



SUMMARY OF SELECTED REPORTS ON  
THE PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT OF  
USAID'S WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM  
1973-2001

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*This report is funded by the Office of Women in Development, Bureau for Economic Growth,  
Agriculture, and Trade, U.S. Agency for International Development.*

**UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
GEW-I-01-02-00018-00  
Development & Training Services  
Activity VII: Publications, reports, etc.**

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**April 18, 2003**





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## I. SUMMARY OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 1973 the U.S. Congress passed the Percy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, which mandated that U.S. foreign aid give particular attention in its assistance programs to integrating women into the economies of developing countries. A year later, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) established the Women in Development (WID) Office as the focal point for technical assistance and research on women, and established a policy to integrate women's issues throughout its programs.

To provide background and to assist in planning, a review of past research and analyses by government agencies and outside groups, as well as reports by USAID and WID itself has been undertaken. This paper summarizes selected reports over the last 20 years that will contribute to a better understanding of the progress or lack of progress in gender integration in USAID.

Since the reports are from various sources and had differing objectives and target audiences, they are, therefore, not comparable. Some cite commitment or progress made in women in development, others to their lack of it. They are not necessarily contradictory, but point to various aspects of women in development, and later, gender integration, at various times in the Agency over the past three decades of changing resources, priorities and circumstances. USAID declares significant progress having been made in its 1984 report and fifteen years later in 1999, writes of an identified "powerful commitment to gender integration" by USAID. Other reports reviewed including ones by the General Accounting Office (1993), the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (2000), and Ritu Sharma in *Foreign Policy in Focus* (2001) question USAID's progress. The GAO report states that USAID "has only recently begun to consider the role of women in its third-world development strategies, despite the fact that 20 years have passed since Congress directed that AID assistance programs focus on integrating women." The most recent research, that of ACVFA, found that of more than 500 USAID and PVO/NGO representatives "Over 90% of those interviewed in USAID and the PVO/NGO community said that the GPA [1996 Gender Plan of Action] has not had any measurable impact on Agency operations."

Reading these reports, it is possible to trace the evolution of development concepts on women over the past 30 years. What is remarkable, considering the various rationales for the reports, is the consistency of their recommendations and conclusions. At the beginning of the WID process, USAID speaks of 'women-in-development' and 'women-specific' projects. By the 1984 report the strategy is to design women's components as add-ons to larger projects, referring to them as 'women-integrated' projects. By 1993 there is the recognition of the need to begin to integrate gender into non-project assistance and to approach women and development at a macroeconomic level, rather than limit it to the microeconomic focus of the past. By the end of the 1990s the new focus is on gender as a cross-cutting issue at all levels, with an effort to tie achievement of concrete results in the field to allocation of resources – a process known as the R4 (Results Review and Resource Request) process.

### **The reports recognize WID progress in the following areas:**

- **Expansion of gender advisors and staff**
- **Increased training and technical assistance by the WID office**
- **Development of country and program gender action plans**
- **Acceptance of the concept of gender integration by many USAID officials**

**However, from the early recommendations of the USAID 1984 report at the end of the first decade of the WID program, and throughout all the non-USAID reports reviewed for this study, the same salient concerns and recommendations are repeated over and over again. These major recommendations are:**

- **Leadership and commitment of senior management is crucial and must be consistent;**
- **Training of USAID personnel and its development partners must continue, with current emphasis on “how to” rather than “why” implement gender integration and conduct gender analysis;**
- **Continued institutional capacity-building on gender is needed;**
- **Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation must be developed and WID must be consistent in seeing that they are implemented;**
- **Incentives and rewards must be developed and implemented to encourage and better recognize those who successfully integrate gender into USAID programs and projects;**
- **Capacity and mechanisms for collecting and analyzing sex disaggregated data is critical for effective evaluation of progress being made;**
- **Increased resources are needed to enable WID to implement and monitor effectively;**
- **Review of placement of the WID office, proximity to policy decision-makers is important, and clear authority for the WID office needs to be conferred;**
- **Internal executive structures such as a Gender Network and InterAgency Council can help coordinate, monitor, and promote gender integration throughout the Agency and development programs.**

