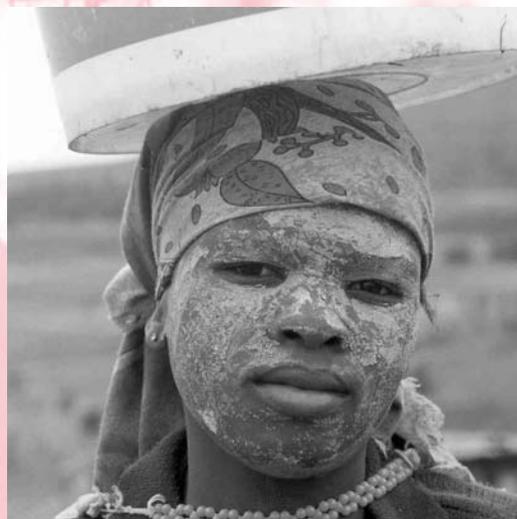


Women 2000

BEIJING PLUS FIVE

The USAID Commitment



**UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT**



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Dear Friends:

Since 1973 the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has worked to ensure that U.S. development assistance programs help improve the status of women in developing countries. In the early 1970s, the United States was one of the first major donors to recognize that lasting results would not be realized unless women were full and equal partners in the development process.

The small community of development practitioners and activists in developed and developing countries that took up this challenge so long ago has grown over the years to include bilateral and multilateral donors, host country governments, and civil society organizations. The U.N. world conferences on women, beginning in Mexico City in 1975 through Nairobi in 1985 to Beijing in 1995, have been crucial to the growth and strength of this community.

As the Director of USAID's Office of Women in Development, it is my privilege to submit this report highlighting USAID's efforts to help women and men in developing countries work for gender equality so that all people may participate fully in their communities and countries.

USAID is proud of its accomplishments, yet we recognize that for all that has been achieved, much more remains to be done. It is fitting, as we enter a new century, to examine the progress that has been made, to define the challenges still to be confronted, and to renew our commitment to eliminating the barriers to women's full participation in the social, economic, and political lives of their societies.

Katherine M. Blakeslee
Director
Office of Women in Development

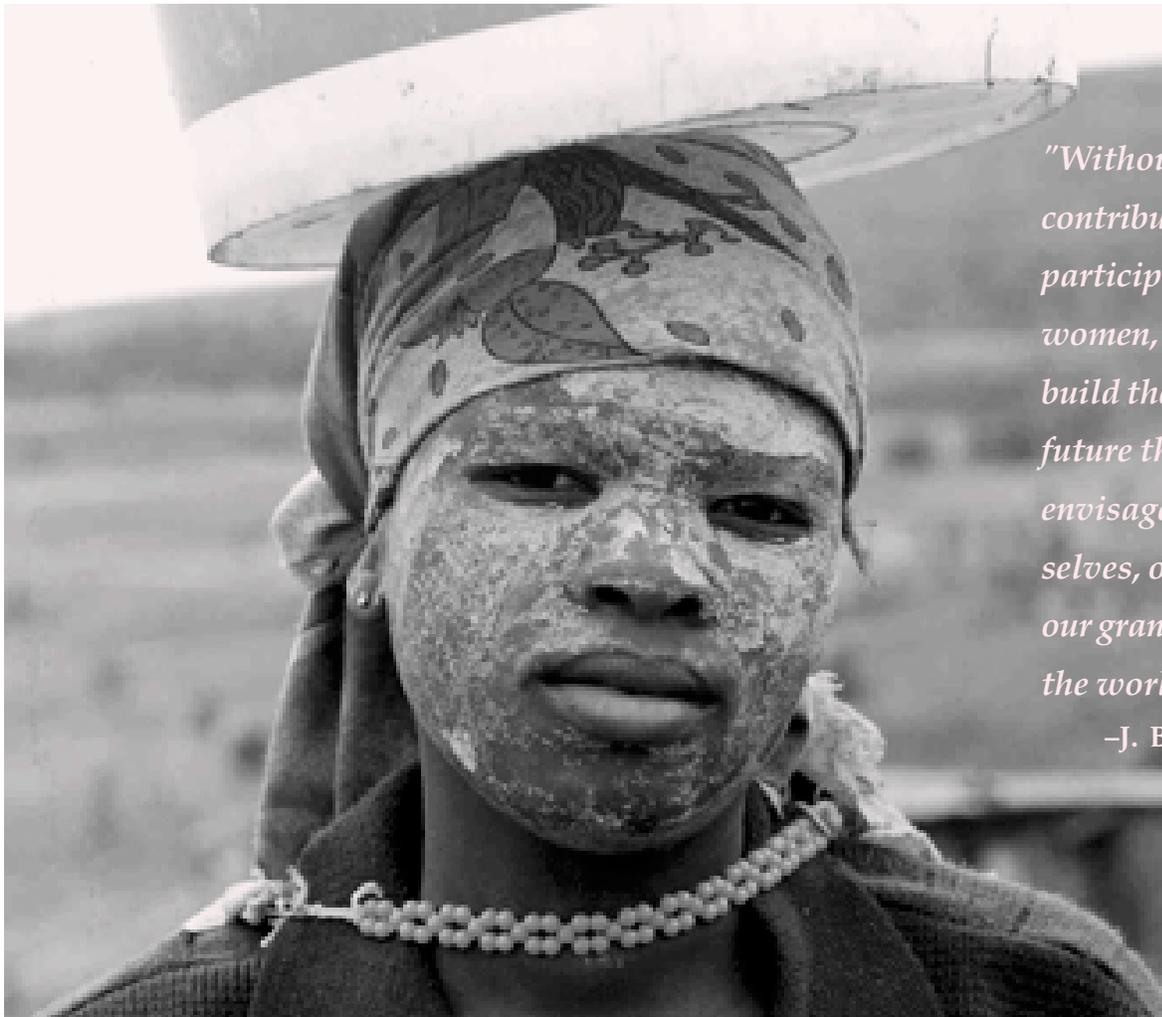
1 Introduction and Overview

In September 1995, the United States was one of 189 countries to participate in the U.N. Fourth Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, and to adopt, unanimously, the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*.

Calling for measures that ranged from protecting the rights of the girl child to promoting economic and political opportunities for women, the *Platform for Action* was considered the most far-reaching and comprehensive statement on women's rights ever adopted by so many countries.

Commitments evidence the good will of those who pronounce them, whether they are governments, the international community, or nongovernmental organizations, and are critical components of any action plan. The translation of commitments into actions and results signals the willingness of actors to engage, exert pressure, persuade, expend time and effort, and lead.

Like many of the signatories to the *Platform for Action*, the United States undertook dual responsibilities. All countries pledged to



"Without the full contribution and participation of women, we cannot build the kind of future that we envisage for ourselves, our children, our grandchildren, and the world at large."

—J. Brady Anderson,
Administrator,
U.S. Agency for
International
Development



pursue to the best of their abilities the Platform's goals in their national laws and public policies. As a major donor country with substantial resources to assist the development of poorer countries, the United States also committed to integrating the objectives of the Beijing consensus into its foreign assistance programs.

Each year since the Beijing conference, the President's Interagency Council on Women (PICW) reports on U.S. progress in implementing the *Platform for Action* at home. The international development portfolio of the United States is implemented, primarily, by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Since 1995, USAID has committed a sizable portion of its resources, an average of \$500 million annually, to advancing women's economic, social, and political status, and has played a critical leadership role in helping countries in all regions of the world fulfill their Beijing promises.

To mark the fifth anniversary of the U.N. Fourth Conference, this report surveys USAID's endeavors to achieve the goals of the *Platform for Action*. It also assesses the Agency's progress and identifies the challenges that remain unmet. The 2000 PICW report covers the activities of the entire U.S. federal government according to each of the Platform's 12 critical areas. This USAID report collapses the 12 areas of concern used in the *Platform for Action* into six categories: the girl child, basic human rights for women and girls, health and education, economic growth and poverty reduction, and women's political participation.

