

PN-ABZ-675

**Concept Paper for a USAID Strategy in
West and Central Africa**

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
December 20, 1996

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West Africa Strategy concept paper

. . . with Communism dead, I believe the greatest threat to our value system comes from Africa. That is, if Africa's future is mostly a series of Somalias, Liberias and Zaires, can we still believe our founding principles are universal? If we find ourselves writing off an entire continent -- an entire race -- might we become more selfish or introverted? Less idealistic? Less committed to resolving our own domestic problems of race and ethnicity? I'm afraid we'd stop caring -- and Africans might give up trying.¹

Executive Summary

In February 1996, USAID directors in West and Central Africa met in Abidjan with the senior management of the Africa Bureau to discuss the utility of formulating a strategy for USAID assistance in the region. The meeting concluded with general agreement that USAID would benefit in several ways from a regional strategy and that REDSO/WCA would lead the initial strategy development process in consultation with the bilateral USAIDs in the region and with USAID/W.

This concept paper is the result of REDSO's committed efforts and the cooperation of the countless individuals and organizations consulted during the year. The paper proposes a new approach for conducting American foreign assistance in West and Central Africa. The approach explains *Why* the United States must continue to provide foreign assistance in West and Central Africa, *What* U.S. assistance in West and Central Africa should support and promote, and *How* the U.S. Government should deliver U.S. assistance in the region.

In developing the approach in this concept paper, REDSO made certain assumptions. The most important are that the strategy should apply to all of USAID's development assistance to the region, a USAID strategy for West and Central Africa should operate for at least ten years, the U.S. Government's staff and financial resources for providing development assistance to the region will continue to decline, and USAID will continue to be able to work in non-presence countries.

With those assumptions in mind, this paper argues two basic points.

1. For several reasons, there is a wide gap between America's stake in West and Central Africa and the character of the U.S. foreign assistance program. The foreign assistance program as currently designed does not reflect America's stake in the region.

- Our efforts *in the region* are relatively small compared to the programs of other donors.
- Our efforts focus *on five countries* whose total population, land area, and significance in the regional economy and politics are relatively minor.

¹Hume Horan, *To the Happy Few*, Electric City Press, Washington D.C. (1996), p. 24.

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- We open and close even "full" bilateral posts much too frequently to have lasting impact.

- 2. We propose a new theme for US foreign assistance: ***Beginning the 21st Century in West and Central Africa: The United States Supports the Emergence of a new Economic and Political Partnership.*** This theme is based on supporting two central, positive trends in the region -- political and economic liberalization -- and on greater partnership with Africans in the region's development. The theme is very different from our current constraints-based focus that tries to solve West Africa's major problems, mostly in a few countries. To support this theme, we propose the following operational innovations:
 - A regional office to design and implement regional programs to support political and economic liberalization.
 - Broader geographic deployment of USAID staff in the region in the form of USAID representatives, in lieu of full bilateral missions, to support the regional agenda.
 - Regional activities in support of political and economic liberalization and Congressional earmarks and targets.
 - Effective use of U.S. and African partner institutions including non-governmental organizations.
 - Performance-based grants to support partner institutions.

The proposed new concept for U.S. development assistance to West and Central Africa is only a first step in re-engineering that assistance. After USAID/W reviews and approves the concept, a new strategy must be designed to refine the proposed approach for USAID to follow in the region. The Africa Bureau must lead that process, and USAID/W and the field must participate actively and fully behind the Bureau's leadership.

1. Introduction

As the United States and West and Central Africa² prepare for the start of the twenty-first century, they face opportunities and challenges that demand a creative and flexible approach for foreign assistance. The region's rapidly growing population of over 275 million confronts a range of possibilities that has civil collapse at one extreme and sustainable development at the other. As USAID's assistance in West and Central Africa evolves in the late 1990s, it must rest on a coherent approach to adapt to many new circumstances.

America's foreign policy objectives, major positive trends and problems in West and Central Africa, and America's fundamental national interest in political and economic development all point to a broader geographic engagement for American foreign assistance in the region. With the end of the Cold War, both the United States and Africans are free from a constricting preoccupation with fighting Communism. For the United States, this means not having to support political and economic regimes simply because they are Côte d'Ivoire "on the right side." For Africans, the end of the Cold War brings the collapse of international Communism as a political movement, a philosophy, and an operational basis for development. In addition, Africans have now begun to experiment with development approaches that are free of the European statist tradition that enthralled much of West and Central Africa since the 1960s.

West and Central Africa will need such approaches to confront the causes of the region's poor economic performance. And there is growing realization, both for Americans and Africans, that many of the most serious development problems in West Africa have regional dimensions that should be addressed on a regional basis. Americans and Africans have also learned the importance of working together. Consequently, the proposed theme for a new strategy of development assistance in West and Central Africa is: **Beginning the 21st Century in West and Central Africa: The United States Supports the Emergence of a new Economic and Political Partnership.**

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²Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Togo, Zaire.

This theme focuses America's emerging partnerships with Africans on supporting and sustaining the two positive³ regional trends of political and economic liberalization. Political and economic liberalization relax government controls on the political and economic activities of citizens, reduce government intervention in political affairs and economic markets, break up political and economic monopolies, and allow greater political and economic competition.⁴ The theme also takes advantage of the substantial experience, knowledge, and commitment in the United States to political and economic liberalization, both within and between countries. This commitment gives the United States unique credibility among Africans and leads naturally toward development assistance based on genuine partnerships.

In February 1996, USAID directors in West and Central Africa met in Abidjan to discuss the utility of formulating a strategy for USAID assistance in the region. Assistant Administrator John Hicks had called this meeting because he felt there was at least a *prima facie* case for such a strategy. After two days of intense and lively discussion, the meeting concluded with general agreement that USAID would benefit from a strategy for providing foreign assistance in West and Central Africa and that REDSO/WCA would lead the initial strategy development process in consultation with the bilateral USAIDs in the region and with USAID/W.

Between February and December 1996, REDSO/WCA fully carried out those instructions. REDSO staff met many times in Abidjan to brainstorm and elaborate the major development

³See "Is There Still a Foreign Policy of the U.S. Toward Africa?" Remarks by Regina C. Brown, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, at the 39th International Seminar for Diplomats, Salzburg, Austria, August 2, 1996; <http://www.state.gov/www/regional/africa/brown.html>. After enumerating long-term US foreign policy goals in Africa, Brown adds, "They are essentially conservative goals. By that, I mean that what we seek in the first instance is to preserve and consolidate the real gains—both economic and political—that have been made on the continent, especially in the last decade."

Also see Richard Jolly, "Laying the Foundations for Sustained African Development in the 21st Century: the promise of the World Summit For Children," *Development Journal* 1996.2, Society for International Development, at <http://www.waw.be/aid/dev1996/laying.html>. Jolly writes, "Though this pessimistic perspective often dominates the view of Africa from abroad, it is neither the whole story nor an adequate one for action and future planning. In all parts of Africa, there are points of new hope and dynamism, which need to be built upon. More important, the struggle for development has never been straightforward. An element of vision and determined commitment has always been needed, whether from national leaders, individual entrepreneurs or international civil servants. And history bears out such faith. The 'basket cases' of two or three decades ago become the success stories of today, whether Korea or Malaysia, China or Bangladesh, Costa Rica or Chile, Mauritius or Botswana."

⁴Apologies to Michael Bratton. This concept paper borrows heavily from his clear definition of political liberalization in "Political Liberalization in Africa in the 1990s: Advances and Setbacks," in *Economic Reform in Africa's New Era of Political Liberalization*, USAID, 1993, p. 38.

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issues in the region, retained the services of an experienced and respected former mission director to provide advice on the strategy, produced sector profiles to raise critical issues for themselves and for USAID/W, designed and held consultations with an extensive variety of possible partner institutions and "customer" representatives in West and Central Africa, sought the advice and suggestions from U.S. embassies in countries where USAID did not have a presence, and consolidated a bewildering array of regional issues, problems, and interests. Senior REDSO staff held extensive meetings with a wide variety of USAID officers and individuals outside of USAID, met several times with senior USAID/W staff in Washington and in Abidjan, and consulted with staff from the bilateral missions and with all of our key donor partners. Finally REDSO produced this concept paper for USAID/W's review, meeting the deadlines and other objectives that REDSO and USAID/W had agreed on months in advance.

