationalist struggle, providing communication links among the leaders and participating in policy decisions. Guinean women, like many West African women, supported the nationalist struggle with their economic resources and contacts.³⁷

Women also participated in more violent liberation struggles. In the Portuguese colonies women fought alongside men, while continuing to perform domestic duties. They bore a double burden in order to bring down colonial rule.³⁸ Zimbabwean women also carried arms, and women guerrillas had a high status during the liberation struggle. By the end of the war as much as one quarter of the 30,000 Patriotic Front guerrillas were women. Leaders from the different factions declared women's liberation an explicit and integral part of the overall revolution.³⁹ In South Africa women of all races resisted—and continue to resist—apartheid and racial injustice. The Bantu Women's League of the ANC led the fight against racial injustice in the 1950s. Despite frequent hostility from men both within and outside the ANC, women such as Charlotte Maxeke provided remarkable leadership on women's and black peoples' issues. Today Winnie Mandela provides similar leadership.⁴⁰

Women and the State in Independent Africa

During the liberation struggles women's participation was usually welcomed, and they were promised (and expected) economic and political benefits from independence. These promises, for the most part, have failed to materialize. Some African women are prominent in political affairs, but rarely at the highest levels. Even well-educated women usually occupy the lowest rungs of the political ladder; very few are involved in planning and policymaking. In 1978 a U.N. questionnaire discovered that the mean rate of political participation by women was 12 percent at the local level and 6 percent at the national level. In nonsocialist countries about 5 percent or less of the available political positions are filled by women.⁴¹ In Malawi, for example, there are no women in the three central planning agencies or in any of the ministerial planning units. Women are thus effectively excluded from the planning and planning-related machinery, although a few provide some input from their positions in such traditionally female-dominated areas as home economics, adult literacy, social welfare and health. Representation on lower levels is not much better. Of the 625 wards in Malawi, only 4.8 percent are filled by women, and although some women are active in village affairs, men dominate decision making there as well. In Zambia the Women's Brigade organizers in UNIP have mainly been backstage supporters for male politicians. The few women in high level politics have clustered in traditional female areas, such as welfare and health. Ghanaian market women, even those with considerable wealth, have hardly participated in the independent Ghanaian state.⁴²

Despite official support, women in socialist states are not much better off. Women in Guinea-Bissau have had to fight two forms of colonialism: white-Portuguese domination and black patriarchy. Although Samora Machel stated unequivocally that liberation must include liberation for women, Mozambique's economic and political problems, together with its patriarchal traditions, undermined his and Frelimo's efforts. Frelimo group leaders are rarely women. Of the 249 delegates elected to Frelimo's Third Congress in 1977, only 12.2 percent from the provincial level and 7.5 percent on the Central Committee were women. Although women have been encouraged to join the party and some improvements have occurred at the local level, at the national level, where authority and power predominate, women are conspicuously absent. There is no ministry for women, and the only structure that might evaluate development plans for women, the Organization of Mozambican Women (OMW, founded in 1973) is rarely consulted.⁴³ The Organization of Angolan Women (OMA, founded in 1963) is a respected voice in Angolan government deliberations, but a National Congress meeting recently admitted that despite ostensibly sex-blind policies, "the principle of equality for men and women in society is not sufficient to ensure that women are in fact an active element in their country's development or that they participate equally in decision making."⁴⁴ Women's demonstrations have been a potent political weapon in Zimbabwe, albeit one that has won powers for men rather than women. The Ministry for Women's Affairs created in 1981 has achieved little, despite nominal government support. Feminists in government have retreated from challenges to gender ideologies and the sexual division of labor and have turned to more reformist goals. Isolated and outnumbered, "feminist leaders have generally been separated out from broader policymaking bodies, allowing other government branches to ignore the differential impact of their policies on women."⁴⁵

Thus, socialist countries advocate political involvement by women but fail to achieve it. Liberal capitalist states promise women equality through the vote, but men continue to dominate. Military governments advocate development but usually ignore women. Meanwhile, the vast majority of poor rural women have no access to the state, and even though middle- and upper-class women have greater access, they rarely enter political life. The African state has become essentially a male preserve. We need to ask the question why.

Barriers to Women in Politics

The lackluster political participation of women in independent Africa is most readily explained by their continued lack of credentials for political and civil service positions, especially formal education and work experience. This is partially a colonial legacy, which has changed depressingly little since independence. Female illiteracy is almost twice that of men. In most African countries the ratio of females to males enrolled in secondary education is less than 35 percent, while the ratio is less than 20 percent

at higher levels. Furthermore, available education frameworks continue to shunt women into traditionally female occupations, such as health care (especially nursing), domestic science and primary school teaching. Even more distressing, primary and intermediate school education often fails to prepare girls for any kind of employment, leaving this population with the highest unemployment rate in Africa. Thus, formal education for women in Africa is all too often both insufficient and dysfunctional.⁴⁶

African women are also constrained by their limited economic opportunities. Few hold important economic positions, and with the exception of traditionally "female" occupations, few women are professionals. In the mid-1970s a mere 5 percent of the lawyers, physicians and engineers in Kenya were women; only 6 percent of Nigerian academic staff were women, and they were primarily concentrated in education and the arts. Opportunities for wage labor are few, and even those women with equivalent education and work experience still receive lower wages and slower advancement than men.⁴⁷ In the urban informal sector some women have fared better, but here again the majority still eke out a precarious existence. In Yorubaland, for example, while women dominate the open market and many have retail stores, men own the more capital-intensive shops. In Islamic areas *pardah* further hampers women's economic activities.⁴⁸ Thus, many women continue to have less access to higher education, job experience and capital accumulation than men, which limits their capacity to compete for jobs that might lead to positions of authority and power within the state.

There are other, more subtle but still important, factors affecting female participation in state affairs. Women are constrained by a sexual division of labor which burdens them with domestic duties whether employed in wage labor or not. This double burden saps women's energies and limits the amount of time and effort available to them to engage in political matters. In rural areas the sexual division of labor has meant more work and less remuneration for African women. Rural women contribute 70 percent of the labor for food production, while remaining solely responsible for food processing. Work in cash crop production is performed with no let up in obligations to produce and prepare food, not to mention child care and other domestic duties. Poor urban women usually work in the informal sector, where they can earn a living while also caring for children and the household.⁴⁹ Even middle-class women with household help still have to organize that help and cope with the inevitable crises that disrupt domestic arrangements. Studies of urban working mothers report "fatigue, stress and even anxiety," and high levels of dissatisfaction with child-care arrangements.⁵⁰ Limiting family size is still unpopular, and since birth control is rarely available, family planning is difficult. Political life demands both time and energy. Most women cannot cope with both political and family obligations.

Less obvious but also important, Western gender stereotypes and traditional patriarchal institutions have combined to deprive women of political legitimacy. Even where women are legally equal to men, male predominance

continues to be assumed. When some women dare challenge this fact, they are sharply rebuked. Witness the recent attack by President Moi of Kenya, who chastised women leaders for "misleading rural women by saying women should be the equal to men." He stated that "to be equal to men was to imply that God had erred after all when he made men the head of the family."⁵¹ One (Tanzanian) MP even stated that "women were meant to serve men and that they can never be equal to men."⁵² Similar sentiments have been expressed in Zambia, where in 1982 Prime Minister Mundia advised a new bride that "women graduates should regard themselves as housewives and mothers at home and professionals only at places of work. . . . The husband is the head of the family."⁵³ In Mozambique, Stephanie Urdang reports that:

[women] often have to take a bold leap in the present to assert themselves as militants. Often this has to be done against strong pressure from antagonistic husbands. . . . Some men have even resorted to physical restraint, locking their wives in the house to prevent them from attending meetings, and some women have been beaten or thrown out of their homes by husbands for persisting in their regular attendance.⁵⁴

Although rarely official policy, such attitudes pervade the continent and seriously impede women's capacity to undertake political work.

Protests from women are smothered in nationalist or socialist rhetoric that denies the legitimacy of female concerns and exhorts women to accept the inevitable connection between social and sexual justice. Yet at the same time, Zimbabwean revolutionaries, who once linked women's oppression with class oppression, now see government's goal as "helping women become better mothers and citizens within the existing family structures." Mozambican women are constantly reminded that their liberation depends on involvement in the "main transforming task of society;" yet they are advised not to demand changes in the sexual division of labor within the home. And women's bureaus, where they exist, are usually underfunded and underutilized. Linked to the soft underbelly of government, they rarely affect important decisions, and like the aged and infirm, get the leftovers.⁵⁵

Consequences of Underrepresentation in the State

Having established African women's limited participation in government, we are faced with two questions: how does this affect the status of African women, and what, if any, strategies do they employ to deal with this situation?

The most important consequences of underrepresentation for women lie, I believe, in the economic and legal spheres. Although most African countries have awarded women political rights and equal access to education, a gender-biased mixture of colonial and customary law still operates in many countries, especially in matters concerning land, marriage, divorce and inheritance. Given women's lack of involvement in government struc-

tures, it is not surprising that state laws reflect male dominance and male-dominated legislatures have been reluctant to undercut patriarchal traditions. Women's groups have lobbied legislatures, but with little success. For example, in 1970 delegates to the Consultation of Women's Rights in Zambia recommended specific legislation to protect women; yet virtually none of it has been passed.⁵⁶ Despite official commitment to a socialist, nonsexist society, the Zimbabwean government has refused to change customary land rights in its land resettlement scheme. The Zimbabwean Women's Bureau has protested and women in general have complained bitterly about the scheme, but to no avail. The state has, so far, done nothing, and customary land-tenure practices continue to discriminate against women. Polygamy and *lobola* are still legal in most African countries. Male-dominated parliaments have refused to attack these institutions. In Zimbabwe, for example, government promises to challenge brideprice have evaporated under pressure from male parliamentarians and other leaders.⁵⁷ In Tanzania the Marriage Act has reconstituted patriarchal relations of marriage as the legitimate form of state marriage.⁵⁸ While legal protection for women varies from state to state, in general women's rights have remained a low priority item despite considerable lobbying from women's groups. This has been especially true for widows, who remain one of Africa's most vulnerable groups.⁵⁹

Even where laws have been changed, states are often unwilling to protect women from sexist traditions. Nigerian widows are still plundered by their deceased husbands' rapacious relatives despite regulations to the contrary.⁶⁰ Even women willing to fight for their children find it difficult to win divorce cases, particularly against rich and powerful men. In Zambia, for example, such men are able to flout the law and frequently obtain custody of their children beyond infancy despite the mother's protests. Sexual harassment at work goes unpunished. Women are denied jobs and opportunities because of their sex, but they can neither prove this nor stop it.⁶¹ The Angolan Women's Organization has cited numerous cases where women were refused jobs because employers did not want to pay for maternity leaves.⁶² Tanzanian women workers in the cashew nut industry have struggled in vain to stop the periodic firing of certain categories of women.⁶³ Women tend to cluster in unskilled, vulnerable wage labor, such as domestic work and small-scale retailing, where they are unlikely to have the resources or leverage necessary to use the legal protection theoretically available to them.⁶⁴ This, of course, reinforces female vulnerability and powerlessness. Inadequate representation in government and the consequent inability to exert pressure on legislators make it all the more difficult for most women to defend themselves.

Underrepresentation has important economic consequences as well. Property laws continue to favor men. As we have seen, the Zimbabwean resettlement scheme has perpetuated women's inadequate customary land rights.⁶⁵ By allocating land to male family heads, the Land Reform Proclamation in Ethiopia has failed to transform the subordinate status of women. Instead, "land reform has left women dependent on men and under the umbrella of old patriarchal forms." Mozambique's Land Law of 1979 failed

to establish, clarify or reinforce women's rights to land.⁶⁶ Similar scenarios abound throughout the continent, and according to J. A. Hellen, a student of African land law, women's legal position in relation to land is likely to worsen in the future, particularly if their important role in agriculture is ignored.⁶⁷ Thus, the state has made it more difficult for women to acquire and profit from land.

Women's underrepresentation in government has also permitted development planners to ignore women's special needs and concerns. In an atmosphere where such needs and concerns are rarely discussed and where the few female civil servants and legislators find it difficult to raise women's issues, gender-biased planning readily becomes the norm.⁶⁸ African governments have often adopted colonial gender biases that relegate women's issues to the private, rather than the public, sphere. Much of women's productive activity in agriculture and trade is not measured by economic planners because it is "for the family." Access to land, credit, agricultural training and education is offered to families on the assumption that women and men have equal access to family resources. Gender struggles within the household are not government's concern. As a result, government policies provide benefits to male heads of households and development plans continue to benefit men more than women.⁶⁹ Furthermore, governments frequently ignore women as economic actors and fail to provide them with economic incentives, such as credit, import-export licenses, and tax rebates, so often granted to "well-connected" African businessmen. Even when development plans include women's issues, inadequate representation for women's interests on key decision-making bodies at all levels makes it difficult to change resource allocation patterns.⁷⁰

Women in postindependence African states continue to be prime targets for state abuse. Despite their wealth, Ghanaian market women were scapegoated by Rawlings' "reformists" and attacked as symbols of wealth, while much more affluent businessmen and male bureaucrats escaped. Although the market women fought back and won, Claire Robertson in *Sharing the Same Bowl* documents general economic decline for Ga female traders since independence.⁷¹ Prostitutes, often comprising one of the more prosperous and independent sectors of the female population, also endure frequent attacks by government officials who dislike their independence and see them as safe targets, easily characterized as evil temptresses bent on destroying society's moral fabric. Single women are also frequently branded as prostitutes, making them more vulnerable to arrest and prosecution. The urban woman remains an easy scapegoat who is highly visible and relatively powerless—that is, an obvious target of male dominance and traditional patriarchal values.⁷²

Strategies to Cope with the State

Despite their underrepresentation in the state and their difficulties controlling and benefiting from it, African women have not simply acquiesced

to state power. They have fought back, both individually and collectively. One common solution has been selective withdrawal. Many women have chosen to avoid the increasingly rapacious, badly run African bureaucracies by withdrawing from politics and concentrating instead on the more immediate issue of survival. Economic matters have become their major concern. Ghanaian market women often ignore conventional politics, preferring to concentrate on their economic associations. Nigerian market women have organized themselves and avoid the government. Many no longer vote, inasmuch as politics is viewed as a man's game.

The state is generally seen as an impediment to progress and is treated as a potential threat, rather than as a source of support. The West African market women have organized to protect themselves from the state, not to get closer to it. For example, in 1982 Accra market women withdrew their services until the state returned their control over pricing and the market.⁷³ Nonetheless, reacting to government differs from attempting to integrate with it. In other parts of Africa the story is the same. Poor Zambian women seem indifferent to participation in national development plans; they are preoccupied with economic survival instead.⁷⁴ In Kenya Kathy Staudt has discovered that rural women frequently organize to protect their economic interests but that these organizations usually operate outside the political system. "This autonomy may be an asset in organizational effectiveness but [is] a drawback in extracting the increasingly valuable resources distributed in the policy arena."⁷⁵ Everywhere in Africa individual effort and children remain women's most reliable social insurance and consequently their most pressing concern.

It is hardly surprising that many marginal women are also increasingly active in the illegal economy, insofar as it is an arena which deliberately avoids state control. This can be as simple as selling goods without a license. Christine Obbo reports that many poor women in Kampala survive by illegally selling beer, goods and even sexual services, and that some even enter more lucrative illegal activities, such as gin distilling.⁷⁶ And Janet MacGaffey describes Zairian women's participation in the flourishing *magendo* economy in their country.⁷⁷ Prostitution, of course, remains a common means for escaping patriarchal authority and accumulating wealth.⁷⁸ While data for these activities are difficult to acquire, there is no doubt that many women, especially the uneducated, have responded to declining opportunities in the wage economy by moving into the grey area of illegal trade.

The state cannot be entirely avoided, however, and most women employ an age-old strategy to increase their leverage over the state—aligning with powerful men. This solution is more readily available to elite women, who are often either related or married to influential men. But even poor women can gain some entrée to state power through association with powerful male members of their ethnic or regional communities. As Kenneth Little has pointed out, "the acquisition of a well-to-do, much travelled professional husband has become part of the West African women's 'dream.'" For the less fortunate, a politically well-connected nonprofessional is an acceptable

substitute.⁷⁹ Obbo and Schuster have discovered similar attitudes in Zambia and Uganda, though usually tempered with some cynicism.⁸⁰ While this solution fails to alter fundamental sexual inequities, it remains attractive because it can be pursued in a wide variety of circumstances and mitigates the more difficult problem of coordinating collective action against the status quo. It is, of course, quite attractive to elite women, and holds the hope of individual upward mobility to the poor.

