

NEW AGENDA

FOR

GENDER **EQUALITY**

Draft for Review by ACVFA Members

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

I: THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT SCENE

- A. Progress and Remaining Challenges
- B. Different Impacts on Men and Women
- C. Focus on “Gender Equality”

II: THE GENDER PLAN OF ACTION – STATUS REPORT

- A. Genesis of GPA
- B. Status of GPA Recommendations
- C. Obstacles to Action
- D. Impact of the GPA

III: THE GENDER PLAN OF ACTION – NEXT STEPS

- A. Commitment to Greater Consideration of Gender in Agency Policy
- B. Increased Capacity to Address Gender Through Changes in Procedures
- C. Incentives for Performance

IV: LOOKING AHEAD – OPTIONS FOR DIALOGUE

- A. Overall Approach
- B. Process
- C. Program

CONCLUSION: OVERVIEW AND MAIN FINDINGS

FOOTNOTES

APPENDICES

- A. Glossary
- B. Scope of Work
- C. Gender Plan of Action and Additional Measures
- D. Questionnaire for Use in Washington
- E. Bibliography
- F. Questionnaire for Field Survey and Executive Summary of Findings
- G. USAID Policy Paper on Women in Development (1982)
- H. USAID Action Paper (1988)
- I. Annotated Chart on GPA Implementation
- J. New USAID guidelines on gender equality

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

What an extraordinary experience this project proved to be! It has opened doors for dialogue around the world – from interviews inside and outside government in Washington, D.C., to meetings with human rights advocates and community leaders in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.

The Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA) requested an independent assessment and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) agreed to fund it. The team was asked to assess, in approximately fifty pages, the status and impact of one USAID initiative, the Gender Plan of Action (GPA) of 1996, and to identify other USAID “innovative or especially effective programs” with regard to gender equality. The team was asked to reflect the views of those interviewed and surveyed, rather than our own conclusions and to provide “options for dialogue,” rather than specific recommendations.

Obviously, no report of such brief compass can pretend do full justice to all of those issues and requests. This report does not purport to be an exhaustive review of all Agency work in behalf of gender equality. Instead, the team has tried to highlight, as objectively as possible, the main findings that emerged from what we heard, read and saw in our interviews, field survey, and limited travel to the field. Although we do not necessarily agree with all the views expressed in this report, we have included them because those findings are pertinent to the scope of work and the dialogue on development which could inform future directions for USAID.

Despite the challenges to achieving gender equality in development, the study team found that the outlook is promising. Overall, those inside and outside USAID do say that they want to promote gender equality. For most, doing so makes good development sense. The concluding “options for dialogue” are intended to build on that positive disposition with a wide range of illustrative proposals for consideration.

Finally, we thank all who gave such generous support in time and effort and who spoke with such candor and conviction. In particular, we recall from travel to the field so many extraordinary individuals – from the survivor of civil war in Guatemala and the girl entering first grade in Egypt, to the HIV/AIDS survivor in Uganda, and the advocate of women’s legal rights in Morocco. We dedicate this report to them in the hope that USAID, supported by ACVFA, moves forward to develop a “New Agenda for Gender Equality” for the twenty-first century.

INTRODUCTION

"A transformed partnership based on equality between women and men is a condition for people-centered sustainable development."

Fourth U.N. Conference on Women Beijing, 1995

How can women and men in developing nations become equal partners in progress? How can the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) advance this goal of gender equality? (Appendix A)

Such questions -- and corresponding findings and options for dialogue between USAID and the community of Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) in the United States -- emerged as the most significant outcome of this assessment of one specific initiative, the Gender Plan of Action (GPA). The GPA, issued by the USAID Administrator in 1996, was an attempt to institutionalize concern about involving men and women, with their different roles and priorities, in all aspects of Agency policy and programs. (Appendix B). It was launched with the strong support of the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA). (FN 1) Members of this committee are leaders in the PVOs that provide development advice to the USAID Administrator on a voluntary basis.

Scope of Independent Assessment and Sources. ACVFA originally requested an independent assessment and the Secretariat that provides support to ACVFA, located in the Agency's Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation in the Bureau of Humanitarian Response, agreed to fund it. (Appendix C) The findings and options for consideration in this report reflect the study team's effort to convey as objectively as possible the wide range of sources consulted. In the interest of candor and insight, the team has assured full confidentiality to those interviewed or responding to the field survey, while indicating the general source and level of support for an expressed view. (FN 2) The sources include:

- Over five hundred interviews of representatives from USAID, the Department of State, PVOs in the United States and other donors; host government officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) abroad, and beneficiaries in countries where USAID operates. (Appendix D)
- Review of relevant USAID documentation and literature (Appendix E)
- Field survey of USAID's 71 missions (Appendix F)

- Field study of three countries where USAID operates (Guatemala, Morocco, and Uganda) with some additional material provided by a short visit in Egypt. The team regrets that the field work planned for Ukraine was cancelled. The assessment thus reflects work in three of the four regions where USAID operates.

Organization of Report. Interviews of USAID and PVO representatives in the United States quickly indicated that few were familiar with the GPA and that little follow-up had occurred. Therefore, the assessment team put most emphasis on identifying some USAID work on gender equality that has been particularly effective or innovative, and what next steps are needed. This assessment is organized into four parts:

I: THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT SCENE. What was the context for the Gender Plan of Action in terms of the overall state of world development and the different impacts on men and women? Why shift from pre-eminent focus on “women in development,” to more emphasis on “gender and development” and how can that be done, while still recognizing the special challenges for women?

II: THE GENDER PLAN OF ACTION – STATUS REPORT. What prompted the launch of the GPA and what was recommended? Was collaboration between USAID and ACVFA on the GPA a model for cooperation on other issues? What obstacles did the GPA encounter? What is the current state of implementation for the GPA and what impact has it achieved?

III: THE GENDER PLAN OF ACTION – NEXT STEPS. What should be done to address the unfinished business of the GPA?

IV: LOOKING AHEAD – OPTIONS FOR DIALOGUE. What could or should be done, above and beyond specific implementation of the GPA itself, to address the kinds of issues which emerged from this assessment? On overall approach, what do most interviewees consider the main pre-requisites for effective commitment to gender equality by any development assistance organization, inside or outside government? Further, with particular regard to USAID, how might the Agency change the way or the “process” by which it tries to promote gender equality inside and outside the organization? On the question of “program,” what strategic or substantive issues do those interviewed and surveyed consider most important?

CONCLUSION: OVERVIEW AND MAIN FINDINGS. The final portion of the assessment provides a summary of the key findings and action points raised in each of the four parts of the report, as well as an overview of more general conclusions.

I: THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT SCENE

"My wife and I want our children to go to school, so that they can fulfill our dreams for them!" Farmer in Guatemala

"Learning about family planning can help save us and our children from AIDS!" Married couple in Uganda

None of these individuals from Latin America or Africa ever heard of the term "gender equality" or knows much about the state of the world beyond her or his village. That said, each exemplifies the larger import and impact of those issues. PART I tries to put the perspective of such individuals into context by addressing:

- A. Progress and remaining challenges on development
- B. Different impacts of development on women and men
- C. Focus on "gender equality"

A. Progress and Remaining Challenges on Development

There is much to celebrate as we enter the twenty-first century! Due to the commitment to development of USAID, other donors, and governments and citizens in developing nations, much of the world has overcome many earlier doomsday predictions. The following statistics indicate the kinds of gains that have occurred worldwide over the last thirty years:

- Annual per capita income has increased by over 60 percent.
- Literacy is up by over 50 percent.
- The average woman now has three, not six, children.
- Over seventy nations have become "free" or "partly free." (FN 3)

Impressive as these gains are, it comes as no surprise that more needs to be done. In some areas, development has taken one step forward, only to fall two steps back:

- One half of the six billion people on the planet still live on less than two dollars a day and over one billion live in "absolute poverty" on less than one dollar a day.
- The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. The income gap between the richest fifth of the world's people and the poorest fifth, measured by average national income per head, increased from 30 to one in 1960, to over 75 to one forty years later.

- AIDS is wiping out many of the development gains made in Africa where life expectancy is plummeting and more teachers are dying each week than can be trained. The spread of AIDS to the Asian Subcontinent could wreak comparable developmental havoc. (FN 4)

B. Different Impacts of Development on Women and Men

There are not only changes in development. There are also different impacts from development on men and women.

Consider the case of one set of twins born this year in a small rural village in the Kingdom of Nepal – one girl and one boy. The similarity ends there. Although born in the same place on the same day, they can expect very different lives. The girl will probably not go to school. She will have less access to food and health care. She will have little voice in her village and little choice about her future. Custom may dictate marriage at age ten. If so, this girl-bride may die early in childbirth.

The dichotomy between one girl and her brother in one family in rural Nepal mirrors the global contrast between the fates of men and women. By almost every measure in every nation, women fare worse than men – with less access to education or health care and less opportunity to earn more money or participate in local or national decision-making. (FN 5) Statistics from the United Nations and other sources raise some provocative questions:

- Why, with all the advances in medical science, must complications from pregnancy and childbirth remain the leading killer of women in the developing world, with one woman dying every minute every day?
- Why are women often invisible victims of human rights violations, with at least one woman in every three around the world beaten or abused – frequently by a member of her own family? (FN 6)

There are other more general challenges for women. Local laws or customs in developing nations often discriminate against women so that they lack equal rights in land ownership or divorce. Women often comprise the missing half of democracy, with few knowing the laws of their country and even fewer elected to local or national office. (FN 7) Disparities between men and women in basic rights, access to resources, and power exist in all countries, although the extent and nature of these disparities differ from one country to another. Increasing globalization of the economy creates new and different challenges for women. For example, information technology sometimes widens the gap, not just between “haves” and “have-nots,” but between “knows” and “know-nots.”

Addressing what some call the “feminization of poverty” and its negative consequences for women is just half the story. It is important to appreciate the enormous positive contribution that women make to sustainable development. They represent a

productive asset for their communities and countries. For example, in many African nations, women do much of the farming. Women generally spend the largest share of income earned on their family which, in turn, increases the educational and health levels of the next generation.

Gender inequality is costly to development. The World Bank reports that empirical studies show that societies that discriminate on the basis of gender tend to experience more poverty and a lower quality of life than those where gender equality is pronounced.

Many USAID projects, such as those noted below, reflect significant success stories for women responding to new opportunities which translate into broader gains for national development:

- Commitment by USAID Rabat, Guatemala, Kampala and Cairo to girls' education has resulted in increased enrollment in primary school and improved national literacy rates. (FN 8)
- The team found significant developmental impact from innovation in other areas as well, from use of musical street dramas in rural villages to encourage family planning in the Middle East, to mobilization of community user groups to protect forests in South Asia.

Important as it is to address the role of women in development, it is also clear that many assistance programs may fall short if they miss the mark with men. Programs for women in particular and development in general will not achieve their objectives if they do not take into account the relationship between men and women or their different needs. Some examples:

- Representatives from USAID missions in Southeast Asia have learned that HIV/AIDS projects must include different approaches to counseling and treatment for husbands and wives.
- USAID Guatemala has learned that young girls probably will not enroll in primary school unless the Mission's programs include outreach to both fathers and mothers and male community leaders.

C. Focus on "Gender Equality"

Whether in Central America or Central Asia, the conditions under which men and women struggle to improve the quality of their lives differ greatly. These differences must be addressed in programs for development cooperation, if both women and men are to participate and benefit. Moreover, to accelerate progress toward development and to achieve agreed international goals, the fullest participation of both is essential.

There must also be a strategy to overcome the structural disadvantages facing women in gaining access to education, health care, economic opportunity, legal protection, and

political power. Hence, the need to keep a continuing spotlight on the disproportionate challenge faced by women, but to do so within the context of a broader strategy that focuses on the implications of development for both genders.

USAID and other development organizations have thus moved over the last two decades, from concentration on “women in development” (WID) during the 1970’s, to emphasize the concept of “gender and development.” Focus on “gender equality,” reflecting the importance of equal access to opportunity for women and men, won global endorsement in the concluding documents of the two most recent and relevant United Nations conferences, the Program of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994 and Platform for Action and Beijing Declaration from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

The term “gender” is used to distinguish between the different roles of men and women that are shaped by their culture and social norms, not their biology. Using the gender optic enables governments in developing nations and donors to look at the different needs, power relations, and access to resources of women and men in their households, communities, and countries. The roles of men and women can shift due to economic change or a specific incentive such as legal reform. For example, USAID Kiev has found it helpful to revise its Country Strategic Plan based on the fact that women, especially older women in Ukraine, suffer disproportionately from the immediate impact of the transition to a market economy with much higher rates of unemployment, increasing violence inside and outside the home, and reduced access to social services. **(FN 9)**

Using a gender approach usually entails asking fairly basic questions. These might include: Who are the customers? Do they have equal access to resources or decision-making? How can changes by gender be evaluated and measured for success? **(FN 10)** Straightforward as such questions may seem, most interviewees stressed the complexity of gender and development. **(FN 11)** As one senior USAID official stated: “Addressing gender requires a far broader vision of development, one that looks beyond traditional issues of economic change to fundamental social transformation.” **(PULL QUOTE)**

II: THE GENDER PLAN OF ACTION **STATUS REPORT**

"We wanted to find a way to burrow into the USAID system by institutionalizing concern for gender equality."

PVO Representative

How did the Agency's Gender Plan of Action (GPA) emerge against the backdrop of the two main points addressed in Part I – the general development scene and the move over the last two decades toward greater emphasis on gender equality? That is the subject of Part II, organized as follows:

- A. Genesis of the Gender Plan of Action
- B. Status of GPA recommendations
- C. Obstacles to action
- D. Impact of the GPA

A. Genesis of the GPA

The Gender Plan of Action emerged as a logical part of the evolution of earlier initiatives undertaken by the Agency. USAID was one of the first major donor organizations to recognize the challenges faced by women and to take steps to redress that imbalance in development. It launched action in the 1970's both because of its own concerns and those in the U.S. Congress. The "Percy Amendment" (named for Senator Charles Percy) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, was passed in 1973; it required U.S. bilateral assistance to contribute to the integration of women into the national economies of countries receiving U.S. aid.