The activities this report describes are meant to illustrate the scope and variety of USAID's investment in improving the status of women in developing countries and are by no means a comprehensive catalogue of Agency undertakings. These efforts have sometimes met with singular success, although progress in some sectors is noticeably more difficult. This report therefore concludes with a final section that offers a critical review of the challenges to the more effective integration of gender in development programming that lie ahead.

2 The Girl Child

Recognizing that the social processes shaping the lives of women first take effect on the daily routines of young girls, USAID gives critical attention to girls' education, health, and safety.

Support for Girls' Education

Too many young girls are working or starting families of their own, and far too few attend school, circumstances that are often closely related.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) reports that, worldwide, at least 120 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 worked full time in 1998. If part-time work is included, the number rises to 250 million. According to most estimates, three-fifths of these children are boys; most estimates, however, fail to take account of unpaid work in family enterprises or within the household. If full-time housework were included, according to the ILO, the number of economically active girls would increase to match that of boys, and the population of working children would increase significantly. Working full time in the home, the ILO believes, explains one-third of all girls' nonattendance at primary school.

The same year that U.N. members were meeting in Beijing, USAID launched the Girls' and Women's Education Initiative. Operating in 17 priority countries, the initiative is a major part of USAID's \$50-million-a-year investment in overcoming the social and physical barriers to girls' education. Building more schools, buying new books, and training more teachers expand the educational infrastructure available to developing countries. But USAID has learned that, by themselves, these actions will not sufficiently increase enrollment of girls in primary school or their completion rates. This requires mobilizing human and financial resources from private businesses and other civil society agencies to complement those of the government.



Many of the barriers to girls' education lie outside the limits of a developing country's school system and are rooted deeply in each country's economic, political, and cultural experiences.

The benefits of girls' education are undisputed: labor productivity increases, fertility rates fall, all family members are healthier, and mothers with at least a basic education are more likely to raise educated children, both boys and girls. But parents frequently perceive girls' education as an unaffordable expense, and the benefits to be gained from girls' labor seem more urgently valuable than the longer term benefits to be gained from their education.

To overcome this disincentive, USAID helps communities design and implement their own programs for encouraging and enabling girls to attend school. Local community control of these programs, USAID has learned, is a critical ingredient in their success. The government of Guatemala, for example, has instituted a publicly funded scholarship program for girls' primary education that supports 46,000 girls attending 2,600 schools.

USAID's approach to girls' education recruits supporters for these efforts from every walk of life: private business and religious leaders, community activists, local political and government officials, unions and nongovernmental organizations. The initiative works with media professionals and sports celebrities. Enlisting these decision makers, opinion shapers, and role models as agents for change, program officials help school authorities draw upon a broad base of community support to design effective programs for increasing girls' enrollment and retention in primary education.

In Morocco, the Wafabank and other private-sector organizations have launched the "One-Bank, One-School" campaign. Individual banks "adopt" a local school and pledge financial support for school maintenance, educational materials, and other needs, such as testing students' eyesight and hearing, or supplying schools with clean water. Wafabank officials and staff also assume many of the managerial responsibilities of school administrators. These commitments forge a strong link between the local business community, educators, and parents; one result is an increase in girls' enrollment and retention.

There are now 600 bank branches committed to participating in the program.

The Girl's and Women's Education Initiative in Guinea helps local communities design campaigns to keep girls from withdrawing from school. In Uganda, USAID is helping the government develop a program to protect school girls from social harassment that too often pressures them into quitting school, and in Guatemala, USAID is helping devise activities to create opportunities for girls' education among indigenous populations.

The Intercultural Bilingual Education Program is one example of community-based education that uses collaborative learning, peer teaching, self-instructional guides, and other active learning techniques to encourage increased participation by girls. The program has been active in Mali since 1995. During its first three years, the fraction of school-aged girls enrolled in school increased from 33 to 41 percent. Officials predict that by the end of this year, the percentage of girls attending school will have increased to 43 percent. In Benin, Guatemala, Guinea, Morocco, Peru, and other countries, decision makers from the government and private sector, including leaders of religious





and media organizations, have formed national girls' education networks that are mobilizing resources to develop projects and programs for girls' education as well as advocating for stronger policies.

Combating Female Genital Cutting

Increasing the commitment of decision makers throughout civil society to girls' education and overcoming families' inclination to put their daughters to work instead of enrolling them in school are only part of USAID's focus on the girl child. Equally important is the Agency's work to end female genital cutting, especially in Africa. Each year, as many as 2 million girls are at risk of becoming victims of this practice, with severe consequences for chronic physical and psychological health. Tightly woven into the fabric of many societies, the practice crosses religious, ethnic, and cultural lines. USAID recognizes female genital cutting as a harmful, if traditional, practice that violates the health and human rights of women and hinders development.

USAID opposes any practice of or support for female genital cutting and works toward the goal of total elimination of this practice. Under no circumstances does USAID support the practice of female genital cutting by medical personnel.

Practiced by many communities around the world, including the Bohra of India and some ethnic groups in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, the highest prevalence of female genital cutting occurs in 28 African countries, where it ranges from 43 percent in Côte d'Ivoire to 97 percent in Egypt.

USAID has established programmatic guidelines for working on this problem, drafted an Agency-wide policy, and supported local organizations in their quest to eradicate this practice. Funding has been provided for projects in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Eritrea, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, and Senegal. These programs are making a difference in girls' lives.

In Egypt, USAID supported a "positive deviance approach" to identify positive role models who had withstood social pressures and not had their daughters cut or who advocate against the practice. Through a systematic interview process with these

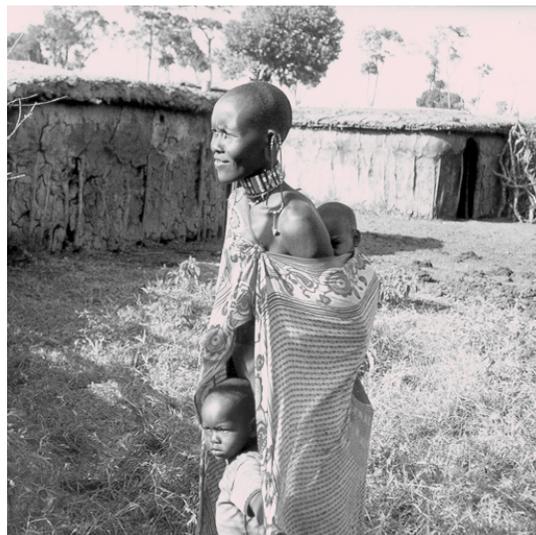


women, nongovernmental organization staff and community leaders were able to determine the factors that allowed women and men to go against the traditional demands of society. The process of the positive deviance approach, used for the first time in the context of female genital cutting, has broken the traditional silence and acceptance surrounding the practice and resulted in innovative programs and new advocates willing to actively participate in efforts to end the practice.

In the Gambia, USAID supported nongovernmental organizations to work in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders—community members, circumcisers, and religious and local leaders—to design an alternative rite of passage curriculum for the traditionally important girls’ initiation ceremonies. The new curriculum emphasizes important aspects of Gambian culture and provides instruction in health, hygiene, and religion, yet eliminates the cutting of young girls. This new curriculum, combined with reproductive health education classes for women, has led more than 30 circumcisers to abandon their profession and take on new roles as village health educators.

In the Kolda region of Senegal, 88 percent of young girls are subject to undergoing this practice. USAID has funded village empowerment projects in other areas of Senegal, focusing on a human rights approach to health education. Extending these projects into Kolda, villagers are informed about the practice’s long-term health effects and the growing number of neighboring villages that have repudiated female genital cutting.

These education campaigns, which brought together local religious leaders, traditional village elders, and government representatives, produced a public declaration to discontinue this practice adopted by a delegation of 2,500 men and women representing 80,000 villagers living in 105 communities.