Women and the State: New Directions

While the above-mentioned strategies provide some leverage, African women are demanding more. They are becoming increasingly assertive in relation to the state. International concern about the status of women, spearheaded by the United Nations' Decade for Women 1975-1985, and the growing economic crisis in Africa have brought women's issues increasingly to the fore in the last ten years. Conferences, seminars and research projects have been organized. National programs have been devised and women's institutes have been set up.⁸¹ On the continental level the OAU's development plan, the *Lagos Plan of Action*, devotes an entire chapter to women. It recognizes the importance of women in all areas of development and calls for measures to integrate them fully into the development strategies of Africa, including placing more women directly into positions of authority so that women's views and concerns will be incorporated into development planning.⁸²

Have these efforts succeeded at all? Data collection on women has improved and some projects are underway, but progress is slow. The impediments discussed above continue to inhibit sexual equality. At recent regional meetings African women leaders and some sympathetic men admitted that advancement has been discouraging and that bold steps must be taken to improve women's status. The Regional Conference on Women and Development, held in Arusha, Tanzania, on October 8-12, 1984, called for better data and development plans that recognize women's diverse circumstances. The assistance educated middle-class women need is very different from that needed by rural women heads of households. Similarly, the policies poor urban women seek are different from those sought by women subsistence farmers. Above all, women must participate in drawing up development plans so that they reflect female realities and provide appropriate services.

But if this is to happen, African women, like women everywhere, must come to their own rescue. The *Lagos Plan of Action*, the U.N. Decade for Women and other women's development projects can only remove some obstacles. Power is rarely abandoned easily, and few men will readily accept changes that are unfavorable (to themselves) in the established power structure and the sexual division of labor. Women have made advances: As the Arusha delegates recognized, "women's visibility to society and their awareness of themselves" has increased.⁸³ But women will have to make a conscious effort to mobilize female participation in state affairs, especially high-level planning and policy decision making, if further advances are to be achieved.

This need is increasingly being recognized by women all over the African continent. Participants at a recent workshop at Ibadan University's International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, for example, emphasized that programs about women's issues must be "planned by women, organized, interpreted and reported by women on women."⁸⁴ Similar statements are being made more and more frequently at international, continental and regional meetings by women's organizations, in markets and at village meetings, especially in the recently turned socialist countries. At the First Congress of the Organization of Angolan Women (OMA) held in 1983, the OMA resolved that "profound changes in social, political and economic structures are the precondition for achieving equality in every sphere." The OMA called on its members to work for "women's full participation in the country's political, economic and social life."⁸⁵ Similar statements have been made by Mozambican, Zimbabwean, and Eritrean women's organizations.⁸⁶ Women in more capitalist countries have been increasingly outspoken, as well. Kenyan women's organizations recently called for sexual equality in all spheres of Kenyan life. In Nigeria the second annual Women in Nigeria conference, held in April 1983, committed the organization to "engage in research, policy-making, dissemination of information, and action aimed at improving the conditions of women."⁸⁷ While none of these resolutions have as yet brought about much change, and impediments continue to inhibit change in both socialist and nonsocialist countries, the resolve of African women for a fairer deal is definitely growing. And that resolve includes the recognition that women will have to become more active in state affairs.

Despite growing consensus among African women, differences of class, ethnicity and region still curtail female solidarity and inhibit effective organization. Political divisions along ethnic or regional lines tend to divide women in a similar manner. Class divisions also endanger female solidarity. Even if some women achieve positions of power and authority within the state, there is a real danger that these women will pursue the rights and prerogatives of women of their class while ignoring the plight of the vast majority of poor women. This is all the more probable in Africa, where the gap between elite and mass living standards is painfully obvious and the fight for resources is a deadly business. This is a danger that cannot be ignored or avoided, for elite women are strategically the most likely to gain access to state power and thus remain crucial participants in the struggle for sexual equality.

On the other hand, several factors draw African women of all classes together. First, as we have seen, the state is not readily accessible to either elite or nonelite women, and women with different backgrounds and education are increasingly understanding this. Protests against women's exclusion from power are being voiced by educated women and the female rural and urban poor alike. Peasant women in Tanzania "speak of their frustration over being excluded from village government," while Tanzanian feminists, such as Marjorie Mbilinyi and Ophelia Mascarenhas, criticize

women's underrepresentation at the state level. Not only Arusha delegates are calling for change, but also peasant women of Mozambique and Zimbabwe.⁸⁸ The gap between rhetoric and reality is hitting especially hard in the new socialist countries of Southern Africa, where women had expected independence to engender a nonsexist world. They may be discouraged, but they have not given up.

Additionally, divorce and inheritance customs continue to undermine the class position of all but a small number of independently wealthy women. Most women suffer severe economic hardship upon divorce or widowhood. The high divorce rate and ever-present possibility of a spouse's death through accident or disease weaken the class position of elite women and often provide unwanted lessons about sexual inequality. Examples abound, creating anxiety that can lead women to cling to marriage as security but cannot fail to arouse fear and anger about women's vulnerability. It is not surprising that some of Botswana's most ardent advocates of women's rights are divorced female heads of households.⁸⁹

Finally, and most important, over the last fifteen years declining commodity prices and the rising costs of energy and manufactured goods have weakened already inefficient and corrupt African governments. As states have become more corrupt, repressive and inefficient, people have increasingly withdrawn their support. More and more men and women view the African bureaucratic elite with jaundiced eyes. And as state power declines, women's economic power relative to the state is growing. Although those women who depend on elite men lose from the state's decline, most women do not. Women cannot lose power they never had. Meanwhile, the tasks women perform remain crucial for the survival of functioning subunits within shattered states. Women continue to grow the food, trade the goods and perform the household tasks necessary to sustain communities.

Given this reality, it seems reasonable to suggest that the current decline of the African state may benefit African women. Rebuilding weakened, destabilized states may spawn new alliances between the sexes, because attempts to rebuild the state of necessity involve those persons who produce the people and, increasingly, the goods needed to build an effective state in Africa—namely African women. Thus while women can never benefit in the long-run from a destabilized state, in the short-run such a condition may open possibilities for new alliances which strengthen women's positions within the state.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that by and large African women have a different relationship to the state than men, and that despite ethnic, regional and class differences, women have been consistently underrepresented in African state affairs. This is not to say that women have been treated equally. Ethnic and class differences often affect women's access to the state. In precolonial Africa those societies which gave women a greater opportunity to control

land and labor generally awarded women more power, although even this tended to be informal, rather than authoritative. However, during the colonial period Western gender stereotypes combined with patriarchal traditions to facilitate the reduction of female power and autonomy. Although women often fought back and gained economic autonomy in some instances, in general they lost political power during the colonial period.

It is no wonder then that, despite women's active and important role in the nationalist struggles, decolonization was essentially a transfer of power from one group of men to another. Consequently, African women have been underrepresented in the state and have reaped few of the benefits which the state provides. Many women have reacted to this inequity by pulling away from the state, concentrating on economic survival instead. For the most part, these women see the state as an obstacle to be avoided, rather than as a benefactor to be milked. To that end they have employed a wide variety of strategies to ensure their survival in the face of an often hostile, male-dominated state.

Withdrawal has not been the only solution, however. Increasingly women from different classes, regions and ethnic groups have been speaking out and organizing against sexual injustices in African societies. This ground swell has been spawned by a number of factors: growing awareness of sexual inequality in Africa, revolutionary rhetoric, education, the rise of Western feminism and the U.N. Decade for Women. Revolutionary rhetoric has given women's rights new legitimacy, as has the U.N. Decade for Women. The much publicized plight of Third World women has heightened dissatisfaction with women's underdevelopment and has intensified the commitment of African women to better their lives. And increasingly these women recognize that better access to state power is an essential ingredient of any attack on the status quo.

This renewed activism is all the more important because the current decline of many African states has reduced the power of those who benefit from the state—namely men. The balance of power in shattered economies may be shifting to those people who can provide the necessary reproductive and productive labor for survival. Women, who have learned to live without the state, are well placed to lead this effort. Thus, women's disengagement from the state may provide a source of strength as the state declines. It will be interesting to see whether women can parlay their pivotal role in the current crisis into a more sexually egalitarian future. Given their widespread determination to do so, one can at least hope for such a possibility. But also given the historic tendency for the state to remain a male preserve, equal gender sharing of state power continues to be an elusive goal in Africa and throughout the world.

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GENDER, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN AFRICA

Women's Political Participation in History: Changes and Continuities

Women in Africa have not always faced the limitations they do today as they attempt to participate more fully in the political arena. In the precolonial period, women exerted political control in a variety of ways though their impact varied from region to region. Women in some parts of Africa ruled kingdoms, founded cities (e.g., Northern Cameroon), launched military conquests of territory and founded states (e.g., Ashanti women leaders founded Mampong, Wenchi and Juaben). In a few cases women ruled as sole rulers, but generally a female (mother or sister of the king) ruled jointly with a king or chief (e.g., the Swazi, Ashanti, Bamileke peoples). Another configuration involved a tripartite sharing of power between the king, mother and sister (e.g., peoples of Buganda, Kitara, and Ankole) (Lebeuf 1963). Yet a fourth power sharing arrangement involved a dual sex governance system common among the Igbo in eastern Nigeria (Okonjo, 1976; Van Allen, 1972, 1976) and the Yoruba in Western Nigeria (Awe, 1975) in which female leaders controlled the economic, political, cultural and moral affairs of the women and male leaders did the same for the men in the community. These forms of dual-sex governance have persisted to this day in the form of Women's Councils in eastern Nigeria like the Igbo Ikporo-Onitsha (Nzegwu 1993) and in the persistence of the Ashanti Queen mothers tradition. Queens in these societies were valued primarily for their spiritual and moral leadership.

In kinship-based political systems in precolonial Africa women's leadership was not institutionalized as it was in the kingdoms. When women assumed leadership of their communities it was generally in the absence of a male heir upon the death of a father or husband (Lebeuf 1963).

The coming of Islam undermined the political importance of women leaders in countries like Nigeria and Chad. Women's political authority was further eroded by colonialists, who dealt primarily with local male authorities as they were accustomed to in their home countries. But even in societies where women's direct political power had diminished, they continued to exert pressure through indirect means, for example, by creating public opinion through talk and by influencing men (O'Barr 1991, 142). Women's role as spiritual and moral leaders, although not recognized by colonial authorities, remained important to the communities themselves. Women also continued to exert influence through their involvement in various types of organizations formed around age classes, agricultural production, trade, market sales, mutual aid, and control of initiation and other rituals.

Even though women's political leadership had been undermined by colonial rule, they actively initiated and involved themselves in anti-colonial protests. In British Cameroon women drew on their tradition of *aalu* and *fombuen* to ridicule and shame colonial male authorities in the late 1950s (Diduk 1989, 339). Women rioted against colonial procedures for assessment and collection of taxes in Pare District, Tanganyika (Tanzania), in the 1940s (O'Barr 1976) and Muslim women of Bujumbura (in Burundi) similarly opposed colonial taxes for single women in the 1950s (Funt 1989, 363). Thousands of Igbo women from several provinces in Nigeria launched a women's war in 1929 against threats that women's property would be taxed by colonial authorities. The war involved demonstrations, burning buildings, breaking jails and attacking European stores and trading centers (Ifeka-Moller 1973, Leith-Ross 1965, Van Allen 1972, 1976). Market women's associations in Nigeria actively protested market taxes along with price controls. In the 1940s, for example, the Abeokuta Women's Union, which represented over 100,000 women organized demonstrations, and tax boycotts and even sent a representative to London to present their case. The Union succeeded in getting female taxation suspended and in 1948 women gained a seat on the transition council that would replace the government (Parpart 1988, 213).

Women continued to be visible in the nationalist independence movements. In Tanzania they formed a women's section of the Tanganyika African National Union (Geiger, 1987, 1990; Meena, 1992) while in Kenya's Mau Mau movement women kept the fighters supplied and in some instances fought alongside men (Presley 1984, 1988, 1991; Santilli, 1977, Likimani, 1985; Kanogo, 1987). In the more recent armed liberation struggles in Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Zimbabwe, Eritrea and Western Sahara women similarly played leadership and combat roles.

Women's Participation in the Post-colonial Period

After independence, women found their organizational efforts curtailed once again, only this time the constraints came from the newly independent single-party and military regimes, which increasingly limited autonomous associational activity of all kinds. National women's activities were to be channeled through a single women's organization, usually tied to the ruling party, which used it as a source of funds, votes and entertainment (Staudt 1985, 77; Steady 1975). The relationship between the ruling party and women's organization was sometimes solidified by placing the association under the control of the wife of the head of state. By the late 1980s such relationships had been created, for example, between Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania and Chama cha Mapinduzi in Tanzania, Maendeleo ya Wanawake and KANU in Kenya, the Women's League and United National Independence Party in Zambia, the Women's Wing and the All People's Congress in Sierra Leone. This cooptation effectively marginalized women's leadership and channeled women into mobilizing around a narrow set of issues, which in a country like Zambia, for example, meant for many years a focus on women's morality.

Women's political participation was curtailed by their lack of educational and employment opportunities relative to those of men; time constraints that kept them tied to domestic duties; cultural and religious prohibitions on women's public activities; and objections from male public officials and politicians. These limitations varied according to a woman's age, marital status, class, region and religion. The example of Ladi Adamu from northern Nigeria's Islamic Kano state shows how difficult it can be for women to engage in politics, even at the local level where women often have the greatest latitude to participate. Adamu won the largest number of votes in local government elections on a platform supporting women's rights. Prior to her election she had been active in obtaining water wells, water pumps in remote villages, the construction of roads in rural areas and in promoting immunization. Even though she followed religious injunctions and dressed appropriately, the chairman of the 13-member Birnin Kudu local council had the microphone shut off when she started to speak. Unlike other council members the chairman refused to give her an office, portfolio or transport and was told her that if she wanted to influence the council she "should marry a local counselor." To get around the district she had to rent a bicycle or motorcycle and travel with a child on her back. Nevertheless her popularity in the district had convinced her to run for chairman in the following elections. She reasoned that "men cannot block my path because I follow all the religious injunctions in dress and behavior" (New York Times 22 August 1988).

The newly independent African governments rarely took steps to bring women into leadership. As leading Sudanese human rights activist, Dr. Fatima Babiker Mahmoud explained: "African political parties never took the issue of gender seriously. Even the Leftist parties who claim they were for liberation of women failed to democratize their internal structures to involve women. . . . It is the patriarchal structure of these parties that did not permit the recruitment of women to such offices rather than the real impact of women within African culture" (Abdulai 1993, 48).

As the economic crisis deepened in the 1980s, financially strapped governments in Africa began to loosen their restrictions on autonomous associations. These associations increasingly had independent resources to employ in development initiatives, but more importantly they had the will to organize and devise self-help strategies at the local level. Like other associations, women's groups began to mobilize with visible results. In a country like Niger, virtually the only women's group to operate since independence was the Association des Femmes du Niger, formed in 1973. After the loosening of restrictions on associations in 1984, new women's groups emerged like the Association des Femmes Commerçants et Entrepreneurs du Niger, Union des Femmes Enseignant du Niger and the Association des Femmes Juristes du Niger. In Tanzania, the opening came in the late 1980s after which groups like the Tanzania Media Women's Association, Medical Women Association of Tanzania, Tanzania Women Lawyers Association, and the Association of Women Artists in Tanzania emerged, although informal organizations tied to women's expanding role in income-generating activities had already been proliferating since the mid-1980s. By 1992 the national groups were so numerous they were able to form a Tanzania Gender Networking Programme to coordinate strategies around legal reform, policy change and public education.

While these diverse organizations expanded and proliferated at a time when governments were loosening restrictions on mobilization, the immediate impetus for associational growth varied: in some cases it had to do with the new availability of donor funds; in other cases it was in response to the growth of foreign NGOs; and in other instances the catalyst arose out of local grassroots economic and welfare needs. Many of the more visible urban women's groups fall into the first two categories, and they tend to receive much of the attention in discussions of the non-governmental sector. However, in both urban and rural contexts, the majority of organizations fall into the last category and tend to be informal, loosely organized, multipurpose in character, reliant on their own resources and formed to meet the needs of members.

While in most countries, governments simply relinquished some of their role to private actors allowing women greater political space, in a few countries like Uganda, the government adopted (under pressure from the women's movement) a more proactive policy to promote women in political leadership. In 1980 there was only one woman out of 142 members of parliament. By 1993 women made up 15% of the members of that same body. Women have been represented on national commissions like the Human Rights Commission and Constitutional Commission. Women hold cabinet positions including the key post of Minister of Agriculture. Likewise women are represented at all levels of the Resistance Council system with one guaranteed seat for women on the nine-member village level councils and then at all levels from the parish, ward, sub-county, county levels and to the National Resistance Council (parliament). The relative success of the women's movement in Uganda in negotiating a space for women in the political system shows that governments can make a difference when they begin to tackle the many political constraints women face.