The landmark dates and developments for USAID's response to the Percy Amendment and its own growing commitment to work on women and gender equality include:

- **Establishment of Women in Development (WID) Office in 1974.** This office remains the prime locus for work on women in development and gender equality in USAID. It has evolved from having no funds, to managing an annual budget of about ten million dollars; the staff level has ranged from one to ten. Based in the Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research since 1993, its "mission" is "to improve the status of women and increase the effectiveness of development efforts by advancing gender equitable strategies and approaches." (FN 12)

- **Policy paper on women in development (1982).** This document still governs Agency work on women in development and gender equality. It addresses the issue of WID in primarily economic terms and focuses on agriculture and rural development which dominated USAID programming in the 1980's. It requires that all relevant data be analyzed or disaggregated by sex; that country strategies involve women; and that USAID employees reflect women's roles in project design and implementation. Although many of that paper's basic concepts remain relevant, some of the specific structures and procedures to which it refers no longer exist. (Appendix G)
- **WID Action Paper by the USAID Administrator (1988).** This short document reflected then Administrator Alan Woods' view that USAID needed to mandate certain actions to help "institutionalize" women in development within USAID. He instructed all bureaus and USAID missions to describe strategies explicitly that involved women and to make specific WID training a priority for USAID personnel in such fields as agriculture and the environment. (Appendix H)
- **Follow-up on Cairo and Beijing, 1995 – present.** USAID has contributed to much of the international response of the U.S. Government to commitments made in the major United Nations conferences in the mid-1990's. The Agency's preparation for "Women 2000," the follow-up on the 1995 Beijing conference, has included many programs focused on overcoming economic and social barriers to women, such as the Micro-enterprise Project and projects to increase girls' enrollment and school completion rates. During the past five years, USAID spent an average of almost \$500 million per year in improving women's status around the world. (FN 13)
- **USAID role in donor coordination.** The Agency has played a leading role since the 1980's in encouraging the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization of Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) to put more emphasis on women and development and, more recently, on gender equality. The DAC Expert Group on Women in Development, renamed the DAC Working Party on Gender Equality in 1998, drew together a set of practical guidelines for advancing the goals set by the World Congress in Beijing and developed a valuable set of key concepts and approaches on issues of gender equality. (FN 14)

This evolution of policy and the lack of follow-up on explicit calls for reform from previous Agency leaders shaped the context for the Gender Plan of Action. Most interviewees credit the specific development of the GPA to the leadership of a few individuals in the public and private sector. They wanted to build on the Agency's achievements and to address concerns raised in several critical reports in the 1990's (FN 15). Primary credit goes to then USAID Administrator J. Brian Atwood and his senior management team. (FN 16) Leaders in ACVFA played a key role in supporting that initiative. (FN 17)

There are several key points that emerged from interviews of PVO representatives and USAID about the origin of the GPA.

First, there was a clear consensus between USAID and ACVFA leaders on the need for more action on gender equality. “We agreed,” as one senior PVO representative put it, “that cooperation on the GPA would be a win-win for both of us.” (PULL QUOTE) Their collegial partnership reflected their belief that the GPA served their shared purposes in behalf of more sustainable development. According to one key player: “ACVFA used USAID and USAID used ACVFA to advance the issue of gender equality with the GPA.” For that reason, interviewees believed that there was remarkably close collaboration between leaders of USAID and ACVFA, collaboration that could well be replicated in other comparable areas of shared interest.

Second, representatives from ACVFA and Agency leaders agreed that emphasis on an institutional approach constituted the most timely, useful tactic to create an enabling environment for work on gender equality. As proponents inside and outside USAID said, “ We wanted to burrow into the Agency and not just concentrate on reaching individual programs or project officers.” They placed highest priority on targeting what they considered key “pressure points” for change, such as personnel policy and procurement requirements. They wanted to make concern about gender equality such an integral part of the Agency’s institutional fabric that it would endure through changes in political leadership.

Third, a joint working group of USAID senior staff and members of ACVFA thought that emphasis on gender equality might alleviate USAID’s perceived “stove-pipe” mindset. They worried about what they considered the Agency’s tendency to think vertically along sector-specific lines and not horizontally across areas of concern. They believed that addressing gender equality might help reinforce connections between such areas as democracy and economic growth – either between Strategic Goals in the Agency’s Strategic Plan at AID/W (Agency Headquarters in Washington) or between Strategic Objectives in each USAID Mission’s Country Strategic Plan.

B. Status of GPA Recommendations

The GPA is a short document recommending attention to gender sensitivity in Agency policies, programs and procedures. Shortly after the announcement of the GPA on March 12, 1996, the Agency followed up with the announcement of more seven specific related “Additional Measures” in June 1996 which were intended to specify next steps for implementing the GPA. The GPA and “Additional Measures” address three areas:

1. **Commitment to greater consideration of gender in Agency policy** (such as the USAID Strategic Plan and a new Agency Policy Paper on Development and Gender Equality)
2. **Increased capacity to address gender through changes in procedures** for personnel evaluation, procurement, training and evaluation

3. Incentives for performance and follow-up

What has happened since the Gender Plan of Action and the Additional Measures were announced in 1996? This section of Part Two highlights which recommendations have been implemented and where action is pending. (See the Summary Chart at the conclusion of this section and Appendix I for the annotated chart on implementation of the GPA.) As the following discussion, keyed to each of the three major points of the GPA, indicates, some action has been taken.

1. Commitment to greater consideration to gender in Agency policy

First, on the question of increased USAID commitment to gender in policy and program, there has been some forward movement.

- Some modification of the current Agency Strategic Framework. USAID has modified its Strategic Framework slightly to reflect the importance of gender considerations, but primarily in regard to women in development rather than a gender perspective. For example, the preamble to the Framework states explicitly the Agency's commitment to full participation by women in sustainable development and there is some reference to women in many of the Agency's Strategic Goals, as summarized in the Box.

BOX #

SUMMARY: GENDER REFERENCES IN THE AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN

- **Preamble:** General reference to full participation of women and disadvantaged groups in sustainable development
- **Goal 1: Economic Growth** -- General reference to women's central role in broad-based economic growth and agricultural development. Two gender-related approaches: Micro-finance and micro-enterprise.
- **Goal 2:** Democracy and Governance -- General reference to women. Six gender-related approaches: Legal, political process and transparency.
- **Goal 3:** Human Capacity Building -- Emphasis on primary education for girls.
- **Goal 4:** Population, Health and Nutrition – Strong emphasis on women. Gender implied in approaches.
- **Goal 5:** Environment -- No reference to women or gender equality.
- **Goal 6:** Humanitarian Assistance – General reference to women and children. Three related approaches, including human rights protection.

- **Goal 7:** Management: No reference to gender
-

- Cross-cutting Issue in Annual Reporting. Most useful, according to many interviewees, is the fact that gender has been designated a cross-cutting issue that must be addressed in USAID's programs and reported annually in the Results Review and Resource Requests (R4) process. That link is significant because the "R4" is the main means by which USAID tries to relate the achievement of concrete results in the field to allocation of resources. The FY 2001 R4 guidance, sent to the field in late November 1999, requested that data be sex-disaggregated "whenever pertinent and management useful." That guidance also asked that USAID Missions "as appropriate, highlight beneficiary-specific results, particularly with respect to gender" and "as appropriate, explicitly address gender in the analysis of program performance."

There are other changes that are pending on the policy front:

- Changes in the Agency's Automated Directives System (ADS). The ADS replaces the Agency's previous set of policy and procedural handbooks and has the potential for increased impact over time as employees learn to work with the revised systems. Changes in management in PPC and the Bureau for Management (M) have facilitated some breakthroughs in this area that may reflect more explicit attention to gender.
- Update of the Women in Development Policy Paper (1982). Delay on this Policy Paper is just part of a broader problem. The Agency, strapped for resources, has not updated most policy papers from the 1980's. PPC, in collaboration with G/WID, plans to revise the Policy Paper when staffing permits.
- Change in Mission Orders. Delay on the Policy Paper has precluded revision of Mission Orders.

2. Increased capacity to address gender through changes in procedures

Second is the question of developing the Agency's capacity to perform more effectively on gender equality. There has been some forward movement, as follows:

(a) **Guidance on re-engineering.** The Agency has tried to incorporate gender considerations into USAID guidance on re-engineering, via the following:

- Training. Material on gender has been provided for new entry training and some sector-based training run by the Global Bureau.
- Personnel requirements. New Foreign Service employees are required to have gender skills.

- Promotion requirements. USAID's Office of Human Resources has revised the precepts for promotion of junior and mid-level employees in the Foreign Service to include gender.

(b) **Contracts, grants and cooperative agreements.** Some of the most important shifts have occurred in contracting procedures. For example, revisions in ADS 202 (August 1999) require Strategic Objective and Results Package teams to include gender in preparing scopes of work for contracts, grants and cooperative agreements. A General Notice (May 1998) outlined changes for the consideration of gender concerns in ADS section 5.5b covering grants and cooperative agreements. ADS 302 has been revised. Because contractors and consultants play such a large role in implementing USAID programs and projects and because that role is likely to grow, enforcement of these changes could have even more telling impact than changes in procedures for Agency direct hire staff.

(c) **Women in Development (WID) Fellows program.** This program was set up to place individuals from domestic organizations in USAID field missions for short-term assignments, so that they would enhance field capacity on gender and encourage greater domestic support and appreciation for USAID. Twenty-three Fellows were placed during the first phase of the program, 1996 – 1999, and a new contract was signed for phase two.

(d) **Appointment of Senior Gender Advisor.** In early 2000, PPC appointed a senior social scientist whose portfolio includes responsibility for gender equality. That part-time coverage will fall short of the GPA recommendation for a full-time Senior Gender Advisor. Gender was just one of several items of responsibility for the PPC Advisor who left in Summer 1999.

Although some implementation of the GPA has occurred with regard to increased Agency capacity on gender, particularly in the last year, much remains to be done:

- Monitoring and evaluation. Work is underway to include consideration of gender in monitoring and evaluation. However, the needed changes in the ADS 200 series have not been completed.
- Training. Training that addresses or includes concern for gender equality has not been provided for most Agency personnel. There is a particular need to provide training for senior USAID managers, Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs), and contract personnel.

3. Incentives for performance

Third is the issue of rewarding special attention to gender equality, with the establishment of a Performance Fund. G/WID agreed to drop this proposal in light of budgetary pressures on the Agency.

The USAID Counselor provided some early monitoring and follow-up on the GPA, most notably helping on issuance of the set of “Additional Measures” in June 1996. That document prompted much of the specific implementation of the GPA noted above. There has been relatively little active monitoring since 1997 at the levels recommended, except some by G/WID. Discussion at several ACVFA public quarterly meetings also facilitated some tracking of GPA implementation.

BOX #

STATUS REPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF GPA AND ADDITIONAL MEASURES

1. Commitment to greater consideration of gender in Agency policy

- A. Modified Agency Strategy Some done
- B. New Policy Paper Not done
- C. Implementation Guidance Little done

2. Increased capacity to address gender through changes in procedures

- A. Senior Policy Advisor Part-time appointment made
- B. WID Fellows Done
- C. Guidance on qualifications Little done
- D. Re-engineering
 - (1) Monitoring/evaluation Under review
 - (2) CDIE indicators Not done
 - (3) New entry training Done for one class; future plans not clear
 - (4) Sector-specific training Some done

3. Incentives for performance

- A. Performance Fund Not done
- B. Follow-up on related items
 - (1) Personnel performance Not done
 - (2) Improved expertise Little done
 - (3) Data Little done
 - (4) Procurement changes Done
- C. Monitoring Little done
- D. Consulting Little done

C. Obstacles to Action

Important as some implementation of the GPA may prove to be, most of those interviewed inside USAID and in the PVO community say that the Gender Plan of Action has fallen short of expectations. As one senior USAID official stated, “The GPA has been invisible and irrelevant.” (PULL QUOTE)

What explains this reaction and why has the GPA encountered such rough sledding? This section of Part Two summarizes the key obstacles or concerns raised during interviews in Washington and abroad and the field survey of USAID missions.

External Problems. Many of those interviewed, especially inside USAID, say that the timing could not have been worse for the GPA. The period, 1996-1998, was one of major turmoil for the Agency due to external and internal factors. Some of the externally-generated problems included:

- **Big budget cuts.** Large reductions in the Agency budget sliced programs and left less latitude for meeting new requirements, including the GPA’s recommendations. Decreased resources for the Agency’s operating expenses (OE) led to a devastating reduction in force (RIF) of Agency personnel, which, in turn, demoralized many employees and undercut capacity to implement or monitor the GPA. Most recruitment and training came to a halt. Leaders in the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC) said that reduced ranks in their evaluation unit (PPC/CDIE) left them unable to develop clearer indicators for gender-disaggregated data or evaluate much of the information they did receive.
- **Increased Congressional requirements for USAID spending.** Congressional requirements on Agency spending, or so-called “ear-marks,” exacerbated the Agency’s budget situation. Most interviewees inside and outside the Agency stated that then, as now, such “flavoring” of funds leaves little flexibility for the Agency to respond to other priorities. One example often cited in the field: although much money is ear-marked for USAID programs on child survival, little can be used for adult literacy for mothers – despite the relevance of doing so for their children.
- **Fate of USAID.** Many in the Agency, including its leaders, was caught up in what they saw as a fight for the survival or independence of USAID during the reorganization of the foreign affairs agencies of the U.S. Government.
- **Headquarters move.** Moving USAID to the Ronald Reagan Building in 1997 was disruptive and time-consuming for most employees, especially some in the Bureau for Management who were charged with implementing many of the GPA’s recommendations.

- Situation in host countries. Many interviewees said that much of what USAID can do depends on what happens in the countries where it operates. There must be a constituency, be it the host government or its citizens, that is receptive to focus on gender equality. That sensitivity, while beginning in many developing nations, is still generally at an early stage. USAID and PVO representatives in the field pointed out that one of the main challenges is for the Agency and its partners to reach the main decision-makers at the national level in the host governments. Most are men in the Ministries of Finance or Planning. Convincing them to allocate funds for gender analysis is a tough sell when they are more interested in getting large loans for capital infrastructure.

Internal Issues. In addition to the foregoing external complications for GPA implementation, many interviewees identified what they considered issues inside the Agency itself. Those factors, in priority order, were:

- Poor communication. The fact that few in the PVO community and USAID ever heard of the GPA foreclosed much buy-in and follow-through. The Plan was known mostly by Agency WID personnel and PVOs specializing in women's programs. Although the GPA was issued by the Administrator, it was dispatched primarily through the daily Electronic Bulletin Board (EBB), which few read carefully. Less than five percent of those interviewed in USAID and the PVO community in 1999 were familiar with the GPA. Although over 90 percent of those responding to the field survey on the GPA said they did know about the GPA, that result appears to be due, inter alia, to the fact that WID advisors completed most of the questionnaires. (FN 18)
- Consultative process. Many USAID employees mentioned what they considered inadequate consultation during the design of the GPA with career staff at Headquarters and in the field. Process is at least as important as product in the Agency's culture. USAID personnel respond best to consensus on program built over time, rather than on what they perceive as top-down directives. As one Agency officer put it, "USAID personnel favor the schmooze approach to change."
- Skepticism about institutional approach. Most Agency personnel, especially those in the Foreign Service, criticized the institutional approach to change exemplified by the GPA. For example, most, though not all (as later discussion will reflect), discounted the utility of requirements for assessing performance on gender equality in personnel evaluations. One officer summed up the generally-held view: "Requiring attention to gender in annual performance reviews for staff simply adds another meaningless box to check." USAID employees, like many others in the development field, respond best, not to administrative approaches, but to appeals to their sense of mission or values. (FN 19) (PULL QUOTE: Previous sentence)
- Proliferation of priorities. Interviewees within USAID reflected great frustration with what they considered confusion about Agency priorities during the 1990's. Many

referred to what they called a tendency toward “initiative du jour.” Increasingly pressed, USAID staff addressed the priorities for which they received resources or other clear indications of support. That, most said, did not include gender equality.

- Re-engineering. Many USAID employees cited “re-engineering” as a major obstacle to follow-up on the Gender Plan of Action. That program was part of the wider “re-invention” of U.S. Government operations responding to the National Performance Review launched in 1993. Although some USAID employees applauded its intent and saw a potentially positive correlation between re-engineering and gender equality, most did not. They reacted strongly against the time it took, forcing them to wrestle with new guidelines, while responding to old requirements. Re-engineering did not capitalize on the possible strategic points for integrating gender into the process such as the formulation of Customer Service Plans and the training of trainer (TOT) sessions. (FN 20)
- New Management System (NMS). The introduction of the electronic New Management System to provide new ways to process Agency data exacerbated the growing sense of “circuit overload.” When the NMS failed to operate effectively, employees’ frustration levels – already high because of the RIF and increased reporting requirements – grew. Difficulties with the NMS made it harder for PPC/CDIE and others to proceed with more effective collection and evaluation of any kind of data, not to mention gender-disaggregated material. “We were and are,” said one USAID official on the subject of missing base-line data, “driving without headlights.”