Reducing Adolescent Pregnancy

Each year, more than 13 million adolescent girls become pregnant in developing countries. This event can double a young girl’s family responsibilities, and for most girls it shuts forever the doors to education and opportunity. To help discourage premature sexual activity by adolescent girls, USAID’s Focus on Young Adults Program encourages health officials and community leaders to introduce reproductive health classes in schools, establish outreach programs for young people at youth centers, and to provide “youth friendly” services at health clinics.

One example can be found in Jamaica, where USAID is funding a local program to help teenage mothers return to school, complete their educations, and avoid future unexpected pregnancies. More than 22,000 adolescent mothers have returned to school since the program’s inception in 1997, and only 1.4 percent of participating girls experience a second pregnancy during any given year. A recognized success by U.S. and Jamaican authorities, the program is now active island-wide and funded primarily by the Jamaican government.

3 Basic Human Rights

"I believe that of all the forces that will shape the world of the 21st century, the movement to recognize and realize the rights of women will be among the most powerful."

—Madeline Albright, U.S. Secretary of State

While delegates convened the U.N. conference in Beijing, halfway around the world in Sierra Leone, rebel forces of the Revolutionary United Front swept through unprotected villages, driving rural noncombatants before them. Slaughter was indiscriminate, but killing was not their only objective. According to Human Rights Watch, "the [rebels] perpetrated systematic, organized, and widespread sexual violence against girls and women . . . planned and launched operations in which they rounded up girls and women, brought them to rebel command centers, and then subjected them to individual and gang rapes."

Five years later, reports of these attacks appeared in *The Washington Post* beneath the ominous headline "A War Against Women." The Revolutionary United Front was not alone in its blending of paramilitary violence with systematic sexual terrorism and predation. In Rwanda, both Hutu and Tutsi warriors have been accused of similar attacks, while the Balkan civil wars were notable for atrocities against girls and women.

International institutions for prosecuting and punishing those who commit crimes against humanity now must cope with the emergence of systematic rape as a weapon of war. These attacks pose an unusually stark challenge to women's internationally recognized human rights. The U.S. government supports efforts to prosecute these atrocities as human rights violations, and USAID is providing humanitarian assistance to help the victims of these campaigns.

These violations of women's basic human rights are as sensational as they are grotesque, but other, less visible challenges to the sanctity of human rights confront women throughout

many developing countries. These include the expanding global commerce in women as slaves, trafficked for forced labor or forced prostitution. These include not only domestic violence but also the difficulties women face afterwards from a legal system that does not recognize this violence as criminal or refuses to safeguard against this abuse.

As asserted in the U.N. charter and reaffirmed at the Beijing conference, universality is a defining feature of human rights. Governments that deny women rights, privileges, and entitlements otherwise conferred upon men violate basic human rights by definition. Thus, where women are prohibited from appearing in public without a male family escort, or cannot inherit property or own land, where legal or religious codes prohibit the education of girls or women, the offense reaches beyond political issues to strike at a woman's basic right to live a human life.

Protecting Rights Through Legal Literacy

Ensuring equal protection of women's human rights requires governments to enact and enforce laws that do not discriminate against women. But nondiscriminatory laws are only part of an effective defense of human rights. Women must also be aware that they are entitled to these protections and understand the institutions and procedures involved in enforcing these laws. Protecting human rights thus presumes that women will have basic "legal literacy." Much of USAID's work on behalf of women's human rights has supported locally organized public education campaigns directed at women and at local and national government agencies.

Since 1995, USAID has invested more than \$20 million to improve the protection of women's human rights. The bulk of these funds support local nongovernmental

organizations. Their activities include encouraging developing country governments to adopt and enforce nondiscriminatory laws protecting women's rights. These nongovernmental organizations conduct public education campaigns to spotlight women's legal vulnerability, draft model legislation to address the failures of their legal systems, and advocate for legislation strengthening the laws protecting women's human rights. When necessary, follow-up public education cam-

paigns are launched to inform women of the means at their disposal for enforcing these rights.

Violence Against Women

The United Nations cites violence against women as the single most pervasive violation of internationally recognized human rights. This violence takes multiple forms, from female



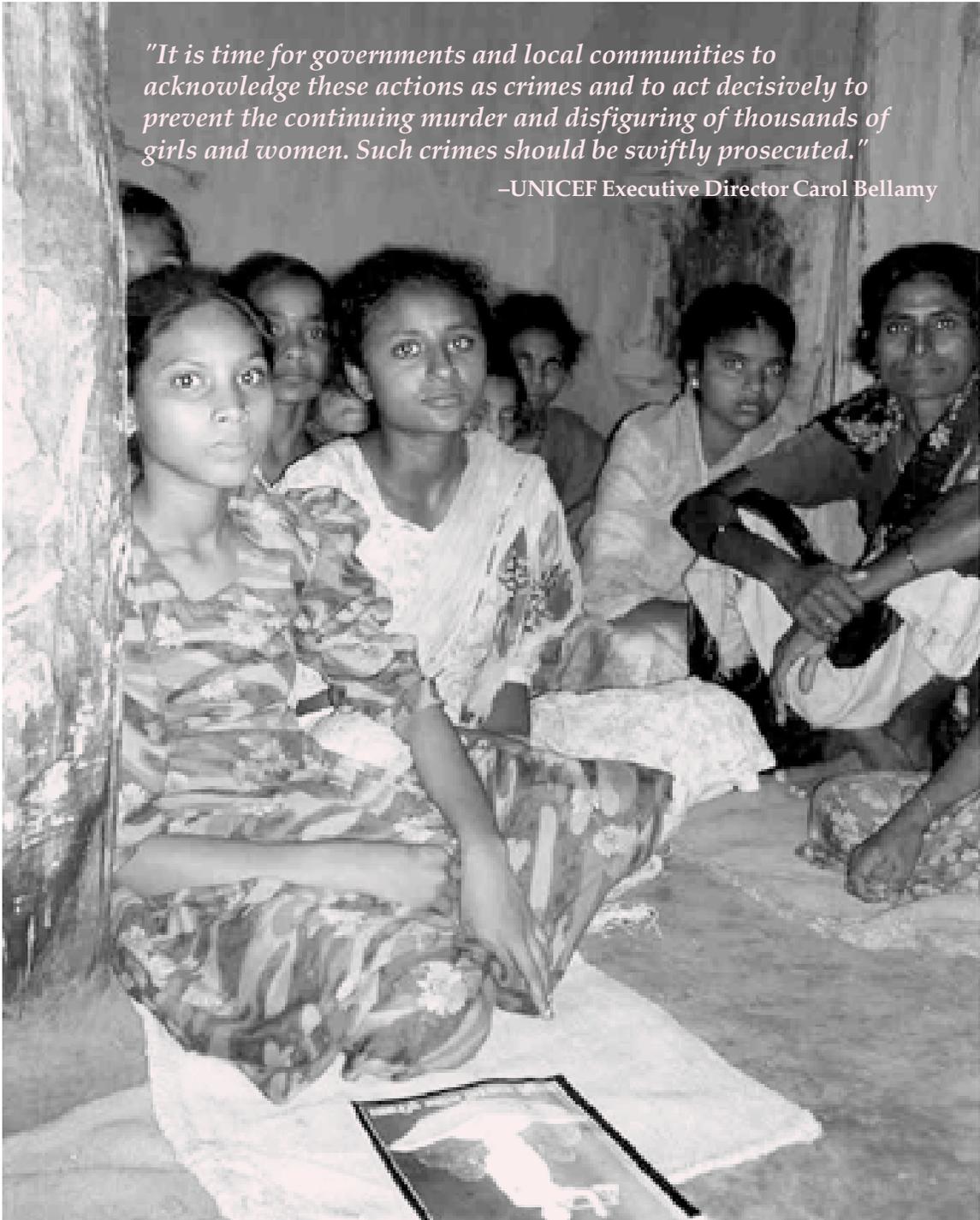
infanticide and sex-selected abortion to female genital cutting, "honor" crimes, and rape as a weapon of war. The costs of gender violence are only now being calculated. It is a daunting task requiring estimates of lost productivity resulting from workplace absence, healthcare expenses for medical treatment, and the costs of law enforcement and judicial review.