Consequently this concept paper is the result of REDSO's committed efforts and the cooperation of the countless individuals and organizations consulted during the year. The paper proposes a new approach for conducting American foreign assistance in West and Central Africa. The approach explains *Why* the United States must continue to provide foreign assistance in West and Central Africa, *What* U.S. assistance in West and Central Africa should support and promote, and *How* the U.S. Government should deliver U.S. assistance in the region.

In developing the approach in this concept paper, under guidance from the Africa Bureau, REDSO made the following assumptions.

- The strategy for West and Central Africa covers a minimum of ten years.
- A new USAID approach in the region requires "thinking outside the box."
- The new approach should identify key problems that have regional solutions that the United States can address effectively.
- The approach should be established around one or two profound, easy-to-grasp concepts.
- The approach should cover all U.S. Government development assistance to the region.
- The U.S. Government's available financial and staff resources for West and Central Africa will continue to decline.
- The approach should identify functions for a regional office.
- USAID will continue to provide development assistance to countries without the presence of USDH staff.
- Substantial elements of USAID programming will continue to respond to direct Congressional earmarks and targets.

- USAID will continue to be subject to traditional forms of accountability and oversight, many of which are out of USAID's control, even while seeking ways of managing activities remotely with far fewer people on the ground.

This concept paper proposes a regional strategy to support and sustain two fundamental, widely acknowledged, and positive trends in West and Central Africa: *political and economic liberalization*. A new approach will profit from American stature and leadership in political and economic issues as well as increased African capacity to sustain the positive trends. It will allow USAID and African partner institutions to design activities to support policies and programs to strengthen the positive political and economic trends in the region.

The approach calls for replacing bilateral missions with a broader deployment of small, stand-alone USAID representatives in the region supported by a regional office. The regional office will manage regionally funded activities and provide technical and administrative support to USAID staff in the region who will advance regional objectives. The regional office will also coordinate centrally funded activities in the region to ensure they support the regional strategy. The in-country USAID representatives will coordinate the regional agenda in the host countries and will serve as a focal points for applying America's unique influence in development matters.

This concept paper has two parts. The first describes current trends in West and Central Africa, U.S. interests and foreign policy objectives, and changes in USAID. The second advances the new concept for U.S. development assistance in West and Central Africa. The concept explains broadly *what* we hope to accomplish -- promoting the political and economic viability of West and Central Africa -- as well as *how* we hope to accomplish it -- by replacing traditional bilateral USAID missions by a regional platform, regional interventions applied bilaterally, and reliance on effective partnerships with Africans. This new approach for delivering economic assistance to West and Central Africa has fundamental implications for how and where USAID should work in the future. A complete strategy for West and Central Africa, which should follow the concept paper, must address the details.

2. Setting

A. Development Context: Trends in West and Central Africa

It is extraordinarily difficult to generalize about the development situation in West and Central Africa in the mid-1990s. Pessimism dominates the view of Africa from abroad. One almost instinctively associates *coups*, human rights violations, civil wars, and general political instability with Africa. Nevertheless, there is substantial dynamism in Africa, which

is extremely important for Africa's future.⁵ In particular, remarkable but often overlooked developments are currently taking place in West and Central Africa in the areas of economic and political liberalization and regional cooperation.

Positive Trends

Political and economic liberalization are separate trends, and development specialists have debated the connections between them for years. There is some agreement, however, that the trends have reached a critical mass in West and Central Africa, and are important enough for us to notice and to support actively. It is very important to keep in mind that these trends are occurring *within and among* countries in the region, and that *they are reversible*. The following tables summarizes positive political and economic trends in the region.

Positive Political Trends

<i>National</i>	<i>Regional</i>
free and fair elections among several political parties	strengthened regional inter-governmental organizations
strengthened civil society	evidence of regional political cohesion
decentralization and growing capacity of local governments	regional networking of professional and trade associations
growth in number and capacity of local NGOs	increasing networking and cooperation among NGOs

Positive Economic Trends

<i>National</i>	<i>Regional</i>
reduced role of the state in parts of the economy	monetary reform
higher productivity	reduction in tariff and non-tariff barriers
growth in some sectors	increased regional trade for some goods and services
rising employment opportunities	other signs of regional economic cooperation

⁵ Jolly (1996).

In the late 1980s, only a handful of African countries could be described as democracies. The vast majority were then "characterized by one-party political structures in which party and state were virtually synonymous, and political opposition was suppressed. In most cases, the mass media acted as government mouthpieces, and the legislative branches were impotent. However, over the last few years, unprecedented political change has occurred within Africa."⁶ Today, more than 30 countries in sub-Saharan Africa are in the process of some form of political liberalization. This general trend has definitely included West and Central Africa. Since 1990, Benin, Mali, and Ghana have seen the growth of public participation in political affairs through NGOs and political parties, and many countries in West and Central Africa have adopted multi-party systems.

Most governments in the region, even those with relatively modest achievements in economic and political reforms, have embraced the principles of structural adjustment. This commitment to pro-development policies has helped reduce or eliminate the kinds of gross macro-economic distortions, such as foreign exchange pricing and public deficit, which characterized West and Central Africa in the past. Structural adjustment has also improved the formulation and execution of economic policies, and public management of development programs. Adjustment programs have induced both political leaders and technocrats to focus more strongly on how to allocate limited resources. Consequently, the widespread micro-level mismanagement that characterized public development programs 20 years ago, often through creation and maintenance of countless parastatal institutions, is generally declining. At the same time, small private enterprises are flourishing throughout the region.

A number of countries including Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and Benin have reformed their economic policies (and to some extent their politics) and are consequently making substantial economic progress during the 1990s. Certain others that have made less progress in democracy and governance, such as Burkina Faso, are nonetheless achieving strong economic growth. Generally, only a few governments in the region currently follow macro-economic management policies that could be called anti-developmental.

Although there is still much room for improvement, African institutions (and individuals) in the last 20 years have demonstrated increased capacity to manage development in the region. The change is strong and perceptible at the highest levels of national government, in regional institutions, and among PVOs and NGOs. These changes will also serve to diffuse power in West and Central Africa, contributing to the growth of democracy and effective governance. More importantly, a broad spectrum of Africans, particularly younger people, are changing

⁶Jerry Wolgin, *New Wine, New Bottles: A New Paradigm for African Development (1994)*, p. 8. Draft paper prepared for the African Studies Association meeting.

their attitudes toward economic management and political institutions. This change in attitudes involves several elements:

- a recognition that each country in the region, and its people, are ultimately responsible for their own development⁷
- the conviction that Africans must take more ownership and responsibility in development programs, and that many of the impediments to development can be removed only by Africans
- a desire to stop economic deterioration
- a realization that deep economic reforms are necessary to achieve progress, that people must stop looking to the state as a great provider of innumerable benefits
- optimism -- a conviction that with progressive policies, reform of political institutions, and strong leadership, economic and social progress in Africa can be as strong as anywhere else in the world. Of all the changes in West and Central Africa during the last 20 years, this change in attitudes may be the most important.

Along with these changed attitudes, political leaders in the region increasingly perceive regional cooperation as a pre-condition for sustained development. Monetary unions such as UEMOA (*Union Economique et Monetaire de l'Afrique*) and UDEAC (*Union Duanière et Economique de l'Afrique Centrale*) have recently moved toward more economic and market integration. Professional organizations are engaging in more regional networking through associations like the West Africa Enterprise Network (WAEN) and networks of Chambers of Commerce. In addition to strengthening professional networks for resolving technical and business problems at the regional level, these organizations serve as forums for discussion of policy and policy implementation problems, and as points of "countervailing power." Finally there have been joint efforts for regional peace-keeping such as ECOMOG's presence in Liberia and the recent peace accord, brokered by Côte d'Ivoire, in Sierra Leone.