E. Impact

Views on the actual impact of the GPA varied. There were some predictable differences of perception between some inside USAID and some in the PVO community. However, the main point that did emerge from all interviews in Washington and the field and the field survey is that most did not believe that the GPA has made much, if any, difference in how the Agency approaches gender equality. For example:

- The consensus among PVOs, expressed in focus groups and individual sessions, is that the GPA has not prompted the Agency to require consistent concern for gender. In response to the question – how did USAID, post-GPA, help or encourage you to look differently at gender or provide value-added on gender? – none could cite an example.
- No USAID personnel, outside G/WID, could cite examples of progress made because of the GPA. The consensus expressed by one senior USAID planner: “Most GPA recommendations turned into dead-ends.” (FN 21)

Despite such concerns, the assessment team found that some PVO’s and most USAID employees believe that the Agency does have a growing general commitment to addressing gender equality. They said, without pretending that an engendered millennium

is at hand, that many USAID personnel have internalized gender equality as an integral part of how they think and work. According to one USAID desk officer, “The light-bulb has gone on at USAID; we buy gender equality!” (PULL QUOTE) To the extent there is a disconnect, some interviewees said it is between employees and Agency resources which fail to support that commitment with adequate budget, training and other measures.

The team also found in the interview data some cause to affirm the value of the GPA, some reasons to put current findings into perspective, and some cause for optimism about the possible future impact of the Gender Plan of Action. The following points emerged from interviews of representatives from the Agency and PVO community:

- Right policy at the right time? Many proponents of the GPA raised the question whether the institutional approach was the right one to use in 1996. As one senior Agency officer asked: “Did we use the right ‘silver bullet’?” Because so many of the hurdles hit by the GPA were beyond the control of USAID and ACVFA leadership, it is not useful to dwell on that question. It was a well-intentioned effort undertaken to attempt a more systemic approach to change.
- Value of dialogue. The dialogue prompted inside USAID by the GPA may prove to be as important, if not more so, than actual changes in Agency documents. Promulgation of the GPA brought more advocates of gender equality to the decision-making table inside the Agency.
- Useful collaboration between USAID and ACVFA. Working together on the GPA strengthened this public-private sector partnership and provided mutual benefit. Some PVO interviewees said that they saw the GPA as a means to help institutionalize gender, not only in USAID, but also in their community. (FN 22) The exercise also helped educate each community. Both communities learned, for example, how inevitable differences in institutional culture affect how or if changes on paper become changes in fact or in the field.
- Unexpected early dividend from assessment of GPA. USAID/ACVFA agreement on launching the assessment, particularly under the leadership of the Agency Counselor, has raised awareness of the GPA and reportedly spurred action on deferred items, such as changes in the ADS system in 1999.
- Shared challenge. The assessment revealed that USAID is not alone in finding it hard to implement institutional change of the sort advocated in the GPA. Interviews and a review of the literature indicate that most development organizations, in the public or private sector, face similar problems.
- Growing constituency for change. There is growing support for gender equality at the local level in many of the countries where USAID operates. That is due, *inter alia*, to particular causes in different nations, such as the commitment of Uganda’s President to affirmative action; the proliferation of non-governmental organizations in the 1990’s; and work by donors. While short of a critical mass in most countries,

proponents of gender equality constitute a growing movement on which USAID and its partners can capitalize.

- Future impact. Much of the impact from the GPA will become more apparent as recently enacted measures, such as changed regulations for contracts, take hold and as USAID continues to take advantage of the increasing call from its customers for gender equality. As USAID Missions from Guatemala to Morocco put it, the Agency and its partners can do the most to promote gender equality when there is an enabling environment in the host nation.

As the foregoing reflects, there is the proverbial “good news” and “bad news” on the GPA, just as there is more generally on global development. Many in both USAID and the PVO community have been disappointed by what has been enunciated or implemented to date on the GPA, although they come at the question from different perspectives.

- Most USAID personnel never read the Plan. When they did see it (many read it for the first time during this assessment), many criticized it for what they considered an overly bureaucratic approach. As one senior USAID analyst put it, “If the GPA was intended to keep the gender fire burning, it failed to turn up the heat!”
- Most PVO representatives also never heard of the Plan. To the extent they knew about it, many found fault with the Plan itself (too vague) or with the Agency (insufficient follow-through) -- or both. Some faulted the Agency for using budget cuts as an excuse for inaction. As one PVO leader put it, “Promoting gender equality is more a matter of will, than means.” (**PULL QUOTE**).

The truth probably lies somewhere between these two poles of perception. Most Agency staff stated that they are indeed committed to incorporating gender equality in their work. Nonetheless, they said that they could and should do more. Even the most highly motivated said that they would benefit from training. Further, those in the field emphasized that they want much more latitude to use resources so that they can address gender equality as a cross-cutting issue and capitalize on new or unique opportunities.

III: THE GENDER PLAN OF ACTION

NEXT STEPS

"Addressing gender equality is a revolution overcoming thousands of years of tradition!" **Senior Official at USAID**

What can be done to move forward on the Gender Plan of Action? This section of the report addresses the question of specific follow-up on the GPA. Despite some of the overall differences in perspective on the GPA between USAID employees and PVO representatives, there appears to be some consensus on where the Agency should proceed. Discussion is organized according to the three main areas covered by the GPA:

- A. Commitment to greater consideration of gender in Agency policy
- B. Increased capacity to address gender through changes in procedures
- C. Incentives for performance and follow-up

A. Policy and Program Commitment

Most of those interviewed, USAID and PVO alike, agreed that it is useful to maintain focus on commitment to concern about gender equality in Agency policy. To that end, they recommended attention, in priority order, to three Agency policy documents:

1. Country Strategic Plan (CSP) of each USAID Mission
2. Agency Strategic Plan (ASP)
3. Policy Paper on Women in Development

1. Country Strategic Plan (CSP)

Most interviewees, especially those inside USAID, accord highest priority in the policy area to emphasizing gender equality in the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) of each USAID Mission. USAID employees take greatest pride in their role and reputation as technical experts in the field. It is primarily there where USAID personnel design programs and projects and where the R4 process links resources to reporting of results. Concern about gender equality can be built in from the beginning and impact can be monitored and measured through such vehicles as: the formulation of the Strategic Objectives (SOs), Intermediate Results (IRs), results packages, and performance indicators; customer service planning; Requests for Proposals (RFP's) and Scopes of Work; performance monitoring plans; and R4 and other reporting instruments.

One question that emerged from the interviews and field survey is how to highlight gender equality in the CSP. Is it most productive to incorporate gender into all the Strategic and Special Objectives of the USAID Mission CSP, or to make gender equality an independent Strategic Objective (SO)? USAID Kathmandu has pioneered the latter

course by making women's empowerment" one of its three Strategic Objectives. Interviewees from both the Agency and PVOs reflected mixed views on the results to date of that experiment.

- On the one hand, making women's empowerment a Strategic Objective helped underscore attention to gender issues in Nepalese society where women have little choice or voice.
- On the other hand, this approach risked marginalizing attention to gender with one small SO team, alienating other SO leaders in the Mission, and becoming a point of contention within the Mission and with PVO partners.

Preliminary conclusion? The returns are not yet in on USAID Kathmandu's innovative experiment and it is not possible to generalize for all USAID Missions. That said, most interviewees asserted that there are likely to be more cost-effective, sustained results achieved from integrating gender into all parts of each USAID Mission's CSP, than from singling out women's empowerment or gender equality as a stand-alone SO.

2. Agency Strategic Plan

The second place to register high priority for policy on gender equality is in the Agency's Strategic Plan (ASP). That document is the Agency's summary of overall Agency Mission and Goals which is revised every three years in response to a Congressional requirement (the Government Performance and Results Act or GPRA of 1993). (FN 23)

The main options proposed by interviewees for addressing gender in the Agency's Strategic Plan include:

- Emphasizing gender equality as one of no more than three cross-cutting themes for the Agency Strategic Plan
- Integrating gender equality in work under each of the Strategic Goals
- Making gender equality one of the Agency's stand-alone Strategic Goals
- Variants of the above.

Although there are proponents for all of these options and variants or combinations thereof, most interviewees favored strong identification of gender as a cross-cutting theme, together with full incorporation of concern for gender equality into work on all six of the Agency's substantive Strategic Goals. ACVFA registered its views in a letter (October 1999) responding to an early draft USAID document, "Gender and USAID's Strategic Plan." The organization urged Agency leaders to focus on gender as a cross-cutting issue in the current revision of USAID's Strategic Plan, indicating more clearly

where there are critical gaps, where updating is in order, and where more accountability must be provided.

Those who advocated using gender as a cross-cutting theme in the Strategic Plan and integrating gender fully into all Agency Strategic Goal areas do stress the need for more specific required reporting and follow-up (see below). Doing so would help address one of the more telling points to emerge from the field survey -- namely, that most Agency employees do not look to references to gender in the USAID Strategic Framework to inform the Mission CSP. To help address this issue, one Agency consultant suggested: "Revise the Agency Strategic Plan to address gender more consistently across all goals areas, particularly in performance goals and indicators; and ensure that the Annual Performance Plan includes actions needed to fully integrate gender in Agency program planning and performance planning."

Gender references in the Agency's Strategic Goals. Most interviewees, particularly in the PVO community, emphasized the need for specific increased attention to the areas in the ASP where they believe there has been the least apparent emphasis or success in addressing gender equality. The following discussion highlights the views of interviewees on the extent to which gender equality has been reflected in USAID's work on its seven Strategic Goals:

(a) **Broad-based economic growth and agricultural development.** Most USAID staff working in these fields said that they have incorporated concern for gender equality in their programs and projects. They cited, for example, the Micro-enterprise Innovation Project and other USAID-supported projects that provide small amounts of credit to entrepreneurs, the majority of whom are women, and programs to encourage the shift from subsistence agriculture to cash crops for export. However, many PVO representatives saw the need for more focus on gender equality in macro-economic policy and the agricultural sector, given the major role of women in farming in many developing nations.

(b) **Democracy and good governance.** While Agency programs in this area have reflected considerable concern for gender equality, budgetary restraints and other factors have, according to interviewees, hampered impact.

(c) **Human capacity built through education and training.** Findings from the team's field work -- from Guatemala to Uganda -- reflected the impressive impact that can be achieved by encouraging girls to go to school and some new approaches that merit replication. The Agency has allocated over \$50 million (1994-1999) annually to help close the gap between girls' and boys' access to basic education. Impressive as such work has been, interviewees inside and outside USAID suggested that the Agency expand its work beyond primary education.

(d) **Population, health, and nutrition (PHN).** Most interviewees in the PVO community, as well as USAID, said that the Agency has made important progress in addressing issues of gender equality in PHN. Discussions and review of relevant

documents confirmed that the USAID/PVO partnership on PHN has made major forward strides in integrating gender into their work and that the USAID-led voluntary working group in PHN could provide a model for encouraging outreach and innovation in other Agency program areas.

(e) **Natural resource management and the environment.** Most Agency environmentalists stated that they incorporate women in their programs. Field work revealed some instructive USAID work, from USAID Rabat's plans to involve women in water user groups, to USAID Kampala's collaboration with Heifer International and Land O'Lakes. However, many PVO representatives said that USAID does not reflect sufficiently the role of women's work in degrading the environment through, for example, farming practices or herding animals and, conversely, the constructive role that women can or do play in protecting the environment.

(f) **Humanitarian assistance.** Interviewees gave kudos for work undertaken, such as the USAID programs for reconstruction in Rwanda via the Women in Transition Initiative and the program to promote ethnic reconciliation and mutual tolerance (or STAR program) in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia.

(g) **USAID a premier development agency.** All interviewees agreed that, for USAID to remain in the vanguard among development agencies, it must incorporate concern for gender equality into its work.

3. Policy Paper on Women in Development

The third reflection of the Agency's policy commitment to gender equality is the USAID Policy Paper on Women in Development issued in 1982. Most interviewees inside USAID discounted such documents as irrelevant to their daily work, whereas most PVO interviewees considered them important. That said, both groups favored issuance of a short statement on gender equality and development which would help emphasize the Agency's commitment in this area, relate to new structures inside the Agency, and spotlight changing priorities for the twenty-first century.

B. Increased Capacity to Address Gender Through Changes in Procedures

The following discussion is keyed to the recommendations on increasing Agency capacity for promoting gender equality which most interviewees considered worthy of follow-up. Items are listed in priority order, from highest to lowest.

1. Training

The top recommendation for follow-up on this section of the GPA was the call for training that includes concern for gender equality. Indeed, the lack of opportunities for

training on most subjects during the 1990's was a frequent refrain with many Agency employees. Some USAID interviewees said that, although most Agency staff wanted to incorporate gender in their programs and projects, many do not know how to go about it. **(SIDE MARGIN QUOTE: "USAID personnel are shifting from asking why they should work on gender equality, to how." USAID consultant)** Many inside and outside the Agency stressed the particular importance of helping implement the new gender-sensitive procedures for contracts, cooperative agreements and grants through specific training workshops and handbooks for compliance. Most USAID employees were adamant that they do not want gender-only training.

The gist of recommendations from interviewees inside and outside USAID for next steps on training for USAID personnel and/or contractors and consultants was as follows:

- Integration of gender equality in training materials on sectors, team-building, management and procurement.
- Priority attention for integrating gender equality in the training for new entrants, program officers, contract personnel, and Foreign Service National employees (FSNs).
- Use of simple, user-friendly training material including short practical guides on "best practices" or case studies of USAID success stories. As one gender specialist in the PVO community advised, "Leave out the intellectual feminist stuff and ask just two questions – how does a project affect men and women, and why?" Much of the useful material that was developed in the late 1980's and early 1990's might be put on the USAID web site with an added resource materials section linking specifically to gender equality tools developed by other donors and PVOs/NGOSs.
- Provision of several training options for members of USAID Mission SO teams, ranging from the annual G/WID Gender and Results Workshop, to training of those on a Mission Gender Working Group (if one exists or is established).

2. Monitoring and evaluation

Interviews with USAID employees and other donors confirmed the importance of solid evaluation in promoting gender equality. They said that it is possible to have an excellent project at the design stage but one that fails due to poor implementation by the host government or others. It is thus vital to have a means to assess impact and extract lessons learned. The problem for many donors is that few recipient nations want part of a loan or project funding allocated for evaluation. Further, much of the data gathered on gender equality tends to be qualitative or anecdotal and not lend itself to easy quantification. The result: little reliable disaggregated data on gender.

Interviews also revealed that, for there to be the fullest buy-in by Agency employees, the case for including concern for gender equality in development needs to be

documented in terms respected by USAID personnel, not for gender equality itself, but for its dynamic impact on development. According to one USAID advocate in the field, “Such data should reflect how emphasis on gender equality, by changing the way resources are used, reduces economic and social imbalances and contributes to achieving national economic self-reliance and reducing poverty.” On this point, most interviewees suggested:

- Incorporation of requirements for reporting on gender equality at the Mission level in R4 and performance reports
- Reinforcement of that field work through AID/W with a more rigorously run R4 process, with its results orientation. PPC’s recent move to re-institute reporting requirements on gender in the R4 process is a positive step for implementing the GPA.
- Greater reference to international indicators on gender equality such as those developed by the OECD/DAC.
- Increased resources for PPC’s Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE). PPC has traditionally been the best equipped USAID office to develop more-clearly articulated indicators for gender analysis and to evaluate incoming data. That staff (although supported by work done on contract) has only a few direct-hire analysts with the capacity to undertake full evaluations. While the Agency has prepared several special studies covering gender issues, it has done no overall evaluation of women in development since issuing the Agency’s Policy Paper on Women in Development in 1982. **(PULL-QUOTE:** “The Agency ... has done no overall evaluation of women in development since issuing the Policy Paper on Women in Development in 1982.”)