Because domestic violence violates women's human rights, threatens their health and that

of their children, restricts their labor force participation, and can enforce public silence when women would speak politically, it is becoming a central focus of USAID's efforts in a variety of development sectors. Some of these activities are directed to the needs of victims for information about their civil rights and the recourse available to battered women seeking justice or protection. Other activities address popularly held beliefs and attitudes about the causes of gender-based violence.

"It is time for governments and local communities to acknowledge these actions as crimes and to act decisively to prevent the continuing murder and disfiguring of thousands of girls and women. Such crimes should be swiftly prosecuted."

—UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy



USAID provides training to nongovernmental organizations and government agencies that assist victims with medical treatment, psychological counseling, or legal advice. Technical assistance is extended to local and national agencies so that legal frameworks can be made responsive to gender violence, including training so that judges, prosecutors, and constables can effectively enforce the laws crafted to protect women.

USAID funding, for example, helps support legal training, workshops, and public education campaigns operated by the Inter-American Human Rights Institute. The Institute selects domestic violence complaints and champions these cases before the courts of the applicable country to help secure precedent-setting decisions in these national court systems.

USAID provided critical support to Honduran nongovernmental organizations pressing for enactment of the Law Against Domestic Violence, a statute to mandate criminal sanctions against anyone found guilty of domestic violence. In addition, the Agency supported public education seminars on law and other reforms to the country's Criminal Code affecting women's rights. As a result, prosecutions of cases involving female victims of crime increased more than 200 percent between 1996 and 1997.

In India, USAID has funded research programs to document domestic violence and develop programs to prevent violence and support battered women. The three case studies funded by the Agency have demonstrated that domestic violence pervades Indian society, cutting across caste, class, religion, age, and education. Two of every five women interviewed reported instances of physical abuse by their husbands.

USAID also has supported research efforts that brought together public officials with representatives from nongovernmental organizations, local crisis centers and women's shelters, and academic researchers to collect and analyze national data on violence. The trends and patterns revealed by this research will support campaigns for legal reforms designed to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and provide legal protections to victims.

In Russia, USAID funding has trained hundreds of judges and prosecutors on issues related to violence against women at the Law Academy in Moscow and the Prosecutors Institute in St. Petersburg. Workshops on violence have been conducted in nine provincial cities for lawyers, police, prosecutors, judges, and concerned citizens. The Agency also has provided funding to the Russian Association of Crisis Centers to strengthen services to members, awarded small grants directly to individual crisis centers for immediate needs, and assisted Women's Wellness Centers, where primary care, education, and counseling are offered to the victims of domestic violence.

Programs to help prevent violence against women that the Agency has funded in Bulgaria have led to the formation of new anti-violence community groups and the creation of local counseling centers. Three cities have won USAID grants to fund community centers that extend state-of-the-art services for supporting abused women and conducting anti-violence public education campaigns.

Education and outreach efforts are central features of the Agency's assistance to local indigenous villages in Ecuador, where communities are experimenting with innovative dispute resolution methods to help reduce the incidence of domestic violence.

USAID has learned that combating domestic violence is easier if the issue can be made public and a matter for community concern. Often this requires challenging community



norms that rationalize men's violence and blame women victims for inciting incidents of domestic abuse. This is a central focus of the USAID-supported work of the Mexican Institute for Research on Family and Population.

Anti-Trafficking Initiatives

Sexual trafficking of young women and girls for forced prostitution has been an open, if illegal, enterprise in Southeast Asia for years. With the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, and the subsequent opening of borders between East and West, this trade has taken on global dimensions. The United Nations estimates that in 1997 traffickers extracted nearly \$7 billion in profits from sale of as many as 4 million women, children, and men. USAID has begun to confront this growing menace.

Not all trafficking involves forced prostitution. Children are trafficked not only for sexual exploitation but also for labor, and older women are often subject to confinement as domestic servants. But whether for forced

prostitution or manual labor, traffickers commonly lure their unwary victims into coercive situations with the promise of legitimate employment in distant cities or foreign countries. Once the victims have arrived at their destinations, they find themselves put to tasks they cannot refuse under conditions they cannot control.

Because most victims of trafficking are smuggled into destinations in violation of immigration laws and are working without proper documentation, police agencies easily mistake these victims for criminals. This confusion has the perverse effect of discouraging victims from attempting to escape. All too often, immigration and police officials are active accomplices in this enterprise.

The U.S. government has adopted an anti-trafficking policy that seeks to prevent this crime whenever possible, protect victims who can be rescued from their captors, and prosecute those engaged in trafficking.

USAID's first effort to combat trafficking brought the Agency into partnership with Ukrainian authorities to launch public education campaigns warning unsuspecting young women of the dangers of fraudulent employment "brokers." The Agency also supported community job training centers to help women gain the skills and contacts needed to find legitimate work. And it is helping train law enforcement agencies and border-control officials to detect trafficking transport patterns and fraudulent travel documentation.

Between 1996 and 1999, USAID provided more than \$1 million to support anti-trafficking initiatives in South and Southeast Asia and to provide healthcare and counseling services to women rescued from their captors. A national network of nongovernmental organizations has emerged in Bangladesh, with USAID support, providing legal assistance to victims and conducting public education campaigns. Similar efforts have been undertaken in Cambodia, Nepal, and the Philippines.



4 Health and Education

Access to education and healthcare is a basic human right of women and girls that the Beijing *Platform for Action* calls upon member governments to expand and protect. As the Platform noted, in 1995, 60 percent of the 100 million children without access to primary schooling were girls, and more than two-thirds of the 960 million illiterate adults in developing countries were women.

The Platform also states that “[w]omen have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The enjoyment of this right is vital to their life and well-being and their ability to participate in all areas of public and private life.” Similarly, the International Conference on Population and Development’s *Platform of Action* focused on the crucial importance of women’s reproductive health needs, including their access to services to enable them to plan their families, ensure healthy childbirth, and prevent HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

Healthcare and education are put forward as human rights because both are essential to fulfilling human potential. Moreover, both are guaranteed within the framework of international human rights conventions. Poor countries have difficulty expanding access to healthcare and education because these are expensive services to provide. Nonetheless, without these crucial investments, countries cannot develop or prosper.

In 1975, for example, more 720 million East Asians, 60 percent of the region’s population, were surviving on less than US\$1 a day. Twenty years later, that number had been reduced by half. This unprecedented decline in poverty was the result of equally unprecedented rates of economic growth, and although many factors combined to make this growth possible, most observers point to the massive investments in basic education and healthcare made by the governments of the region. Improving human capital is the first step toward a diversified economy capable of robust growth.



Preventive Healthcare

Nearly 600,000 women die—at least one woman every minute of every day—annually from preventable pregnancy-related causes; 99 percent of these deaths are in developing countries. Only one in 1,800 women in the developed world dies during childbirth or from pregnancy-related complications. In contrast, one in 48 women in developing countries can expect to die from these causes. One in four maternal deaths could be prevented by family planning, which postpones early, high-risk pregnancies, gives women's bodies a chance to recover from previous pregnancy, and helps women avoid unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions. The complications from unsafe abortion are a leading cause of maternal mortality, resulting in 75,000 preventable deaths a year. Furthermore, more than 150 million married women in the developing world still want to limit the number of or lengthen the interval between pregnancies but do not have access to modern methods of contraception.

Thirty-four million people now live with HIV/AIDS, 95 percent of whom are in the developing world. One of the most striking trends in the HIV/AIDS pandemic during the past decade has been its rapid spread among women. Women account for nearly half of new infections and are becoming infected at faster rates than men. Young women are particularly vulnerable. It is estimated that 70 percent of women infected with HIV are between the ages of 15 and 24. Women and girls not only face greater biological vulnerability than males, but they also must contend with social and economic forces that increase their likelihood of being infected with HIV.