Even in this period of political liberalization, women in Africa continue to find themselves living under regimes which are not open to demands for policy change, thus limiting women's mobilization. Women's groups are significant because they have often created alternative resources to the diminishing resources of the state, functioning outside of the patronage networks that have come to characterize and define many state-society interactions. Sometimes women's mobilization occurs in spite or in defiance of a corrupt regime whose officials are interested in their organization only as an institution they can plunder for personal gain. The same women's groups may operate both to evade and engage the state in different contexts. Women's groups have sometimes created new institutions, i.e., new rules of organization and accountability that are relevant to their cultural forms of organization. Women operate

in multiple arenas in their struggle for access to and control of resources. For this reason not all women's groups can be encompassed in narrow notions of civil society, i.e., a society seeking to influence public policy (Holm 1989). Women's participation therefore needs to be seen in its multiple dimensions: in its open and quiet resistance to the state, in the creation of alternative resources and institutions, as well as in the engagement of the state through policy advocacy (Chazan 1989; Hirschmann 1989, 1691; O'Barr 1975).

At present, women's movements generally have not been incorporated into the multiparty movements that have emerged in much of Africa. Certainly individual women from these movements have been involved in party politics. Women have run for president (e.g., Central African Republic and Nigeria) and have formed parties (e.g., Limakatso Ntakatsane recently formed a political party in Lesotho and ran for parliament). Sylvie Kinigi was appointed Prime Minister in the newly elected government of President Ndadaye and became head of state when he was killed in an abortive coup d'etat four months after the new regime took over. Women have participated in mass protests of human rights violations in Kenya and Mauritania, protested economic policies in Guinea, and demonstrated for a change of government in Mali, Zaire and Zambia. But the relationship between women's movements and multiparty movements is tenuous at best, even though women are involved in struggles for political liberalization. The gap between the two movements is more revealing of the limitations of multiparty politics than of women's lack of political involvement. In particular, women have challenged the depth of the commitment of multiparty movements to democratization, especially when party leaders seem more interested in attaining political power than in institutional change, i.e., in changing the rules of the political order.

Women's movements have been critical of the new parties for their lack of inclusiveness along several different dimensions. In countries like Sudan, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia and Niger, women's associations have criticized the opposition parties for not incorporating women's demands into their agendas and for not bringing more women into leadership positions. In Niger, a predominantly Muslim country that has seen relatively little activism among women in its post-colonial history, several thousand women protested the exclusion of women from the preparatory committee for the 1991 national conference. Only one woman had been included among 68 representatives to the meeting. The women carried banners that read "National Conference without Women = Discrimination!" "Equal Rights!" "No Conference without Women" and marched on the office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where the Commission was meeting. As a result, five additional women were appointed (Dunbar and Djibo 1992).

In Zambia, the non-partisan National Women's Lobby Group formed in 1991 to promote women's rights and the increased participation of women in the public sphere. During the 1991 multiparty elections the major political contenders went out of their way to attack the small lobbying group, suggesting a fear of independent dissent and criticism on the part of both the former ruling party and the opposition party, which won the elections (Liatto-Katundu 1993, 79-125). In fact, the lack of incorporation of gender issues by the opposition movements has made many of the older single ruling parties look like "champions" of women's rights in comparison.

Women's movements in countries like Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya have also challenged opposition movements to unite rather than fall into divisions based on regional, ethnic and religious differences. In Kenya where the opposition has been divided along regional and ethnic lines, women's leaders like Wangari Maathai have consistently argued for unity within the opposition. She has called on Kenyans to understand that politicians are using the political and economic insecurity that people face

as a tool to foment "tribal" tensions (Nowrojee and Manby 1993). Another Kenyan women's activist, Maria Nzomo, has argued that ". . . good governance in a multiparty context requires the devising of a mechanism for managing ethnic diversities and conflicts, equitable sharing of power between various minority and other interest groups. For ethnic peace, tolerance and cooperation among the multi-ethnic communities of Kenya to take root, the political leaders must themselves demonstrate statesmanship, project a national image and not tribal chief's image" (Nzomo 1993b, 27).

Women's Associations and Political Reform

What then are some characteristics of the women's associations advocating political reform and greater inclusiveness in political mobilization?

Women's Political Leadership on the Agenda

Women's movements in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Zambia and many other parts of Africa have recently begun to place gaining access to political power as their number one agenda priority. Women realize that it is not sufficient simply to try to influence public policy makers, but that they need to be in there creating and shaping that policy from a position of leadership. One of the clearest examples of this change in agenda was the 1993 Kampala preparatory meeting for the Africa-wide UN Women's Conference to be held in Dakar in 1994, followed by the international Beijing conference in 1994. Representatives of over 120 women's associations from Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya determined that access to political power for women was the most important goal of women in all three countries. They adopted national goals and plans of action that involved lobbying, networking, leadership training, affirmative action around educational policies, public education around the need for democracy and women's leadership, and the creation of pressure groups.

Similarly, the Nigerian National Council of Women's Societies held a meeting in 1986 to condemn the tokenism of past governments with respect to women's leadership and to demand 30-40 percent of positions in legislatures and cabinets (Mba 1989, 84-85)

Building a More Pluralistic Polity

Women also are frequently involved in struggles to create a broad-based political order that incorporates not only women as political leaders, but a wide range of representation that cuts across ethnic, religious and regional lines. It is not uncommon to find women's groups struggling internally in a constructive way over issues like ethnic inclusiveness, while at the same time fighting to see changes at the broader societal level around the same concerns.

In national level associations like Action for Development (Uganda), Women in Nigeria, Yewwu Yewwi (Senegal), and National Women's Lobby Group (Zambia), it has been easier for women to organize across such divisions because the women's movement needs a pluralistic character to unite the largest number of women possible. Women of all backgrounds face discrimination in employment, business, politics, and education and can therefore find common cause.

At the local level women of diverse backgrounds have come together in savings clubs and income-generating activities to meet financial needs brought on by economic crisis or to provide collective social services. The basis for such organization has more to do with location and compatibility of interests than with an ascriptive affinity. In the urban context where people of different affinities

intermingle at work, in the market, at church, in the mosque, in schools and in neighborhoods, women's organizations easily form around common economic and welfare interests. Finally, the practice of exogamy in patrilineal societies (of women having to leave their natal home upon marriage) forces women of different clan and ethnic backgrounds together to form associations in the husband's community in a way that men are not required to integrate.

In countries like Uganda where ethnic, religious and regional differences have divided the country in bitter conflicts, women are especially conscious about why they organize along plural lines. A 1993 study of several hundred urban women's organizations in Kampala, Kabale, Mbale, and Luwero found the overwhelming majority to be formed along multiethnic and multi-religious lines (Tripp 1994). Certainly possibilities existed for narrow membership, but as one woman in a savings club explained: "Everything has been so politicized along tribal, religious, and party lines. Women through these organizations are rejecting that. We know that divisions exist among us but it is more important right now to survive and help each other out. We do not want to go back to the way it was, back to the repression, back to having to escape to the bush for fear of one's life. These organizations are non-denominational, non-tribal, non-partisan. They do not exclude anyone. The reason they are generally organized around sex is because of the gender division in our culture." This same view was reiterated by members of national and local organizations alike. Women's organizations, especially national ones have struggled over problems related to their diversity, but they have confronted them head on and have seen the need to translate that vision of society into a broader national vision. At the same time, because sectarianism is associated with party politics in Uganda, women have been more inclined to stick with their organizations and have often rejected party politics quite explicitly because they say it promotes sectarianism and divisiveness.

While urbanization and economic crisis have given added impetus to women of differing backgrounds to come together, women's mobilization along pluralistic lines is not a new phenomenon in Africa. Already at the time of independence in Tanzania, women's urban organizations were distinct from male groups, which were based on exclusionary principles of ethnicity, region and religious affiliation. Local women's groups (e.g., dance, beer brewing, food sellers groups) that collectively came to form an important part of the independence movement were explicitly pluralistic in their attempt to encompass nationalist principles in their organization and used Swahili as unifying force (Geiger 1987, 15). Mwaniki (1986) found in her study of women's groups in Mbeere, Kenya, that they crossed ethnic religious and other affinities and that location was the key factor in determining group membership. Similarly Diduk discovered that today as in 1958, local women's organizations in Cameroon cut across ethnic groups and socioeconomic differences, even where economic classes are emerging (1989, 351).

Redefining the Gender Discourse within Islam

As in northern Africa, associations of predominantly Muslim women in sub-Saharan Africa have been among the staunchest forces pressing for democratization and a secular state. Even in countries like Tanzania where the challenge to secularism is less visible and where Christians dominate the educated elite, one of the first women's rights groups to emerge was a predominantly Muslim group, Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA). Muslim women are no strangers to politics in Tanzania, having been at the forefront of the independence movement in the 1950s led by Bibi Titi (Geiger 1982, 1987; Meena 1992b).

Many Muslim women's movements are drawing on alternative traditions within Islam that promote women's rights. In the case of Sudan, the Islamic fundamentalist regime of General Omar

Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir has undermined the rights of women by imposing ever harsher restrictions since he came to power in 1989. These restrictions include dress regulations, banning all political and non-political organizations, restricting travel by women, firing women from top positions, and institutionalizing physical and psychological abuse of women accused of being dissidents. Women's groups like the Sudanese Women Union have been at the forefront of the movement for a democratic secular state, campaigning against the new legal restrictions against women and arguing for an interpretation of the Qur'an that does not discriminate against women (Ibrahim 1992, 34, Leatherbee and Osman 1992, 6-7). They argue, like Dr. Fatima Babiker Mahmoud, that Islamic fundamentalism does not "accommodate the notions of equality, human rights, justice, democracy and civil liberties" (Abdulai 1993, 48-50). Women's groups and activists have also challenged the opposition coalition of parties, the National Democratic Alliance, that is fighting for a secular Sudan for not incorporating women into its leadership. As Salah Hassan (1993) argues, "This is despite the fact that Sudanese women have been in the forefront of the struggle against the current fundamentalist regime, and that the underground Sudanese Women's Union is a signatory to the NDA Charter."

While women's groups in countries like Sudan and the newly independent Eritrea, have fought for a secular state, in Nigeria, organizations like the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN) have tried to open up the gender discourse within Islam, pressing for a redefinition of women's rights, including inheritance and custody rights, equality in education and the full participation of women within the context of an Islamic state and within the bounds of the Islamic sharia law (Callaway and Creevey 1994, 156-157).

Household Politics, National Politics

Women's groups do not separate household politics from politics in the broader economic, social or governmental arena. This is not only an ideological conceptualization of activist women's groups, it also follows patterns of organization and thought that are deeply embedded in many African societies. For example, since precolonial times up until today, women's market associations in Nigeria, argues Mba, embody the relation between women's public and private roles as the basis of women's mobilization in the political system (1989).

In national groups women make links between domestic relations and the public realm by carrying out education at the local level around women's rights, but also by agitating at the national level for changes in policy regarding women. There is the implicit understanding that changes in women's rights have to occur at both levels, both in living practice and consciousness as well as within legal instruments. At the aforementioned 1993 Kampala conference of women's groups, participants talked about how their understanding of democracy started with the family and needed to come not only from the top at the policy level, but also from below at the family level. Undemocratic upbringing in the family, they argued, helped breed undemocratic decision-making and practices at the national level. Were homes to become more democratic, they reasoned, larger numbers of women would participate in public affairs. Participants also saw issues of democratization as closely linked to questions of women's property ownership, reproductive rights, freedom of speech and movement. (Draft report of Proceedings of the East Africa Women's Conference 1993).

Local Level Participation

Given the existing constraints on women's involvement in national politics, women have found greater room to maneuver at the local level. This in itself makes decentralization all the more important

for people who have a harder time accessing national politics and find it easier to approach and influence local authorities with their demands (Andersen 1992; Callaway and Creevey 1994, 171; Hirschmann 1991, 1684-1685; Mba 1989, 87-88; O'Barr 1991). At the local level people who have less access to political and economic power can build the capacity, knowledge and resources to "influence and even determine the structure of power and allocation of material resources," as Mark Swilling (1993) has argued in the case of South Africa.

The multipurpose nature of many women's organizations, especially grassroots organizations, allows them to take on many different functions. It is not uncommon to find groups that combine agricultural production, with income-generating, savings, cultural and even political activities (Mwaniki 1986, 215; Feldman 1983, 68; Strobel 1979). Women's groups can take on different functions according to the needs of the group and the opportunities open to them at any given time. It is important not to a priori dismiss women's organizations in their varied forms as uninterested in political change.

One example of such a multipurpose groups are the dual sex Women's Councils in eastern Nigeria. According to Nkiru Nzegwu (1993), the Women's Councils suffered with the coming of British rule because the colonialists refused to recognize the Councils as "legitimate constitutional representatives of women" and took over their control of trade and market affairs, i.e., their revenue base. Nevertheless these Councils persist and have adapted to new circumstances in a way that continues to let them fulfill many of their functions. They establish trading cooperatives and coordinate and oversee activities of multiple associations, linking women of all classes and in many diverse professions and occupations. They are concerned with cultural, religious, economic and political issues and are as likely to concern themselves with household matters or relations among members of the group as with local governance issues or even national politics when it touches on the community. Just as women can be censured by the Councils if they violate norms of the community, men also can be forced to deal with their dependency on women by being ostracized by the Council, which can withdraw women's power temporarily from social interactions with men until they recant.

A 1993 study of the political impact of women's associations in Uganda found many multipurpose groups of this kind that had been involved at different times in local level struggles for access to and control of resources (Tripp 1994). In two villages on the outskirts of Jinja, multipurpose women's groups had fought to establish and control health units that provided services to their communities. They carried out feasibility studies of community health needs, raised money, in one case physically built a maternity ward, donated furniture, and established the health units. The women carried out these activities against the wishes of local government leaders who objected to them not only because the women were poor and illiterate, but mainly because they were women. One women's group garnered support from not only the District Medical Officer and his deputy, but also the District Administrator, the Director of Medical Services at the Ministry of Health, the Minister of Agriculture (who is a woman from the region), Resistance Council leaders from nearby villages, the subcounty chief, other women's groups in neighboring districts, in addition to local men and women. The women's group was opposed by local Resistance Council leaders, the local Protestant church officials, and other male elders in the community, but they nevertheless were successful in obtaining the health unit. The way in which these women organized not only to provide a social service in their community, but also for leadership of the health unit, shows that women involved in these local self-help groups are not exclusively interested in economic concerns, but in political issues as well. The women soon realized that they would not be able to have an impact in shaping their health initiatives at the local level without political control as well and for this reason persisted in their fight for leadership long after the health unit had been established.

Local level influence is often personalized, and women's groups find it easier to confront local authorities face to face with their complaints or demands. Women employ various strategies, ranging from forms of public humiliation to indirect pressures that involve spreading rumors and creating public opinion (O'Barr 1991). At the local level in Sukumaland in Tanzania, one woman explained how women use their informal means of influence: "Sukuma women have that capability of advising and being accepted in indirect forms. For instance we have a group where men and women are working together . . . we do persuade them [men] indirectly and they agree. If we have problems we also go to the village office. We see the village secretary or the village chairman. Mostly in the meetings, women just sit and listen . . . Women talk a lot outside meetings. They express if they want or don't want something which has been proposed . . . You can see directly how much women rule over men, even though they can't speak up in public meetings" (Interview with Bibiane 1990, Andersen 1992, 196).

Women have even transferred these informal means of influence into national politics. A campaign to admit more women into university in Uganda was launched in the early 1990s by an activist women's organization, Action for Development, and a university women's association. They attribute their success in changing the admissions policy to the fact that they did not make the issue a confrontational one but used their powers of persuasion in a well orchestrated but quiet campaign to persuade key politicians and decision makers in the University system. Had they used a more confrontational approach they do not believe they would have been as effective. The explicit purpose of this affirmative action program was to enlarge the pool of educated woman that can be drawn on in their efforts to get more women into public leadership positions.

The point here is to show how even under enormous constraints, women use a variety of strategies to exert their influence. They may care as deeply as men about political issues and political power but do not generally have as many avenues of access.