In sum, the political landscape in sub-Saharan Africa in general, and West and Central Africa in particular, has changed dramatically, even since 1990. The region is in the midst of a transition toward democratization and political liberalization. This transition, although partial and fragile, creates a radically new development environment for West and Central Africa and for the United States.

⁷This point is made by many development specialists. For a particularly convincing case, see OECD, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*, (1996), at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/htm/stc.htm>.

Persistent Problems

Despite the significant progress made in several areas, Africa still faces the greatest development challenges in the world.⁸ The challenges are poverty, rapid population growth, low literacy, debt burden, environmental degradation, and political instability.

- *West and Central Africa is one of the poorest regions in the world.* Per capita GDP in the region is \$367. Many economists attribute much of the regional economic growth in 1995 and 1996 to rises in basic commodity prices, which are not likely to be repeated, and which may be reversed. Up to half the potential economic growth in West Africa is not realized because the sub-region is divided into numerous small countries with different laws, currencies, regulations, trade barriers, and poor governance. This creates a set of small markets that cannot attract significant external investment or productively specialize.
- *Sub-Saharan Africa is the only major region in the world whose people have not improved in nutritional status during the last 20 years.* Average caloric consumption in nearly all countries is only slightly over minimum requirements. This means that in nearly all countries in the region, between 20 and 25 percent of the entire population is malnourished. As long as food production continues to lag behind population growth, food security will continue to be a serious problem.
- *West and Central Africa faces profound demographic changes.* The 24 countries in West and Central Africa have approximately 278 million people in 1996. Rapid population growth and the current age structure in West and Central Africa mean that the growth rate will remain high during the next two to three decades, even if fertility rates decrease dramatically. In fact, the region's population will increase by 50 percent in 14 years.
- *West and Central Africa continues to lag behind in the dramatic improvements in health achieved by other developing countries during the past 40 years.* Whereas other regions of the developing world have achieved declines of over 50 percent in infant mortality between 1960-1990, in West and Central Africa, infant and child mortality has declined an average of only 30 percent, and remains unacceptably high at an average of 111 deaths per 1,000 births. Maternal mortality is also at unacceptably high levels. Finally, despite growing efforts of governments and communities, the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to spread relentlessly and has become a deadly health problem in the region, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Togo, and Mali.

⁸USAID, FY97 Congressional Presentation, <http://www.info.usaid.gov/pubs/cp97/afr/afrovr.htm>. In this regard, West and Central Africa is no different from the rest of Africa.

- *West and Central Africans are generally poorly educated:* around 60 percent of the population over the age of 15 is illiterate. On average, women's literacy rates are 10-35 percent below those for men, and during the last 15 years, the gap has widened in most of the region.
- Some of the countries in West and Central Africa will continue to benefit from smaller external debt, whereas for others, external debt is a monumental constraint. Coordinated international attention to debt should lead to a reduction of the problem.

Other Donors

Compared to other donors, the United States has made a relatively small development investment in West and Central Africa. In the 1990s, the total efforts of other donors dwarf ours in the region. Moreover, the other donors now provide substantial assistance in many critical technical areas that address the most persistent problems. If the United States expects to continue exerting leadership in the region that is proportionally greater than the material resources it applies, it must focus its efforts carefully.

Table 1. All official development assistance to West and Central Africa countries, 1990-95; total, U.S. portion, and U.S. percent of total.

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
All ODA (\$ billion)	7.35	7.09	6.96	6.56	7.74	7.05
U.S. ODA (\$billion)	0.35	0.40	0.34	0.33	0.31	0.26
U.S. ODA percent.	4.77	5.61	4.86	5.08	3.98	3.74

Table 2. Five largest bilateral donors to West and Central African countries, 1995.

Bilateral donor	Official Development Assistance (ODA) to WCA 1995** (\$ millions)	Percent of total ODA from bilateral donors to WCA
France	1708.44	40.25
Japan	529.82	12.48
Germany	500.00	11.78
Benelux Countries*	279.48	6.58
United States	264.00	6.22

* The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg

** Total ODA from all bilateral donors was \$4.245 billion in 1995.

Summary. Although West and Central Africa has some of the most difficult development challenges in the world, the circumstances have dramatically changed in the region in the last few years. Economic and political liberalization have unleashed the creativity and dynamism of a flourishing private sector. Many countries are witnessing and for the first time encouraging an emerging civil society. These dramatic political and economic changes in West and Central Africa require a new paradigm for U.S. economic assistance.

B. U.S. Interests in West and Central Africa

Primarily American factors

Some of the justification for taking a new systematic look at how USAID delivers foreign assistance to West and Central Africa relates to the following events taking place primarily in the United States :

- *The end of the Cold War*, and its preoccupation with defeating Communism in Africa, liberates U.S. foreign policy, especially as it concerns foreign assistance, to focus more closely on African issues.⁹
- *An important part of America's population has vital historical and cultural ties with this part of the world.*
- *Re-engineering.* In 1994, USAID became one of the first U.S. Government agencies to join Vice President Gore's effort to reinvent government. Some of the consequences of USAID's re-engineering, particularly the reduction in the number of bilateral USAID missions in West and Central Africa and the emphasis on strategic planning, justify a new systematic look at how USAID does business in West and Central Africa. In addition, a new articulation of "core values" requires USAID to take more seriously the focus on participation of clients and partners. It is also worth noting that for the last 30 years, USAID has delivered its most important development assistance in West and Central Africa through full bilateral missions with much larger staffs implementing their agreements through host governments. This approach may no longer be the preferred method of implementing USAID's activities in the region.
- *The desire to balance the U.S. Federal Budget.* Both the Congress and the president want to balance the U.S. national budget. This very likely will mean a continued reduction in resources for U.S. foreign assistance.
- *Cost effectiveness.* Our current approach could be more cost effective and consistent. Establishing a standard bilateral USAID post requires considerable time and funds. Some of the most important costs -- those reflecting how long it takes the U.S. Government

⁹See Regina C. Brown, 1996. "The end of the Cold War has given us an unprecedented opportunity to shape a more secure world of open societies and markets."

See also U.S. Policy for a New Era in Sub-Saharan Africa, Released by the Bureau of African Affairs, October 2, 1996, and found at http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/US_policy_subsahar_africa.html. The policy statement says, "In a new post-Cold War environment, Sub-Saharan Africa is undergoing unprecedented political and economic change. These dramatic shifts and the end of superpower strategic competition in the region have resulted in a thorough re-examination and reorientation of U.S. policy. The U.S. Government intends to maintain its engagement in Africa despite resource constraints. Progress and stability will require long-term support by the international community and the efforts of Africans themselves."

See also "The United States and Africa: A New Relationship," remarks by Secretary Christopher at the 23rd African-American Institute Conference, Reston, Virginia, May 21, 1993, at <http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/secsp593.html>. "During the long Cold War period, policies toward Africa were often determined not by how they affected Africa, but by whether they brought advantage or disadvantage to Washington or Moscow. Thankfully, we have moved beyond the point of adopting policies based on how they might affect the shipping lanes next to Africa rather than the people in Africa. And that's an improvement."

assistance program to react to a given situation -- are not usually identified in an accounting sense although they seriously affect USAID's program effectiveness.

In 1996, there are 24 countries in West and Central Africa. These countries have a total population of around 278 million, a total GDP of about \$100 billion, and an average per capita GDP of \$367.¹⁰ Since 1990, the number of countries in West and Central Africa with USDH staff managing USAID funds at post dropped from 19 to 9 (Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal) in 1996. With this reduction, the U.S. Government has considerably decreased its support to the region. Present plans call for USAID to have only five "sustainable development" missions in 1997. The five missions will be in countries with a total population of 46.3 million, and a total GDP of \$18.8 billion. The five missions will exclude Zaire and Nigeria, the two most important countries in the region.¹¹ For the five countries, as Table 3 shows, USAID is as minor a player (in terms of the level of resources it provides) as it is in West and Central Africa.

¹⁰All of the economic data in this paragraph are the latest available from 1993.