USAID works in close collaboration with a wide variety of partners to improve the range and quality of preventive healthcare and essential medical services available to poor women in developing countries. The 60 countries participating in these projects make up 72 percent of the population of the developing world, excluding China.

Because better information is essential for USAID and its partners to focus the most effective programs where the needs are greatest, the Agency has supported national surveys on the status of women's and infants' health in 45 countries. These surveys collect

data on women's status, family planning, maternal mortality, sexually transmitted diseases, male roles and responsibilities, and female genital cutting.

To ensure that women receive needed family planning and reproductive health services, USAID has supported innovative service delivery and management systems and training of thousands of providers. Reflecting Morocco's progress toward self-reliance, USAID assistance to the country will be phased out over the next five years. Since 1983, modern contraceptive use in Morocco has more than doubled to 49 percent of married women of reproductive age. Average family size has declined by almost half to 3.1 children, and maternal deaths have dropped by more than 50 percent, from over 3,000 to less than 1,500 annually.

For many years, USAID has supported innovative community-based approaches to providing family planning and reproductive health services, often through networks of local nongovernmental organizations. CARE and Save the Children are among the U.S.-based organizations with which USAID is working, each bringing a wealth of experience in child survival, health, and community development, along with extensive networks of local partners. One influential model is in Bolivia, where a network of 24 nongovernmental organizations has been providing integrated reproductive and child health services to poor rural communities since 1988. Since then, prenatal care, safe deliveries, and modern contraceptive use have vastly increased in project areas.





A relatively recent development in the past decade for both USAID and the U.N. Population Fund is the provision of family planning assistance to countries of Eastern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia, where women had little access to family planning for many years and relied heavily on abortion. With modest inputs of training and technical assistance, the results have been dramatic. In Romania, for example, the use of modern contraceptive methods (primarily pills, IUDs, and condoms) has more than doubled between 1993 and 1999, from 14 to 29 percent of married women. During the same period, the incidence of abortion has declined by 35 percent, and abortion-related maternal mortality dropped by over 80 percent.

USAID has provided financial support since 1994 for pilot research-demonstration programs to improve treatment for complications of unsafe abortion in more than 30 countries, including Egypt, Kenya, Nepal, and Peru. These programs are showing success not only in saving the lives of women but also in providing women with the family planning information and services they need to avoid repeat abortions.

Guatemala offers a clear example of the central importance these programs have for the future of developing countries. The 1996 Peace

Accords ending that country's civil war mandated a national, five-year campaign to reduce maternal and infant mortality by 50 percent. USAID has supported this campaign by working to strengthen the capacity of local communities to provide these services. The Agency's MotherCare Project is helping the Ministry of Health extend obstetric services to poor women and newborns living beyond the reach of the healthcare system. Local communities, for instance, have opened maternity facilities, staffed by rotating teams of medical personnel, to bring formal healthcare to indigenous villages. Areas served by this project have experienced a sizable increase in the use of obstetric services. Where once just over half of all expectant mothers sought obstetric care, now more than three-quarters of all pregnant mothers receive obstetric care.

In El Salvador, USAID-supported projects are helping 30 nongovernmental organizations provide 90,000 poor women with health services that include prenatal care, midwife assistance, postnatal care, and family planning counseling. Follow-up services promote healthy infant nutrition and breast-feeding. Twelve thousand working women in El Salvador now have access to family planning and other health services, including cervical cancer screening and counseling for victims of



domestic violence, through the Demographic Association Rural Program.

Working with the U.N. Population Fund and other donors on approaches to prevent maternal deaths, USAID is training health workers in obstetric emergencies and supporting a community mobilization effort to promote safe motherhood in 75 districts in Nepal. USAID also has supported development and distribution of an inexpensive clean

home delivery kit to help ensure that women in remote mountainous areas of Nepal receive at least basic sanitation for normal deliveries.

With USAID assistance, the Government of Indonesia has adopted a program to reduce maternal mortality, including training 55,000 village midwives, promoting iron supplements for pregnant women, and launching a post-partum public education and outreach campaign.

In Uganda, the use of radio spots, voluntary counseling, and testing has encouraged young women ages 15 to 24 to delay the onset of sexual activities and encourage safer sex practices. As a result, their HIV prevalence has declined by 35 percent.

In Kenya, more than 1.1 million women are estimated to be infected with HIV, 13 percent of the adult female population. The unmet need for contraception and the rapid transmission of HIV/AIDS lend special urgency to efforts to increase the use of condoms. A USAID-funded program to promote subsidized sales of condoms now sells over 12 million condoms annually, triple the sales of just three years ago.



USAID recognizes the importance of helping women gain access to methods of disease prevention. The female condom is one such method, and the Agency's work in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa has demonstrated not only that this method is an effective approach to disease prevention but also that it can be successfully marketed in developing countries.

The Agency first test-marketed the female condom in Latin America in 1995. Subsequent programs have demonstrated the success of this device in Bolivian, Brazilian, and Haitian markets. Sales in Madagascar began in July 1996. Through the end of 1999, more than 12 million units had been sold through a network of 400 wholesale and 16,000 retail distributors nationwide. The Madagascar program is now active in all cities with high HIV/AIDS risk and along major transport routes.

Basic Education

"The first step is for societies to recognize that educating girls is not an option, it is a necessity."

—U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan
(from UNDP Newsfront)

Each year since the Beijing conference, USAID has provided just under \$100 million to support basic education in developing countries. Approximately half of these funds support programs to expand primary education opportunities for girls as well as local literacy projects for adult women.

Literacy training, USAID has learned, promotes a variety of complementary objectives. Local women's organizations often prove valuable resources for literacy projects. These groups are able to develop curricula that use local knowledge to help women simplify their daily tasks and responsibilities. The groups become more influential as their membership grows and becomes better educated. And women participants acquire more than basic literacy. They also gain essential experience in how to work as a team. Because many of these projects rely on self-instruction, participating women also gain a stronger sense of self-empowerment.

Since 1995, more than 500,000 Nepalese women have graduated from a USAID-supported 18-month program that combines basic literacy and numeracy training with

legal literacy and advocacy training. Participants of this program have proven eager to put their skills to the test. In 1997, thousands of these newly literate women ran for public office in their local governments, and hundreds were elected.

These education programs, structured along the lines of literacy classes, have focused on family planning, safe motherhood, nutrition, child hygiene, HIV/AIDS prevention, and sexual trafficking. More than 40,000 women have attended these classes since 1996, and they emerged better educated, healthier, and more active in civil society.

In South Africa, basic literacy instruction uses course materials carried on the Internet. These materials are printed and distributed to local trainers who tutor adult participants. But these materials can be easily revised and new materials distributed at little if any additional cost. The ability to substitute new and better literacy tools for less effective materials ensures that trainers will have available information most appropriate to the students they are assisting.

USAID's adult education assistance often supports groups that apply basic education to improve the skills or the health of participants. The LearnLink Project, for example, is helping local education groups provide training in high technology to school-aged students and adults in 15 countries, but its primary focus is on Benin, Ghana, and Paraguay. In Ghana, three cities operating community learning centers offer instruction in basic computer and Internet operations. Participants learn not only how to type but also how to use the Internet as an information resource. Only one-fourth of all LearnLink participants are women, but the project is employing creative outreach measures—street theater and community radio broadcasts—to increase women's enrollment.

With USAID's support, and that of other donors, more women and girls are gaining access to the healthcare and educational opportunities they need to develop their own human potential and to accelerate the development of their communities and countries. As the girls and women who participate in these programs become healthier and better educated, they also become better equipped to contribute to the economic and political development of their homelands.

5 Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction

"Concrete calculations demonstrate that there are enormous economic benefits to investing in women."

—Lawrence Summers, U.S. Secretary of Treasury

Of the 1.3 billion people surviving on less than US\$1 per day in 1995, women made up the vast majority. Thus, reducing poverty among women was the first measure to improve women's status identified in the *Platform for Action*.