Women's efforts to change their local circumstances through organizational activity is significant in itself. It is a response to political and economic decline and at the same time it is an effort to do something concretely about their living conditions. With the burden of household sustenance falling increasingly on women's shoulders in many African countries, women have found themselves having to take concrete measures. Women are often very consciously starting to create in practice a vision of a society they want to build rather than only protesting an unjust system. Seen in this light, women's economic initiatives are more than "simply" non-political income-generating activities. But this creative aspect to women's involvement in local level groups cannot be appreciated without understanding women's consciousness about what they are doing.

There are other features of local organizations that need to be emphasized. Promoting equity among women members of organizations is a common feature at the local level. Women's groups in Kenya, for example, are based on equal treatment of members and redistributive principles whereby the group members will help out the neediest member of groups, especially in times of drought, food shortages or other hardship (Mwaniki 1986, 218). Groups like the Women's Councils in eastern Nigeria are inclusive across class lines and consciously incorporate women of all income levels. In Uganda educated urban women's groups actively sought ties with rural women's groups to help them with literacy or to teach them various skills they had acquired. This is not to say that problems do not arise because of income inequalities or rural/urban differences, but that one often finds sincere efforts being made to ameliorate and minimize these differences at the local level.

Policy Impact

Finally there is the question of policy impact of associations, which has been limited in general but especially so for women's organizations. Here the main concerns of women are in the areas of legal reform, environmental issues, creating an environment more conducive to small scale entrepreneurial activity and increasing women's role in political leadership, which has already been mentioned.

In some countries, women have been active in the process of revising the constitution. In Uganda in the early 1990s women's organizations carried out seminars throughout the country to collect women's views about the new constitution and to educate them about the significance of the constitution. From these seminars they drafted a memorandum to the Constitutional Commission addressing key concerns women had regarding not only women's issues but also national questions. The women representatives on the constitutional commission that drafted the new constitution were vocal and effective in conveying women's concerns. Moreover, at this time significantly large numbers of women are running for the Constituent Assembly, which is to debate the Constitution. In the district of Busoga there are so many women running for Constituent Assembly that virtually all the leading competitors are women.

On the legal rights front women are concerned with reforming laws regarding inheritance, maintenance, child custody, divorce, and marriage, in addition to rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment. Groups like the Tanzania Media Women's Association, the Association of Women Lawyers in Uganda, Women's Solidarity in Namibia, Women's Action Group in Zimbabwe, have been active in the area of legal reform. In addition to carrying out legal reform, women's organizations also have sought to educate women about their rights and establish clinics where women can bring their complaints.

Credit and finance associations, like the Uganda Women's Credit and Finance Trust and the Kenya Women Finance Trust support women entrepreneurs, providing advice, technical assistance and loans. They also lobby the government to change prohibitive tax laws and to bring bank procedures and loan conditions more accessible to women entrepreneurs. Women are also active in environmental organizations like the world renowned Kenyan Greenbelt Movement, which successfully opposed President Moi's attempts to build a 60-story office building in Nairobi park.

These women's associations not only mobilize women at the grassroots level, but they are also actively building linkages among themselves both at the national and regional levels. For example, over 2,000 representatives of women's groups in Kenya met prior to the December 1992 elections to discuss "A Women's Agenda for a Democratic Kenya," focusing on problems of women's exclusion from the political process. In Tanzania, national women's organizations formed a Tanzania Gender Networking Programme in 1992 to coordinate women's action strategies to promote gender equality and to create pressure groups that can lobby and organize for policy reform and action at all levels (TGNP 1993, 114). In Uganda, women's groups worked together and were successful in their collective efforts to influence the contents of the draft constitution, in lobbying for and obtaining a Ministry of Women in Development, in obtaining a larger number of slots for women in key government posts, in changing rape and defilement laws, and they are now working together to redraft a domestic relations bill to address marriage, divorce, inheritance and other such issues.

Similarly, at the regional level there are coordinating non-governmental organizations like the Women and Natural Resource Management Network and the International Environmental Liaison Center based in Kenya. Women and Law in Southern Africa Research Project and the Women in Law and Development in Africa have focused on legal issues. Others are research organizations like the

✓ Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) based in Dakar and finally there are more general women's rights organizations like the FEMNET based in Kenya, the East African Conference of Women that networks among women's groups in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda or the International Association for the Advancement of Women in Africa (ASAWA).

These new developments are exciting in and of themselves, but the newness of many of these initiatives makes them fragile and tentative. Competition for scarce resources sometimes puts the focus of the national and regional organizations on fundraising rather than on carrying out the day to day work of the association. The same competition also results in petty squabbling among groups that ought to be cooperating more with one another. Corrupt leaders can also destroy initiative in a newly formed association. But all these organizational "growing pains" aside, the fact that these new forms of associational activities have emerged is significant in and of itself and deserves careful and well-planned support.

Well-intentioned donors, while fostering the growth of many women's organizations, have at times been the source of their demise. Organizations with scarce resources often have little option but to accept donor agendas and may be all too eager to write their proposals to suit donor criteria, even when these criteria may conflict with their own needs and interests. The eagerness with which organizations apply for donor funds may lead all too easily to the illusion that donor objectives coincide with those of the applicants. Funds carelessly disbursed without a thorough understanding of complex political dynamics between women's organizations and personalities can set rivalries into a destructive spin that undermines the intended purpose of the funds. Supporting groups without sufficient capacity to administer the support or without mechanisms to ensure accountability can be equally self-defeating. All of these arguments speak to the need to thoroughly understand local conditions and the political intricacies that determine relations between groups.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID/Malawi has been exemplary in its systematic integration of gender issues into its programs and projects. Due to its success, USAID/Malawi was selected for inclusion in a series of case studies, sponsored by the Office of Women in Development, which document effective approaches to the integration of gender considerations in development programming. These studies aim to provide Missions with examples of useful strategies for strengthening attention to gender, and to inform regional and central bureaus in USAID/Washington about how their guidance and support has affected attention to gender in the field.

The USAID/Malawi case study takes place in a context of transition. Since early 1992, Malawian society has been experiencing major political and economic developments which have contributed to the emergence of a more democratic society after 30 years of autocratic rule. Although significant political advancements are being made, the Malawian economy continues to stagnate. Malawi faces a significant external financing gap, low foreign exchange reserves, and marked increases in inflation. The per capita gross domestic product (GDP) remains among the lowest in the world. In terms of people-level impact, the situation remains alarming. Malawi is constrained by a high population growth rate, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and limited social and education services.

Women in Malawi are particularly disadvantaged compared to men: they have significantly lower levels of literacy, education, political representation, formal and non-traditional employment opportunities, and access to resources to increase agricultural productivity. Recognizing that the exclusion of women and girls from mainstream participation in Malawi's economic and social development is an obstacle to the country's overall development, USAID/Malawi has paid particular attention to the situation of women and girls. The goal is to increase women's access to resources, development opportunities, and avenues of expression to enable women to attain a level of social and economic participation equal to that of men.

The case study focuses on three areas in which USAID/Malawi has achieved particularly significant results: promotion of democracy and governance, educational advancement, and NGO capacity building. Accomplishments in these areas include:

- **Democracy and Governance:** In preparation for the first multi-party elections since independence, the Democratic and Civic Institution Development Project (DECIDE) convened a women's session during an "All Party Conference" in January 1994. This provided the country's first opportunity for female political party representatives to come together across political lines. At the session, the women identified the five most important issues affecting their lives. By the end of the conference, the women secured agreement from all seven political parties to address these issues in the new government. During this period, the Mission also provided support to the National Commission on Women in Development. This support helped ensure that women's rights were enshrined in the new Constitution. Currently in draft form, the new Constitution contains a

separate section for women's rights in the Bill of Rights, and calls for equal representation of men and women in the upper house of the National Assembly.

- **Educational Advancement:** The Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education Program (GABLE) seeks to increase enrollment, achievement and persistence of girls in primary school -- combining both project and non-project assistance to achieve its objectives. Through non-project assistance conditionality, the Ministry of Education introduced a gender appropriate curriculum and implemented a school fee waiver program for non-repeating girls. Through project assistance, USAID/Malawi provided technical assistance in the development of a gender appropriate curriculum and will fund a nationwide social mobilization campaign to underscore the importance of girls' education. Over 400,000 girls benefitted from the school fee waiver program in the 1992 school year, and girls' enrollment and persistence rates have increased steadily.
- **NGO Development:** The Support for Health, Agriculture, Rural and Enterprise Development Project (SHARED) aims to strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations. To that end, SHARED provides institutional development and program grants to NGOs. SHARED's criteria for evaluating NGO funding requests includes a preference for organizations which seek to increase opportunities for women. As a result, women constitute roughly half of the total participation in these 29 NGOs, and many women have become involved in, and empowered by, NGOs which are assisted by SHARED.

These impressive accomplishments are the result of a systematic effort by USAID/Malawi to address gender issues throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation of its programs and projects -- including the policy dialogue process. Ten factors were identified by the study team as the most significant in USAID/Malawi's achievements in addressing gender issues in development. They are as follows:

- ✓ A highly participatory development approach that promotes extensive collaborative efforts on gender issues with host country counterparts and other donors.
- ✓ Strong receptivity of Malawian women toward USAID/Malawi, enhanced by the gender-balanced work force of the Mission over the past decade.
- ✓ Strong and consistent commitment by Mission management to address gender throughout the portfolio as a regular part of the program/project cycle.
- ✓ A highly qualified and resourceful WID Officer who focuses attention on strategic interventions that have a significant and sustainable impact.
- ✓ Effective use of Non-Project Assistance as a tool to create a positive policy environment that promotes and sustains the consideration of gender issues in development.
- ✓ Effective and consistent use of research to identify effects of policies and programs on both males and females.

- ✓ Use of USAID/W resources to strengthen field activities.
- ✓ Integration of gender considerations into ongoing tasks as a regular part of the program/project cycle.
- ✓ Location of the WID Officer in the Program and Project Development Office (versus a technical office) which affords a comprehensive, cross-cutting view of Mission activities and facilitates identification of key interventions.
- ✓ Development and revision of a practical WID Action Plan to guide the Mission, that actively involves and promotes the participation of WID Committee members and technical staff in its design and implementation.

Box 1

Putting Women's Issues on the Political Agenda

The Democratic and Civic Institution Development (DECIDE) project was authorized in September 1993, and has already made important contributions that will benefit women. DECIDE is providing support for the country's first democratic election in Malawi, scheduled for May 1994. The project's political party training component is being implemented through a grant to the National Democratic Institute (NDI). In January 1994, NDI sponsored an "All Party Conference" for all seven political parties, focusing on campaign strategies and techniques in preparation for the election. Each party was invited to send 20 delegates to the conference. To ensure that women were represented, NDI specifically requested that at least five of the 20 delegates be women.

Since both USAID/Malawi and NDI recognized the strategic importance of addressing women's issues at the conference, the WID Officer designed a "women's session." The purpose of the session was to provide a forum for women to come together and build solidarity across political lines, and to identify key issues affecting women in Malawi.

The women delegates were hesitant as they began the session, but they soon gained confidence. By the end of the 45 minute session, they had identified 30 issues, among which five were prioritized as key issues, including:

- **EDUCATION:** Encourage girls to enter and stay in school at the primary and secondary levels; provide opportunities for girls in traditional and non-traditional fields; and address the problems that cause girls to drop out of school.
- **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:** Recognize the positive roles women can play in and outside the political arena, and develop schemes to increase women's participation in politics.
- **ECONOMIC EQUALITY:** Provide women with financial opportunities (including loans) to allow them full and equal participation in economic activities, such as establishing their own businesses.
- **LEGAL RIGHTS, LABOR AND FAMILY LAW:** Provide women the same legal rights and protections as men in areas such as land ownership, inheritance, property rights, and labor laws.
- **HIV/AIDS PREVENTION:** Promote HIV/AIDS prevention programs for men and women to reduce the number of HIV/AIDS cases in women, in particular.

The women political representatives designated a spokesperson to present the identified issues at the closing plenary of the conference. They hoped that all the parties would endorse the issues raised so that they would be addressed no matter which party won the election. A lively discussion ensued at the plenary, with parties clamoring to show their support. The (UDF) party agreed to develop strategies to address these issues. Another party (MDP) announced that positions would soon be vacant and women were welcome to contest, even for the Presidency. A third party (MNDP) pledged that they would ensure that men and women would have equal opportunities within the party and the country. By the close of the plenary session, all seven (male dominated) parties had endorsed the issues, and agreed they should be addressed by all the parties, as well as in the new Constitution.

Zambia Democratic Governance (611-0226)

Duration: FY 1992-1997

LOP funds: \$15 million

The goal of the project is to increase governmental accountability in Zambia by (1) increasing citizen awareness of civil rights; (2) enabling independent and professional journalism; (3) enhancing the legislative performance of the National Assembly; and (4) coordinating policy implementation in the Cabinet Office. The project will provide TA, training, studies, and commodities.

Under the first component the project will (1) support the Ministry of Legal Affairs' activities to revise the Constitution of Zambia so as to enhance individual rights and legislative powers and publicize those revisions through pamphlets, seminars, and multimedia publicity spots; (2) launch, through the Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP), a nationwide educational campaign on citizens' rights and responsibilities, including pamphlets, multimedia messages, and revisions to secondary school civic textbooks; (3) train volunteer trainers who will form educational outreach networks; and (4) provide legal assistance on rights cases, particularly for women, through civic associations and NGOs.

A second component will (1) provide training abroad for two University of Zambia (UNZA) communications faculty and the Zambia Institute of Mass Communications (ZAMCOM); (2) fund internships with U.S. media organizations and graduate training abroad; (3) establish a Media Resources Center, possibly including a printing press, for independent journalists; and (4) conduct studies on the legislative environment and the potential for media privatization in Zambia.

A third component will strengthen the Zambian legislature by (1) augmenting the National Assembly's committee staff through 3 new positions related to constitutional/corporate law, public accounts, and economic/financial analysis; (2) establishing a legal drafting fund to augment the drafting capacities of the Assembly's Legal Counsel Department; (3) funding study tours to legislatures in other developing countries; (4) increasing the resources of the National Assembly library, particularly with publications related to political and economic liberalization; (5) funding studies concerning the relationship of Parliament to other decisionmaking institutions, the structure of the National Assembly, and Parliamentary administration (including personnel); and (6) enhancing the Assembly's capacity to document and publish its own reports and documents through the provision of equipment such as word processors, photocopiers, and transcribers.

Under the project's final component the Cabinet Office will create a policy analysis and management unit to screen ministerial policy proposals for consistency with government policy and to develop implementation plans for Cabinet decisions. This unit will enable the Cabinet (rather than individual ministries) to become the nerve center of accountable and effective government.

WOMEN IN POLITICS PROGRAM

T H E A S I A F O U N D A T I O N

The Women in Politics Program: Building on Four Decades of Work in Advancing Women's Rights in Asia

The Asia Foundation, in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), launched the Women in Politics (WIP) program in 1993 to increase women's participation in and access to decisionmaking bodies in Asia and the Pacific Islands. The program builds on the Foundation's four decades of work in advancing women's rights in the region and is an essential part of the Foundation's efforts to support democratic development.

The Women in Politics program supports indigenous initiatives that encourage women to participate in all aspects and at all levels of public decisionmaking and to play more active roles as voters, activists, and leaders within and outside of government.

In-country projects are complemented by regional initiatives which facilitate sharing of models, strategies, and ideas, and foster networking and solidarity among women and women's groups throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The program is able to capitalize on local, national, and regional opportunities such as elections, new legislation, issues in the public spotlight, and regional and international conferences to advance women's full and equal participation in their societies and to advance pluralistic democratic development in the region.

In addition to its USAID-supported programs, The Asia Foundation utilizes its own funds and funds from two private foundations to bring women from non-USAID countries as resources and participants to regional workshops and to support activities in countries in which USAID does not operate.

Some of the results of the first year and a half of the Asia Foundation and USAID supported WIP programs are listed below.

With support from The Asia Foundation and USAID, the Centre for Analysis and Choice (CAC) in Bangladesh has established a Women in Politics unit to strengthen women's participation in the political process.

In the initial phase of its program, CAC analyzed the results of the last parliamentary election, identifying women candidates who lost. Through interviews and working sessions with 32 of these women, CAC drafted recommendations on how to reduce obstacles to successful women's candidacies. Drawing from these recommendations, CAC developed a comprehensive training program for women candidates and their staffs, covering campaign management, fund

raising, media relations, and coordination of volunteers. CAC has trained 28 women candidates and 21 members of their campaign staffs.

In Indonesia, the WIP program supported the establishment of Convention Watch to monitor the implementation and enforcement of the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Convention Watch activities are aimed at increasing awareness among women of their rights and the ways in which they are discriminated against. Convention Watch also exerts pressure on the public and private sectors to achieve greater accountability on practices versus policy.