In its own extensive review process, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reported on findings from 24 member organizations. Although its findings were across 19 countries and the European Commission, they are remarkably similar to the recommendations directed specifically to USAID above. Thus, they reinforce a number of specific conclusions for gender integration to be effective. These are:

- Gender integration is a long, difficult process;
- Senior leadership is key;
- More resources must be designated for gender integration;
- Mechanisms for analysis, monitoring, accountability, and management responsibility must be developed and implemented;
- Institutional capacity strengthening is an ongoing process.

Clearly, these studies indicate that gender integration in the development process – in policies, programs, and institutions – is a challenging process. USAID, with the Women in Development Office as sits catalyst, has made progress over the last 30 years in a number of areas. Yet, there are reoccurring concerns that have not been adequately addressed by the Agency. The following summaries of these reports highlight both the accomplishments and the areas, which must be addressed and implemented if WID is truly to provide the necessary leadership for gender integration in USAID and its policies and programs.

## II. SUMMARY OF STUDIES AND REPORTS OF THE OFFICE OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

### A. **Women in Development: The First Decade 1975-1984**, a Report to Congress by the Agency for International Development

In 1974, the USAID established the Office of Women in Development to assist USAID missions and regional bureaus in integrating women into their various projects in the field. Ten years later USAID issued a Report to Congress intending to report not only on women in development activities, but also on the identification of progress, issues and strategies that emerged during the 'first decade.'

In the introduction, the report states that "in the past decade, the women in development issue has gained increasing acceptance within the development community. Within A.I.D. it is recognized as an important economic tool...the Agency is now implementing effectively a number of strategic measures to integrate WID concerns in bureau and mission efforts..." (p. iii) The 1984 Report highlights a number of emerging trends:

- *Development professionals are learning the extent of women's participation in agriculture-* the report focuses on projects, especially women-specific projects, rather than the integration of gender.
- *Women have entered the labor force in unprecedented numbers, especially self-generated employment in the informal sector.* Examples given indicate early use of microcredit and support for microenterprise.
- *Lack of education opportunities reduces the social and economic options women have in LDCs [lesser developed countries] and also reduces the potential socioeconomic returns of developing countries' investments in education*
- *In most LDCs, women and girls are responsible for providing their household energy needs, which led to examples of reforestation and fuel stove projects.*
- *Women play a central part in strategies to improve health, raise nutritional levels, and control their own fertility.* While women's roles in these traditional areas had been recognized, development efforts had not always addressed them in the widest or most productive ways possible. Examples of newer approaches included water and sanitation projects that began to address a wide range of benefits and roles for women.

*Women In Development: The First Decade* provides a historical overview of the Office of Women in Development (WID). During the first decade WID was based in the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination. With an emphasis on economic development, the Agency through WID had begun to move away from women-specific projects to a strategy of designing women's components as add-ons to larger projects undertaken by the Agency (then referred to as 'women-integrated' projects). The identified next step was to move toward institutionalizing integration of "women's needs and talents from the outset of project design through completion of evaluation of project effectiveness." (p. 2-3) At this point, based on the 1982 Agency's Policy Paper on Women in Development, the WID office was to:

- Provide technical assistance, research and training to enhance integration;
- Play a coordinating role and develops mechanisms within UASID to institutionalize the concept of gender integration and to similarly help other organizations;

- Suggest strategies for enhancing women's productivity in agricultural development, micro-enterprise development and income generation through credit programs, and training activities at various levels; and
- Serve as the liaison with other members of the international donor community.