USAID's efforts to reduce poverty among women range from basic support for social investments in health and education to advanced skills training. The Agency's programs promote institutional reforms to extend basic economic rights to women, such as the right to own or inherit property. Its agricultural extension efforts to improve farm productivity are actively recruiting greater participation by women producers. USAID-financed microcredit programs enable thousands of women to become small-scale entrepreneurs. And the Agency's support for business training helps ensure that participating women not only earn income but also acquire invaluable experience as managers of their own small businesses.

Although straightforward, the Agency's goal to encourage broad-based economic growth and agricultural development can be difficult to implement. Poverty can be reduced, however, when poor women and men are provided with an enabling economic environment and they are helped to acquire the resources and training they need to take advantage of economic growth opportunities. To ensure that poor women as well as men are reached often requires removing gender-based obstacles to economic growth, including addressing institutional inequalities limiting access to

education and training, and factors of production, such as credit, land, and labor. USAID frequently works through local associations and women's groups that have been organized by women to help them identify and meet their own needs. These groups are often the best methods of delivering the technical and financial resources USAID has to offer to the women who need them.

Ensuring Food Security

Sometimes the resource most urgently needed is basic nutrition. Where the poor are at risk of starvation, USAID helps improve food security. The PL 480 Food Aid Program serves as an international pipeline delivering food and instruction to poor communities around the globe. To help poor women feed their families, the Agency takes special care to work with local community groups. In India, for example, 3,000 women's groups participate in a variety of PL 480 food program activities, some of which were organized specifically to join the program's grain bank and its savings and credit projects.

USAID also supports agricultural research through Collaborative Research Support Programs (CRSPs), which draw on the expertise of U.S. universities and link U.S. and partner country researchers. CRSPs include several innovative efforts to work with women's groups and to improve women's income and nutritional status. Some examples include the development of two new strains of cowpeas through CRSP research that have increased production 2.4 times above the 20-year average levels in Senegal, the creation of a cowpea flake for cereals that has helped increase the amount of protein available to malnourished children in Ghana, the development of higher yielding peanut varieties in

Thailand, and the breeding of dual-purpose goats in Kenya.

Support to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) by USAID also targets the needs of women. Some of this work includes research into fortified rice and corn varieties that could help to alleviate micronutrient deficiencies found among rural populations. Several CGIAR programs have a gender focus, such as the Gender and Development Policy Program based at the International Food Policy Research Institute.

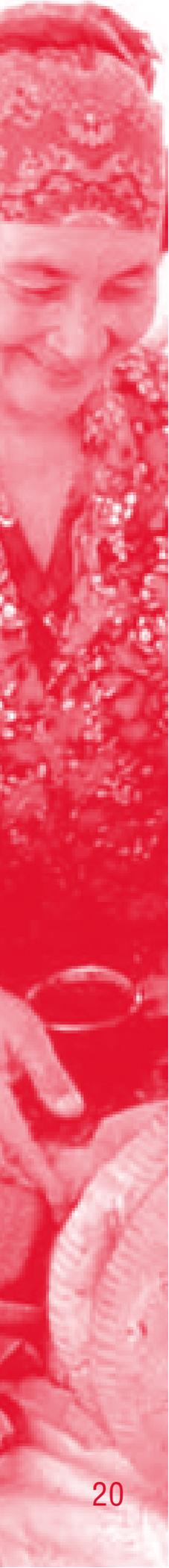
Women, despite being the backbone of the world's agricultural labor force, seldom have any role in setting the agricultural policies or priorities of developing country governments. Via Campesina is a worldwide network of peasant associations linking small- and medium-scale farmers, farm workers, rural women, and indigenous agrarian communities devoted to increasing the role of these groups in national policy making. With USAID support, the Via Campesina Women's Working Group was formed in 1996 to address the cultural, economic, and social barriers to women's participation in the larger organization and assist it in becoming a more effective advocate for small producers.

Among the group's concerns are national agricultural policies that often have the unintended effect of diminishing food security by encouraging the production of cash crops for export rather than diversified crop production to supplement household food needs. Food security is commonly understood as a function of three interrelated variables: availability, access, and utilization. Families that farm to meet their food needs may be reluctant to divert acreage into cash crop production that cannot serve their own nutritional requirements, but the extra income generated by cash crops ought to improve their overall food security. This result is achieved, however, only if adequate supplies of food are available at local markets at affordable prices. These choices and tradeoffs are often determined by a developing country's agricultural policies. By strengthening the role of women in Via Campesina, USAID helps strengthen the ability of local organizations to set local development priorities.

Rural Development— From Farm to Market

The Agency's agricultural assistance projects help the rural poor combine production for markets with production for home consumption, and women farmers are key participants in a variety of projects. In Bangladesh, nongovernmental organizations operating with USAID funding helped 1.25 million poor





families, representing 5.4 million beneficiaries, take up small-scale aquaculture and vegetable farming in 1998. Women either headed or maintained more than 70 percent of these families, and the average production of their fishponds, 1,950 kilograms per hectare, was double the national average output.

In Malawi, USAID is helping small family farmers respond to new economic opportunities. Cotton is a staple cash crop on these farms, but the crop is typically sold to intermediate traders who deliver the cotton to large cotton gins. USAID has helped 475,000 female-headed farm families join cotton cooperatives that deliver the product directly to gins for processing and export. In 1999, these women earned an average of 17 percent more than did neighbors who were not members.

In Albania, USAID supports programs to improve dairy production, and 97 percent of the participants are women dairy operators receiving training in new processing techniques and effective methods of livestock management and artificial insemination. This project has also helped these women dairy operators establish a credit union to promote savings and investment and to further increase their output.

The Agency has recognized that combining technical assistance to small-scale producers with financial innovations, such as creating credit unions to provide credit to producer associations, can increase output, promote more efficient production, and lay a foundation for future growth. Women have proved enthusiastic participants in several such projects. In Mali, USAID's Sustainable Economic Growth Program has helped women farmers gain critical access to irrigated land for rice production. The program has also organized 19 women's credit unions throughout the country, enabling 3,700 women to qualify for small loans in 1998, many of which supported rice farming. Thus, rice farming is growing increasingly popular among small-scale women farmers.

Microcredit for Microenterprise

USAID makes \$120 million a year available for microcredit programs; more than two-thirds of the borrowers are women. In Nicaragua, these loans have helped 9,000 women find gainful employment in agricultural export processing.

In Nepal, USAID has linked literacy training with entrepreneurial opportunities. The Women's Empowerment Program follows a simple plan. Women in local communities form self-help groups by pooling their meager savings. Over time, as these accumulate, women launch small businesses in goat and poultry raising, vegetable marketing, or biscuit-making. With the earnings from these enterprises, participating women buy the instructional materials needed for literacy and numeracy training. Groups number between 25 and 35 women, and last year, more than 450 women participated in the program's activities.

USAID's Program for the Recovery of the Economy in Transition works in Haiti to channel credit to small business owners, especially in the services and trade sectors. Working in conjunction with commercial banks and local nongovernmental organizations, the program has financed 6,000 loans worth US\$3.4 million. The project has a loan delinquency rate of only 3 percent.

USAID's experience with women's microcredit confirms that of other donors and institutions: women are frugal borrowers, prudent entrepreneurs, and low business risks.

Lenders usually extend credit to teams of women who most often operate their separate enterprises individually but remain jointly responsible for the entire amount borrowed.

The experience helps each woman acquire valuable management skills and invaluable self-confidence that comes with success on even the smallest scale. And because the team must repay the full amount of the loan, each member has a stake in the success of the others' enterprises as well as her own. The results are repayment rates that conventional commercial banks will never match.



Working with private banks in Jordan and the Jordan River Foundation, founded under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, USAID is helping extend new credit opportunities to the residents of Jordan's impoverished south. As many as 25,000 active borrowers are expected to qualify for loans by the end of next year, at least half of whom will be women. Already, businesses started with these loans are producing wicker furniture for local and international markets that is recognized for the quality of its construction and design.