¹¹In discussing criteria for deciding where and when the United States should act in African crisis situations, David Gordon argues, "*The first is large states that hold the key to regional stability. This would only include a few countries, most notably Nigeria and Zaire (as well as Kenya and South Africa, should a major crisis arise). While the disintegration of the Togolese state would be a tragedy for Togo, it would have no regional implications, and pressure for external assistance would fall into the lap of the intimately engaged French. But the collapse of Nigeria into chaos or civil war would likely have regional repercussions that could unleash waves of instability and mass migration throughout West Africa.*" David F. Gordon, "Assessing the Clinton Administration's Africa Policy," testimony before the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa, September 26, 1996, at <http://www.odc.org/dghse.htm>

Table 3. Official development assistance (ODA) 1995 to five sustainable development countries: total ODA, U.S. portion, and U.S. portion percent.

Country	1995 Total ODA (\$ millions)	1995 U.S. portion (\$ millions)	U.S. portion Percent of total
Benin	269.8	11	4.4
Ghana	648.9	54	8.3
Guinea	386.4	28	7.3
Mali	547.0	31	5.7
Senegal	647.6	22	3.4
Total: 5 Countries	2499.6	146	5.8

With limited resources for supporting development activities in such a large region, USAID must take great care to use the available resources wisely. In this regard, it is probably not cost effective to continually close and open bilateral posts according to changing notions of whether the national host government is an effective development partner.

(1) Most of the reasons for continuing U.S. foreign assistance to the region suggest a broader rather than a more focused geographic engagement. Thus concentrating our limited assistance in a few bilateral posts in countries that comprise about 15 percent of West and Central Africa's population limits our impact in the region.

(2) In an area of the world that is politically unstable, useful engagement means constant engagement; not departing every time there is a coup or other undesirable change in the national government and walking away from millions of dollars of investment. Since one of USAID's major strengths is its overseas presence, USAID must stop retreating overseas.

(3) It does not make good development sense to have large fluctuations in levels of development assistance or in sectoral priorities within countries.

Support progressive political and economic change and advance U.S. political and diplomatic objectives

The United States supports political and economic change in West and Central Africa because that support and those changes are at the core of the value system mentioned in the quotation at the beginning of this paper. When the United States provides that kind of support, with American vigor, American competence, and American idealism, America benefits and Africa benefits. Moreover, those progressive changes have tangible consequences for American individuals and organizations doing business in Africa.¹²

U.S. development assistance in Africa, as elsewhere, is part of American foreign policy.¹³ But American foreign policy in Africa, as at least one knowledgeable Africa expert remarks, is in "limbo status," mainly because of the absence of vital security interests in the region.

Stuck between ill-defined, but real, American interests and Africa's peripherality to U.S. strategic or vital concerns, Africa policy is inherently very tricky. Absent the Cold War framework where all regions were part of the chessboard of the great game of superpower competition, determination of U.S. interests for several regions has been under dispute, but nowhere has this been more difficult than in Africa.¹⁴

But Africa, and West and Central Africa, is important to the United States for reasons already described. Publicly stated American foreign policy objectives thus provide the framework for USAID's decisions about development assistance in the region. In Africa, U.S. foreign policy objectives are:

- Conflict resolution and peaceful change
- Democratic systems that respect human rights and seek equitable economic growth

¹²"An enabling environment must be created before trade and investment take place. That environment comprises policies, laws, institutions and attitudes that enable individuals to enter into business, conduct trade, and enjoy the fruit of their labor. Such an environment is critical to the emergence of free markets and to the transformation of developing countries into attractive places for foreign investment. Our mission at USAID is to create that environment." Statement of J. Brian Atwood, Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development, to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs, March 7, 1995.

¹³*Ibid.* "USAID's development objectives are closely intertwined with U.S. foreign policy objectives. From promoting peace in the Middle East to opening up one of the world's largest markets in Russia to restoring democracy in Haiti, foreign assistance has been critical." And, "Our work must always advance overall American foreign policy and we can never abandon foreign assistance as a tool to accomplish that aim."

¹⁴David F. Gordon, 1996.

- Sustained equitable development through market-based reforms that rely more on the private sector and promise to reduce dependence on external aid
- Solution of a variety of transnational problems like AIDS, environmental degradation, population growth, refugees, the spread of terrorism and narcotics trafficking, subversion by radical regimes on the periphery of the region, and the important, and often disproportionate, role of African military and security forces in public life.¹⁵

Respond to global concerns

Many of the most pressing problems in West and Central Africa have consequences far beyond the countries' formal borders. Some of them, such as disease and environmental pollution, affect the United States more directly than others. But even problems such as population growth in West and Central Africa, which seem remote to Americans now, will surely be much more obvious in the near future if they continue to be neglected. As Brian Atwood testified to Congress about global problems,

they . . . endanger our own stability and economic well-being. We are all threatened by the destruction of the world's ecosystem, by global warming, by unsustainable population growth. These are not other people's problems. Our nation cannot insulate itself from the failure of poorer countries to deal with their own development problems.¹⁶

Reduce effects of complex emergencies¹⁷

In a sense, all successful diplomacy is preventive, and that reality is particularly relevant today: It is far cheaper to prevent nations from failing than it is to rebuild them. It is far less disruptive to prevent refugees from fleeing their homes than it is to feed and house them. It is far less expensive

¹⁵See U.S. Policy for a New Era in Sub-Saharan Africa, Released by the Bureau of African Affairs, October 2, 1996, at http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/US_policy_subsahar_africa.html.

¹⁶ J. Brian Atwood, 1995.

¹⁷"A complex emergency differs from a natural disaster not only in the manmade nature of the crisis, but also in the political component of the disaster, the presence of warring factions, and the commensurate breakdown of government infrastructure which severely hinders the provisions of humanitarian assistance to affected populations." *Annual Report FY 1995*, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development, 1995, p. 10.

to strengthen the institutions of conflict resolution than to overcome ethnic and social divisions that have already exploded into bloodshed.¹⁸

Complex man-made disasters have occurred in several West and Central African countries in recent years. These impose direct costs on the American people and Government. In 1986, complex disasters made up less than 10 percent of all disasters officially declared by the United States, and the proportion has generally been rising. In 1995, 18 of the 39 officially declared disasters were complex disasters. The rise in the cost of complex disasters, which was negligible in 1985, is even more dramatic. In 1995, out of total obligations of \$170 million for all disasters, USAID spent \$165 million on complex emergencies.¹⁹

In some cases, as with the recent troop deployment for Liberia, complex emergencies resulted in direct military expenditures. Large amounts of funds have also been expended on humanitarian programs, particularly for Liberia and eastern Zaire. (In 1996, for example, the U.S. Government spent over \$76 million, including Food for Peace, to assist approximately 1.6 million displaced and war-affected Liberians. Although this is a large number of people, they constitute less than 1 percent of the population of West and Central Africa.) These operations reduce the efficacy of U.S. contributions to multilateral organizations whose efforts have to be diverted to relief instead of development. There are also indirect costs from the impact of these disasters on the portfolio quality of both multilateral and commercial lending institutions.

Help West and Central Africa be more attractive to U.S. investors and businesses

Staying engaged in Africa is in America's interest. Today, the nearly 700 million people who live south of the Sahara comprise a major emerging market, and Africa's wealth of resources--from oil and uranium to cocoa and coffee--are in permanent demand here in America. Yet we have barely begun to explore all the possibilities that trade with Africa holds for U.S. companies and consumers. U.S. exports to Africa totaled \$4.4 billion last year, and more than 80,000 American jobs depend on them. These exports -- which exceed those to the former Soviet Union by nearly a quarter -- can be vastly increased. But to do so, we must continue to help stability take hold and democracy take root throughout the continent.²⁰

¹⁸J. Brian Atwood, 1995.

¹⁹OFDA, pp. 10-11.

²⁰See "Sustained U.S. Assistance to Africa." Remarks by Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, to the roundtable on sustained U.S. assistance to Africa, Trans-Africa Forum, Washington, DC, June 29, 1995, <http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/laksp695.html>.