The WIP program supported campaign training for women candidates running for Korean local assemblies in the June 1995 elections. Training included campaign strategies, campaign school programs, research on political orientations, recruitment of women candidates, and surveys on voter consciousness regarding gender preference of politicians. Partially as a result of this support, 252 women candidates stood for the June elections—a substantial increase over the last provincial and county elections held in 1991. (supported with non-USAID funds)

Mongolia's Women for Social Progress (WSP) conducted a major Voter Education Program to inform the electorate and create mechanisms for making the government and political parties more accountable on gender issues. WSP is the first NGO in Mongolian history to receive permission from Parliament to access parliamentary archives of members' voting records. This resulted in a proposed change to the electoral law that will make MP's voting records available to the public and enable citizens to hold leaders accountable in their decisions.

Support from The Asia Foundation and USAID enabled members of Nepali women's advocacy groups to participate in a study/observation tour to Thailand, India, and the Philippines. The participants were able to see firsthand how their counterparts in the region have successfully built coalitions and conducted outreach, mobilization, and lobbying on specific women's issues. In addition to broadening the participants' perspectives, the experience gained on the study tour inspired them to increase coalition-building among women's advocacy organizations in Nepal. The project also generated a resource book which profiles NGOs and institutions in the three

Indonesia: Ensuring the Application and Enforcement of CEDAW

Korea: 252 Women Candidates Stand for Election—June 1995

Mongolia: Proposed Changes in Electoral Law to Make Parliamentary Voting Records Available to Public

Nepal: Women's Advocacy Groups Trained to Lobby on Women's Issues

"We are committed to transforming women's lives through legal reform, and this will be done through women's full and equal participation in the policy process at all levels of governance and in all spheres of decisionmaking."

—Dr. Socorro Reyes, Founding President, Center for Legislative Development, Philippines

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"APWIP to me is a source of information, a place where we can exchange ideas and experiences. A place where I can go to when I need help, and also a place where I am asked to go to when others need my help."

—Ms. Yasmeen Murshed, Director, Centre for Analysis and Choice, Bangladesh

countries visited. This book will be widely circulated and used as an international networking tool.

The first Regional Roundtable on Women in Politics for the Pacific Island nations was held in Suva, Fiji in February 1994. Twenty participants—including Members of Parliament, aspiring politicians, and NGO personnel from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Western Samoa—attended the Roundtable. The Suva Roundtable produced a plan of action which includes a commitment to utilize local media in promoting women's participation, the development of a political education program for women, and the creation of a WIP lobby group to hold political parties accountable on women's issues.

With support from the WIP program, a permanent Women in Politics unit has been established within the Congressional Research and Training Service (CRTS) in the Philippines. CRTS' Women in Politics Program has already established itself as an important resource for the region. Recent activities include three legislative briefing sessions which focused on the "Anti-Rape Bill" and the "Women Empowerment Act." One of the CRTS WIP unit's projects, "Enhancing the Capacity of Advocates to Monitor Legislation and Policy Reform," achieved all of the outputs it had outlined in the plan for action, including: legislative monitoring and briefings; preparation of issue briefs on legislation affecting women and issue briefings for women's groups; case studies on the lobbying activities of women's groups; needs assessments of women's groups in provincial areas followed by legislative advocacy training; an analysis of women in the Ninth Congress and a workplan for analysis leading up to the 1995 elections.

The Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR), through its project, "Promoting Women as Leaders and Raising the Visibility of Women's Issues Through Increased Gender Awareness and Accountability," conducted interviews with over 400 Sri Lankan women, from different backgrounds, to assess their perceptions of the role of women in national and provincial politics and decisionmaking. The results of this survey will be used to develop training materials on gender sensitization and women's empowerment. Publication of the survey is expected to raise awareness of gender issues and inform future training to increase women's participa-

tion in their societies. Also as part of this project, CENWOR is producing a "watchdog" newsletter—modeled after the Gender Watch Group newsletter in Thailand—that holds leaders accountable on women's issues.

In Thailand, More than 1,000 women received political training in five northern provinces before the 1995 local elections. Of the 289 women who ran, two-thirds received training and 109 (34%) were elected. The number of women holding local office in these provinces increased from an average of 1% before the elections to 14% after.

The WIP program supported the first-ever in-country training in Vietnam for women candidates running for positions on People's Councils at the commune, district, and province levels. Training sessions were held in October 1994 for a total of 60 women. Additional training sessions were organized and conducted by Vietnamese trainers throughout the country, reaching more than 200 additional women candidates. After the November 1994 elections, women's representation on the Councils increased from 12% to 20%. (supported with non-USAID funds)

In January 1994, the WIP program held its first regional meeting in the Philippines. The week-long meeting brought together women leaders from 16 Asian and Pacific Island nations to examine the role of the media as an advocacy tool and explore the potential for mobilizing resources to support the work of women's organizations. The meeting culminated with the founding of the Asia-Pacific Women in Politics (APWIP) Network. APWIP's objectives are to develop leadership skills among women; incorporate women's perspectives and views into the policy agenda; and to advocate, establish, and enforce a legal framework that promotes the political involvement of women.

Since its establishment, APWIP has held three regional workshops and plans to present a panel on "Putting Gender Issues on the Policy Agenda" at the Beijing Conference on Women in September 1995. Through the Centre for Analysis and Choice in Bangladesh, the APWIP Network publishes a quarterly newsletter that reports on initiatives under way across the region. APWIP members are also developing training materials that can be adapted for use throughout the region to encourage women's participation in the political process.

Thailand:
More than 1,000 Women Trained to Run for Local Office in Five Provinces

Vietnam:
Over 200 Women Trained to Run for Local Office—Women's Representation Increases from 12% to 20%.

Regional Initiatives:
Asia-Pacific Women in Politics Network Designs Region-Wide Curriculum

Pacific Islands:
First Pacific Island Conference on Women in Politics Results in the Creation of a Women in Politics Center

Philippines:
Women in Politics Center Established to Monitor Legislation Affecting Women

Sri Lanka:
Gender Watch Newsletter Initiated to Hold Leaders Accountable to Women

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**The Agency for International Development
Center for Democracy and Governance**

NOTE: *The following material was submitted to the DG Center by Norman Olsen, USAID/Uganda*

WOMEN CADS' WORKSHOP: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

FROM THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 20 TO MONDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 24 USAID SPONSORED A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP AT MBARARA IN WESTERN UGANDA FOR ALL WOMEN MEMBERS OF UGANDA'S CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. THE WORKSHOP PROVIDED A FORUM FOR DISCUSSION AND TRAINING ON SKILLS THAT WILL MAKE THE WOMEN MORE EFFECTIVE LEGISLATORS. THE WORKSHOP WAS EXTENSIVELY COVERED BY BOTH PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA. PRESIDENT MUSEVENI OPENED THE WORKSHOP AT A LENGTHY EVENING SESSION AND ANNOUNCED HIS CANDIDACY FOR PRESIDENT IN THIS YEARS ELECTIONS. HE IMPLIED HE WOULD NOT BE A CANDIDATE FIVE YEARS HENCE, AND STRESSED THAT THE TOP TO BOTTOM DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM WHICH UGANDA HAS BUILT WILL QUICKLY DEFEAT THE INSURGENCY THAT SEEMS TO BE STARTING IN THE NORTH. THE WORKSHOP WAS CLOSED BY AMBASSADOR SOUTHWICK, WHO STRESSED THAT UGANDA MUST RESOLVE THREE MAIN POLITICAL ISSUES (AN HISTORIC COMPROMISE ON FEDERALISM, FULL HUMAN RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE, AND A SUCCESSFUL GENERAL ELECTION) IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO CLAIM THAT UGANDA IS A CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY. THE SUBSTANTIVE SESSIONS OF THE WORKSHOP COVERED A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPING THE POLITICAL SKILLS THAT WILL ALLOW THE PARTICIPANTS TO ENACT A LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM.

IA. CONTEXT.

GIVEN ITS HISTORY SINCE 1970, UGANDA HAS HAD FARTHER TO GO AND MORE FUNDAMENTAL INSTITUTION BUILDING TO DO THAN MOST OF ITS NEIGHBORS IN THE REGION. USAID HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY CONCERNED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONSTITUTIONAL CULTURE, INCLUDING THE DRAFTING AND ADOPTION OF A CONSTITUTION ITSELF, AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF EFFECTIVE DEMOCRACY IN THE INSTITUTIONS SET UP BY THE CONSTITUTION, NOTABLY THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY AND AN EFFECTIVE LEGISLATURE. THE LEGISLATURE HAS MADE GAINS IN TACKLING LEGISLATION IN A CRITICAL AND PRODUCTIVE MANNER OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS. HOWEVER, THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE NEED TO FURTHER DEVELOP OR SHARPEN MANY SKILLS TO MAKE THEMSELVES FULLY EFFECTIVE. ACHIEVING THIS IS A LONG-TERM GOAL FOR USAID UGANDA'S D & G EFFORTS.

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B. SIMILARLY, USAID RECOGNIZED FROM THE INITIAL PHASES OF THE CA'S DELIBERATIONS THAT CA DELEGATES ARE IN NEED OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS, BOTH SUBSTANTIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL. A GREAT DEAL OF ENTHUSIASM WAS DEMONSTRATED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CA PROCESS, BUT THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND POLITICAL SKILLS FOR PRODUCING THE REVISED DRAFT CONSTITUTION EFFICIENTLY WERE CLEARLY IN SHORT SUPPLY. USAID IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED TO FIND MECHANISMS FOR DEVELOPING SUCH SKILLS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, AND OF AVOIDING THE PERCEPTION THAT ASSISTANCE IN THIS FIELD IS ASSOCIATED WITH ANY PARTICULAR POLITICAL POSITION. CONSEQUENTLY, THE STRATEGY OF WORKING WITH THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS OF THE CA, WHICH CONTAINS MEMBERS FROM ALL AREAS OF UGANDA AND ALL OF THE MAIN POLITICAL POSITIONS, SEEMED MOST OPPORTUNE.

C. THERE WERE SEVERAL FURTHER REASONS FOR THE EMPHASIS ON WOMEN. ONE IS THE GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA'S PROGRESSIVE ORIENTATION ON THE ISSUES OF EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE. SECOND, THE GROUP COMPRISES 52 WOMEN, A GOOD NUMBER TO WORK WITH IN A SETTING WHERE BOTH INTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS AND "HANDS ON" EXPERIENCE WERE ENVISIONED. THIRD, WHILE THE WOMEN IN BOTH THE NRC AND THE CA ARE A GROWING FORCE, THEY HAVE NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY VOCAL, EFFECTIVE OR FOCUSED. USAID WAS CONFIDENT THAT EXPOSURE TO THE SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES THAT WOMEN HAVE DEVELOPED ELSEWHERE WOULD INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INDIVIDUALS IN THE CA, AND ULTIMATELY OF PARLIAMENT, A BODY TO WHICH A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF THE WOMEN DELEGATES SEEM LIKELY TO BE ELECTED IN THE ELECTIONS IN DEC. 1995.

IIA. CONTENTS AND APPROACH.

THE WORKSHOP WAS FACILITATED BY A SUB-CONTRACTOR WORKING THROUGH MSI AND INCLUDED AS A CENTRAL COMPONENT SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ACTUAL AMERICAN WOMEN POLITICIANS, NOT JUST STAFFERS, CONSULTANTS, OR ACADEMICS.

B. THE TEAM OF FOUR INCLUDED FORMER CONGRESSWOMAN PATRICIA SAIKI, REPUBLICAN OF HAWAII, AND COUNCILWOMAN CHARLENE DREW JARVIS, DEMOCRAT OF WASHINGTON, D.C. IN ADDITION TO THEIR SUBSTANTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS, THE WOMEN POLITICIANS SERVED AS ROLE MODELS WITH WHOM THE CA DELEGATES QUICKLY IDENTIFIED. THEY PRESENTED CONSIDERABLE DETAIL ON THE "NUTS AND BOLTS" ASPECTS OF EFFECTIVENESS AS A LEGISLATOR -- HOW TO ORGANIZE AN OFFICE, HOW TO ORGANIZE A CAMPAIGN STAFF, HOW TO SEEK SUPPORT FOR BILLS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO ONE'S CONSTITUENCY, HOW TO USE LEGISLATIVE RULES OF PROCEDURE TO ACCOMPLISH ONE'S OBJECTIVES (INCLUDING BUYING TIME TO PERMIT CRUCIAL LINING UP OF SUPPORT FROM COLLEAGUES), HOW TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA, HOW TO RESPOND TO THE CAMPAIGN PROMISES AND CHARGES OF OPPONENTS. TIME WAS ALSO SPENT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTIFYING CONSTITUENCY SPECIFIC ISSUES, DEVELOPING

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A WELL-DEFINED POSITION ON THESE, AND THEN PUSHING THEM THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS. THESE ARE ALL SKILLS THAT THE CA WOMEN HAVE BEEN LEARNING THROUGH TRIAL AND ERROR DURING THE CA'S DELIBERATIONS. THEY WELCOMED THE CHANCE TO IMPROVE UPON THEM THROUGH THE INFUSION OF SOME EXTERNAL EXPERIENCE.

C. THE TEAM WAS LED BY DORRIT MARKS, A CONSULTANT WITH LENGTHY EXPERIENCE WITH THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, WHO PROVIDED INPUT ON THE NEED TO DEVELOP CIVIC SUPPORT GROUPS AND USE THEM EFFECTIVELY TO BUTTRESS SPECIFIC POSITIONS.

D. DARYL GLENNEY, A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN CONSULTANT FROM WASHINGTON, D.C. PROVIDED CONSIDERABLE DETAIL ON THE METHODS AMERICAN POLITICAL CANDIDATES USE IN RUNNING FOR OFFICE, THEIR METHODS IN BUILDING CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATIONS, AND TRANSLATION OF THIS EXPERIENCE INTO THE UGANDAN CONTEXT.

E. THE WORKSHOP INVOLVED PLENARY SESSIONS IN WHICH MATERIAL WAS PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED FROM THE FLOOR. THESE WERE FOLLOWED BY WORKING GROUPS OF AROUND TEN PERSONS EACH WHICH TOOK THE ACTUAL TASKS OF IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES, PRIORITIZATION, DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLANS, LOBBYING FOR SUPPORT, AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS TO THE MEDIA. A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF ROLE PLAYING WAS DONE OVER THE ISSUES OF FUND RAISING AND DEALING WITH THE MEDIA, AND THESE PROVED TO BE OUTSTANDING SESSIONS. THE US POLITICIANS BROUGHT WITH THEM LITERATURE AND CAMPAIGN MATERIALS THAT WERE OF GREAT INTEREST, AS WERE THEIR DESCRIPTIONS OF HOW THEY RUN AN OFFICE AND MAINTAIN A PUBLIC PROFILE. USAID PRESENTED MATERIAL ON THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF DEALING WITH DONORS: WHAT DONORS WANT TO SEE IN THE WAY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT IDEAS AND REQUESTS, WHAT SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR POLITICIANS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS ALIKE TO DEVELOP IF THEY WANT TO BE EFFECTIVE IN NEGOTIATING WITH DONORS.

IIIA. ACHIEVEMENTS.

THE WORKSHOP ATTRACTED A VERY LARGE AMOUNT OF MEDIA ATTENTION. THE US WOMEN WERE FEATURED IN THE LOCAL MEDIA WITH EXTENSIVE DAILY COVERAGE. A HIGHLIGHT OF THE EVENT WAS THE MEETING ARRANGED BY THE UGANDAN COORDINATOR, HON. WINNIE BYANYIMA, WITH PRESIDENT MUSEVENI, AT HIS FARM IN RWAKITURA. THE PRESIDENT CHOSE TO USE THE EVENT TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION OF THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS TO BE "THEIR CANDIDATE" FOR PRESIDENT. PRESIDENT MUSEVENI'S CANDIDACY IS OF COURSE NO SURPRISE; THAT HE CHOOSE TO ANNOUNCE IT AT THIS VENUE IS, AND ILLUSTRATES THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF WOMEN IN UGANDAN POLITICS AND THE PRESIDENT'S ACTIVE COURTING OF THIS CONSTITUENCY.