3. Procurement

One of the most critical next steps for implementing the GPA is to assure that contractors are aware of the new requirements on the books and how to comply with them. Most interviewees agreed that it is important to address the inclusion of gender equality early on in the process -- with development of the scope of work for grants, cooperative agreements and contracts -- and then to specify compliance at the completion of the project. The Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation in the Bureau of Humanitarian Response has required attention to gender in Requests for Applications (RFAs) in the Matching Grants Program for a number of years. The Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia affirmed the importance of compliance in the procurement area in a message sent to all E and E missions in early May 2000.

4. Personnel policy

Some interviewees inside USAID and most in the PVO community said that the Agency should move to include concern for gender equality more generally in personnel policy, beyond what has already been done entry-level and other more junior employees. Even those inside the Agency, who are skeptical about what they consider a “checklist approach to change,” said that they thought broader amendment of personnel policy might work if Agency leaders were to maintain consistent, sustained follow-through on such requirements as the following:

- More general inclusion of gender requirements. Job-specific reference to gender equality (not/not general “boiler-plate” language) might be included in every employee’s work requirements statement, the annual contract that stipulates priorities for the rating period. As one interviewee in USAID Kampala put it, “Where appropriate, gender integration should be incorporated into individual staff work plans and constitute an evaluation criterion for work objectives, so that commitment to gender integration becomes an element in employee performance assessment.”
- USAID senior personnel. The study team found that there is no guidance provided on performance on gender equality for the Chiefs of Mission or Ambassadors who are responsible for evaluating the work of USAID Mission Directors annually. Thus, USAID’s Office of Human Resources might raise this issue with the Director General of the Foreign Service at the Department of State and the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA).
- Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs). Several interviewees suggested that it might be useful to have some Agency guidance reflecting concern for gender equality in the performance of the host-country nationals employed by USAID in the field. Those employees are assuming increasing responsibility for implementing many USAID programs. They may also, as citizens of the host-country, be best informed as to the most appropriate approach on gender equality.

5. USAID Senior Gender Advisor

Interviewees were divided on whether the Agency needs a full-time Senior Gender Advisor. Whereas most USAID employees were unenthusiastic about this proposal, many in the PVO community urged this action. Such advocates said that, to be effective, the Advisor should be high-level, respected and able to operate effectively inside USAID, technically competent on gender and other development issues, politically savvy, attuned to the PVO community, and knowledgeable about the Hill. A daunting profile for this Wonder Woman or Man!

There are several other questions regarding the Senior Gender Advisor. One question is where she/he should be based. Most interviewees favored PPC because of its cross-cutting responsibility for policy formulation and its role in the ADS process. Early in 2000, PPC hired a senior social scientist who has coverage of gender equality as part of her portfolio. There is also the issue of the relationship between the Senior Gender Advisor and the Director of G/WID. Some interviewees inside USAID suggested that

past tension and other problems might be avoided by clearer agreement on the division of authority and labor between the two. The Advisor in PPC, suggested some, might have lead responsibility on policy matters and the Director of G/WID could provide technical support.

6. Women in Development (WID) Fellows

This new program was established, according to G/WID's strategic plan, "to build a technical cadre to support the integration of gender issues into development programs, and to allow for the assignment of WID advisors in all USAID missions and bureaus." Interviews with field missions that had WID Fellows, as well as those involved with the program in Washington, indicated that this program has fallen short of expectations. Many USAID personnel said that they spent more time educating the WID Fellows, than they gained because many Fellows had little knowledge of the Agency, international affairs or gender equality. (FN 24) The second phase of the program was launched with a new cooperative agreement in September 1999 without evaluating the first phase. It might be useful to see if changes could be made in this three-year program. If not, subsequent agreements might reflect some of the following suggestions made to the study team:

- Selection of candidates with international experience
- Selection of candidates who already have gender expertise so that there is no need for USAID initial training
- Provision of longer tours of duty (most served for less than a year)
- Higher stipends (preferably at the GS 13-14 level) in order to attract more experienced personnel to the program and to USAID/Washington assignments in particular
- More USAID mission participation in shaping the program
- Requirements for evaluation of program impact built into next phase

C. Incentives for Performance and Follow-up

Sustained implementation of the GPA, including next steps, will depend largely on monitoring, particularly by Agency leaders advised by ACVFA, and recognizing and rewarding employees' commitment to gender equality. Interviewees offered several options for consideration:

1. Incentives for performance

The question of rewarding outstanding work on gender equality merits another look. G/WID and others decided to drop the proposal for a Performance Fund because of the budgetary pressures on the Agency in the 1990's. However, many USAID interviewees thought that it would be useful to signal special recognition for outstanding advocacy of gender equality. As one member on the USAID Kampala team stated: "Responsibility and accountability mechanisms should be balanced by a system of credit, rewards and/or

incentives for accomplishments, within the framework of the Agency system for recognizing individual and/or group achievements.”

The proposal that emerged from interviewees was: The Agency Administrator could present one award for each of the four categories noted below that best exemplifies effective or innovative work on gender equality and development. These awards could be special citations or cash awards (provided by the Agency or a private-sector sponsor) presented at the annual Agency Awards Ceremony:

- U.S. direct-hire employee
- U.S. contract employee,
- USAID Mission team of AID/W office

The question of how to monitor and follow up on the GPA elicited several proposals from interviewees, including:

- Shifting the primary responsibility for monitoring progress on the GPA from the Office of the Counselor to the Office of the Assistant Administrator for PPC, unless and until the Counselor has a larger support staff. PPC should work in collaboration with G/WID.
- Regular Review of the GPA. Since most implementation of the GPA has occurred so recently, it is difficult to measure impact. For that reason, the Agency, might want to hold regular reviews on action taken since 1999.
- ACVFA initiatives. Sustained progress on an issue as complicated and important as gender equality would benefit from continued monitoring by ACVFA. Several interviewees suggested that ACVFA might:
 - Revive the practice of using its quarterly public meetings to request and review written status reports on the Agency’s progress in promoting gender equality.
 - Use small private sessions with USAID senior management to discuss how to address specific obstacles to progress, the need for course corrections or new proposals. ACVFA leaders might also suggest participating in part of the annual conferences of USAID Mission Directors.
 - Use foreign travel by ACVFA leaders to meet with USAID Mission staff in the field to discuss progress on gender equality.

IV: LOOKING AHEAD

OPTIONS FOR DIALOGUE

"Women are half of humankind. We need men and women to hold up the sky! " Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

If, as some said during the U.N. Women's Congress, "women hold up half the sky," men hold up the other half. Just as obviously, both must work together to help promote sustainable development.

To that end, there is a wealth of experience and depth of dedication on which leaders from USAID, advised by ACVFA, can build. This section of the report moves beyond the specific next steps for the GPA addressed in Part III, to reflect the wide range of ideas that emerged from discussion of gender equality and development. The interviews, responses to the field survey, and field work were most notable, not for what they revealed about the GPA *per se*, but for what they suggested about how USAID might become more effective in promoting gender equality. Those sources also helped underscore the extensive commitment of the Agency in this area which began before the GPA and which has continued to increase around the world irrespective of general lack of Agency awareness about the GPA. (FN 25)

What emerges as the most significant outcome of this assessment is thus this section focused on the future – the options for dialogue on gender equality. There are many suggestions which those interviewed and surveyed believe merit discussion within ACVFA and USAID and between the two. The consensus from USAID personnel and PVO representatives: There is the potential for even greater impact for sustainable development if USAID develops a bold strategy for the future, "The Agenda for -- 2000 and Beyond."

Part IV is organized as follows:

- A. Overall approach to gender equality
- B. Process: how USAID could move to the next plateau of institutional innovation, outreach to others, and collaboration with its partners?
- C. Program: what substantive issues merit more Agency attention?

A. Overall Approach to Gender Equality

There can be no significant forward movement in any development organization on gender equality, without an overall approach that reflects consistent commitment, according to most interviewed or surveyed for this assessment and relevant literature. The points raised in this section reflect general precepts for effective advocacy of gender equality. They do not reflect specific judgments on the leadership of any organization.

That said, many interviewees went out of their way to commend leaders of USAID and several U.S. PVOs for demonstrating the kind of commitment considered vital to progress on gender equality. Interviews with USAID and the PVO community emphasized the following overall approach to gender equality:

- The buck starts and stops with the leadership at the very top of the organization in question.
- That leader must demonstrate vision. That longer-term outlook for the future should include an external dimension recognizing the different roles of men and women in development and an internal component promoting gender equality inside the organization through equal opportunity for leadership positions and family-friendly policies.
- She/he should demonstrate clear commitment to gender equality as one of no more than three central priorities of the organization.
- That commitment must reflect consensus built over time within the organization and with customers. Listening to the beneficiaries in the field matters more than checking boxes on forms at Headquarters. Inside the organization, one way to build consensus is through an agreed approach to gender analysis that reflects staff values and development mission.
- Resources must match rhetoric.
- All training must include concern for gender equality.
- Accountability is critical, with outstanding performance rewarded and results clearly monitored and clear time-lines set achievement of objectives. One PVO representative suggested: “Turn GPA into a ‘Grade Point Average,’ evaluating how people promote gender equality in their projects.” (FN 26)
- The leader must demonstrate determined political will, ready to “walk the talk” (the right talk!), promoting new capacity and a positive organizational culture to foster gender equality.

B. Process : How to Promote Gender Equality

“What one action would you take to promote gender equality if you were USAID Administrator for the day?” (PULL QUOTE) That was the question posed by the team to conclude many individual interviews and focus groups. The answers, together with responses to the field survey, provide a wide range of specific ideas as to how USAID might integrate concern for gender equality more fully into its organization and how it might build greater support elsewhere. This section is organized as follows:

1. Advocacy of gender equality inside USAID

2. Role of the Office for Women in Development
3. Funding promotion of gender equality
4. Increased collaboration within the U.S. Executive Branch
5. More outreach to the U.S. Congress, American public, PVO/NGO community, and USAID “customers”
6. Donor coordination

1. Advocacy of gender equality inside USAID

Just one person, a so-called “gender entrepreneur,” can play a major role in any organization or on the global stage. Many interviewees cited the extraordinary difference made by one individual – from the Director of a USAID and leader in ACVFA, to heads of government and their spouses. For example, in Uganda, women leaders attributed many of their gains to the strong commitment of President Museveni. In Morocco, men and women alike hailed the statements in behalf of equal rights by their new King.

However, important as such individual advocacy is, most interviewees still emphasized the need to find more systemic ways to inculcate concern for gender **equality**. In that regard, interviewees inside and outside the Agency, suggested several options to help USAID move to the next plateau of organizational change. The proposals ranged from (a) a “Gender Network,” to (b) a “Senior Management Team.”

(a) Gender Network. Some interviewees in USAID and the PVO community proposed a framework which would link gender advisers in AID/W with their field counterparts.

- A Senior Gender Advisor would report to the Assistant Administrator in each AID/W regional bureau, to capitalize on the fact that most program/project decisions are made in these bureaus and their respective field missions. (Two of the four regional bureaus, for Asia and the Near East and for East Europe and the former Soviet Union, now have gender advisors.)
- Other members of the Network in AID/W would include the Senior Gender Advisor in PPC, the Director of G/WID and a senior-level Gender Advisor for the Bureau for Management (M). Including M could help ensure coordination on personnel and funding questions.
- The Chairperson for the AID/W Gender Network could be either the Senior Gender Advisor in PPC or the Director of G/WID. To avoid turf battles, one suggested option: co-chairs.
- Each USAID Mission would have a Gender Advisor, reporting to Mission senior management (Deputy Director or Program Officer) and coordinating with her/his AID/W regional counterpart. Most gender advisors now are junior female FSN’s with little clout and another full-time job. As one put it, “It would be best if the

Gender Advisor in this country, with all its machismo, were a male U.S. direct-hire employee!”

- Members of the Network should be career staff and have, not only gender expertise, but also other international development experience and knowledge of USAID procedures.

(b) Senior Management Team. One gender consultant at a USAID Mission proposed a different team approach for both Washington and the field that would foster “buy-in” on gender equality through links between leaders in AID/W and the field who are not necessarily gender specialists. She, along with others, argued that the existence of G/WID in Washington and WID officers in the field marginalizes attention to gender equality. This approach would operate as follows:

- In Washington, a Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) in each regional and functional bureau would chair a Senior Gender Equality Team assuring inclusion of gender concerns in the programs of each office in the bureau. The Deputy Administrator would chair regular meetings of the DAAs to help ensure Agency-wide coordination. Given the press of other business in Washington, there might need to be technical back-up on gender issues.
- In the field, the Deputy Mission Director would chair a Gender Equality Team consisting of one member from each of the SO teams. Accountability for the achievement of Strategic Objectives and Intermediate Results, including those that demonstrate gender impact, is vested explicitly in the SO teams in accordance with ADS guidance and principles of re-engineering.
- With this option, there might not be a continuing role for WID Advisor or G/WID since the main emphasis is on mainstreaming gender equality into all Agency work.

No matter which option (or variant thereof) for advocacy of gender equality is chosen, many interviewees urged the Agency to take into fuller account some of the trail-blazing initiatives undertaken by other donors. Some examples: the revised policy on gender equality of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); the useful guidance on specific principles, links between policies and results and gender analysis developed by the OECD/DAC; and the Gender Policy Review at the World Bank. (FN 27)

2. Role of the Office for Women in Development

Opinions varied widely on the role and effectiveness of USAID’s Office of Women in Development. On the one hand, some in the Agency complained about the “WID police” and stated that a separate WID Office reflects an outdated approach from which USAID should graduate. On the other hand, many, especially in the PVO community,

argued strongly for keeping G/WID and some Mission personnel praised G/WID for its helpful technical expertise. The following options emerged:

- (a) **Elimination of G/WID.** Some USAID employees and PVO representatives urged closing G/WID. Their reason was similar to the rationale cited by Oxfam America, which does not have a gender unit because of the belief that each program officer must take responsibility for ensuring application of gender concerns throughout her/his programs.
- (b) **Retention of G/WID.** The majority of interviewees in the PVO community and a small minority in USAID recommended keeping G/WID. Although they acknowledged the challenge of finding a constructive balance between advocacy and alliance building and the risk of the “ghettoizing” gender, advocates thought that G/WID must remain until there is more confidence in the capacity of all Agency employees to integrate gender into their work.
- (c) **Changes in G/WID.** Some interviewees inside USAID and the PVO community recommended the items below to help increase office impact (some of the proposals might constitute part of a special evaluation of G/WID programs and contracts before next steps are taken):
 - Signaling USAID’s increased emphasis on gender equality by changing the office name to Office of Gender Equality in the Bureau of Global Programs, Field Support, and Research (G/GE).
 - Recruiting direct-hire staff with both gender expertise and technical experience in other development sectors and one or more of geographic regions (reflecting the range of expertise of those in the WIDSTRAT project that concluded in Spring 2000).
 - Improving communication and outreach to USAID staff and PVOs.
 - Responding better to expressed customer needs through exclusive focus on technical support for field missions and PVOs/NGOs, rather than G/WID’s own projects.
 - Increasing staff and career appeal. Proponents and opponents of G/WID said that it suffered from too few staff (expected to drop to seven in FY 2001) to meet Agency demands and manage its contract personnel and from recruitment problems (assignment to G/WID is seen as a “career breaker”).