Lack of investment spending represents a major problem in West and Central Africa. According to the World Bank, an investment rate of about 25 percent of GDP is necessary to sustain a growth rate of 6 percent in the region.²¹ During the last 10 years, the gross investment in the region has been running at only about 15 percent of GDP. The gross savings rate in the region is only about 2.5 percent. At the aggregate level, investment depends heavily on donor resources, which represent over 16 percent of GDP.

U.S. merchandise exports to all of Sub-Saharan Africa in 1994 were \$4.4 billion, about 1 percent of total U.S. merchandise exports, and total U.S. direct investment in Sub-Saharan Africa stood at only \$3.5 billion at the end of 1994.²² Given Africa's currently low state of economic development, these numbers do not reflect the potential for growth in trade with the United States. U.S. development assistance in the political and economic evolution of the region will increase opportunities for the U.S. economy.²³ Engagement by the U.S. Government in development assistance now will set the stage for trade and investment opportunities later.²⁴

²¹West Africa Background Strategy Paper, A Report to USAID, Mitchell Group, quoting 1994 report by IBRD, "Adjustment in Africa," P. 16.

²²U.S. International Trade Commission, U.S. - Africa Trade Flows and Effects of the Uruguay Round and U.S. Trade and Development Policy, Publication 2938, January 1996, P.2-1.

²³Both the size of Africa's market and the U.S. share are expanding. In 1995, the United States exported goods valued at \$5.4 billion to sub-Saharan Africa, a 22% increase over 1994. This level of trade supports about 100,000 American jobs. Over the past several years, U.S. exports to Africa have actually exceeded total American exports to the New Independent States by 20%. The growth of total African imports has been particularly robust -- averaging 11% per annum -- in countries that have pursued sound policies and realized economic growth. The business-oriented Financial Times (London) recently declared Africa to be the "final frontier of the world's emerging markets ...producing dramatic returns" for investors.

With a nascent but growing market and a population projected to grow to one billion by the year 2015, Africa has significant potential as a market for U.S. exports. These exports represent tangible benefits to Americans. At current growth rates, Africa would import U.S. goods and services worth \$600 per American family in 2025. If the United States makes the investments Africa needs, and African governments continue to implement the kind of sound economic policies that have fueled growth in Asia and Latin America, the return to each American family could be as much as \$2,000 annually. These are significant returns on the U.S.'s development assistance investment. They represent potentially millions of new jobs for American children and continued financial health for this nation. USAID FY97 Congressional Presentation; <http://www.info.usaid.gov/pubs/cp97/afr/afrovr.htm>.

²⁴"Today, the African market is already growing far faster than America's markets in Europe. Our presence there, through our USAID missions and the development work we are doing, guarantees that the U.S. share of that market will expand along with the African economy. If we pull out, others will take our place and our rightful share of that market." J. Brian Atwood, 1995.

3. A new strategic approach for West and Central Africa

The first part of this paper describes the dynamic changes occurring in the region and some of its most difficult problems, and argues that U.S. development assistance must fundamentally adjust to them. USAID's current approach delivers development assistance through a steadily shrinking number of bilateral USAID posts supplemented by a mixture of regionally and centrally funded activities under the rubric of sustainable development. That approach worked well when the United States could rely on a large pool of resources, but it is not clear that USAID can effectively continue to conduct business that way in West and Central Africa.

There now needs to be a reconciliation between America's stake in West and Central Africa and our foreign assistance efforts in the region. The steady decline in USAID's resources and the spectacular collapse of its presence have wrenched ends and means from each other. If America's interests *in the region* are as critical as argued in this paper, USAID's current approach does not match those interests.

Thus USAID has two logical choices for reuniting ends and means: either change the definition of America's stake in the region or change the approach USAID uses to act on behalf of that stake. The first alternative would define America's stake in the region as less significant than argued herein. In that case, it might suffice to locate the core of America's interests in the five existing sustainable development countries. There would be little need to expand our regional presence and no need for a regional strategy. Decisions about where to work and what levels of resources to invest would simply depend on applying performance-based budgeting criteria to the bilateral programs: If America's stake in the region converges in the five sustainable development countries, and those countries continue to perform as "winners," then USAID should maintain if not enlarge those programs.

The argument in this concept paper is quite different, however. The argument is that America has a greater stake in West and Central Africa than is reflected by "full" bilateral presence in five countries. The region includes 24 countries, displays extraordinary variation, has relentless problems, and is beginning to change in important ways. This concept paper argues for retaining the idea that America has high stakes in the region and for reinventing USAID's foreign assistance approach. That is a better way to reunite means and ends in West and Central Africa than to devalue America's stake in the region.

The region's future could take any of the following paths: the situation could generally improve, stay generally the same, or become generally worse. Those three possibilities might prompt any of the following reactions from the U.S. Government.

1. Declare victory (or defeat) and leave. This course of action would end all sustainable development assistance in West and Central Africa, and drastically reduce activities funded by regional or Global Bureau projects that respond to problems that are important to the United States, such as population growth and the environment. Most remaining American foreign assistance to West and Central Africa would consist of humanitarian relief and contributions to multilateral organizations and international financial institutions.
2. Continue the reduction of the last few years. USAID would do even less with less.
 - USAID could retain approximately the same number and variety of strategic objectives, maintaining direct bilateral support for sustainable development, but further decrease the number of bilateral posts.
 - USAID could maintain the same number of bilateral posts, but those remaining would have fewer strategic objectives than now.
 - USAID could sustain or slightly increase assistance to regional West African institutions.
3. Try something new to solve the dilemma USAID now faces in the region: how to focus and concentrate development assistance while still maintaining a broad and effective engagement that furthers American national interests.

A. A proposed concept

As a way out of the dilemma, this paper proposes a new concept for supporting political and economic liberalization in West and Central Africa that capitalizes on America's existing influence in the region and seeks to continue it. The concept consists of

- A regional platform to design and implement regional programs to support political and economic liberalization. This means a fully staffed hub mission that will have comprehensive programming and managerial responsibilities for USAID activities in the region.
- Broader geographic deployment of USAID representatives in the region -- not missions or large offices -- to coordinate the activities that support the regional agenda in the host countries.
- Regional activities in support of political and economic liberalization and Congressional earmarks and targets.
- Effective use of U.S. and African partner institutions.
- Performance-based grants to support partner institutions.

This operational approach has several advantages over USAID's present approach in the region. It allows USAID to focus its activities on the most critical and positive development trends in the region. It allows USAID to play a major role in acting in America's interests *in the region* by helping to carry out U.S. foreign policy objectives. Finally, it will avoid limiting USAID's major activities to only five countries with full USAIDs, which together play a relatively minor role in the political and economic future *of the region*.

The proposed approach also has organizational advantages over current practice because it will enlarge USAID's geographic presence in the region while keeping USAID's activities more focused on promoting a regional agenda. The regional office will take responsibility for designing and administering regional activities as well as helping coordinate Global Bureau and Africa Bureau programs throughout West and Central Africa. The regional office will take full advantage of a functioning New Management System to manage multi-country performance-based grants. The regional office will also provide specialized customer-support services to country-based USAID representatives, partners in other U.S. Government agencies such as the Foreign Commercial Service and USIS, and implementing partners with a multi-country presence. Eventually, support for political liberalization would include local and regional conflict resolution and partnerships for strengthening civil society. The complexity of programs in terms of the overlap of support for political and economic liberalization will determine the level of USAID's presence and investment in any specific location.

A USAID country representative will provide USAID presence in a large number of countries in the region. The representatives will coordinate activities that support a regional agenda of political and economic liberalization in their host countries; help identify USAID partners to carry out the activities; advise the host government, other development partners in country, and the American embassy on development policies and programs in the host country; serve as the primary in-country contact for USAID's regional and transnational projects; and advise USAID on projects proposed by multilateral organizations like the IBRD and AfDB. These USAID representatives will serve as focal points for applying America's unique influence in development matters. In that capacity, the USAID representatives will coordinate USAID's regionally based activities with a variety of partners. As a result, USAID will be able to leverage its influence on the development climate.