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B. THE PRESIDENT SPOKE ALSO OF THE SPATE OF REBELLIOUS AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE EMERGED RECENTLY AND INDICATED THEY WERE NOT A SERIOUS THREAT BECAUSE OF THE PROGRESS UGANDA HAS MADE IN BUILDING AN OPEN AND MORE DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, WHICH PEOPLE PUT GREAT VALUE ON. HE PARTICULARLY MADE REFERENCE TO THE RC SYSTEM WHICH ALLOWS THE POOREST MOST ILLITERATE FARMER TO HAVE AN INPUT INTO POLICY DISCUSSIONS. HE SAID THOSE CHOOSING VIOLENCE TO EXPRESS DISGRUNTLEMENT WERE FINDING THEIR EFFORTS THWARTED BY AN AWARE POPULACE WHICH FEELS IT HAS A STAKE IN THE PEACE AND STABILITY NOW PREVAILING. THIS MAY BE AN OVERLY OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENT BUT IT WAS CLEARLY HEARTFELT. HE ALSO SPOKE OF THE NEED TO UTILIZE SCARCE ECONOMIC RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY, CHARGING THE WOMEN WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CLEARLY PRIORITIZING THE REQUESTS THEY MAKE ON BEHALF OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS FOR GOVERNMENT'S RESOURCES. THE INDIVIDUAL WOMEN MEMBERS OF THE CA GAVE SHORT SPEECHES WHICH INCLUDED BOTH THANKS FROM THE PRO-NRM WOMEN FOR WHAT THEY SEE AS "GOOD GOVERNANCE" AND A DIPLOMATIC BUT CRITICAL COMMENTARY FROM A PRO-PARTY REPRESENTATIVE FROM AN AREA OF THE COUNTRY WHICH BORE THE BRUNT OF REBELLION AND IS STILL VERY WARY OF NRM'S INTENTIONS. IT WAS NOTABLE THAT NONE OF THE WOMEN, WHATEVER THEIR POLITICAL BELIEFS, APPEARED INTIMIDATED ABOUT RAISING THEM IN THIS PUBLIC FORUM WITH THE HEAD OF STATE. THE WHOLE GROUP WAS FEATURED ON UTV MEETING THE PRESIDENT FOR THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE FUNCTION.

C. AT THE OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP, USAID'S PROGRAM OFFICER, NORMAN OLSEN TOLD THE PARTICIPANTS THAT THE TIME FOR PUTTING THE BLAME ON THE COLONIAL SYSTEMS OR THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IS PAST, AND THAT THE CURRENT NEED IS TO ACQUIRE AND USE MORE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION SKILLS. HE ALSO STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM WORK ACROSS ETHNIC, GENDER, AND EXPLICITLY POLITICAL LINES, POINTING OUT THAT THE TWO WOMEN POLITICIANS FROM THE US ARE, RESPECTIVELY, CO-CHAIRS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEES TO ELECT BOB DOLE, AND TO RE-ELECT PRESIDENT CLINTON AND YET THEY WERE EASILY ABLE TO COOPERATE ON AN EFFORT SUCH AS THE WORKSHOP. OLSEN ALSO ADDRESSED THE CLAIM THAT EMPOWERING WOMEN IN EFFECT MEANT REDUCING MEN'S POWER, BY STATING THAT QUITE TO THE CONTRARY, THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN SHOULD NOT MEAN ANY OVERALL DIMINUTION OF EFFECTIVENESS OR POWER ON THE PART OF MEN, IT SHOULD MEAN AN INCREASE IN THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS WHICH ARE COMMON TO US ALL.

D. AMBASSADOR SOUTHWICK ADDRESSED THE WORKSHOP AT ITS CLOSING, AND MADE SEVERAL POINTS ABOUT THE SKILLS WOMEN POLITICIANS NEED TO DEVELOP, AS WELL AS COMMENTING ON THE BROADER UGANDAN POLITICAL CONTEXT. HE MADE REFERENCE TO THE CURRENT DEBATE ON FEDERALISM AND THE STRENGTH OF OPPOSING VIEWS, STATING THAT THIS IS AN AREA WHERE THERE IS A CLEAR NEED FOR AN "HISTORIC COMPROMISE", AND HOPED THAT ONE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING FROM THE CA'S FINAL DELIBERATIONS. HE SAID THE

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SECOND IMPORTANT ISSUE IS THE PURSUIT OF HUMAN AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS, PARTICULARLY THE RIGHTS OF SPEECH, ASSOCIATION, AND ASSEMBLY. IN THIS CONTEXT HE MADE REFERENCE TO A REPORT OF POLICE ACTION AGAINST THE PUBLIC MEETING OF A LEADING OPPOSITION POLITICIAN THE PREVIOUS DAY AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE HOLD-OVER OF NON-DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES WHICH SEEM OUT OF PLACE IN UGANDA'S EMERGING DEMOCRACY, AND CONVEY VERY NEGATIVE SIGNALS TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. FINALLY, HE FOCUSED ON THE COMING ELECTIONS FOR PARLIAMENT AND THE PRESIDENCY AND STRESSED THAT THESE MUST MEET INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS OF FREE AND FAIRNESS.

E. THE WOMEN WHO ATTENDED THE WORKSHOP EXPRESSED A VERY HIGH DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH WHAT THEY GAINED. REACTIONS IN TERMS OF THE MOST USEFUL COMPONENTS WERE QUITE DIVERGENT. AN EVALUATION DONE BY PARTICIPANTS PRODUCED A MODAL RATING OF 9 ON A SCALE OF 10, AND SIGNIFICANT COMMENTS ABOUT WORTHWHILE TOPICS AND SESSIONS.

F. MORE IMPORTANT THAN RATINGS WERE THE HEIGHTENED INTEREST IN AND THINKING ABOUT CRITICAL STAGES OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS THAT OCCURRED, AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE MAIN DIFFICULTIES UGANDAN WOMEN CANDIDATES AND LEGISLATORS ARE LIKELY TO HAVE IN RESOLVING THEM IN THEIR OWN CONTEXT. DIFFICULTIES THEY FORESEE IN PURSUING THE STRATEGIES THEY LEARNED FOCUSED OVERWHELMINGLY ON LOGISTICS AND FUNDING, THE FORMER BEING MORE OR LESS A FUNCTION OF THE LATTER. OTHER ISSUES THEY FELT WOULD BE CONSTRAINTS IN THEIR PURSUIT OF EFFECTIVENESS INCLUDED THE POOR EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF THE ELECTORATE, POOR COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE, AND THE TIME PRESSURE TO THE ELECTION. A FEW HAD OTHER CONCERNS: A LACK OF COOPERATION AMONG WOMEN THEMSELVES, ESPECIALLY ENVISIONING COMPETITION BETWEEN THESE MEMBERS OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND THOSE PRESENTLY SITTING IN PARLIAMENT, WHO ARE THEIR LIKELY RIVALS; AND TRADITIONAL AND CONSERVATIVE ATTITUDES OF MEN, AS WOMEN BEGIN AGGRESSIVELY TO MOVE INTO RACES FOR SUBSTANTIVE, TERRITORIAL SEATS RATHER THAN THE "AFFIRMATIVE ACTION" SEATS MANY OF THEM NOW OCCUPY.

IVA. LESSONS LEARNED.

THE WORKSHOP WAS BY ALL ACCOUNTS A GREAT SUCCESS. NONETHELESS, SOME LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNED THAT WILL ASSIST US IN IMPROVING FUTURE ENDEAVORS OF THIS NATURE. ONE IS THE NEED TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH THE US FACILITATORS ADDRESSING THE VERY DIFFERENT POLITICAL CONTEXT OF A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM, IN WHICH LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONING IS DIFFERENT FROM THE US CONGRESS, NOTABLY IN THE LOCUS OF THE INITIATION OF LEGISLATION.

B. THE WOMEN WHO WERE CHOSEN HAD LITTLE BACKGROUND IN AFRICA BUT PROVED TO BE VERY FAST LEARNERS, WITH GOOD SKILLS AT SEEKING THE

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INFORMATION THEY NEEDED TO MAKE EXAMPLES MORE RELEVANT AS THE DISCUSSIONS PROCEEDED. THEY ESTABLISHED VERY FAST AND PRODUCTIVE RAPPORT WITH THE UGANDAN CA DELEGATES.

VA. FOLLOW-ON ACTIVITIES.

SEVERAL ADDITIONAL IDEAS EMERGED IN THE COURSE OF THE WORKSHOP AS SUBJECTS FOR FOLLOW-ON ACTIVITIES, TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS. THEY INCLUDE A WORKSHOP ON FUND-RAISING, BOTH FOR POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AND FOR PROJECTS SPONSORED BY WOMEN POLITICIANS; TRAINING ON THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET CYCLE, ITS SCHEDULES AND HOW TO OBTAIN, READ, AND USE THE BUDGET IN PURSUING BOTH PROJECTS AND WIDER PROGRAM CONCERNS; DEVELOPMENT OF PROFILES ON DONORS AND THEIR INTERESTS AND ACCOUNTING REQUIREMENTS; AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INFRASTRUCTURE THAT CAN NURTURE WOMEN POLITICIANS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, IN THE DISTRICT AND SUB-DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, WHICH ARE ACKNOWLEDGED BY ALL TO BE THE TRAINING GROUND FOR THE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF WOMEN WHO MUST FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THESE DELEGATES TO CONSOLIDATE THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ARENA.

TOTAL P.07

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APPENDIX B

THE ASIA FOUNDATION-U. S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM

TO

INCREASE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC
REGION

RESULTS IN THE FIRST YEAR AND A HALF

In 1993, The Asia Foundation, in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development, launched a comprehensive program to increase women's political participation in the Asia-Pacific region. The Women in Politics program was launched in recognition that both organizations are committed to bringing women fully into political processes as an essential part of efforts to advance sustainable democratic development and foster pluralistic civil societies. In Phases I and II, in-country projects were supported in seven and eight countries respectively that responded to each nation's political environment regarding women's political participation. In-country projects are complemented by regional initiatives which facilitate sharing of models, strategies, and ideas, and foster networking and solidarity among women and women's groups in the Asia-Pacific region.

The combination of regional and in-country activities is creating a multiplier effect that is accelerating transfer of models and strategies that are empowering women across Asia and the Pacific. The program is able to capitalize on local, national, and regional opportunities such as up-coming elections, new legislation, issues in the public spotlight, and regional and international conferences to advance women's full and equal participation in their societies and to advance pluralistic democratic development in the region.

AID Administrator Brian Atwood has noted that "There is nothing more basic to the development process than participation." The Foundation's Women in Politics program supports indigenous initiatives that are increasing women's access to decisionmaking bodies and policymakers, and encouraging women to participate in all aspects and at all levels of public decisionmaking and to play a more active roles as voters, activists, and leaders within and outside of government so that women's views and interests are represented commensurate with their number as half the population. The partnership program explicitly targets the participation of women in all aspects of

their societies so that democracies have a broad base of support among the citizenry of each country, and are representative of and responsive and accountable to women as well as to men.

The Asia Foundation utilizes its own funds and funds from two private foundations to bring women from non-AID countries as resources and participants to regional workshops and support activities in countries in which AID does not operate to make the program truly regional in scope. This collaborative program has worked successfully to advance progress in individual countries and to link women's organizations working on these issues throughout the region for the first time. The networking that has been fostered through this program is creating a regional dynamic that is central to the success of the program overall and to accelerating women's political participation in countries from Fiji and Papua New Guinea to Bangladesh and Nepal. Some of the results of the first year and a half of the combined Asia Foundation and AID supported programs are listed below. Projects funded with non-AID funds are indicated by an *.

BANGLADESH

- The first Women in Politics unit in Bangladesh was established in the Centre for Analysis and Choice (CAC), which has conducted four workshops for 32 women candidates who had unsuccessfully contested in the 1991 parliamentary election, completed a baseline analysis of women's candidacy in the 1991 election, developed a long-term program strategy, and initiated training for women candidates. CAC's Women in Politics unit has trained 28 women candidates and 21 members of their campaign staffs in three campaign management workshops. CAC is now working with grassroots organizations to conduct leadership training in rural areas.
- Three workshops organized by Women for Women sensitized 33 local government officials, 29 Members of Parliament and party leaders, and 55 members of four political parties to gender and empowerment issues and promoted women's inclusion in the national and local policy agenda. The recommendations and summaries of discussion are being distributed to key women's groups and government officers that will serve as tools for NGOs and others advocating on behalf of women, and for measuring the accountability of elected officials toward women's issues.
- Women for Women developed a handbook on women for government officials that includes statistics on women in education, labor, health, politics, law, and rights, and recommends steps for improving discrepancies between men and women and identify areas of discrimination.*
- The Foundation is expanding the impact of Women for Women's workshops by sharing the materials developed with grantees working on voter education and elections programs aimed at encouraging more informed participation by citizens, especially women, in the next national election. These grantees include the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA), a broadbased coalition of local development organizations and civic and professional bodies that have grouped together to monitor the upcoming parliamentary election; the Society for the Environment and Human Development, which is producing a handbook for journalists to encourage more analytical and informed election reporting, and introducing these concepts to journalists in training sessions; and the Multidisciplinary Action Research Centre (MARC), which will work in collaboration with rural and national NGOs in developing, testing, and evaluating a variety of voter education models and materials.
- The WIP program is promoting consideration of gender issues in ongoing democracy activities in Bangladesh. With funding from USAID/Dhaka, The Asia Foundation supports CAC's permanent public policy program that includes seminars for

Members of Parliament, a research and publication unit, and legislative drafting support for Members. Through this program, two seminars and a publication addressed political and legislative issues relevant to women's empowerment.

- The WIP unit convened a one-day session on the proposed "Muslim Family Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1994," legislation introduced by one of the appointed women Members of Parliament. This session was a significant accomplishment because there is no tradition of public debate on proposed legislation in Bangladesh, and the country is currently experiencing a serious political-religious backlash to changes in women's status. Open discussion of proposed legislation that will significantly affect women among a group that included Members of Parliament, representatives of NGOs concerned with women's issues, and selected participants from the WIP workshops for unsuccessful women candidates in the 1991 parliamentary election, is a small but important change in the political environment, if not sufficient in itself to enact policy change.

As part of its regular seminar series for Members of Parliament, CAC recently organized a seminar on women's representation in the Parliament. This session provided a forum for debate of the constitutional provision for reserved seats, and exploration of alternative methods to increase the number of directly-elected women legislators.

CAC's publication unit issued an analysis of women's participation in electoral politics as part of its series of policy briefs, distributed to Members of Parliament, government officials, NGOs, the media, and libraries. The monograph was authored by the WIP unit's project director.

INDONESIA

- Convention Watch was established as a monitoring organization to assess implementation of the U.N Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and to pressure the government to enforce CEDAW, particularly for women in the workplace. Convention Watch started a number of activities to increase awareness of women of their rights and the ways in which they are discriminated against, and demand greater accountability on practices versus policy. For example, there is a policy of equal pay for equal work, however, in practice women are often paid less than men. Convention Watch is exposing such discrepancies to force practices to adhere to policy and increase accountability to women.
- A TV series is being produced and aired on national networks portraying women in non-traditional roles that is reaching thousands of Indonesians. This project is targeted on changing attitudes toward women's status and roles which has

traditionally served to limit women's options to participate in their societies.

KOREA

- The Korean League of Women Voters formed watchdog groups in their local chapters and trained them to scrutinize county members' performance in the local legislature. This brought public attention to women's political activities and enhanced women's participation at the grassroots level. Additionally, support was provided to enable the League to monitor media coverage on women's issues in print media.*
- Campaign training for women candidates running for local assemblies in the June 95 elections which included campaign strategies, campaign school programs, research on political orientations; recruitment of women candidates; and surveys on voter consciousness regarding gender preference of politicians. 252 women candidates will stand for the June elections, which is a substantial increase over the last provincial and country level elections held in 1991.*

MONGOLIA

- The Foundation has supported the development of women's NGOs including the Liberal Women's Brain Pool (LEOS) which is now the largest NGO in Mongolia with over 500 members. The founder and director of the LEOS attended the first regional workshop where she met her peers from across the region for the first time. She has maintained contact with many of them and has visited several of them since that meeting, in their countries. She was attended a meeting of the East Asian Women's Forum as a result of those contacts where she had a role in drafting the platform for Beijing from East Asia. She has stated that the Mongolian women's movement was dramatically affected by what she learned from her peers in the region.*
- The Women Lawyers' Association organized and held the first -ever seminar on women's rights in Mongolia in May 1995, and is preparing to publish Mongolia's first Women's Rights Manual.
- For the first time, Women for Social Progress has received permission from the parliament to review the transcripts of parliamentary deliberations to determine MPs stance on gender issues. This may be the first time that any NGO has received permission to use session transcripts for such purposes.