3. Funding for gender equality

How might USAID jump-start or sustain any variant of the organizational approaches cited above? Interviews reflected several options from (a) setting up a Fund for Gender Equality, to (b) continuing the current approach, but with increased attention to including concern for gender into all Agency programs.

(a) **Fund for Gender Equality.** Many PVO and USAID representatives urged the creation of a special fund to help encourage innovative programs that might become models for wider Agency replication. This fund could be set up either by designating part of overall discretionary funding for each of USAID's four regional bureaus, or by other means. It could help address what most interviewees consider inadequate latitude for funding gender-integrated programs due to funding by Strategic Goal or Objective, together with the extensive use of Congressional earmarks or "flavoring" of money. Some argued that, if the case were made effectively, there might well be support on Capitol Hill for such a fund.

(b) **Current Approach.** Skeptics about the utility of a special fund warned that such initiatives have been tried in the past and failed, largely because Mission Directors resent what they see as an AID/W directive "robbing Peter to pay Paul" – particularly in a time of tight budgets. They stated that it would be hard to win Congressional approval for more money for gender equality. They thus urged Mission Directors to achieve greater results in behalf of gender equality by integrating that perspective more fully into current or new programs and projects.

4. Increased collaboration within the U.S. Executive Branch

Feedback from the field, both USAID and Embassy personnel, indicated that more explicit commitment to gender equality by each Country Team – led by the Ambassador and including the Embassy, USAID, the Public Affairs Officer, Peace Corps and others – could help assure that USAID achieves an even greater impact in behalf of gender equality. The example set by the current U.S. Ambassador in Guatemala stands out, both in terms of her emphasis on gender equality with the U.S. Country Team and the donor community in Guatemala City and the role model she provides as a committed woman ambassador. Several options that emerged from discussions in Washington and abroad include:

(a) **Greater linkage between USAID and State Department Planners.** USAID Mission personnel in Africa and Latin America suggested that work on gender equality could capitalize on increasing USAID/State collaboration on **resources and planning**. There might be more specific linkage on gender equality between the 16 Goals in the Strategic Plan for International Affairs prepared by the Department of State and the seven Goals in the Agency Strategic Plan. Increasing collaboration in Washington by USAID and the State Department could, in turn, be reflected by expanding cooperation in the U.S. Country Team in the field, with more mutual reinforcement between the Embassy's annual Mission Program Plan (MPP) and the USAID Country Strategic Plan (CSP) (prepared on a three-to-five-year cycle).

(b) **Complementary role by the President's Interagency Council on Women (PICW).** Established in 1995 as part of the "Beijing process," the PICW could help set clearer U.S. Government priorities and increase coordination of

resources available for international promotion of gender equality from agencies ranging from USAID and State, to the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services, and the Environmental Protection Agency and others. Treasury could be included to help ensure more attention to promoting gender equality through the international financial institutions. Most interviewees expressed some question as to what the primary role of the PICW has been beyond the sponsorship of high-profile events such as the “Vital Voices” conferences of women leaders around the world.

- (c) **Increased collaboration between USAID and public diplomacy.** More cooperation between USAID field missions and the Embassy Public Affairs Officers (and their Washington counterparts) could help ensure beneficial attention to gender equality in the Fulbright and International Visitor Programs.
- (d) **More cooperation between USAID and the Peace Corps.** Field work revealed increased potential for mutual reinforcement of both agencies’ goals through more exchanges of information on projects at the local level, such as community involvement in primary education for girls and boys in Guatemala, and briefings on gender sensitivity for new Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs).

5. Outreach to the Congress, American public and USAID “customers”

To build on USAID’s cooperation with its partners and address the need for more outreach beyond the U.S. Government, interviewees suggested several options. These proposals ranged from (a) creation of some new entities, to (b) increased USAID/ACVFA collaboration. Some interviewees observed that the U.S. gender community has much to learn from its counterparts in the environmental world. The green movement began with little public support in the late 1960’s. Since then, environmental organizations have become a large, well-financed and effective political force. The options proposed in behalf of promoting gender equality included:

- **U.S. Council on Gender Equality.** To help build a comparable constituency for gender equality inside the United States, some interviewees proposed the creation of a U.S. Council on Gender Equality. This Council could include members from the Congress and/or staff since there is not a large vocal constituency in favor of gender equality on Capitol Hill. Further, that Council should include representatives from the U.S. business community (given the role, according to USAID Guatemala and others, that some corporations play abroad regarding labor rights for women and more general promotion of gender equality). It should also include representatives from key U.S. women’s organizations as part of a much more active effort at capitalizing on the most obvious constituency for gender equality. (FN 28)
- **International Council on Gender Equality.** Some suggested that the Administrator might initiate comparable outreach outside the United States with the establishment of a new international advisory board. He/she might meet at least annually with this Council comprised of beneficiaries (especially women, but not exclusively) from

some countries where USAID operates. One of the most frequently articulated concerns in the field was that from USAID “customers” wanting a greater role in formulating program priorities and approaches. Based on World Bank experience with this kind of outreach, noted by a Bank representative in Morocco, such a Council could help assure more direct dialogue between USAID leadership and some of the women and men participating in USAID projects abroad. This Council could help encourage more responsiveness to priorities in the field, innovation, and regional collaboration on gender issues transcending national boundaries.

- Professional Exchange Program. Others suggested increased USAID/PVO collaboration. To address the issue of different perspectives between the two communities which became apparent in this assessment, some interviewees suggested launching a small exchange program. The PVO community and the Agency might each second to the other five employees per year for a twelve-month program. Such a Professional Exchange Program might help build a cadre of personnel over time who could strengthen mutual understanding and build on the collaboration resulting from PVO representatives serving on U.S. delegations to international conferences.

6. Donor coordination

“We risk breaking the first rule of development – do no harm!” according to one USAID Guatemala Consultant. **(PULL QUOTE)** His specific concern, voiced by others in the field, was with what they considered the enormous potentially damaging proliferation of donors’ gender programs in developing countries. One USAID adviser in Africa thus advised: “Careful coordination with other donors is critical in order to avoid duplication of effort, double funding, overwhelming the management capacities of smaller beneficiary organizations, or abuse.” To help ensure more constructive mainstreaming of gender equality by the donor community, some interviewees suggested the following:

- Formation of donor coordination groups on gender equality in host-country capitals. This could be done by any donor but many interviewees recommended acting under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) or the World Bank because of the larger resources and broader political appeal of multilateral organizations.
- Increased attention, as appropriate, to gender equality in regular meetings of the Consultative Groups on macro-economic policy and performance chaired by the World Bank or other multilateral organizations.
- Less emphasis on sending the same “donor darlings” to expensive international conferences and overseas workshops (one exasperated USAID Mission Director called for a moratorium on all “workshops” in Washington!) and more attention to training community leaders in-country;

- Increased commitment to a customer-based approach, listening more to what the beneficiaries need and staying attuned to local context and culture. One of the strongest recurrent themes in interviewees with host-country aid recipients was the plea that donors not impose their “Western” priorities and that they listen to their views;
- Need to keep the local and national governments in host nations informed about donor plans with NGOs, in order to facilitate collaboration among all concerned parties.

C. Program: What to Propose for Gender Equality

Changing how USAID does business is, according to most interviewees, just one part of achieving gender equality. Revamping organization charts and procedures does not address the more critical substance of the Agency’s work. It is, said most USAID interviewees, more important for Agency leaders to decide “what” they want to do, before they worry about “how” they plan to proceed. Perhaps betraying some procedural fatigue from the “re-engineering” of the 1990’s and other matters, they tended to discount the points emphasized in literature on organizational theory regarding the dynamic relationship between process and program and stressed the need to focus on what they called “substance.” This section thus addresses what mostly USAID interviewees raised regarding:

1. General strategic questions for the Agency
2. Specific issues about USAID programs

1. General strategic questions for the Agency

USAID may be, said many interviewees, at a critical crossroad in its strategy for gender equality. There are some crucial choices to make, since resources are limited and may become more so. Interviewees raised the following kinds of general strategic questions for Agency consideration:

- How bold should USAID be in its vision for development? Many interviewees expressed the view that incorporating concern for gender equality in development requires a fundamental transformation of society. If so, should the Agency move from seeking integration of gender concerns in the status quo, to becoming a more explicit agent for change?
- What about country focus? Which developing nations merit most attention in terms of gender equality and should the Agency reflect greater awareness of transnational issues? A few interviewees argued that country-specific programs are outmoded in an era of increased regionalism and globalization. Some urged shifting as much as possible from USAID’s almost exclusively country-based orientation, to more focus on some concerns (such as regional conflicts and HIV/AIDS) and potential for more regional collaboration (such as The Asia Foundation’s work on networking among

female political leaders in the Indian Subcontinent or USAID Guatemala's regional programs in Central America).

- What are the highest priority needs or issues? One PVO leader wondered whether there must or should be a tradeoff between focus on questions of basic survival (such as high maternal mortality rates) and issues of empowerment for women, such as divorce law and land ownership. One of her colleagues raised the question whether some or most Agency work in behalf of women should continue to emphasize such traditional areas as their reproductive health, literacy and micro-credit/enterprise, or whether there should be more attention to such newer questions, such as the impact of war and societies in transition on women, or both the opportunities and challenges of globalization for gender equality.
- What are the most effective interventions in behalf of gender equality and are those likely to change over the next ten years? Some interviewees talked about the comparative payoff from investments in economic growth or education. Still others raised the question of whether USAID needs to approach this kind of question from a totally different vantage point. Some, for example, asked whether the Agency needs to do more to follow its "customers" from the farm to the city? One interviewee in Cairo, with its estimated population of almost 18 million, suggested that it may be time for USAID to shift more from emphasis on rural poverty, to grapple with the reality of an increasingly urbanized world – especially with the preponderance of mega-cities in the developing world. As more people move to these megalopolises, USAID might explore the implications of that phenomenon for gender equality and overall sustainable development.
- How can the Agency address demographic and generational challenges? One Agency policy officer expressed the profound concern that chaos from conflict in Africa, compounded by the AIDS pandemic, precludes any dent whatsoever in development on that continent, including gender equality. Still others, including those focused on Africa, suggested a different optic. How, they asked, might the Agency think afresh about its programs in light of two new and related generational challenges – the young and the old?

Youth: The largest-ever generation of adolescents is about to enter their childbearing and working years. Some urged USAID to give more attention to the more than one billion adolescents in the world. According to ICRW, "The health, educational levels, and economic prospects of these young people hold profound consequences for human and societal development. Yet, policymakers around the world are failing to give youth the priority attention they deserve."(FN 29)

Ageing Populace: The proportion of people over age 65 will more than double over the next 50 years. That increase will occur, not only in OECD nations, but in much of the developing world where overall life expectancy is projected to rise to 73.2 for men and 77.8 for women by 2045. Thus, those countries will have to deal, simultaneously, with continued high fertility rates and growing older populations and

the fact that older women are more likely than men to be poor, illiterate and sick. As the burden of health care for the elderly shifts from infectious to non-communicable and chronic diseases, women are expected to have greater health problems due to a life time of inadequate access to basic health services and other factors. (FN 30)

One African Mission Director, responding to the field survey, spoke out with particular feeling on this generational question. He urged “re-tooling in terms of a larger understanding of gender” because of generational and other questions. He noted the large numbers of unemployed young males who are turning from “parasitic to predatory” and thus becoming an even greater threat to girls and women. Observing that grandmothers are often caring for AIDS-orphaned children, he said, “We need to look at the problem of the aged and recognize that most generational problems are women’s problems.”

That kind of dual generational challenge – from young and old – suggests, in microcosm, some of the parameters and possibilities for looking ahead. Whatever the answer to such questions, most interviewees agreed that USAID should, with requisite sensitivity for time and place, act even more as a **dynamic agent for change**. The Agency should find ways to integrate work on both traditional and emerging issues affecting gender equality with a **multi-dimensional strategy**. For example, programs for women’s reproductive health, such as those pursued by USAID and its PVO partners in Morocco, are particularly successful because they incorporate other concerns important to woman’s dignity -- from access to adult literacy training or financial credit, to counseling for battered spouses -- and because they try to reach men as well.

If choices must be made for putting scarce resources to best use, most interviewees, while identifying economic concerns as paramount, advocated **education for girls** as the single most cost-effective investment in behalf of gender equality in particular and development in general. They believe that that will remain true for some time. “Giving a young girl the chance to read and write,” as one Guatemalan mother said, “unlocks the door to the world.” (PULL QUOTE) It opens up the opportunity for her daughter to earn more money, to have more say about her reproductive and legal rights, and to play a role in her community and country. That said, most interviewees underscored the **critical importance of economic growth**. Without that, no commitment to gender equality will have much longer-term significance.

Innovation -- and the means to support it -- the assessment team heard from all quarters, is essential. That includes everything from thinking more regionally and globally, to conceptualizing across urban-rural and generational lines. USAID must be ready and able to try new approaches, so that women and their daughters do not remain invisible victims of poverty, but become instead full partners in progress with men. The team’s field work indicates that thinking or working out of the usual development “box” does indeed help promote gender equality, provide models for replication, and produce better development results. Some examples:

- USAID Kampala’s gender-sensitive training on environmentally sound agricultural export projects for men and women is increasing family income and job creation in Uganda.
- USAID Guatemala’s special scholarship and community outreach programs in rural Mayan villages, sometimes combining adult literacy for both parents with primary education for their children, are increasing enrollment of young girls and boys in schools in Guatemala.
- USAID Rabat’s teen clubs, where boys and girls meet weekly on the subject of safe sex and create lively musical street dramas on HIV/AIDS prevention for rural communities, help address critical health issues. Perhaps even more important, these clubs provide a unique venue for social interaction across gender and generational lines (with more communication with their parents) that may help Morocco grapple with the mix of modernity and Muslim tradition.

2. Specific issues about programs

What about the Agency’s current work? Against the backdrop of the foregoing general strategic questions, interviewees raised some specific issues that relate to most of the Agency’s Strategic Goals, as follows:

- (a) Broad-based economic growth and agricultural development
- (b) Democracy and good governance
- (c) Human capacity built through education and training
- (d) Population, health and nutrition
- (e) Natural resource management and the environment
- (f) Humanitarian assistance

(a) Broad-based economic growth and agricultural development

Interest in addressing economic opportunity for women emerged as the top priority among interviewees in the field. Over eighty percent of host-nation female leaders stated that earning more income is a higher initial priority than winning political influence. As one Moroccan woman put it, “Money is power!”” (PULL QUOTE) Interviewees in Washington and the field indicated the need for increased consideration on the following:

- More resources for USAID work on economic growth. AID interviewees voiced great frustration because of the meager funds available to address what over seventy-five percent consider the highest priority for USAID -- namely, promotion of economic growth in general. As one officer in USAID Morocco put it, “If any Mission Director had the choice, he or she would put most of the Mission budget into economic reform.” USAID, backed by ACVFA leaders, might help build a constituency on the Hill for more resources overall for programs on economic growth and then work to assure that those programs reflect concern for gender equality.