It is not envisioned that USAID staff deployed in the region will manage projects (or activities, in NMS parlance). Most in-country activities will be part of larger regional activities negotiated, funded, and managed as performance-based grants.²⁵ Although the USAID representative will be the primary contact for the grantee in country, the grantee will

²⁵REDSO/WCA has begun using this approach with much success in the Family Health and AIDS -- West and Central Africa Project.

have its own resident advisor, management structure, and support system, which will relieve the USAID representative of managerial responsibilities for the country-based activities.

These in-country activities will not have to be limited to democracy/governance or economic growth, even though the activities will be supporting political and economic liberalization. In fact, many of the activities will likely be regionally or centrally funded activities in areas of Congressional interest such as child survival and family planning. But the application of those activities in particular countries will support the regional agenda as well as the activity's technical objective. As such, regional activities in child survival or environmental protection, for example, will include political or economic liberalization among their objectives.

One way to meet both technical and regional objectives together is for USAID to work closely with African partner institutions. West Africans have started taking the lead in their own economic and political liberalization. They are defining the agenda, devising solutions, and implementing them successfully through cooperative efforts throughout the region. Non-governmental institutions and civil society in general exert greater influence in mapping the direction of the region's development. A growing number of institutions and networks in West and Central Africa, like the West Africa Monetary Union, the African Development Bank, CILSS, chambers of commerce, the West Africa Enterprise Network, and numerous private sector networks and unions are improving their vision, clarifying their mandates, and strengthening their management and organizations to better address the development challenges. USAID must build on these cooperative efforts to sustain and expand economic and political liberalization through critical partnerships with public and private organizations, institutions, and networks that have demonstrated the necessary managerial capacity.

The new concept thus represents a fundamental change in how USAID supplies U.S. development assistance in West and Central Africa by

- Channeling much of the assistance through appropriate African partner institutions with demonstrated management track records.
- Focusing congressional earmarks and targets in ways that have critical relevance to the region.
- Leveraging the contributions of other donors by facilitating and coordinating their efforts, African efforts, and American efforts in the region.

- Designing and following new guidelines for development partnerships.²⁶

B. Proposed phases for implementing program and strategy

The strategy should be introduced carefully in order to minimize disruptions to existing programs and arrangements. At the same time, a phased approach would allow for and encourage experimentation in establishing newer, smaller USAID country representation. During the phasing in of the new organizational arrangement, USAID will reduce the size and scope of the current bilateral missions in West and Central Africa and begin establishing USAID representatives in countries where it makes sense to do so. At the same time, in consultation with possible African partners, USAID will develop regional interventions based on (1) the theme of supporting political and economic liberalization through African partnerships, and (2) the "emphasis areas" funded by Congressional earmarks and targets. Finally, the regional office, in collaboration with the USAID representatives and possible partners, will start designing and administering programs outside of Congressional interest areas to support political and economic liberalization in the region.

4. Conclusion

This concept paper proposes a new direction for USAID to follow in West and Central Africa. The proposal derives from current trends in West and Central Africa, American interests and stake in the region, key features of American foreign policy in the region, the activities of other donors, and changes taking place within USAID. All of those factors require USAID to adjust its approach so that its assistance can yield region-wide benefits. The new strategy focuses on political and economic liberalization in the region for the following reasons:

- Political and economic liberalization is the most significant development trend in West and Central Africa, and it is most effectively supported in as many places as possible.
- Political and economic liberalization is a central part of American national interests in West and Central Africa and is the core of American foreign policy objectives.
- The approach enables USAID to analyze and respond to complex emergencies and transnational problems more quickly and effectively.

²⁶See OECD, 1996, for a discussion about the different responsibilities of host countries and providers of development assistance. The paper provides the basis for discussions by describing joint responsibilities, developing country responsibilities, and external partner responsibilities.

- The U.S. Government has greater credibility and moral suasion in supporting political and economic liberalization than any other donor.
- USAID is no longer preoccupied with fighting communism in West and Central Africa.
- African people and institutions in West and Central Africa increasingly view political and economic progress as central to their own futures, they have started acting accordingly, and they are willing and able to be effective development partners for the United States.
- Political and economic liberalization is a basic requirement for achieving USAID's mission of sustainable development.
- Other donors are addressing many of the serious technical problems that USAID has traditionally tackled and with far more resources than USAID can mobilize.

USAID's current way of doing business in West and Central Africa rests on two legs: sustainable development and traditional bilateral USAID missions. This basic approach has served USAID well for many years and has provided notable success stories even among some of the poorest countries in West and Central Africa. Generally, between the 1960s and the 1990s, USAID's assistance focused on problems and possibilities *within countries*. These problems included political and economic independence, basic human needs, problems associated with drought, rural development, health and family planning, local capacity building, and eventually national policy reform. The earlier successes were due at least partly to the match between the conditions in the countries and the kinds of assistance USAID offered.

As the 1990s come to a close, however, some of the most critical conditions in West and Central Africa that made previous approaches work have changed (including the contributions of other donors), and USAID consequently needs to re-examine some of its basic principles for working in the region. The most important changes take the form of opportunities, not constraints. If we are careful, USAID can take advantage of these changes, re-orient its strategy to support and enhance their effects, and take a position of leadership in West and Central Africa's development that is much larger than the amount of resources USAID can invest.

The proposed concept will allow greater flexibility for USAID to address regional issues and to foster development trends in a larger number of countries. By focusing its activities in West and Central Africa on support for political and economic liberalization, USAID will be riding the crest of perhaps the most important "wave" surging through the region, and will be taking the lead in two areas that are at the very core of American interests and foreign relations. By thinking and acting regionally, and at the same time establishing smaller but

more focused USAID presence in many countries rather than fewer, USAID will increase its chances for helping bring about changes in the region, and not just in a few countries.

It should be quite clear that the approach proposed in this concept paper, although consistent with many of USAID's current objectives, *represents a fundamental change* in how USAID would supply U.S. development assistance in West and Central Africa. In other words, it is a serious move "outside the box." The new development box is made of different material -- support for political and economic progress -- and it has a different shape -- a smaller and wider presence, held together by one regional office. Both the material and the shape need better definition. The strategy development that follows this concept paper must provide that definition.

Annex 1: Change, controversy, and alternatives

Controversy and change. The appearance of a radical departure from a current practice can generate a range of lively responses including support and praise. The critical reactions will include honest, substantive, negotiable disagreement on form and content, as well as more diffuse, emotional resistance that is understandable but harder to respond to. Since we have already encountered an ample range of praise and disagreement after circulating a draft of the concept paper in the field, we can anticipate some of the reactions from Washington readers and perhaps offer some clarifications. We hope the clarifications will address some of the critical concerns that some reviewers have already raised.

This concept paper is written from an unapologetically regional perspective. So it is hardly astonishing to find people disagreeing with it who have a dedicated commitment to bilateral assistance programs. For example, during discussions of an earlier draft with USAID/Mali, mission staff argued that regional programs should be designed to support the mission's bilateral activities that were helping bring progress to Mali, and that USAID country offices require a critical mass of resources that is greater than the concept paper proposes.

This is a perfectly logical and defensible position. But this concept paper argues exactly the reverse: that USAID representatives should carry out activities in support of broad regional objectives and that country representatives do not have to work in large bilateral "sustainable development" missions in order to be effective, if they are all following the same strategy. There is no unequivocally correct resolution to this dispute, because different assumptions will lead to different responses. Surely differences of this kind can be negotiated given the larger general agreement that an effective foreign assistance program in West and Central Africa requires both regional and country-based activities. And this is a far more worthwhile discussion than quarreling over whether the concept paper's proposal has elements that "were already tried 20 years ago, and failed" or that REDSO is really most interested in preserving its own existence by conquering the bilateral posts.

How much discussion of alternatives? This concept paper offers a very specific alternative to current practice, but it does so without much discussion of other possible choices or combinations of choices. Some reviewers found this frustrating because they were able to think of alternatives that the paper did not consider. And there is a huge variety of alternatives, some more important than others, that can be posited for nearly everything the concept paper discusses. Here are some examples of important alternatives not discussed in the paper. We do not discuss alternatives for how to deploy USAID's presence in the region or how to balance management responsibilities between the field and USAID/W. We do not discuss alternative substantive areas of emphasis in the region. We do not discuss different staffing arrangements or funding levels. We do not try to prioritize regional development constraints and issues; in fact, we list and describe constraints rather than analyze how they

relate to each other. We do not discuss the relative merits of bilateral and regional strategies. We do not discuss whether to support regional institutions and, if so, which ones are the best candidates. Finally, we do not discuss possible activities to design in support of the larger objectives.