NEPAL

- An advocacy training curriculum was developed for illiterate and semi-literate women which assures maximum individual

participation. This curriculum has the potential to significantly advance the ability of rural women in understanding local policymaking processes and influencing decisionmakers and decisionmaking processes. The curriculum is being used training programs where it is being tested and revised. The Advocacy Training for Women Advocates project is considered a major success. The project generated unprecedented media coverage of women's issues, drawing attention to problems and raising awareness. The project assisted individual organizations by enhancing their efforts and catalyzing an unprecedented breakthrough in cooperation among women's organizations that vowed to work across party, religious, ethnic etc. lines to advance a women's agenda.

- Members of women's advocacy groups participated in a study/observation tour to three Asian countries, Thailand, India, and the Philippines. The study tour added a new dimension of knowledge and exposure to how counterparts in the region have successfully built coalitions and conducted outreach, mobilization, and lobbying on specific women's issues broadened the participants' perspectives which is expected to foster coalition-building among women's advocacy organizations in Nepal. The project generated a resource book which profiles NGOs and institutions of the three countries visited which will be circulate as an international networking tool.

PACIFIC ISLANDS

- The first Regional Roundtable on Women in Politics for eleven island nations was held in Suva, Fiji, February 1994. Twenty participants, including Members of Parliaments, aspiring politicians, and NGO personnel attended the Roundtable from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Western Samoa. Utilizing shared information and communal energy, The Suva Roundtable produced a plan of action which brought about a commitment to utilize local media, development of a political education program, creation of a WIP lobby group to hold political parties accountable on women's issues, and a commitment was made to pursue the mutual goal of promoting WIP in all countries of the Pacific Island region.

This forum was the first of its kind designed to highlight the importance of women's participation in the political process and to develop organizational structures which will continue the goals and discussion of the Roundtable. The Roundtable was a catalyst that stimulated important initiatives in individual island countries to increase women's voice in the political process and linked women in the Pacific region working to empower women for the first time. A resource person from the APWIP Network helped the groups form an agenda for the Roundtable and helped to

facilitate the conference. According to many participants, her work in Korea greatly inspired them and they left greatly energized and empowered with new initiatives in mind a number of which have been acted on since the Roundtable including in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and New Caledonia.

- In Fiji, a new Women's Affairs Center was established following participation of Fijian women leaders in regional and sub-regional meetings which highlighted models in other countries and examined the role of the media in advancing women's issues. The Center is effectively using the media to highlight issues of concern to Fijian women and lobbying decisionmakers on their policy decisions. The Center has increased media attention by utilizing the tools and techniques presented at the first regional workshop. The Women's Affairs Center is already playing an important role in raising attention to issues of concern to women and encouraging cooperation among women's organizations in the Pacific Islands region.
- In Papua New Guinea, under the leadership of a woman who participated in the first and third regional meetings, as well as in the Pacific Islands sub-regional meeting, a Women in Politics Center has been revitalized with new office space, staff, and an ambitious agenda for raising awareness, training women to run for office, and putting gender issues on the national agenda. By her own account, the leader of this rejuvenated Women in Politics Center was greatly inspired and energized to increase women's awareness and encourage their voice in policymaking after she met other women working to empower women at the first regional meeting.
- Women participated in the sixth Pacific Regional Women's Conference in Noumea, New Caledonia. The participants established new contacts and follow-up discussion has occurred via monthly satellite links, where the Fiji National Council of Women has been able to promote APWIP's activities. Papua New Guinea Women in Politics (PNGWIP) hosted a Public Awareness Promotion, which promoted women in politics within the Papua New Guinea media and acted as a recruitment mechanism for (PNGWIP) using some of the techniques presented at the first regional workshop.*

PHILIPPINES

- A permanent Women in Politics unit of Congressional Research and Training Service (CRTS) has been established. One of its projects, "Enhancing the Capacity of Advocates to Monitor Legislation and Policy Reform," achieved all of the outputs it had outlined in the plan for action including: legislative monitoring and briefings; preparation of issue briefs on legislation affecting women and issue briefings for women's groups, case studies on the lobbying activities

of women's groups; needs assessments of women's groups in provincial areas followed by legislative advocacy training; an analysis of women in the Ninth Congress and a workplan for future analysis leading up to the 1995 elections; participation in three regional workshops.

CRTS' Women in Politics Program has the potential to play an important role in reducing barriers to Filipinas participation in politics and has, through its regional interactions, already begun to be an important resource for the region. Key results included three legislative briefing sessions which focused on the "Anti-Rape Bill" and the "Women Empowerment Act."

SRI LANKA

- The Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR) project for "Promoting Women as Leaders and Raising the Visibility of Women's Issues Through Increased Gender Awareness and Accountability" conducted a field survey which included interviews with over 400 women, from differing backgrounds, to assess perceptions of their role in national and provincial politics and decisionmaking. The results of this survey will be used to develop training materials on gender sensitization and women's empowerment that will be used in workshops during Phase II. The project is still in a too nascent of a stage to accurately assess progress on reducing barriers; however, publication of the survey is expected to raise awareness of gender issues and inform future training to increase women's participation in their societies. Additionally, production of a "watchdog" newsletter, modeled after the Gender Watch Group newsletter in Thailand that holds leaders accountable on women's issues, is underway.

THAILAND

- A Thai businesswomen's group has been established modeled on the Emily's List concept of women supporting women candidates that was presented at the first regional workshop. This endeavor will aid in reducing a formidable barrier to women's success as candidates--lack of financial resources.
- A nationwide Gender Watch Group (GWG) has been established to increase monitoring capacity among women and women groups in Thailand for greater government accountability. Gender Watch Groups around the country participated in a postcard campaign to urge members of parliament to ratify an amendment to the Thai Constitution guaranteeing women's equal rights. The amendment was ratified unanimously in the fall of 1994.
- Gender Development and Research Institute developed a Gender Analysis framework as a tool to build interrelationships

between gender parity and development policy for greater accountability. The GA concept has been incorporated into training workshops in order to track institutionalization and integration of gender concerns in policymaking and policy implementation.

- Training workshops have been conducted to enhance rural women's understanding of policy processes and the means to influence these processes which increased their knowledge of and ability to participate in political processes so that their views will be considered and governments and planning boards will be more accountable to women. Participants learned how to mainstream gender into policy planning and programming and create regional plans of action. The participants plan to conduct a series of seminars for key members of political parties to pressure them to reserve seats for women in the party's executive committee, on the candidates list, and increase the recruitment of women. Participants also committed to producing a roster of potential women candidates and urging each political party to create a Women's Affairs Section. One seminar was broadcast nation-wide via the Parliament radio channel.
- A documentary video, has been produced portraying women as leaders in non-traditional roles. The twenty minute video entitled, "Power in Women" contains the life and work stories of five women leaders who committed themselves to women and community development. A description of the highlighted women is included in the Thailand Appendix and a copy of the video is available from The Asia Foundation on request. The video was tested at all WIP workshops supported under the AID grant and met with positive response. Plans are now being made to broadcast "Power in Women" on at least three national television channels.

VIETNAM

- A base line survey was conducted to initiate WIP program in Vietnam that included a comprehensive review of eight issue areas essential to WIP programming. Preparation of the base line survey facilitated establishment of a relationship with four leading research bodies involved in gender-related work in Vietnam.*
- A senior member of the Vietnam Women's Union, who participated in three regional workshops, on behalf of the Union's requested a consultant from the APWIP Network to help them start a leadership training program for women at the local level. This has resulted in the first-ever in-country training for women candidates running for positions on People's Councils at the commune, district, and province level was conducted. Training sessions were held in October 1994 for a total of 60 women. Additional training sessions were organized and conducted by the Vietnamese

trainers throughout the entire country, using trainers from the initial sessions, to reach a target of over 200 additional women candidates. After the November 1994 elections, women's representation on the Councils increased, on a national average, from 12% to 20%.*

- Financial support was provided for a comprehensive survey on "The Current Status of Women Leaders in Vietnam", conducted by the Vietnam Women's Union, February - April, 1995. Results of the survey form the basis for the country report for the Vietnam NGO delegation to the Beijing Forum in September.*
- In-country training for women in public management was conducted in Hanoi, June, 1995. This provided first management training for women politicians, holding seats on People's Councils at the commune, district, and province level. Thirty participants representing six provinces, participated in a four-day session. Models developed at the session adopted as the basis for future training sessions for women in public management.*
- Support is being provided for four participants to the Beijing NGO Forum.*
- Of the dozen or more international organizations working on gender-related issues in Vietnam, TAF/VN was the first to target women in politics, specifically. It was the first (and to date the only) organization to work directly with women candidates. Its June 1995 training session was the first specifically for women holding seats on the People's Councils, the local representative political bodies throughout Vietnam. Future plans include further training sessions for women public office holders at the local level as well as work with a women's caucus within the National Assembly. Candidate training will be scheduled for the 1997 and 1999 elections (respectively the next national and local elections).*

REGIONAL

- The first regional WIP workshop was held in Manila in January 1994, which brought together women from 15 Asian and Pacific Island countries. The participants identified needs and opportunities in the region that helped to establish the framework for the WIP program. The five-day workshop identified four priority areas: 1) raising awareness; 2) building leadership capacity of women; 3) legal reform and changing cultural attitudes toward women; and 4) promoting access to information that will empower women.

Workshops on using the media as an advocacy tool and resource mobilization were held. Participant evaluation indicated that new and important concepts to advance women's

empowerment were presented during these workshops. Each participant developed a personal action plan and a number of women have taken many steps toward their defined goals since the Manila meeting.

- The Asia-Pacific Women in Politics (APWIP) Network was established as a regional resource in response to a consensus that a central communication and coordination clearinghouse was critical to acceleration of progress on women's empowerment. The APWIP Network has held a number of regional workshops in the first year and a half since it was formed in January 1994, and is emerging as an important forum for exchange of models, strategies, and ideas for advancing women's participation in political processes and is also playing an important role in linking women's organizations across the region and building solidarity that is bolstering women and women's organizations in their efforts to effect change in their own countries. Additionally, APWIP's convening power is enabling women to work together across borders on pernicious problems facing women in the region such as trafficking of and violence against women. APWIP produces a quarterly newsletter which facilitates sharing of models and success in empowering women in the region and fosters sisterhood in Asia and the Pacific. APWIP is linking women's organizations around the region on Internet and facilitating cost-effective means of communicating and sharing resources.
- National organizations have developed their capacity to serve as regional resources that are responding to the needs and requests from organizations in other countries, which has significantly advanced cooperation in the region. Centers in Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines are becoming significant resources for the region by presenting models, strategies, and techniques that are working in their countries, and then supplying expert consultants to help other countries adapt them to their political systems and environments. These resource organizations in turn, are gaining insight and experience dealing with barriers to women's full participation in other cultures with different political systems which enriches their own national efforts.
- A workshop on "Putting Gender Issues on the Policy Agenda" brought together 40 women from 23 countries to examine tools and techniques used to place gender issues squarely on the agendas of decisionmaking bodies and policymakers. A report on this workshop will be distributed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. For most participants, this was the first opportunity they had had to meet their colleagues in the region working on these issues. Women from South Asia agreed to exchange materials and remain in contact. The APWIP Network expanded its outreach to additional countries, organizations, and individuals and will distribute resource materials developed during the

regional workshops to women's NGOs at Beijing.

- A new Center for Women's Studies was established at the Korean Women's Institute at Ewha Women's University. The Institute conducted research on the status of women and the women's movement in China, both ethnic Korean and Chinese women, to share information regarding women in Korea through lectures at the University and to establish contacts with key leaders and counterparts in order to build a foundation for cooperation. The completed lectures were published serially in a weekly newspaper. This work culminated in the new Women's Studies Center. The Center is expected to serve as a catalyst for exchange programs between women in Korea and China. Additionally, the Center has a potential intermediary role for women in South and North Korea in preparation for the unification of Korea. This project promoted regional cooperation.*

USAID GENDER AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA WORKSHOP

Speech by,

Stephanie Funk
USAID/Malawi

Good afternoon.

I am here today to discuss USAID/Malawi's experience with factoring gender considerations into our democracy and governance project. I will cluster my remarks into three broad categories. First, I will discuss how our democracy project incorporates a gender emphasis. Second, I will give you one example of what we have achieved through that incorporation and the process by which we've achieved it. And finally, I will summarize the factors which have enabled gender to receive such important play in our democracy efforts.

For those of you who do not know Malawi, let me begin with a bit of history. For most of the years since independence in 1965 Malawi citizens have been subjected to authoritarian rule, inability to participate in politics except within the one-party structure, harassment and imprisonment for daring to speak out or organize to advance their interest, and heavy-handed civil and criminal codes. In June, 1993, as a consequence of sustained domestic and international pressure, the government called for a referendum on the issue of a single vs. a multi-party system of government. In that referendum, 63% of the population voted in opposition to the single party dictatorship of the past 30 years and voted for multi-party rule. In response to this unique call for change, then President Banda made an even more unique call for presidential and parliamentary elections to be held within a year.

Eager to ensure that this deadline was not missed, the mission and other donors responded quickly to support the election process.

USAID/Malawi seized the moment by designing and authorizing the Democratic and Civic Institutional Development Project (DECIDE) within three months after the referendum. The project's three components consist of electoral assistance, legal/judicial reform, and civic institution development.

The question now is, how did we incorporate a gender emphasis in DECIDE?

First, we followed a practice which has become second nature in USAID/Malawi when designing programs and projects and that is to take gender considerations seriously during initial pre-design analysis. That serious consideration resulted in the documentation of national statistics which clearly demonstrated that although women represented 52% of the population they were disadvantaged compared with men in virtually every social, political, and economic sector. Women have significantly lower levels of literacy, political representation, and formal and non-traditional employment opportunities. Female literacy is approximately 35%, while male literacy is estimated at 60%. In the cabinet, female representation was less than 2%, while male representation stood at more than 98%. In the formal sector, women make up less than 5% of administrative and managerial cadres and in the Ministry of Agriculture, less than 1% of grassroots extension workers are women despite the fact that 70% of women in the rural areas are farmers. In addition, the NGO sector was only three years old and NGOs which focused on women's rights or human rights only existed on paper at the time of DECIDE's design.

Once these figures were documented, the mission made a conscious decision to commit the project to a democratic process that provided equal access and opportunity to both men and women. The mission recognized that the new environment in general and DECIDE in particular presented a unique opportunity to expand women's political participation. These principals of addressing gender equality were clearly enshrined throughout the project document and provided a broad and flexible mandate to work with women.



As many of you know, enshrining gender issues in the design stage is one thing but carrying it through on implementation is quite another. The movement from design to implementation is often the place where gender issues are left behind. This did not happen in DECIDE however because of our commitment to the issue and our close contact with the women of Malawi. That commitment translated into the mission always looking for opportunities to advance women's participation and to ensuring that the implementors of DECIDE shared in our search for that opportunity. Additionally, Malawian women relied on us to keep them in the loop of election happenings which at times the donors knew more about than others and the bonds of that close relationship kept the focus on track.

Years of close collaboration with the handful of professional Malawian women in various sectors and our support of the National Commission on Women in Development (NCWID) served to increase the mission's understanding of women's needs and priorities. The Commission not only benefitted from USAID funding, but a number of USAID projects benefitted from gender recommendations made by the Commission. This solid relationship provided the impetus for Malawian women to look to the mission for support in the political arena and for the mission to provide it within the appropriate context. It also laid a strong foundation of mutual trust and understanding between the mission and the women of Malawi.

In general, that sets the background to incorporating gender considerations in DECIDE. Next, I'd like to give you an example of what we have achieved as a result of that focus. This is but one example which focuses on the role DECIDE played in facilitating women's participation in the drafting of the constitution. This example covers a period of just over a year and I have broken it down into four events.

Event #1: Jan., 1994

In January, 1994, The National Democratic Institute (NDI), which was funded through a grant from DECIDE, sponsored the first "All Party Conference". The purpose of the conference was to assist all seven

political parties contesting in the election to develop campaign strategies and techniques.

In an effort to identify opportunities to expand women's participation, NDI and USAID agreed to sponsor a separate women's session as part of this conference. Each party was invited to send 20 delegates to the conference and a special request was made that at least five of those party delegates be women. This conference was the country's first opportunity for male and female political party representatives to meet and collaborate across political lines.

The purpose of the women's session was to provide a forum for women to come together and build solidarity across political lines and to identify the key issues affecting women in Malawi. These were not women from the National Commission on Women in Development who had dealt with gender issues for years. Rather, these were women who came from rural areas and for various reasons were brave enough to enter the political fray. They were hesitant as they began the session but with our encouragement they soon gained confidence and within 45 minutes, 30 issues were identified and then synthesized into the five most important ones. These issues were presented at the closing plenary of the conference and the hope was that all parties would endorse these issues so that they would be addressed no matter which party won the election. Briefly, the five key issues included: (1) encourage girls' to enter and stay in primary and secondary education; (2) recognize the positive role women can play in politics; (3) enhance women's economic equality and financial opportunities; (4) provide equal legal rights for men and women; and (5) promote HIV/AIDS prevention programs for men and women.