- Micro-enterprise and credit. No interviewees disputed the positive impact of USAID's programs in this areas, but some in the field in particular did raise some questions for consideration:

Sustainability. While these programs and projects help boost income in poor communities that are direct beneficiaries and enable women to participate more fully in household and community decision-making, they do not provide a sufficiently comprehensive approach to move poor nations, including women, out of the economic basement. Further, as noted by officials at the World Bank, there are still major challenges to ensuring sustainable programs and improving the performance of public sector micro-credit programs. NGOs such as Accion International and the Grameen Bank have so far provided most of the success stories. (FN 31) Focusing micro-finance programs on women and small-medium enterprise programs on men can have a marginalizing effect for women and set a ceiling on their entrepreneurship.

Marketing. Field work from Guatemala to Morocco confirmed the importance of putting more emphasis on product selection and design and improved marketing. Too many women are encouraged to participate in micro-enterprise and credit programs, only to waste time and money on producing goods that no one will buy.

Employment generation. Senior officials in USAID Kampala emphasized the importance of projects that lead to significant value-added and job generation. In this regard, one USAID Mission Director called for more latitude in loan size, stating that, since the facilities are increasingly in place for micro-enterprise and large-scale enterprise in many nations, the Agency should consider facilitating the availability of loans in the \$10,000 - \$50,000 range.

- **Macro-economic policy role.** Most women in developing nations have yet to make the leap from micro-entrepreneurship to decision-making on macro-economic policy. They are rarely present at the policy table for formulation of the tax, investment or trade policies which directly affect them. Although there is increasing evidence about the different impacts on men and women from economic reform in, for example, the former Soviet Union, relatively few resources have been devoted to such questions as providing a new social safety net or helping organize women for collective action in unions. USAID Kampala's support for Uganda women seeking a "gender budget" may exemplify the kind of approach that will help assure greater attention to issues of gender equality at the national policy level there and elsewhere. USAID might encourage more attention to gender equality in the national policy reviews conducted by international financial institutions.
- Globalization. Increasing globalization presents both opportunities and challenges for gender equality which, according to some interviewees, merit more attention.

Jobs and distribution of wealth. Some global trends expand the flow of money and commodities, creating new and different jobs and fostering economic growth. At the same time, as argued by some organizations such as Women's Edge, globalization

can hurt some in the short term and its benefits may not be shared equitably. The fifth of the world's population living in the highest income countries has almost ninety percent of world gross domestic product, over 80 percent of world export markets, and almost 70 percent of foreign direct investment. The bottom fifth in the poorest countries has one per cent in each category, with women often the poorest of the poor. (FN 32)

Unequal access to information technology. Breakthroughs in information technology could put nations, rich and poor, on the fast track for knowledge-based growth. But, so far, almost 90 percent of the users live in industrialized countries. As observed in the most recent Human Development Report, "An invisible barrier has emerged that true to its name, is like a world wide web, embracing the connected and silently, almost imperceptibly, excluding the rest." (FN 33) USAID officials in the field urged providing more programs to upgrade women's marketable skills in the modern economy, such as training in management of commercial agriculture for export and computer programming/data processing (versus traditional subsistence agriculture or handicrafts). As one female economist in Cairo said, "Please spare us the basket-weaving school of development!" (PULL QUOTE)

These kinds of suggestions from USAID and PVO/NGO professionals alike reflect the opportunity for the Agency to join others in the U.S. Government and other nations as well in grappling with what some in UNDP call "re-writing of governance for the twenty-first century." Such an ambitious approach might include recommendations -- most of which have implications for gender equality -- ranging from the global (reform of the U.N. and the World Trade Organization), through the regional (collective approaches by groups of countries to international negotiations on trade and other areas), to the national (more social protection against the effects of globalization) and local (greater balance between men and women in sharing family responsibilities). (FN 34)

(b) Democracy and good governance including human rights

Although women make up at least half the population in every country, their representation in decision-making bodies is under ten percent. Most of those interviewed agreed that women remain a largely untapped resource for helping build and maintain civil society. Data from the World Bank and elsewhere suggest that women are perceived to be more accountable and trustworthy in countries that suffer from rampant corruption. Thus, if democracy is to succeed, one leader in Egypt said: "Women must move from the kitchen table to the political cabinet, joining men in shaping the laws and policies of our country." (PULL QUOTE)

Part of the challenge for achieving gender equality in governance lies in the fact that the world has changed over the last ten years. With the end of the Cold War, local culture has often replaced ideology in politics, with, for example, the increasing influence of fundamentalist movements. In Morocco, the team found that some Islamic leaders are challenging the campaign by women leaders for legal rights.

Most of those interviewed believed that, although USAID has tried despite budget cuts to help achieve gender equality in promoting democracy and good governance, this is an area that deserves more attention. Some proposals for consideration:

- Increased funding for addressing gender issues as part of work on democracy and governance in USAID's Global Bureau and USAID Missions.
- Increased collaboration in the U.S. Executive Branch. Relevant parts of the U.S. Government, such as the Departments of State and Labor, that have resources for promoting democracy might join with USAID in developing a more coordinated program with emphasis on gender equality. That coordination of program priorities and allocation of mutually-reinforcing resources might be achieved through a NSC-chaired interagency committee or under the auspices of the President's Interagency Council on Women (PICW).

Violation of human rights constitutes an increasingly recognized priority for good governance. This concern obtains whether the violation is within the home, where many abuses of women occur, or in war or more generally. The Taliban deny women their internationally recognized rights in Afghanistan. There are reports from Kosovo that women who were raped during the war were expected to commit suicide in order to avoid shame for her family.

Interviewees thus recommended that USAID expand its work on human rights and gender equality. They applauded PPC's analysis of women in conflict. USAID Guatemala has demonstrated leadership by helping to rally the entire donor community to address the issue of domestic violence that pervades both Ladino and indigenous societies in that Central American nation. **(SIDE MARGIN QUOTE:** "Domestic violence is the best-kept secret in Guatemala." Guatemalan lawyer.)

What else might be done? Some possibilities include:

- More exploration of the implications of violence and conflict for development. Some well-known writers on gender and interviewees suggested that old stereotypes attributed to men and women may not hold. Women are increasingly combatants. In addition, many of those left at home during war or afterwards as widows find themselves empowered as decision-makers. USAID Kampala is working closely with women activists who point out that many of them fought, side by side, with men during the 1980's. They thus won recognition of gender equality in the Ugandan constitution and some of the most progressive programs for affirmative action in the world.
- Role for more women in peace negotiations. The program called "Women Waging Peace," launched by U.S. Ambassador Swanee Hunt, offers a vision of what women, most often absent at formal peace negotiations, might do in achieving sustainable peace. As one well-regarded gender analyst has observed,

“The importance of including women and gender analysis in peace negotiations and the design of peace agreements is a critical issue.”(FN 35)

(c) Human capacity built through education and training

Providing more access to quality education and maintaining enrollment levels constitute a top priority according to over ninety percent of interviewees. As one USAID Mission Director in Latin America said: “You can’t build democracy or a market economy with first graders!” (PULL QUOTE) Interviewees, inside and outside the Agency, suggested that USAID address several of the illustrative issues below in order to remain in the vanguard in this sector:

- Increased emphasis on opportunities for girls as well as boys to have secondary schooling as growing numbers of students graduate from primary school.
- More emphasis on including technical or vocational training for girls and boys in the later years of primary school (this approach would be useful for those who are not likely to attend secondary school) and more such vocational training at the secondary level as well.
- Greater concern for gender equality in technical training. Men, in developing countries, according to interviewees, are more likely to be encouraged to acquire marketable and remunerative skills, such as computer training, than are women. As one USAID analyst put it: “Too often we just tell the women to go off and knit!”
- Greater participation of women in training programs. As appropriate, women should constitute at least forty percent of the host-country candidates for USAID training programs in country or elsewhere.
- More in-country training. Many interviewees in the field urged greater reliance on train-the-trainer curricula in host-country institutions, rather than sending a relatively limited number of trainees to the U.S. The pay-off: multiplier effect with more host-country buy-in and more people trained at a fraction of the cost.

(d) Population, health, and nutrition

Although some of the most generally effective work in behalf of gender equality has been done in the area of population, health and nutrition, there is more to done. PVO interviewees and their USAID counterparts urged consideration to such ideas as the following:

- Target women’s health and other needs beyond those related to her reproductive role. One example: USAID Rabat’s integrated multi-purpose program for women and men in Fes. It combines health messages with literacy programs that are, in turn, linked to training for income generation and credit access.

- Reach out more to men so that they learn to share responsibility for family planning and care of their children. Programs such as those operated by USAID Cairo to reach men and boys reflect the kind of approach that is needed, according to NGOs in Egypt, if there is to be an end to the practice of female genital cutting which affects over 85 million women in almost 30 countries of Africa and the Middle East. The Men and Reproductive Health Subcommittee of USAID's Gender Working Group has produced some innovative material including their "HIM CD-ROM" and "Men and Reproductive Health" in Arabic.
- Expand services to both men and women on HIV/AIDS. Although USAID Kampala thinks that the incidence of AIDS is increasing fastest among women, its programs target both men and women, with different approaches tailored to their different needs for counseling and care.
- Address the link between HIV/AIDS and trafficking. Women and girls constitute a large part of the growing global market in trafficking which amounts to an estimated \$7 billion per year. Many of the victims of trafficking, such as young Nepalese girls sold for service in Bombay brothels, contract HIV/AIDS and return home to die.
- Reach the most influential health care providers at the local level. As USAID Guatemala pointed out, "The choke point for maternal mortality is the mid-wife." One additional way to increase appeal and impact in more remote communities, according to some patients interviewed in the field: combine "Western" medicine with traditional approaches that are more trusted by indigenous communities.
- Promote the role of women as health care policy-makers or managers. Few women have such roles now despite the fact that they dominate as health providers (often unpaid).

(e) Natural resource management and the environment

Gender equality should have special significance for those concerned about protecting the environment and managing natural resources, according to some expressing concern about some USAID programs. As the following suggests, there are both positive and negative implications for women and the environment, as well as for men:

- Women often suffer more than do men from risks in the household environment caused by poor sanitation, indoor air pollution, and inadequate or polluted water supply. Female workers outside the home are more likely than men to work in industries and small enterprises that are poorly regulated, with such hazards as toxic chemicals and radiation. (FN 36)
- Women can cause some environmental damage in their daily work. The number of rural women living in extreme poverty has increased by almost 50 percent (versus

less than 30 percent for men). Impoverished women are not likely to worry about or even understand the long-term implications of practices such as collecting wood for cooking in settings where this can cause erosion, silting of streams and mud slides that can threaten their livelihood and safety. **(FN 37)**

- Many women in developing nations can and do play a constructive role in protecting the environment. They are taking the initiative to address problems of inadequate fuel, food or water caused by soil erosion, deforestation, and pollution. Thus, many interviewees recommended capitalizing on this innovative capacity of women.
- Control and access to natural resources is another issue. Who owns the trees and who has the right to gather wild herbs or fruits in the forest is particularly important to the livelihood of women and their families.

Some interviewees indicated that women are not taken into sufficient account in the PVO community where those working on gender and those working on the environment often talk past each other. For example, some environmental organizations put greatest emphasis on blocking large hydropower projects in order, inter alia, to protect biodiversity. Legitimate as those campaigns may be in many respects, some come at the needless expense of (a) women in poor developing nations who might benefit from more access to electricity and less time spent gathering fuel wood and (b) even the environment itself, given the attendant deforestation. As one representative of a women's PVO stated: "Our colleagues in the green movement need to understand that women are also an endangered species." **(PULL QUOTE)**

Some points and recommendations that emerged from discussions and review of the literature include:

- Expand the effort to make USAID's environmental projects more people-oriented. Concern with the environment per se, not people, is often the starting point for many Agency programs, especially for natural resource management and biodiversity conservation.
- Include women as well as men in USAID's growing number of participatory resource management projects, including in the initial decision-making process. While many USAID projects do reflect an appreciation for the importance of community participation and stakeholder analysis more, said interviewees, need to reflect specific gender sensitivity. **(FN 38)**
- Include livelihood and security issues for women and work in that work.
- Provide more gender-disaggregated data and include specific reference to concern for gender equality in documents ranging from scopes of work for environmental contracts to references in R4 reporting and Mission Country Strategic Plans. Although most USAID personnel working in this field say that they already emphasize the role of women, interviews suggested that more might be done,

especially in documenting that work and disseminating examples of effective innovation.

- Expand dialogue in the PVO/NGO community between those focused on the environment and those working on gender equality.
- Recognize the importance of water – both supply and quality—as an issue which is likely to become more critical in coming decades. USAID Rabat has underscored this issue, including the need for gender sensitivity in addressing Morocco’s increasingly imminent water shortfall.
- Expand on excellent USAID research examining the gender dimensions of environmental problems and the results from projects that involved men and women in programs on solid waste management, preservation of coastal resources, and conservation of bio-diversity.

(f) Humanitarian assistance

All interviewees applauded USAID’s work in this area and recommended that the Agency:

- Seek opportunities to expand on USAID’s already evident sensitivity for the different needs of men and women in situations of natural disaster or conflict;
- Make available to all USAID Missions, for contingency use, helpful checklists for action in emergencies, such as those developed by InterAction, that help assure attention to gender equality.

CONCLUSION:

OVERVIEW AND MAIN FINDINGS

Poverty usually has a female face. For that reality to change, there must be overall economic development that benefits men and women. Those are two of the central points that stand out from the hundreds of interviews, the world-wide survey and field work.

What also emerged clearly is that the United States must devote much greater effort to supporting development assistance, bilateral and multilateral. The United States spends the lowest percentage of its gross national product of any donor (less than one-tenth of one percent) and less than half the proportion that the U.S. spent ten years ago. No implementation of documents such as USAID's Gender Plan of Action or even the fuller range of USAID programs will make a major dent in development needs without a major renewal of American political will to address U.S. global interests in this area.

That said, **this assessment has produced the following general points and key findings for possible new directions and discussion:**

I: THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT SCENE

A. Progress and remaining challenges.

There is much to celebrate in the new millennium. Foreign aid programs, together with changes undertaken by the governments and people in many developing nations, have led to more economic growth and political freedom and better health and education in the last quarter century. But, major challenges remain. Witness: the more than one billion people who live on less than one dollar a day.

B. Different impacts on women and men.

Addressing those challenges effectively requires taking into account the different needs and roles of women and men. There must also be attention paid to the disproportionate burden of poverty born by women in most countries.

C. Focus on "Gender Equality."

Hence, the move by many donors and others from focus on "women in development" in the 1970's, to greater attention to "gender and development" in the last two decades. As one reflection of that move, the major United Nations conferences in the 1990's

endorsed the concept of “gender equality” to help underscore commitment to women and men becoming equal partners in progress.

II: THE GENDER PLAN OF ACTION – STATUS REPORT

A. Genesis of the GPA.

USAID’s increasing focus on gender equality and expanding programs in this area set the stage for the GPA. Leaders from USAID, supported by ACVFA, agreed in 1996 on the need to bolster the institutionalization of gender equality in Agency policies, programs and procedures. They worked together to formulate the GPA, announced in March 1996.

B. Status of GPA Recommendations.

The GPA and the related “Additional Measures” (June 1996) focused on three areas which included:

1. Commitment to greater consideration of gender in Agency policy
2. Increased capacity to address gender through changes in procedures such those covering training, procurement and personnel policies
3. Incentives for performance on gender equality

Although the Agency has taken some action on the GPA, such as requiring more attention to gender equality in procurement, it has done little to move on recommendations which echoed many made by USAID Administrators since the early 1980’s. Examples: no significant changes in personnel, training or reporting requirements and no update of the Agency’s Policy Paper on Women and Development of 1982. (See Appendix I for a summary of action taken or pending.)