The Village Banking Program now operating in Kyrgyzstan has led to the formation of 486 banking groups with 5,876 members, 90 percent of whom are women.

Microcredit may be essential to helping women launch small businesses, but by themselves these small loans cannot guarantee success. USAID is also developing training programs for microenterprises and small business. In Russia, for example, USAID offers business incubator services that help entrepreneurs develop business plans and acquire basic business skills. These incubators also extend small loans to qualified borrowers, 76 percent of whom have been women.

USAID's efforts in Jamaica support a wide variety of services to promote small business formation in the export sector, including microcredit lending and skills training. Women made up more than 70 percent of the microcredit borrowers, and by 1998, these activities had provided training to 630 women and contributed to the creation of 135,000 jobs for women.

The Agency continues to place considerable emphasis on extending business services to support microenterprise development. In 1998,



6 Political Participation

The economic transformations that over the past decade have changed the dynamic of international trade and development are matched by a global movement toward democratic government. The former has expanded the range of development options available to countries; the latter increases the likelihood that the policies these countries pursue will more accurately reflect the immediate and long-range priorities of their people.

Anything that restricts the scope of public participation not only weakens a country's democratic foundations but also has the immediate effect of limiting debate over its development priorities. No barrier is more pervasive than the laws, institutions, and

traditions that relegate women to subordinate roles in public life, and USAID supports a wide variety of initiatives promoting women's political participation.

Many of these activities help train women to stand as candidates for formal political office in village councils, provincial legislatures, and national parliaments. Others support local and national organizations in running public education campaigns to provide women with basic information about their country's electoral process or about pressing public issues, from the details of national budgeting to the issues at stake in constitutional referenda.





Strengthening Democracy At the Grassroots

By helping women—especially poor women with limited access to information or other political resources—take active roles in public affairs, these activities do more than enable women to affirm their basic human rights as citizens. They also increase the likelihood that emerging democracies will adopt policies that reflect the needs and priorities of the entire community.

In 1997, Thailand was adopting a new constitution. With USAID support, the Women and the Constitution Network, a coalition of nongovernmental organizations and individuals, sponsored 45 workshops across 32 provinces to provide women voters with information about the range of individual rights delineated in the charter and the means for having these rights enforced by local and national government agencies. Because

85 percent of the participants at these workshops were themselves women leaders active in local rural women's groups, the project was more than a simple public education campaign. The grassroots network it helped create and mobilize serves as a public interest watchdog.

Similar workshops have been conducted with USAID support in Bolivia, where 2,000 women leaders received training in procedures for registering voters and candidates for local public office. And almost 4,000 women in the Dominican Republic participated in a USAID-funded program bringing local women's groups together with municipal authorities to discuss social reform issues.

These public education campaigns help women understand the political processes of their countries and create opportunities for women to join the public debate about political issues. Equally important to increasing women's political participation is the

Agency's support for technical training so women can compete in the formal political arena as candidates for local and national office. The benefits of these workshops extend far beyond the comparatively few women who are able to participate in this training. When the *Platform for Action* was being debated, only 10 percent of the members of national legislatures throughout the free world were women. USAID is confident that only by investing in the recruitment and training of women candidates at the local and national levels can this number be increased.

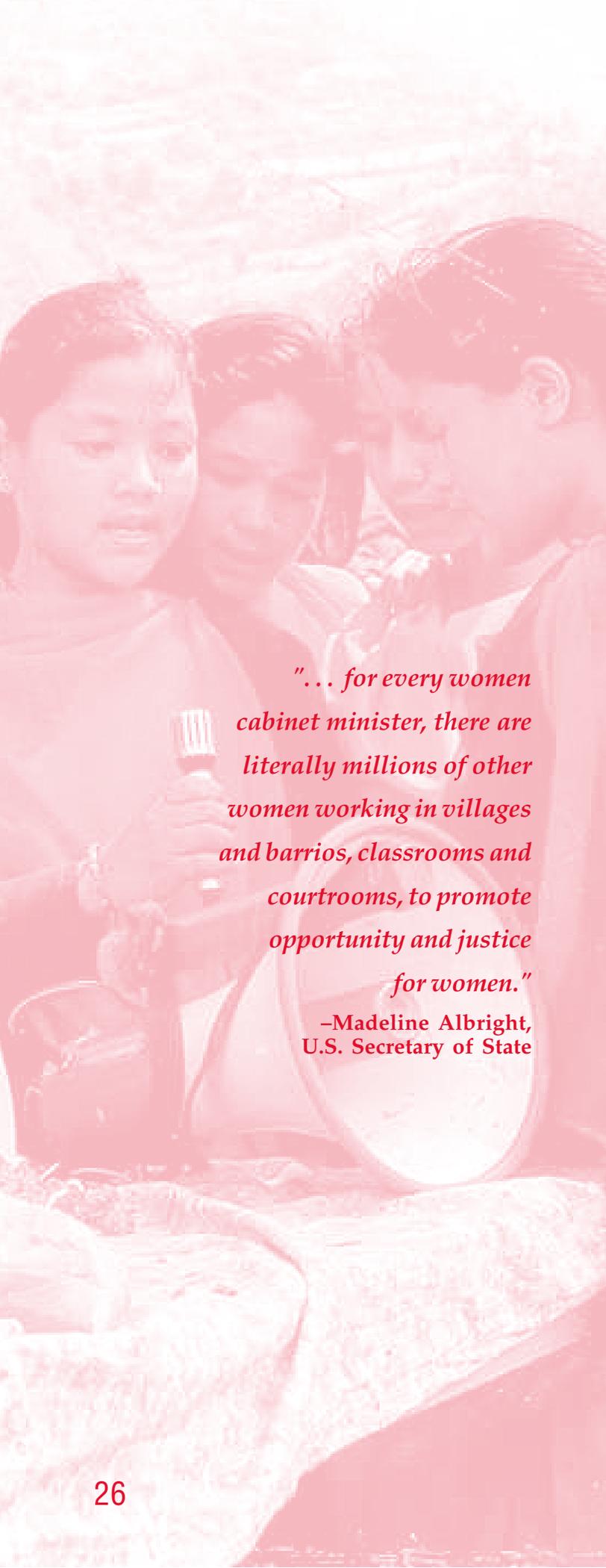
Women at the Polls And in Parliament

In the Philippines, the Agency supported a regional program provided by the Center for Legislative Development. The Center conducted workshops and seminars in the Province of Cotabato so women could debate public issues and identify local priorities. Of 30 women who participated in one year's training program, 27 went on to become candidates for municipal or provincial office, and 21 women candidates trained by the Center won local office in North Cotabato.

Training women as candidates was especially important in Peru, where recently adopted election laws required that 25 percent of the candidates for town council and congressional offices be women. USAID provided financial and technical support to the four regionally based nongovernmental organizations that coordinated a national campaign to recruit and train women candidates. Working principally in the country's poorest regions, where women's political participation was usually lowest, the program helped generate an unusually high voter turnout. More than 2,200 women were elected to town councils, and the proportion of women among elected officials increased from 8 to 24 percent.

While Peru's elections were shaped by the need to implement electoral quotas, elections in Russia were shaped by the elimination of these gender mandates. The Communist Party traditionally apportioned symbolic representation among various party constituencies, including women. The dissolution of the Soviet Union brought an end to party-controlled elections. The number of women holding public office declined dramatically.





"... for every women cabinet minister, there are literally millions of other women working in villages and barrios, classrooms and courtrooms, to promote opportunity and justice for women."

**—Madeline Albright,
U.S. Secretary of State**

To help reverse this trend, Russia's Congress of Women of the Kola Peninsula approached the International Republican Institute in 1996 seeking assistance for training women to stand for elective office or manage nongovernmental organization campaigns on women's issues.

USAID joined with the Institute to provide communications and campaign management training. By 1997, the Congress of Women of the Kola Peninsula was fielding candidates for the Mumansk City дума. Of the 17 seats that make up the дума, 12 were won by women.