When these issues were presented at the plenary, a lively discussion ensued, but by the close of the session, all seven political parties endorsed the issues, and went one step further by stating that women's issues should be addressed in the new constitution.

EVENT #2, Feb.1994

One month after the "All Party Conference," a constitutional conference was convened to gather views from the nation for the drafting of the new constitution. At this conference, all segments of society (political parties, NGOs, church leaders, chiefs, women leaders, etc.) voiced their views of what should and should not be included in the new constitution. A women representative from the "All Party Conference" made a presentation reiterating that all parties had committed themselves to addressing the special concerns of women in the new constitution. The Chairperson of the NCWID who had been briefed on the outcome of the "All Party Conference" built upon the momentum that was generated there by calling for a separate section for women's rights in the bill of rights and equal representation for men and women in the upper house of the Parliament, or the senate.

The paper that the Chairperson of the National Commission on Women in Development (NCWID) presented was drawn extensively from the Women and the Law in Malawi book which had been funded by the US government's Human Rights Fund. The book outlines the laws that affect women in Malawi and recommends reforms to those laws which are discriminatory against them. By virtue of the fact that the research had already been completed, the commission was poised to make solid recommendations for the bill of rights. The issue of one house verses two (in parliament) was a major topic and the chiefs, women, and political parties that had been excluded during the one-party state lobbied hard for the senate as a body that would include otherwise unrepresented groups.

The specific recommendations for women in the bill of rights and the composition of the senate were incorporated and deleted approximately four times in three months before the constitution was ratified in May 1994. The National Consultative Council (NCC) went back and forth on their commitment to the provisions pertaining to women. Since the donors had provided a constitutional expert to assist in the drafting of the constitution we were kept abreast of its progress including the status of the women's recommendations. When the drafters decided to water those recommendations down or take them out I would call one of the three women who was serving in the NCC that was suppose to

oversee the process and she would march to the drafting office and demand that they be put back in. She would then call the chairperson of the NCWID who would send letters of complaint to that very body. At one particularly crucial time, newspaper articles were drafted urging the NCC to follow the dictates of the constitutional conference. In essence, a very small core of women played the watchdog role to ensure that their recommendations remained in the constitution.

The constitution was approved in May 1994 and went into effect on the eve of the election as a provisional document with a one year period of review. In the final analysis, the constitution contained the women's recommendations for the bill of rights and the senate. Towards the conclusion of the one year period of review a second constitutional conference was convened to gather views from the public before final ratification in the house.

EVENT #3, Feb., 1995

USAID, through NDI, financed the second constitutional conference in February, 1995 and again assisted the women, along with political parties and other interest groups, in defining their strategies in preparation for the conference.

For the women, that entailed assistance to the newly founded Society for the Advancement of Women, a local NGO, to bring women together to discuss the constitution and solidify their recommendations for the conference. USAID and NDI worked with the Society to sponsor a number of meetings to reach agreement on these recommendations. The main recommendation of their paper called for the retention of the senate on the grounds that it was the only constitutional mechanism which guarantees representation for women. The paper stated that the senate was a luxury the country could ill afford to eliminate. Given the lack of women involved in the political process, they declared a crisis of representation and stated that it was undemocratic not to address this crisis. They also called for the restructure of the senate so that it would be a body mostly composed of women and chiefs (two from each district) who they thought would adequately represent the rural areas. This was a strategic move since the women knew that the

ruling party no longer supported a senate and that the women alone did not have the votes to win on this issue. The ruling party's justification for not supporting the senate was that a two-house parliament was too expensive. However, many noted that the ruling party was arguing for other things to be retained in the constitution that cost significantly more than the senate.

Since NDI was also sponsoring meetings for the parties and the chiefs to define their strategies for the constitutional conference the women decided to attend those meetings and make a plea for their support. Much to everyone's surprise, two of the three parties and the chiefs decided to join the women on the senate issue. Their success in gaining allies on this issue can be directly attributed to the time and effort they put into the formulation and justification for their recommendations.

The ruling party was taken by surprise with the women's support and they pulled out all stops by having the President remark in his opening speech that the senate was not a good idea. Despite this opposition, the women spoke out vigorously. Given Malawi's authoritarian history, this was an act of courage and tenacity and the majority of the members at the constitutional conference recognized that by voting to retain the senate.

EVENT #4, March, 1995

Parliament convened a few weeks after the second constitutional conference to consider their recommendations. However, with the ruling party having a majority in the Parliament it appeared that they were going to disregard many of the recommendations from the conference, including the retention of the senate. The Parliament declared that they alone could vote on amending the constitution and that the constitutional conference only served as an advisory meeting.

In the midst of Parliament's session, USAID/Malawi supported another workshop given by the Society for Advancement of Women on women's empowerment. Over 100 Malawian women, representing government, NGOs, and traditional authorities (chiefs) were invited to

the workshop and discussed constraints to women's empowerment. They looked at ways to address those constraints, e.g., through lobbying parliament, increasing networking among NGOs and increasing women's participation in politics. Because the senate was going to be voted on the day after the workshop it became a key topic of discussion. The women decided to draft and sign a petition calling for the senate's retention. Six women were selected to go to Parliament to distribute the petition. USAID and NDI provided crucial support by xeroxing the documents and providing transport to the women so that they could arrive in Zomba for Parliament's opening.

The timing was vital. As a result of their petition being broadcast on the radio and every Parliamentarian receiving the petition, the Parliament realized the pressure and voted to retain the Senate in the constitution. However, they added an amendment that senate elections would not take place until 1999. Had the women not been able to mobilize their efforts at the Women's Empowerment Workshop and had the women not been present at parliament to petition and lobby the parliamentarians, there is no doubt the senate would have been abolished.

The final result of all these events is a gender sensitive constitution which provides equal rights and representation for women. This is a tangible example with a solid outcome. But it is a result that has taken continual attention and will continue to do so in the future. The question is, will the senate be included in the elections in 1999 or will the Parliament amend the constitution and abolish the senate before it can be put into place? The women of Malawi will have to follow this issue closely in the intervening years.

Finally, I would like to offer ten summarizing remarks:

- 1) Seizing the moment and designing a democracy and governance project at lightning speed enabled the mission to be responsive to the fast paced changes leading up to the election. That philosophy of "seizing the moment" was crucial to the effectiveness of our assistance to women as well.

2) The incorporation of a gender analysis into the design of DECIDE laid a strong foundation for addressing women's issues during implementation. Operationally, that emphasis was guaranteed by including it in our grantee's SOW.

3) Effective utilization of resources from a variety of sources (DECIDE project, NDI grant, and 116(e) Human Rights Fund) allowed flexibility and responsiveness to the precise needs of Malawian women.

4) Assisting women to build coalitions and partnerships with groups like the chiefs and political parties strengthens and enlarges their outreach and ultimate impact.

5) For countries that have come out of a closed political system, much assistance and coordination is needed to support groups that have never come together in a political way. That assistance may mean providing everything from transport to moral support. To be sustainable, however, it is imperative to establish a framework that encourages rather than discourages women to build broad networks among themselves and to take initiative.

6) The essential point for participation was not whether Malawi should have a bicameral legislature, but rather whether the views of a previously voiceless majority--Malawian women--were "brought to the table". When supporting a disadvantaged group in democracy and governance activities it is vital to be explicit about who our clients are and our justification for supporting those clients. The emphasis for our support should remain on a process of participation and not on the outcome of what each group is trying to achieve. As with support to all political activities, it is important for all the clients to receive equal assistance.

7) From the women's session at the "All Party Conference" the primary lessons were that: 1) special efforts are needed to include women issues at political conferences; 2) efforts to include women can be as simple as requesting their attendance; 3) there are issues affecting women's lives that cut across party lines for which women can put aside their political differences; and 4) simple, practical

efforts to facilitate dialogue among women can have far-reaching impacts in achieving equitable development.

8) Constitutional drafting provides a once in a lifetime opportunity to shape the laws that will affect women for many generations. It also provides a unique opportunity to educate women of their legal rights and involve them in the process of defining those rights.

9) USAID/Malawi's approach of initiating consultation and dialogue with women as well as men has recognized them as key contributors to problem solving. In our democracy and governance activities this has led to gender specific focus groups that have informed the mission of the similarities and differences of the attitudes and political behaviors of both women and men.

10) Working with women in any sector often involves a redistribution of power. In the political arena, this is a more sensitive issue because of the potential appearance of taking a political stance. Aware of the delicate nature of the situation, USAID/Malawi has emphasized a supportive rather than leading role for the mission and has been explicit about its goals to provide equal access and opportunity for women.

In conclusion, the main point that I would like to leave you with is that democracy and governance presents numerous possibilities for providing equal access and opportunity for women. If each mission with a democracy and governance project was required to initiate just one activity that addresses women's issues (for instance, a review of laws that affect women, a study of women politicians and how they rose to office, a conference for women leaders to voice their concerns, the design of a gender sensitive civics education curriculum, or weekly meetings with women on political topics) then it would begin the process. What is it a democracy and governance project should do for women? What is really required? What is important? From a substantive point of view, the requirements will change by country, but from a participation point of view, providing a formal channel for women so that their voices can be heard will create a process whereby

they can tell us what is required and important. If we can create the process, they will lead us.

REMARKS

BY
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AFRICA DEMOCRACY AND GENDER WORKSHOP
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Thank you Chuck. Distinguished guests from Africa, our other valued partners in African development who are here today, and my USAID colleagues, I am very pleased to speak to you today on a matter of grave importance to me -- to all of us who are serious about promoting development in Africa. And that is the full participation of women in political and economic life.

I believe that unleashing the tremendous human capacity of African women is the surest way to accelerate and sustain development in Africa. Indeed, I am convinced that failure to do so creates the greatest barrier to prosperity and stability that Africa faces.

As all of you in this room know, for the most part, the status of women in Africa is among the worst in the world.

But this was not always the case. In pre-colonial Africa, women, although subordinate to men, played a much larger participatory role in their economies and societies than women in Europe and America.

In matrilineal, and many patrilineal societies, African women made important decisions as Queen Mothers, leaders of war campaigns, and through traditional organizations which protected their jurisdiction in the community.

This power was eroded during the colonial period.

But more and more, especially since the mid-1970s, we see African women struggling to attain their rights and political freedom. And because of these brave women along with their enlightened male advocates, important change is taking place.

Also, I think that it is safe to say that within the last 20 years, with the help of some dynamic women around the world, we all have come to understand better the distinction between focusing on the "role of women in development" versus the "empowerment of women", and the difference between "designing projects for women" versus "devising gender sensitive strategies".

And it is important that we focus on empowerment and gender sensitivity --- empowerment because full political and economic participation of women requires that they have opportunities, rights and privileges equal to those of men. And gender sensitivity figures prominently because of the need to make women visible relative to men, and to avoid marginalizing women through special projects.

So we want to move away from strategies which would teach women to weave baskets and sell them, but fail to consider that as women, they may have no control of the fruits of their labor.

Empowerment strategies require that we go to the root causes of biases against women, and help to foster an understanding of why these biases are harmful, immoral and serve to slow progress towards development.

For our programs, I believe this means going beyond the project level to the policy level where we can help African women and men attack structural and systemic constraints to the empowerment of women.

This means reforming legal systems which fail to grant men and women equal rights and protection under the law. Although reform is taking place in a number of countries, in too many cases, legal systems still assign women less than full adult status.

For example, a woman's minor son might have a right to family property that is superior to her rights, simply because she is female and he is male.

Empowerment goals require changing laws which, on their face, discriminate against women.

Take the case of Lesotho. Although women make up the vast majority of the agricultural labor force and more than one-third of the male labor force is away in South Africa at any given time, married women cannot apply for credit on their own or enter into contracts on their own. Now, Lesotho is not unique in this matter. It typifies many other countries in the region.

Sometimes we find that laws discriminate against women in their application. For example, dual legal systems in some countries allow a male to choose a customary law which permits polygamy over a statutory law which bars polygamy.

Even laws that protect women are too often not enforced. And practices, procedures and attitudes among law enforcement officers and members of the judiciary may be biased against women.

In Africa, as in many other parts of the world, custom and practices pose greater barriers to women than laws, and carry more weight than law. (Typically, 95% of the population in an African country relies more on custom and traditional institutions than the formal legal system.)

The dictates of custom may mean that women have no control over their bodies. They may need permission of a husband or father to:

- seek medical treatment;
- practice family planning;
- travel outside of their village; or
- they may be required to undergo harmful procedures such as circumcision.

The dictates of custom may mean that women are discriminated against in terms of access to education, extension services, credit, or even food available within the household.

One thing for sure, in Africa, custom means that women carry the heaviest burden of labor --- whether it is productive labor in maize or coffee fields, or reproductive labor through multiple births and nurturing of the family.

I don't want to convey the idea that all customs in Africa are bad. Quite the contrary, most customs developed because they served an important social function. But --- not all customs are good -- like the old custom of slavery in this country.

And, even good customs may be time sensitive --- and changes in demographics, technology, the economy and so

on can make a once rational custom irrational.

There are some who talk about Africa as if it is frozen in time -- as if customs have not changed since the beginning of civilization, and moreover, as if it is near impossible to change customs there. If this is true, those of us working to promote development in Africa are wasting our time! But it is not true. I know that customs don't change easily, but they do change, sometimes even quickly, in response to changed circumstances. It is often a matter of arresting fears, and demonstrating the benefits of change.

There is a universal phenomenon about customs that I have observed. Most societies are willing to relax customs that discriminate against women in a crisis, but return to them once the crisis has ended. For example, African women have been on the frontlines in the battle for independence in a number of countries including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Mozambique. But once the war was won, these women who could lead battles, could not be trusted, with the same confidence as men, to lead the nations created in part through their courage and brilliance. This reminds me of pre-1960s policies in the United States --- African-American soldiers were worthy of risking their lives on the frontlines of war, but not worthy of the right to participate fully in the society and freedoms they had helped preserve.

The challenges we face are great. But I am proud to say that within recent years, we have seen African women step out front to take leadership roles internationally in the fight against gender discrimination.

Let me give you a few examples.

About two months ago, I met representatives of the Forum of African Women Educationalist (FAWE) --- a group we recently began supporting. FAWE's membership includes distinguished African women --- ministers, social workers, lawyers and so on --- who are committed to developing workable strategies for improving access and quality of girls' education --- a priority area for empowering women.

Believe me, I have never seen a meeting energized the way those FAWE women energized that one. They are a powerful force! That is the kind of group that we should support.

I returned from east Africa about 2 weeks ago. Uganda and Tanzania were two of the countries I visited.

In Uganda I marveled at the strength, energy, determination and hope of the women I met. In central and southern Uganda, I saw women farmers organizing themselves and supporting networks to grow mushrooms which they export to markets as far as Europe. These women talked about ending, not alleviating, poverty in their communities.

In Kampala, I met Noreen, who founded an AIDS clinic which helps infected individuals live productive lives. She was inspired to do so after her husband died from AIDS. If you go to see Noreen's clinics, you will see among the terminally ill courage, faith and love --- the dynamics of living--- in action.

But Noreen herself is amazing beyond belief. She is HIV positive, as are some of her children. Noreen and her husband built their dream home, much of it with their own hands. But the house was taken from her and her children at her husband's death. Why? Because custom dictated that the house should go to her in-laws. (Original custom would also have required her in-laws to take care of her). Somehow, Noreen found the strength and resourcefulness to build another house for her homeless children. I have never been more impressed by any one individual.

In Tanzania, I met a group of women, who I am convinced could take over their country, or almost any country, if they so desired. These women were talking about strategies to increase political participation and leadership among women.

And you find dynamic women all over Africa, who are organizing for change. I am particularly pleased that we have invited a few of them here today. We need to listen to them, to follow their lead, and to assist in any way that we can.

In the Africa Bureau we are launching a new effort to help improve understanding of the systemic constraints to empowering women, and to understand how to go about removing them. I am assigning high priority to this effort.

I have dedicated my career to helping create a better life for the people of Africa. And I have worked many years on the continent. If there is one picture of Africa that is imprinted in my mind, it is that of a woman laboring in a field with a baby on her back and another little one at her side, it is the picture of women carrying heavy loads to and from the market, or hauling water. It is the picture of the single most productive and deprived person in any country. It is a picture of the key to prosperity and stability in Africa -- a key we all must help turn.

Thank you.

NOTES