C. Obstacles to Action.

Implementation of the GPA suffered from initial bad timing (a period of big budget cuts and disruption in the Agency) and other external factors. It also suffered from some internal matters, including inadequate communication. Less than five percent of those interviewed inside or outside USAID were aware of the GPA. There was and is pervasive skepticism inside the Agency about an “institutional” approach to change. As one senior Agency manager put it: “Beware of the checklist mentality and regulation creep!”

D. Impact of the GPA.

Due to such problems, the Gender Plan of Action has had little impact to date. However, that could change over time with: follow-through on recently implemented GPA recommendations, future action on some pending points in the GPA, additional shifts in process and program inside the Agency, and the emergence of a more receptive

environment for gender equality in the countries where USAID operates. The interviews and survey data indicated that:

- It is too soon to make a definitive judgment on the impact achieved by the GPA. Action on many recommendations came in 1999 or is still pending.
- The enduring impact of the GPA will depend on leaders throughout the Agency making a sustained longer-term commitment to gender equality. If they demonstrate resolve in seeking compliance with the GPA, it could contribute to longer-term change in the Agency's culture.
- The GPA, with its institutional approach, is only one potentially valuable tool for encouraging systemic attention to gender. The GPA alone cannot achieve significant change in the absence of other factors.
- It is far more critical for USAID leadership in Washington and the field, as in any development organization, to make clear consistently that gender equality is a top priority and to support it with required resources.
- The full impact from the GPA will come over time. Whether for USAID or ACVFA, the ultimate verdict will come, not in years, but in decades.

III: THE GENDER PLAN OF ACTION – NEXT STEPS

This part of the report concentrated on specific implementation of pending actions in the Gender Plan of Action. Most interviewees inside and outside USAID favored follow-up on some, but not all, of the GPA. They supported action as noted below, with preferences listed in priority order (highest to lowest) under each of the three areas addressed by the GPA:

A. Commitment to greater consideration of gender in Agency policy

- Country Strategic Plan (CSP). Focus first on the CSP for each USAID Mission. Most advocated integrating concern for gender equality into the work of all the Strategic Objective (SO) teams and not designating a separate SO on gender equality.
- Agency Strategic Plan (ASP). Include gender equality as one of three cross-cutting themes for the ASP and increase attention to gender equality in each of the Agency's six substantive Strategic Goals. Use USAID/PVO/NGO work on population and health as a model, and require annual reporting via the R4 exercise. Examples:
 - Expand work on gender equality in economic growth and agriculture to mirror more at the macro-economic level the innovative work underway on micro-finance and enterprise.

- Increase attention to gender equality in projects for community-based natural resource management.
- Build on work underway in behalf of girls' primary education to explore what needs to be done for more secondary schooling and technical and vocational training to help assure greater gender equality.
- Policy Paper. Issue, as a low priority in this section, a short Policy Paper on Gender Equality and Development to replace the USAID Policy Paper on Women in Development (1982).

B. Increased capacity to address gender through changes in procedures

- Training. Provide training that reflects gender sensitivity as part of much expanded Agency training for all levels of USAID personnel but integrate practical "how to" gender material into broader sector-specific and management training. Avoid stand-alone gender training.
- Reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Collect gender-disaggregated data by formulating clear indicators (drawing on work of OECD/DAC), annual requirements for reporting from the field, and increased Agency capacity (particularly in PPC/CDIE) to evaluate data, ascertain impact, and disseminate data to the field.
- Procurement. Encourage compliance with the new requirements on gender in contracts, cooperative agreements, and grants by means of training relevant personnel, including concern for gender equality in scopes of work and monitoring performance at project completion and in final reporting documents.
- Personnel. Incorporate job-specific (not "boiler-plate language) concern for gender equality in the work requirements for all USAID personnel so that achievements can be reflected in annual personnel evaluations and promotion precepts. The Agency should consult with the State Department on seeking inclusion of relevant gender concerns in the performance reports of USAID Mission Directors (evaluated by Ambassadors).
- Senior Gender Advisor. Appoint a full-time Senior Advisor for Gender Equality in PPC.
- WID Fellows. Revise the WID Fellows Program if there is to be a third phase, or drop the program.

C. Incentives for performance

- Awards. Present annual Gender Awards to one in each of the following categories that exemplifies outstanding performance in behalf of gender equality: U.S. direct-hire, contractor, FSN, and USAID Mission team or AID/W office.

To help assure follow-up in these areas of concern, interviewees and those surveyed suggested:

- Regular Review. Review status of GPA implementation as needed to track follow-through on actions taken since 1999.
- PPC and G/WID Role. Shift primary responsibility for monitoring follow-up on the GPA to PPC, in collaboration with the Office of Women in Development.

Although many interviewees favored the foregoing follow-up on the institutional measures of the GPA, over seventy-five percent of interviewees, especially those inside the Agency, favored shifting from what they see as an undue emphasis on process, to greater concentration on program. As one senior Agency manager stated, “We need to move beyond fixing systems and get a handle, not so much on process, but on programs.” (PULL QUOTE)

IV: LOOKING AHEAD – OPTIONS FOR DIALOGUE

What can or should be done, above and beyond the GPA? Part IV dealt with the issues that go beyond specific implementation of the GPA. This section is drawn from the many ideas that emerged from interviews and the field survey that could provide options for consideration and discussion dialogue inside USAID and ACVFA -- and between the two.

Part IV opened with a brief discussion of the overall approach to gender equality in any development organization, inside or outside government. Interviewees concurred on the need for top leadership to demonstrate commitment through consistent advocacy of gender equality, clear accountability, and adequate resources.

A. Process

Part IV focused next on issues of “process” – that is:

- How USAID itself might take steps above and beyond the GPA to strengthen its institutional approach to gender equality
- How it might expand outreach to others, inside and outside the U.S. Government
- How it might strengthen dialogue between USAID leaders in key “customers” in programs for gender equality

Suggestions for the Agency with regard to such questions included the following:

1. **Advocacy of gender equality inside USAID** through ideas ranging from the status quo, to creation of a “Gender Network” connecting gender advisors in AID/W and the field, or a “Senior Management Team” linking Deputy Assistant Administrators in AID/W with Strategic Objective (SO) team leaders in the field.
2. **Role of the Office of Women in Development**, with choices running the gamut from elimination of G/WID, to strengthening a renamed Office of Gender Equality (G/GE).
3. **Funding promotion of gender equality**, with options ranging from variants of the status quo, to the creation of a Fund for Gender Equality to encourage innovation in the field.
4. **Increased collaboration within the U.S. Executive Branch**, with such proposals as: increased collaboration between the resource/planning offices at the Department of State and USAID, new interagency mechanisms or an expanded role for the President’s Interagency Council on Women.
5. **More outreach to the Congress, American public, and USAID “customers**, with options including: use of existing entities, the creation of a U.S. Council of Gender Equality for the American domestic audience (especially women), the formation of an International Council on Gender Equality to encourage more input from USAID’s “customers” abroad, and the establishment of a Professional Exchange Program for an annual exchange of personnel between USAID and the PVO community.
6. **Donor coordination**, with options including increased cooperation on gender equality in host-country capitals and more emphasis on gender equality in review of national economic policy by the international financial institutions.

B. Program

Part IV concluded with discussion of options on program – that is, what substantive issues regarding gender equality might merit more consideration by USAID. In that regard, it raised, some general strategic questions such as whether the Agency should act as a more assertive agent for change and what should be the highest priorities in a period of shrinking resources.

This section of the report also highlighted some specific issues about programs related to the Agency’s Strategic Goals, that were raised by interviewees and that bear on promotion of gender equality, such as:

Economic growth: Should USAID shift from pre-eminent emphasis on micro-enterprise and finance for women, to a broader macro-economic approach that addresses such questions as the impact of economic reform or globalization on gender equality?

Democracy and governance: Should the Agency devote more attention to the questions of violations of human rights and violence against women, whether in the home or international conflict?

Human capacity building: Should the Agency move from pre-eminent focus on primary education for girls, to greater consideration of what needs to be done at the secondary level and whether more attention should be given to technical training (including in information technology and other twenty-first century skills) for both men and women?

Population and health: Should USAID build on its innovative programming with integrated health care and outreach to men, by moving as well into areas that encourage a greater policy/management role for women?

Environment: Should the Agency's environmental programs become more people-oriented and gender-sensitive?

Humanitarian assistance: What else can the Agency do to assure that it meets the often different priorities of men and women in refugee camps, or in the wake of natural disaster and war?

IN SUM

The Gender Plan of Action constituted a well-intentioned experiment in institutionalization of gender equality at USAID. Its significance, however, pales in comparison to issues raised by other USAID work in this area before and after 1996.

Most to the point, findings from this assessment indicate that **much more must be done to provide forward momentum for USAID's work on gender equality, to address both unfinished business and new challenges.** These findings provide the basis for next steps by the Agency, in consultation with ACVFA, on gender equality. The Agency should launch a comprehensive consultative process inside USAID and with Agency partners on its policy toward gender equality. It could be similar in scope and approach to the major policy review, "Engendering Development," completed by the World Bank in Spring 2000.

The consensus from the interviews and survey data provides the outline of a seven-point program for USAID policy for promoting gender equality:

1. **Statement and demonstration of clear consistent Agency leadership in Washington and the field.** The senior leadership of USAID must "walk the talk" – with an ambitious vision for the future, commitment built on consensus inside the organization, vital adequate resources and training, and explicit accountability.

2. **Commitment to change.** The Agency, with due sensitivity for time and place, must act as a more assertive agent for change. Achieving true gender equality requires, ultimately, transforming power relationships. USAID should use approaches that are more innovative and comprehensive in impact and that include programs that integrate several elements (such as literacy training, income generation, and access to credit).
3. **Increased funding.** Serious promotion of gender equality will require more money overall for USAID or reallocation of resources within the Agency, or both. One specific proposal: creation of a Gender Equality Fund to help foster USAID innovation and ability to respond quickly to new targets of opportunity or need.
4. **Commitment to organizational change.** The Agency's new policy on gender equality should reflect balance between USAID and PVO views on organizational or institutional change. Given the history of the GPA, Agency leaders would achieve greatest employee support for institutionalization of gender equality by putting the GPA itself aside. They should re-package the most salient points (gender-integrated training, annual requirements for reporting and evaluation on gender integration, compliance with new procurement requirements, and annual awards for outstanding performance) as part of a broader organizational strategy for advancing gender concerns. That strategy should include designating a Senior Management Team to promote gender equality, supported by a stronger, more technically-oriented Office of Gender Equality.
5. **Expanded outreach to promote gender equality.** The new USAID policy should include:
 - Efforts to increase coordination within the U.S. Government (particularly between USAID and Department of State resource planners, echoed in the field by increased linkage between the Embassy's Mission Program Plan and the USAID Country Strategic Plan).
 - Special outreach to U.S. women's organizations, thus building a critical constituency for gender equality and development assistance more generally.
 - Increased dialogue with USAID "customers" in the field, in order to reflect more effectively their recommended priorities and program approaches.
 - More donor coordination (especially incorporation of gender equality on the agenda for donors' national policy reviews).
6. **Shift to greater focus on program issues.** The new Agency policy should reflect the fact that the majority of USAID employees in Washington and the field think that it is time to shift intellectual and bureaucratic gears. One Agency senior manager summed up the USAID consensus: "We need to move beyond fixing systems and get a handle, not so much on process, but on programs."

7. **New substantive priorities.** To that end, USAID employees stated that the Agency has both an opportunity and a responsibility to address key strategic questions and specific issues related to the Agency's policy framework. Those that emerged with particular salience for a new Agency policy are:

- **On strategic questions:** Develop new approaches to the challenges to gender equality in the large urban centers of the developing world, from Cairo to Calcutta; put greater emphasis on regional and global issues; and reach the largest-ever generation of adolescents in world history.
- **On program issues:** Concentrate most on economic means to attain gender equality. As women from Casablanca to Kampala said, "Money is power." Further, use education as the key intervention, but build on the foundation of increased primary schooling to put more emphasis on vocational training, particularly instruction that equips boys and girls for the twenty-first century. Read: forego basket-weaving in favor of computer programming.

In sum, this outline for a six-point policy on gender equality reflects the consensus from the assessment for next steps in the Agency's promotion of gender equality. Those interviewed and surveyed think that the Agency, supported by ACVFA, can and should do more to advance gender equality in countries as diverse as Uganda and Ukraine, where women must join men in building of emerging democracy. It can help in countries as divergent as Morocco and Egypt, Muslim societies moving to modernity, or Guatemala, fighting poverty in the midst of a peace process.

The assessment team acknowledges its appreciation for the opportunity to explore the challenges posed by gender equality and, most particularly, for the privilege to meet with courageous leaders from Rabat and Guatemala City, to Cairo and Kampala. **We dedicate this report to the leaders in developing nations abroad, with the hope that it fosters dialogue within and between ACVFA and USAID on formulating a bold strategy for the future – the Agency's "New Agenda for Gender Equality" in the twenty-first century.**

FOOTNOTES

1. The Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACFVA) is a federal advisory committee established by Presidential Directive after World War II to serve as a link between the U.S. government and private voluntary organizations (PVOs).

2. Rather than using numerical percentages throughout the report to indicate how many held a particular view or using names, this report usually uses the following adjectives to reflect the approximate strength of support for a given point:

- Most: 75 –90 percent
- Majority: 50 – 60 percent
- Many: 30 – 40 percent
- Some: 15 -- 25 percent
- A Few: 5 – 10 percent

3. USAID, “Making a World of Difference, Celebrating 30 Years of Development Progress,” Washington, D.C., 1998 and the United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report (HDR), New York, 1999.

4. Speech by the World Bank president, James Wolfensohn, “Challenges Facing the Bank in the Twenty-first Century, Washington, D.C, March 14, 2000.

5. The annual Human Development Report published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) documents the disparities between men and women according to life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, school enrollment, real GDP per capita, and empowerment (as reflected in parliamentary seats held by women, female administrators and managers, and female professional and technical workers). Writers of the latest report state: “.... The most widespread discrepancy is between the sexes – universally. The statistics indicate ‘gender inequality in every society’ and show that only a few countries have made ‘substantial progress’ in this area.”

6. International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Washington, D.C, November 1999.

7. Women occupy more than 30 percent of parliamentary seats in only five countries. They occupy fewer than five percent in 31 nations. In fact, women reflect one painful political irony: the number of women elected to national legislatures in what used to be communist countries has dropped over 15 percent in the last decade. This last point was made in a speech by Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, “Vital Voices Conference on Women and Democracy,” October 8, 1999.

8. For more details, see project documents from those USAID missions, as well as the “USAID Five-Year Response (1994-1999) to the United Nations Platform for Action and

Beijing Declaration, Fourth World Congress on Women, Beijing, China,” Washington, D.C., February 2000.

9. Some object to the term “gender” as trendy jargon. One highly regarded “gender specialist” advocated dropping it and suggested: “Let’s speak plain English!” The assessment team agrees that it would be most refreshing just to say what we mean: since women and men play different roles in development, assistance to them should reflect that fact of life. Thus, our use of “gender” is simply short-hand for that common sense approach. For additional reading of the considerable literature on gender equality and analysis, see the Bibliography. One subject that this report does not address, although many raised the issue and the issue is related to concern about gender equality, is the question of equality of opportunity for women. The assessment concurs with the importance of that issue but addressing it is beyond the scope of work for this report.