The Agency recognized the need for sex-disaggregated data, technical assistance and training and research. The report focused on examples of WID activity in five areas of fieldwork:

- Agricultural Development, particularly integrating women into the mainstream agricultural development portfolio;
- Employment and Income Generation, with the beginning of a microcredit focus;
- Education and Training, especially education of girls as well as seeking more women for AID 'participant training programs;'
- Energy and Natural Resource Concentration, still a relatively small focus for WID activity, primarily in Africa and Asia, with main examples being solar cookers, wood stoves, and use of forested lands;
- Water, Health and Sanitation, a new focus, primarily on water; prior to 1984, very few programs in this area kept women in mind.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

At the end of the first decade of the WID program, USAID was proud of its increasing efforts to address the development role of women. Extensive statistical data on WID projects is included at the end of the report. Then USAID Administrator M. Peter McPherson ended his introductory remarks by saying: "*Our goal for the future is to integrate WID into every bureau and mission of this Agency – not just as a legitimate issue, for A.I.D. policy makes it such – but as a development tool with its own set of specialized skills, techniques and methodologies.*" (p. ii) To meet this goal and to summarize the Report, major recommendations included: (p. 44)

- The integrative approach should continue;
- Women-specific projects should be 'stepping stones' that might increase integration of women into mainstream development;
- More systematic gathering of statistical data to track short-term and generational gains of women is needed;
- Training efforts of Agency of development professionals must be integrated and sustained to assure that professionals are skilled at integrating gender into projects from the earliest design stage;
- Mechanisms for incentives and rewards both on an individual professional level and an institutional level are needed;
- Internal authority for WID needs to be conferred;
- WID officers should be added to AID/Washington country desks;
- Concise guidelines for addressing gender issues in project design are needed;
- Policy dialogues with host governments should integrate women in development concerns into all relevant topics;

- Co-funding with bureaus and missions will leverage WID funds to impact work of WID, bureaus and missions.

## **B. Women in Development: Report, FYs 1991 and 1992**, U.S. Agency for International Development

In the Foreword to *Women in Development: Report, FYs 1991 and 1992*, Brian Atwood, USAID Administrator, stated, “*The importance of integrating women into A.I.D.’s programs cannot be overemphasized... Our efforts to achieve dynamic, long-lasting growth will only succeed if our resources empower women as well as men to seize opportunities and make a difference for themselves, their families, and their communities... women’s participation in and contribution to A.I.D.’s programs is paramount*”. (p. v)

This report describes the progress made by USAID in mainstreaming attention to gender throughout its strategies and programs during the FYs 1991 and 1992 from the perspective of USAID. Gains were seen in institutionalizing gender in such areas as incorporating from the start a WID perspective in two new strategic emphases: the Democracy Initiative and AIDS prevention and care programs. Other areas of growth included:

- Intensified training of USAID staff in headquarters and the field;
- Increased field requests for technical assistance on gender issues;
- Increased co-funding with WID on projects in the field;
- Increased operational expertise through WID advisors in Bureaus, WID action groups, and country missions devoting at least a portion of an officer’s portfolio to women in development issues; and
- Launching of basis for gender analysis and sex-disaggregated indicators in a new Evaluation Initiative beginning in 1991.

During 1991 and 1992, WID focused on the following **five strategic areas**: private enterprise; sustainable agriculture, environment, and natural resource management; democracy and governance; health; and basic education. Its **functional approach** included: training of AID staff in DC and in the field, including host-country and PVO counterparts; technical assistance for implementing a gender-sensitive approach to development; funding especially targeted to integrating women into development activities; commissioning research to provide data and analysis to improve project and program planning and implementation; co-funding gender specialists in the Agency; and providing outreach to expand gender awareness and expertise in the development field.

The major part of *Women in Development Report* provides examples of programs highlighting WID activities in Regional Bureaus and Missions. This is accomplished by reporting both through a regional approach and through a priority sector approach. Following the then recent Agency-wide Evaluation Initiative launched in 1990, WID joined the effort to increase gender considerations in evaluation, identifying such tools for monitoring and evaluations as gender analysis, sex-disaggregated indicators and country program performance monitoring. According to the Report, WID saw itself providing leadership and playing a catalytic role in accounting for USAID’s performance in women in development.