We deliberately chose not to lengthen the paper and complicate the presentation of its main points with discussions of alternatives we felt were less appropriate than the ones in the paper. Others with different views will be more effective advocates of their alternatives, and we expect to hear from them during the paper's formal review. We also chose not to provide many implementing details that some people crave because we wanted to help keep the review of the concept paper focused on the broader issues and not the details.

All of the issues mentioned above -- and many others! -- represent critical choices for USAID. After USAID/W reviews the approach in this concept paper, and if USAID/W decides to proceed with developing a strategy for West and Central Africa based on that approach, the issues not covered by the concept paper and their alternatives need to be addressed -- during the development of a strategy for West and Central Africa. At that time, with an appropriate commitment from USAID/W and from the field, USAID can give those issues the attention they deserve.

To help begin that process, we have included a set of issues that can be used as the basis for an issues meeting during the review of this concept paper.

Annex 2: Organizations consulted during the preparation of the WCA Strategy Concept Paper

1. Donor organizations

United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

United Nations Fund for Population Activity (UNFPA), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso)

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire),
Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), and Ottawa.

GTZ (German International Agency for International Cooperation), Abidjan, Côte
d'Ivoire, and Frankfurt, Germany.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Lomé (Togo)

European Union, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Lomé (Togo), and Brussels (Belgium).

United Nations AIDS Control Program, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

World Health Organization (WHO), Brazzaville (Congo), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Lomé
(Togo)

Japan Embassy, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Dakar
(Senegal)

World Conservation Union (IUCN), Dakar (Senegal)

African Development Bank (ADB), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

International Development Research Center (IDRC), Dakar (Senegal)

World Bank, Dakar (Senegal), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Lomé (Togo), Abidjan
(Côte d'Ivoire)

Danish Embassy, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Mission Française de Coopération et d'Action Culturelle (French International
Development Agency), Lomé (Togo), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), and Paris (France).

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Paris (France).

Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), Frankfurt (Germany).

Caisse française de développement, Paris (France).

Dutch Cooperation Agency, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Institut Français de Recherche Scientifique pour le Développement en Coopération (ORSTOM), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Peace Corps, Lomé (Togo)

United States Information Service (USIS), Lomé (Togo)

2. US and European PVOs, and USAID implementing partners

Cooperative League of USA, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

InterAction, Washington, D.C.

BASICS (... Child Survival), Dakar (Senegal)

Family Health International (FHI), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

Social Marketing for Change (SOMARC), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

Family Health and AIDS prevention in West and Central Africa (FHA-WCA project)

Save the Children, United Kingdom, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Plan International, Dakar (Senegal)

CDC/RETRO-CI, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

Environnement et Développement dans le Tiers Monde (ENDA-TM), Dakar (Senegal)

AFRICARE, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

CARE International, Lomé (Togo)

Organisation de la Charité pour le Développement International (OCDI), Lomé (Togo)

Child Survival and Family Planning project, Dakar (Senegal)

Population Council, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

International Program from Training in Health (INTRAH), Lomé (Togo)

3. Regional African Institutions

Centre Africain de Management et de Perfectionnement des Cadres (CAMPC), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

West African Enterprise Network (WAEN), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

Ecole Inter-Etats des Ingénieurs du Développement Rural (EIER), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Institut Pan-Africain de Développement (IPD/West Africa/Sahel Office), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa), Dakar (Senegal)

OMVS (Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal), Dakar (Senegal)

Union Inter-Africaine des Droits de l'Homme (UIDH), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

International Crop Research Institute for Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Niamey (Niger)

Funds of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS Funds), Lomé (Togo)

Banque Ouest-Africaine de Développement (BOAD), Lomé (Togo)

Groupe d'Etude et de Recherche sur la Democratie et le Développement Economique et Social (GERDDES-Afrique), Lomé (Togo)

4. Host Governments

Premier Ministre de Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

Ministère de la Santé, Lomé (Togo)

Ministère de la Promotion Feminine et des Affaires Sociales, Lomé (Togo)

Ministère de la Santé, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et de la Recherche, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Direction de l'Ecologie, Lomé (Togo)

Commission Nationale de Décentralization, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Comité National pour le CILSS (CONACILSS), Dakar (Senegal)

5. National African Institutions (NGOs, public institutions, etc.)

Santé Familiale (SANFAM), Dakar (Senegal)

Institut Pédagogique du Burkina (IPB), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Centre National d'Education pour la Santé, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Ligue des Consommateurs du Burkina, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Ecole Nationale Supérieur de Travaux Publics, Yamoussoukro (Côte d'Ivoire)

Institut National de Santé Publique, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

Institut National Supérieur de l'Enseignement Technique (INSET), Yamoussoukro (Côte d'Ivoire)

Les Amis de la Terre, Lomé (Togo)

Union Nationale des Transporteurs du Togo, Lomé (Togo)

Port Autonome de Lomé (Togo)

Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme, Lomé (Togo)

Ecole Africaine des Métiers de l'Architecture et de l'Urbanisme, Lomé (Togo)

Ligue Togolaise des Droits de l'Homme, Lomé (Togo)

Union des Routiers Burkinabe pour la Lutte contre le Sida (URBLS), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Centre d'Etudes pour le Développement Africain (CEDA), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

6. U.S. Embassies

Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

Lomé (Togo)

Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Dakar (Senegal)

7. USAID Operational Units

USAID/Dakar (Senegal)

USAID/Bamako (Mali)

USAID/Conakry (Guinea)

USAID/Accra (Ghana)

USAID/Cotonou (Benin)

8. Conferences

FAO Regional Conference for Africa, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), April 16-20, 1996

Regional Workshop on the Tokyo Declaration on African Development, Yamoussoukro (Côte d'Ivoire), July 23-25, 1996

West and Central Africa Concept Paper, December 1996

Forum Régional sur l'Enseignement de la Santé de la Réproduction en Afrique Centrale et Occidentale, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), September 23-27, 1996

Regional Trade of Horticultural Products in West and Central Africa, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) September 18-20, 1996

Décentralisation et Capacités Institutionnelles, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), November 19-21, 1996

Annex 3: Sources Cited

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Annex 4: Draft Issues for an Issues Meeting

During the development of this concept paper, both before and after earlier drafts were circulated in the field, many issues emerged that a *strategy* for West and Central Africa (as opposed to a *concept paper*) should address. Each of the issues bears on the strategy's basic objective: guiding the Africa Bureau's decisions and choices about how to deliver development assistance in the region. These issues were not included in the concept paper for the following reasons:

- The concept paper should be as concise and straightforward as possible. Adding a large number of *important but not essential* issues would require a much longer and more complex paper. Moreover, although the drafting team has opinions about all of the following issues, many of them would generate extensive discussion and debate themselves, drawing attention away from the larger and more fundamental issues that we have treated in the concept paper.
- Any of the following issues can be discussed (and even decided) without referring to a "larger" theme, such as proposed in this concept paper. But the discussions would be more productive and the decisions more consistent, systematic, and better if they were made in the context of a larger objective like the one proposed here. Thus many of these issues would be useful to consider in the context of reviewing the concept paper.
- Many of the following issues are outside REDSO/WCA's manageable interests to address in this paper. Examples include which sectors USAID should emphasize in the region, which countries or geographic areas should receive the most attention and resources, how USAID should allocate management responsibilities and staff between USAID/W and the field, and how a strategy for West and Central Africa should deal with complex disasters. The Africa Bureau will have to decide which of those issues it wants to address in a full strategy and how to do so. We suspect that the decision on how to do so will mean either a very participatory or a very restrictive approach (there is justification for either choice).
- Many of the issues, while stated simply here, are actually very complicated and would require more time, effort, and expertise to answer adequately than REDSO/WCA could provide during production of the concept paper. Many of these issues should be addressed during the development of the full strategy.