10. Commission on the Advancement of Women, InterAction, Best Practices for Gender Integration in Organizations and Programs from the InterAction Community, Findings from a Survey of Member Agencies, 1996. See also such references as: “International Save the Children Alliance Gender Equity Policy” (approved October 1999) and “Best Practices in Gender Relations Analysis – From Analysis to Action: Integrating Gender into Programs” (September 1996 workshop sponsored by USAID/BHR/PVC), as well as gender web-site for USAID.

11. There are many ways to use gender to analyze what will foster progress, as the considerable literature on gender analysis reflects. Gender analysis is a useful tool for identifying the roles of men and women and changes in those roles. It helps monitor equity in access to development resources and reflects the benefits for different types of men and women (old or young, rural or urban, or different religious and ethnic groups). According to Caroline Moser, there are three main theoretical frameworks for integrating gender issues into development work: the Harvard Framework, the Moser Methodology, and the Longwe Framework and the three build upon and complement each other. Mainstreaming Gender and Development in the World, Washington, D.C, The World Bank, 1999.

12. G/WID Mission Statement and Strategy.

13. “USAID Five-Year Response (1994-1999) to the United Nations Platform for Action and Beijing Declaration and Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China (February 2000) and “From Commitment to Action” (on follow-up to the ICPD). See also: America’s Commitment, Women 2000, produced by the President’s Interagency Council on Women. Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of State, March 2000. <http://secretary.state.gov/www/picw/indew.html>.

14. OECD Development Assistance Committee, DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Cooperation and DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality, 1998. Ambassador Jim Michel, previous Acting USAID Administrator, chaired the DAC during the period when that

Committee formulated some of its most significant policy changes on gender. He returned to Washington in 1999 to serve as USAID Counselor and to chair the Steering Committee for this assessment.

15. GENESYS Special Study #17, by B. Sherchand, October 1994 and Government Affairs Office (GAO) Report on USAID Work on Gender, Washington, D.C., December 1993.

16. The Administrator was backed enthusiastically by his then Deputy Administrator, Carol Lancaster, and Kelly Kammerer, USAID Counselor. He enjoyed important support as well from some of the most concerned Assistant Administrators – such as Sally Shelton-Colby, then the head of the Bureau for Global Programs and relevant Deputy Assistant Administrators such as Anne Van Dusen, and Margaret Lycette, then the director of the Office for Women and Development.

17. In the case of ACVFA, the leading players were members of the Gender Subcommittee, led by Elise Fiber Smith of Winrock, which included Julia Taft, then president of InterAction, and Mayra Buvinic, former president of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) who now heads the Human Resources and Social Development Division at the Inter-American Development Bank; Bob Chase; Charles MacCormack; and Vivian Lowery Derryck. These lead players won the support of Tom Fox (chairman of ACVFA at the time), and Bill Reese, current chairman of ACVFA. Peggy Curlin, president of the Centre for Economic Development and Population Activities, while not a formal member of the Group, was an active player. Some of the players in ACVFA were to change institutional hats in the 1990's so that they became proponents of gender equality inside USAID. For example, Tom Fox became Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC) and Vivian Lowery Derryck became Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Africa.

18. There was a striking discrepancy between what the assessment team was told in off-the-record interviews and what showed up in written responses to the field survey sent to all USAID missions as part of this assessment in November-December 1999. Ninety-four percent (66 of 70) respondents to the field survey said that they were aware of the GPA (versus the less than five per cent registered in oral interviews). Those tabulating the survey data noted that, while that percentage appears, “at the surface,” to be a very favorable outcome, “such a response does not mean that respondents have detailed knowledge about the Gender Plan or that others in the mission are familiar with the Plan.” The disconnect appears to be due to the fact (a) that respondents to a written survey (versus a confidential in-person interview) often tend to provide more of what they perceive to be the desired reply, than what they actually think; that a copy of the GPA was attached to the questionnaire; that WID officers completed many of the forms; and the way the question was posed may have skewed the returns. For these reasons, the assessment team, while finding results of the questionnaire instructive, believes that most of responses, especially those requesting a simple yes-no answer, on this point and others, need to be put into careful perspective. That said, some of the narrative responses do

provide specific useful suggestions, especially on next steps for using the GPA which are reflected in PARTS III and IV of this report.

19. Many USAID interviewees agreed that they will be more likely to include concern for gender equality in their programs when they see clearer documentation on the relevance of gender concerns. Moser, Mainstreaming Gender and Development in the World Bank, p. 16.

20. See “Gender Issues in Operations Re-Engineering,” report by Mari Clarke, prepared for the USAID Office of Women in Development., January 1996.

21. According to the finding from the field survey, the lowest mean score (2.7 on 5-point scale) in the field survey for USAID personnel was given to the extent to which the Agency’s Strategic Framework helps incorporate gender into mission strategy. That point reflected the much stronger statements made in off-the-record interviews where USAID personnel almost unanimously dismissed any effect from the GPA-mandated reference to gender equality in the ASP on their work.

22. Work by InterAction’s Commission on the Status of Women reflects both the progress made and the great distance to be traveled in the PVO community. According to a survey of gender practices in a select number of U.S. PVO’s with field programs undertaken by InterAction in the mid-1990’s, 30 percent had gender policy statements, collected gender disaggregated data consistently, and offered gender training. About forty percent had a gender advisor or unit and evaluated the gender impact or women’s involvement in projects.

23. The seven Strategic Goals for the current USAID Strategic Plan are: Broad-based economic growth and agricultural development encouraged; democracy and good governance strengthened; human capacity built through education and training; world population stabilized and human health protected; the world’s environment protected for long-term sustainability; lives saved, suffering reduced, and conditions for political and economic development reestablished; and USAID remains a premier development agency.

24. Thirty percent of respondents to the field survey reported that their mission had a WID Fellow. Analysts of the data expressed the view that a higher mean rating than 3.5 (on 5-point scale) might have been expected. Returns indicated, inter alia, disappointment or disapproval that WID Fellows worked in a specific sector and did not share their expertise with other staff.

25. Martin, Patricia. “Addressing Gender Concerns: The Success of the USAID Gender Plan of Action and USAID Country Programs,” A Report to the United States Congress by USAID, January 1999. This report is most useful for its citation of examples of innovative work undertaken by the Agency. See also: “Gender Planning, Performance Measurement and Reporting in USAID: Progress and Next Steps,” by Pat Martin for USAID/PPC/CDIE, December 1998.

26. PVO Focus Group, Washington, D.C., November 5, 1999.
27. See “CIDA’s Policy on Gender Equality,” Hull, Quebec, Canadian International Development Agency, March 1999; the web-site for the World Bank for key publications and documents on gender equality, including the ongoing policy review; and the Bibliography for citations on work by the DAC.
28. The DAC Assessment of Women and Development Policies (1994) indicated the importance of both a strong domestic lobby for women in development and a strong national policy on gender equality. The authors of that report stated: “ Women’s groups and networks – in both donor countries and the countries receiving aid – have helped put political pressure on DAC members to adopt WID/GAD policies.” Those nations which have the most advanced assistance programs on gender are generally those undertaken by parliamentary governments enjoying strong popular support for both foreign aid and women’s issues. Cases in point: the Nordic nations, the Netherlands, and Canada .
29. ICRW Special Report, Washington, D.C., November 1999. There are questions such as those raised by HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Of the 30 million people living with HIV/AIDS, at least one third are 10 – 24. Recent studies indicate that the rate of HIV/AIDS is increasing faster among young women than young men in low-income countries. For example, in Uganda, infections among adolescent girls aged 13 to 19 years are three times higher than among teenage boys. See also: The Center for Reproductive Law and Policy, “Adolescent Reproductive Rights: Laws and Policies to Improve Their Health and Lives.” February 1999. Many interviewees suggested the need for more thinking on how to reach the increasing cohort of alienated adolescents, boys and girls, and the impact of that growing, disaffected group on prospects for democracy.
30. UNFPA, “The State of World Population: The New Generations,” New York, 1998.
31. The World Bank Group, “How the World Bank Promotes Gender Equality,” <http://www.worldbank.org/gender/how/lending.htm>.
32. UNDP, HDR, 1999.
33. UNDP, HDR, 1999.
34. UNDP, HDR, 1999.
35. Moser, Caroline. “Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence,” Washington, D.C.: June 1999. See also: Stephanie McNulty’s “Women’s Organizations during and after War: From Service Delivery to Policy Advocacy,” Washington, D.C., USAID, October 1998, for both the analysis provided to USAID and its useful bibliography on this field of growing concern.

36. International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Global Fact Sheet, "Women's Health Matters," Washington, D.C.

37. According to experts in G/WID, "As users of natural resources, women contribute to the pressures that have pushed so many resources onto the 'critical list.'" Gender Action, A Newsletter of the USAID Office of Women in Development, Vol. 2, No. 1, Winter 1997-98.

38. Diamond, Feldstein, Gambill, and Rojas. "A Working Session on Communities, Institutions, and Policies: Moving from Environmental Research to Results." WIDTech report for USAID's Office of Women in Development, December 1997.

APPENDICES

- A. Glossary
- B. Scope of Work
- C. Gender Plan of Action with Cover Memo and Additional Measures (1996)
- D. Questionnaire for Use in Washington, D.C. (July – November 1999)
- E. Bibliography and References
- F. Questionnaire for Field Survey of USAID Missions and Executive Summary of Findings, “Analysis of the Field Perspective of Incorporating Gender into USAID Programs and Activities,” by Tania Romashko and Oscar Espinosa, Development Associates, Inc., February 2000. This questionnaire was sent to the attention of the Mission Director at each of the 71 USAID Missions, November –December 1999. Seventy questionnaires from 51 missions were returned.
- G. USAID Policy Paper (1982)
- H. USAID Action Paper (1988)
- I. Annotated Chart on implementation of the GPA
- J. New USAID guidelines on gender equality

Appendix A

GLOSSARY

- AA: Assistant Administrator
- ACVFA: Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid
- ADS: Automated Directives System
- AID: Agency for International Development
- AID/W: Washington Headquarters for USAID
- APR: Annual Performance Report (produced by USAID)
- ASP: Agency Strategic Plan
- BHR: Bureau for Humanitarian Response in USAID
- BHR/PVC: Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation in USAID/BHR
- CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- CIDA: Canadian International Development Agency
- CP: Congressional Presentation
- CSP: Country Strategic Plan
- DAA: Deputy Assistant Administrator
- DAC: Development Assistance Committee
- FC/FGM: female circumcision/female genital mutilation
- FSN: Foreign Service National, the term could to apply to USAID employees from the host country where USAID is operating
- G: Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support, and Research in USAID
- GAD: Gender and development
- GPA: Gender Plan of Action
- G/WID: Office of Women in Development in USAID's Global Bureau
- HDP: Human Development Report (annual report issued by UNDP)
- ICPD: International Conference on Population and Development (double-check)
- M: Bureau for Management in USAID
- NGO: Non-governmental organization
- OECD: Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
- PHN: Office of Population, Health and Nutrition in USAID's Global Bureau
- PICW: President's Interagency Council on Women (established in 1995 just before the U.N. World Congress on Women). Based at the Department of State, it has coordinated U.S. Government follow-up on that U.N. conference.
- PPC: Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination in USAID
- PPC/CDIE: Center for Development Information and Evaluation in USAID/PPC
- PVO: private voluntary organization. Throughout this report, this term refers to U.S. private voluntary organizations and cooperative organizations. The term "NGO" refers to indigenous non-governmental organizations in countries receiving foreign assistance.

- R4: Results Review and Resource Request
- RFA: Request for Application
- RFP: Request for Proposal
- SIDA: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- SO: Strategic Objective
- SOW: Scope of Work
- SPIA: Strategic Plan for International Affairs (developed by the U.S. Department of State) It defines core U.S. values and priority interests in its 16 goals. The welfare of women and girls is recognized in 2 of the 16 goals.
- SpO: Special Objective
- UN: United Nations
- UNDP: United Nations Development Program
- UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
- USAID: United States Agency for International Development
- WID: Women in development

APPENDIX E

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APPENDIX I

GENDER PLAN OF ACTION STATUS REPORT

1. Commitment: Policy and Program

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| A. Modify USAID strategic framework | Some changes made to reflect gender, such as identification of gender as cross-cutting theme, but level of attention not articulated
Reference to gender included in some Goals and R4 reporting requirements
Not in Automated Directives System |
| B. Update/strengthen USAID policy paper on women | Not done |
| C. Incorporate gender in implementation guidance for strategic planning | PPC has included references in ADS 201 and 203 which are undergoing Agency clearances prior to publication. |

2. Capacity

- | | |
|--|--|
| A. Appoint a senior policy advisor on Gender in PPC | PPC appointed (2/2000) a senior social science advisor who has gender as part of her portfolio. |
| B. Implement Women in Development Fellows Program | Phase I of small program completed in 1999;
Phase II launched with new cooperative agreement on September 29, 1999. |
| C. Develop guidance on authority, mandate, and technical qualifications of WID officers and coordinators | Little done |
| D. Include gender in USAID re-engineering | |
| (1) Monitoring and evaluation | ADS 200 series is undergoing Agency clearances |
| (2) CDIE training in developing indicators | Plan suspended |

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|------------------------------|---|
| (3) New entry training | Training module designed for 10/99 new entry class
Future plans not clear |
| (4) Sector-specific training | Some training done by G/WID for Global Bureau technical centers, 1997-1999, and for field personnel, 1998-99. |

3. Incentives, Reporting, and Follow-up

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|---|---|
| A. Establish Performance Fund for Women in Development | Not done |
| B. Agency Counselor to report to the Administrator on feasibility of actions in such areas as: | See following list as well as summary of Additional Measures below. |
| (1) Evaluate personnel performance | Not done |
| (2) Improve WID expertise of direct-hire Personnel | Little done |
| (3) Improve collection and use of sex-disaggregated indicators of results | Some done by Global Bureau
Little done by PPC |
| (4) Provide incentives for WID expertise among contractors and collaborators via procurement procedures | Changes made in ADS 302 and 303 and 202. |
| C. Counselor to report to Administrator on implementation of above actions | G/WID assumed part of role. |
| D. Counselor to monitor implementation of necessary and feasible actions | G/WID assumed part of role. |
| E. Counselor to consult with concerned Agency bureaus and partners | G/WID assumed part of role. |

Additional Measures (June 12, 1996)

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|--|---|
| 1. Include responsibility for addressing gender in position descriptions | Gender included in announcements for new entry Foreign Service Officers;
Gender included in position descriptions of Civil Servants if gender expertise required for job performance |
| 2. Take gender into account for Agency recruitment | Generic standard vacancy announcements for new Foreign Service professionals require analytic skills for gender sensitivity. |
| 3. Include need to address gender in guidance for evaluating | Revised precepts for 1999-2000 include gender for junior and mid-level Foreign Service employees. |

performance for promotion by Foreign
and Civil Service

No requirements for senior officers such as USAID
Mission Directors evaluated by Ambassadors

4. Include requirement for
addressing gender in competitive
assistance guidelines, including
contract Requests for Proposal

ADS 303 amended in 1998 for grants and cooperative
agreements; regulations on contracts amended via
CIB of 1999 and revised ADS 202; ADS 302 amended.

5. Include gender in indicators
for mission and support strategic planning
with sex-disaggregated data

Not done

6. Include gender in changes in ADS for
for strategic planning and results
reporting

G/WID is working on an ADS 200 series appendix on
gender.

7. Revise Mission Orders
to reflect updated Agency Policy
on Women

Not done

(Gender Draft Report, Rev Mar2000)
5/7/00(10)