### **C. Foreign Assistance: U.S. Had Made Slow Progress in Involving Women In Development, Report to Congressional Requesters, United States General Accounting Office, December 1993**

In 1991, the United Nations reported that despite decades of development assistance and increased international awareness of the key roles women play in development, the situation of the world's women had not improved, and in some instances, had deteriorated. Concerned, a number of Members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives requested that the Government Accounting Office (GAO) review the efforts of USAID and the Department of State to comply with directives of the 1973 Percy Amendment. GAO evaluated: 1) USAID's development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of women-in-development policies and activities and its barriers to effective implementation of the directive; and 2) State Department policy development and leadership on women's issues at the U.N. agencies, including issues relating to women refugees. (p. 3) [For the purpose of this report, primary focus here will be on the GAO evaluation of USAID.]

To research the report between October 1992 and June 1993, the GAO conducted interviews with USAID personnel in both Washington and the field. They visited projects and met with officials in non-governmental organizations as well. They reviewed WID policy papers, actions plans, and various USAID internal documents and reports. Additionally, they reviewed research literature from other sources.

**The report is critical in its evaluation of progress made by USAID in integrating gender into its programs and what the GAO sees as a lack of monitoring and evaluating the implementation and impact of USAID programs even twenty years after the Percy Amendment.** It specifically identifies USAID's progress as 'marginal.' It states, "... only recently has AID begun to actively consider the role of gender in its development strategies". (p. 4) Consequently, it sees that bureaus and missions vary widely in their commitment to women in development goals, that gender has not been incorporated into nonproject assistance programs as widely as possible, and that newer 1989 targets have not been met.

#### **Principal Findings**

Even though USAID has issued policies and directed bureaus and missions to integrate women, and later gender, throughout their programs and the Agency beginning in 1974, its 1982 comprehensive WID policy paper, 1988 "action items" from the Administrators, and through the 1989 directives, the GAO finds that these have not been followed. The Report specifically indicates a criticism that the Agency had not issued agency-wide policy guidance on women-in-development since 1982. Although the GAO thought the basic policy was sound, it says that "gender issues are not at the forefront of AID's economic assistance policy." (p. 18)

In fact GAO finds that many personnel were still not even aware of these policies despite the WID office's efforts at providing staff with gender-related technical assistance and training. The report finds that O/WID does not routinely monitor or report to top management on implementation nor has it routinely collected and analyzed sex disaggregated data or developed a system of measuring and rewarding results. (p. 16)

Progress in the field has varied widely. GAO finds that most bureaus and missions have developed gender action plans, contracted gender advisers, and issued guidance to staff to promote integration

of women into development programs. But it criticizes USAID for allowing its units considerable latitude in developing and implementing strategies. It specifically says that “**AID has not centrally monitored the implementation of these policies and cannot verify compliance with them. Accountability for program design and results are hampered by AID’s failure to routinely collect gender data and develop useful program indicators.**” (p. 17)

GAO finds that though many USAID officials support gender integration, they are frustrated with what seem to be competing priorities and objectives. These officials note that there are too many objectives with women in development only one. (p. 19) Other USAID officials did not even consider gender issues relevant to their development objectives. (p. 19) Some officials felt that commitment varies because there is not a systematic effort to hold everyone accountable for women in development results.