1. What is the proper relationship between USAID's interests and objectives in a particular country and USAID's interests and objectives in a region?

Discussion. This concept paper argues that a regional strategy must provide the context for country-based strategies. The bilateral USAIDs argue that a regional strategy must support bilateral strategies or fill in the gaps that bilateral strategies cannot deal with. The five “sustainable development” bilateral posts in West Africa pursue several U.S. Government objectives, not only the sustainable development of the bilateral host country. For example, the United States identifies global and regional issues (environment, HIV/AIDS) that are in the U.S. Government’s interest to address. In some cases, the Congress feels so strongly about these issues that it earmarks funds for them or sets “targets.” These issues may contribute to the sustainable development of bilateral recipients, but at the same time they may compete for resources with other sustainable development requirements that are more important for a particular country (for example, agricultural production or the growth of the formal private sector).

Traditionally, USAID tries to pursue global objectives (such as improving the environment) while contributing to the sustainable development of the bilaterally assisted country. But it is possible that environmental problems can occur in areas where sustainable development is beyond our manageable interest or where USAID does not have a bilateral presence. Then what should USAID do? Add resources until we can affect sustainable development or not engage the global issue because we lack the resources for a more comprehensive effort?

2. Does a regional strategy supporting political and economic liberalization mean that USAID will carry out only activities in democracy/governance and economic growth? If not, how can USAID continue its involvement in some of the more traditional sectors?

3. Earmarks and targets create both opportunities and headaches. How can USAID improve the management of earmarks and targets under a regional strategy for West and Central Africa?

4. The small USAID offices will require access to a certain level of resources in order for country-based USAID staff to exert influence on the development agenda in their country. What kinds of resources and at what levels will these offices require? What kinds of skills will be required for the USDH staff? Will FSNs be required, and if so, with what kinds of skills? Will the country offices have anything like an operating year budget to apply in support of the regional strategy? If so, how will those funds be managed? Assuming the NMS becomes functional in a reasonable period, what are the implications for the USAID offices?

How will the large regional USAID office relate to USAID/W, particularly to the Africa Bureau and the Global Bureau? What kinds of authority will the regional office have over the small USAID offices?

5. What are the theoretical and practical relationships between complex disasters and sustainable development? What are the implications of these relationships for USAID's activities in West and Central Africa?

Discussion. Brian Atwood has said repeatedly²⁷ that USAID needs to be more effective in predicting, preventing, and managing complex disasters, the central features of post-Cold War foreign affairs that should concern us most. A West and Central Africa strategy for USAID would have to address this problem, because it is obviously a critical factor in the development picture in that region. Even more important is that USAID is arguably the most likely part of the U.S. Government to be able to deal effectively with complex disasters (think of State and DOD as alternatives).

USAID tries to define the relationship by arguing that sustainable development reduces the causes of complex disasters²⁸. But there are many troublesome counter examples -- disasters

²⁷See for example, Statement of J. Brian Atwood Administrator U.S. Agency for International Development House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs, April 24, 1996. "I and other members of the Administration have not been shy about arguing for an expanded role for foreign assistance in our diplomacy. We have argued that the prospect of disorder and the failure of nations to develop is a legitimate strategic threat -- possibly, THE strategic threat in the post-Cold War era. It is a strategic threat because it endangers our economic health and political security. It is a strategic threat because it threatens our future markets and the well-being of the next generation of Americans. We have pointed out that this threat is rooted in persistent problems of development."

²⁸See USAID General Notice of 11/7/95, "We agreed that we must maintain and enhance our capacity to respond to crises with humanitarian relief and we must continue to view that relief as part of a continuum that will lead to a nation's recovery and to its long-term development." "Finally, we recognized that in a time of budgetary constraints, it is challenging indeed to make a case for long-term, sustainable development. But addressing the root causes of instability is the most cost effective approach to peace and prosperity. We were encouraged that this case has been strongly supported in recent studies showing a direct correlation between development indicators and the vulnerability of nations to implode and collapse. We also recognized that we must work to enhance the relevance of our work to crisis prevention, and we discussed ways that could be done. We acknowledged that further study is required in that current development theory, analysis and practice do not yet adequately factor in the need to counter or mitigate potential instability."

See also, Statement of J. Brian Atwood Administrator U.S. Agency for International Development House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs, April 24, 1996, "We will have to cut funding for agricultural development and small and microenterprises which are critical to creating employment and income, breaking the cycle of poverty in Africa and Latin America, and preventing future crises."

See "Crisis Prevention, mitigation, and recovery: linking relief and development through public health," paper prepared for the Health and Human Resources Analysis for Africa Project (HHRAA) under SARA Contract Task Order 263, undated. The executive summary states "Chronic underdevelopment combined with a precipitous shift in international donor policy towards SSA [Sub-Saharan Africa] are among the principal causes of SSA instability and vulnerability to disasters. . . . [A] paradigm shift is needed to examine and

occurring in the presence of “progress” and not occurring where there has been very little apparent “progress.”

In addition, as a recent scholarly article²⁹ demonstrates, complex disasters present very special problems for donors. Although most of the factors associated with failed states are closely related to development objectives, they are also internal and not readily amenable to donors’ policies. “The dilemma for the international community in the post-Cold War is this: while it is neither moral, practical nor politically feasible to ignore the problems in failed states, there is a serious lack of knowledge of how best to help solve these problems.”³⁰

The article concludes that the international community might be able to affect the fates of some of potential failed states, but only under the best of circumstances. “Countries can be nudged towards the promised land, but they cannot be forced by others to enter it at gunpoint; ultimately they have to do so on their own and, realistically, not all will.” Whether one agrees with this argument or not, the problem of failed states, which is the most intractable aspect of “complex disasters,” deserves a special degree of treatment that this concept paper cannot provide.

Finally, it is difficult to claim that a strong USAID presence moderates complex disasters. There are just too many counter examples here as well. According to OFDA, complex

strengthen the linkages between disasters and development interventions. . . . [including] How to design long-term development programs that can successfully address the short-term contingencies faced by populations affected by chronic or recurrent disasters.” (p. 2)

This approach attempts to apply principles of disaster planning for health crises to other kinds of crisis by suggesting “development of tools and methods for risk mapping or vulnerability assessment of populations to priority crisis, *including conflict crises, complex humanitarian crises, natural disasters, and emerging disease crises.*” (p. 4; emphasis added). Although this approach has too many serious conceptual difficulties to be included in the concept paper, a full strategy should consider whether the connections between development and complex crises justify merging them programmatically.

See also USAID’s FY97 Congressional Presentation, which says, in the Africa Overview, section on preventative diplomacy, “. . . USAID has a responsibility to look beyond the crises and to invest in development programs that help redress the root causes of crises. To the extent USAID is successful in preventing crises or mitigating their destructive and costly impact, Africa can prosper and the United States saves money.” (<http://www.info.usaid.gov/pubs/cp97/afr/afrov1r.htm>.)

²⁹Jean-Germain Gros, “Towards a taxonomy of failed states in the New World Order: decaying Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and Haiti,” *Third World Quarterly* (Vol. 17, No. 3), 1996, pp. 455-471. This very interesting article proposes a system for classifying “failed states” and analyzing their causes.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 46.

emergencies occurred recently or are occurring now in the following USAID bilateral alumni³¹: Afghanistan, Burundi, Haiti, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, and Zaire; and there have been serious political reversals in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and The Gambia. Thus even if there are good reasons why these are bad counter examples, they raise too many issues for the concept paper to deal with. If USAID wants to pursue this line of thought, it will have to do so separately or as part of the post-concept paper strategy development.

6. How can USAID have a strategy for West and Central Africa and not include Nigeria and Zaire? How can USAID define possible programs in these two places? What would it take to justify a larger bilateral presence in either, without requiring a "sustainable development" national strategy? What other kinds of presence make sense from a technical developmental view? From an "earmark-centric" perspective? Under the "partnership" theme in this concept paper?

³¹See *Annual Report FY 1995*, OFDA, Table of Contents, pp. 3-4.