The effort to build networks of community organizations so women can debate political issues, develop leadership skills, and establish themselves as viable candidates for political office led USAID to support the formation of "100 Women's Groups" in Nigeria. As its name declares, this nongovernmental organization is an aggregation of local women's associations active in promoting political and social reforms. It oversaw training sessions to prepare women candidates for local and national governmental office, for traditional council positions, and for administrative offices in parastatal agencies. Forty-three women candidates the nongovernmental organization supported for national office won election in 1999.

The Global Women in Politics Program, which operated from 1995 to 1999, was the Agency's largest initiative supporting women's political activism. With operations in 15 countries, this program provided technical and financial assistance to help local activists organize women's groups to promote social reforms and provided grants so that well-established groups could continue to grow. It conducted workshops on citizenship rights and responsibilities and helped women launch legal reform efforts targeting domestic violence, child abuse, and other issues important to local communities. It offered campaign training for women candidates and governance training for women elected to public office. In Africa, Asia, the Near East, and Latin America and the Caribbean, the Global Women in Politics Program worked to break down the social and legal barriers to women's political participation.

In early 2000, USAID completed a program to educate women about standing for elected office in Mali. The program highlighted the political experiences of 20 leading women



"... we are striving to help women bring down the barriers to political participation as advocates and voters, legislators, and leaders."

—Madeline Albright, U.S. Secretary of State

activists in printed, video, and audio format. The materials produced by this project allowed each woman to discuss the challenges women face in Malian society when campaigning for public office and the methods each adopted to overcome these challenges. Political parties and major civic groups now use these materials in public campaigns to encourage more women to participate in Malian politics.

Because poverty, illiteracy, and ill health are among the most common barriers to women's political participation, the efforts of USAID to educate women and young girls, its anti-poverty programs, and its support of basic human rights directly promote the goal of helping women participate in the public life of their communities.

Few investments USAID makes will produce the returns to be gained from women's political investment. The development path that emerging democracies pursue will be determined in large part by whether women gain greater access to the political arena. USAID's investments are helping expand the base of these democracies to include women. As women increase their political activism, they will increase their influence over the pace and priorities of their countries' future development. Improving democratic processes in turn ensures that the development choices these countries make will reflect the needs and interests of the whole society. USAID's investments in women's political participation may seem modest, but they will bear fruit for decades to come and are among the Agency's most important contributions to international development.

7 The Challenges Ahead

More than a quarter century ago, and some 22 years before the Beijing conference, USAID undertook a commitment to “integrate women into the national economies” of developing countries, “thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort.” The Agency’s focus has broadened beyond narrowly defined economic concerns to embrace education, human rights, healthcare, and political participation, but the commitment articulated in what has come to be known as the Percy Amendment of 1973 remains central to USAID’s mission of helping countries pursue development.

This report has presented a sampling of Agency activities designed to bring women into the development process as full partners, sharing the benefits as well as the burdens of development. The illustrations this report provides reflect the general rationale under-

lying the Agency’s development assistance strategies. The illustrations do not attempt to reflect a geographic or sectoral distribution of all current activities. In part, this is because gender cuts across the various social sectors into which most development programming is classified.

For instance, we know that for every year beyond the fourth grade that a young girl remains in school, fertility rates drop, maternal mortality declines, and family income increases. As women acquire economic capital, through microcredit programs or agricultural extension services, women also acquire the social status that helps them become politically active. The benefits that derive from investments in women and young girls are diverse enough to defy precise reporting of Agency activities by locale or sector.





Not every USAID effort has met with equal success. The Agency has achieved laudable progress in some sectors, notably education and human rights. In others—the environment, for example—efforts to integrate gender into project design and implementation have proven more difficult. Even in these areas, however, USAID is making progress. Agency experts have recently completed two reports that examine the connections linking natural resource management, gender, and development. These contributions to development literature will help ensure that an awareness of the importance of gender issues results in more effective environmental programming.

No resource, for example, is more precious to the poorest members of developing societies than reliable access to clean water, and women are the water gatherers in most developing countries. So when USAID supports such resource management efforts as the River Basin Authority in Morocco, the Agency is helping to do more than increase supplies of fresh water, improve distribution to poorer urban neighborhoods, and extend plumbing systems to schools and other public buildings. It is helping increase girls' attendance at schools equipped with basic sanitation facilities, for example. By relieving women and young girls of the domestic responsibility of hauling water, it is freeing their time for other pursuits, such as gaining an education or generating income. By including women in local resource management decision making, environmental programming helps women acquire experience with and self-confidence in public recognition.

In the Yammouneh area of Lebanon, USAID is assisting conservative Muslim and Christian women who make up 30 percent of the membership of community committees that oversee irrigation projects and determine local water management issues. For many of these women, this is their first substantial role in helping set the pace and determine the direction of their community's development. The communities gain a new appreciation for the experience and judgment of these women committee members, and the region as a whole enjoys better access to more abundant supplies of fresh water.

Gender in Post-Conflict Transition

In every sector, however, the Agency can continue improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its efforts to make gender a central focus of its activities. Changes within the institution are creating new opportunities for “mainstreaming gender.” For example, in 1994, USAID launched the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) to bridge the institutional gap between short-term emergency humanitarian relief and longer term development assistance. OTI is concerned solely with the “complex humanitarian emergencies” that arise with the cessation of armed conflict. Not long ago, these sorts of emergencies received as little as 10 percent of USAID's disaster assistance funding. Today, responding to these circumstances—as dangerous as they are desperate—consumes 90 percent of the Agency's disaster budget.







OTI works to help stabilize post-conflict societies, almost while smoke still rises from the battlefields. It helps establish temporary shelter for families and individuals that have fled war zones or that have returned to find their homes destroyed. It assists in clearing land mines, retraining de-mobilized troops, and opening alternative media so no central power can exert a monopoly over information. Just as important are OTI's efforts to defuse politically charged situations before latent conflict erupts into open combat.

USAID is taking steps now to ensure that a full appreciation of the importance of gender informs the initiatives OTI undertakes. The Women in Transition Initiative in Rwanda from 1995 to 1999, for example, was the first project to be organized by an international donor designed specifically to deliver development resources to women in such post-conflict settings. Working in tandem with a national network of women's groups, itself organized with USAID support, this initiative provided housing assistance, food assistance, skills training, and microcredit so women could take leadership roles in rebuilding the war-torn country. The initiative has helped the women of Rwanda defend their homes and their homeland against the threat of incipient civil war.

In Angola and Bosnia, Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone, and nearly a dozen other countries, OTI is working, and its activities present a unique opportunity to help women participate in the rebirth of their own countries. Sadly, there is no shortage of such opportunities; as the

millennium dawns, much of the world is cultivating an uncertain peace, and there is every likelihood that more complex humanitarian emergencies will arise in the future. But USAID will be better prepared to respond because it is taking measures to ensure that gender is an integral component of its relief and development programming.

Global Transformations

The job of mainstreaming gender into USAID's activities is occurring even as the Agency contends with economic globalization and the expansion of international trade relations. USAID is working alongside women's non-governmental organizations in many countries to make sure that women benefit from the economic and social opportunities that accompany globalization.



The explosive growth of information technologies carries the potential for transforming the domestic and international relations of even the most remote and least developed countries. Will women share in the freedom that comes with access to knowledge, or will they be left on the far side of the digital divide?

The year prior to the Beijing conference saw the release of USAID's *Gender Plan of Action*, a document that framed internal administrative measures designed to promote greater attention to the effects of USAID activities on the status of women in developing countries. The *Gender Plan of Action* has succeeded, within limits, in expanding the pool of talented professionals capable of communicating the benefits to be gained from infusing gender into development activities.

This pool of dedicated professionals is seeking new opportunities to help women in developing countries help themselves. The Agency works with host country governments, other donors, and, increasingly, nongovernmental organizations dedicated to women's issues. And at every opportunity, the Agency learns anew a truth as simple as it is powerful: No country can hope to build a place for itself in the modern world by ignoring the needs and neglecting the resources of half of its people.

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