GAO indicates that because there is no clear incentive system in place, this sends signals about the organization’s priorities as well. ‘Most stated that commitment to women-in-development plays neither a positive nor negative role in staff ratings, reassignments, promotions, and rewards. (p. 19)

The GAO report recognizes that these same concerns were identified in 1987 in a Development Associates report titled *Evaluation of the International Center for Research on Women Cooperative Agreement Program with AID PPC/WID*. “Specifically, the report stated that AID had not vigorously implemented its women-in-development directives. The report noted four critical variables affecting implementation: (1) the extent of mission leadership, (2) the effectiveness of the mission women-in-development officer, (3) the focus of the mission’s portfolio (project versus policy), and (4) general level of awareness among mission staff.” (p. 23)

**A major critique centers on the lack of focus on collecting sex-disaggregated data.** In fact, they find that from 1988-89 when USAID and the House Appropriations Committee reemphasized previous agency-wide requirements for sex-disaggregated data, and a review of projects from 1989 and 1990, the attention to gender issues and disaggregated data had *decreased* over the prior 2-year period. (p. 21) Reasons given by USAID officials in Washington and the field included that collection is too costly and time-consuming, especially when its usefulness is unclear and that there is a lack of consensus on the types of information to be collected. (p. 21) The WID office identified some options that might help the missions including:

- WID’s matching fund program to contract for assistance;
- The U.S. Bureau of the Census services available to train host countries in sex disaggregation;
- “Rapid appraisal” assessments to obtain gender information to incorporate into project design;
- Reliance on existing data and local knowledge where available; and
- Coordination of research with other donors and the World Bank to prevent duplication and share costs

The Report acknowledges that USAID is in the process of implementing its Program Performance Information for Strategic Management (PRISM) system to help it monitor, effectively measure, and report progress and results of its assistance efforts. This should help measure the institutionalization of WID efforts within USAID, but will not provide all the information needed to design and evaluate WID strategies and programs. Beyond PRISM, USAID recognizes that institutional

measures for holding program staff accountable for achieving results still need to be identified and monitored. (p. 22-23)

Some Bureaus have hired or contracted with gender advisers and the report reviews the different regions and their actions. The USAID Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance, however, does not have Bureau-wide or office-specific WID policies, action plans, or gender advisers, although officials stated that the Bureau considers gender in its programming. Officials in this Bureau did not necessarily see that policy directives were needed because gender was integrated throughout USAID, the NGOs they work with consider gender a priority, and food availability and access were their priorities, not gender. Despite comments to justify the Bureau's approach, GAO stood by the need for more specific gender policy directives by the Bureau. (p. 29)

Another area of concern the GAO raises is **nonproject assistance**, through cash grants or commodity transfers from the U.S. to a host country for general or sectoral budget support or to generate local currency for jointly approved development projects. For FYs 1980-1992, this assistance averaged over one-third of USAID's program obligations. However, GAO points out that WID legislation applies to development assistance funds, but not to the Economic Support Fund through which much of the nonproject assistance is provided. Some officials pointed out that these programs focus on macroeconomic issues, which automatically benefit all of society, including women, and thus gender did not need to be incorporated. Others see gender as too sensitive an issue to raise at the policy dialogue level. GAO recognizes that USAID is beginning to explore promoting gender issues in nonproject assistance, e.g. in the education sector. (p. 30-31)

In the area of gender policy, GAO finds that overall targets for integration have not been met. Yet, this is unclear since sectoral data have not been routinely collected and disaggregated by sex. In areas traditionally affecting women (health and family planning), gender is heavily integrated. But in areas of environment and natural resource management programs, and democracy and governance, there is little consideration of gender. In training and agriculture, the integration is mixed.

## Conclusions

The GAO report concludes that USAID's progress in implementing the 1973 Percy Amendment has been slow, though it made more progress in the late 1980's. It acknowledges that through increasing training and technical assistance of the WID office, USAID personnel have been made more aware of gender issues and their relevance to development work. USAID has implemented some activities that particularly benefit women, including training, health, family planning, and girls' education.

Yet, despite these activities, the GAO indicates that USAID has not provided the clear and centralized oversight necessary to ensure policy conformity. Some USAID entities have not focused on gender issues at all, nor has USAID always incorporated gender into its nonproject assistance. A major concern is the lack of sex disaggregated data and performance indicators and incentives. **GAO specifically identifies two areas that they feel hold the most promise for integration of the women in development concept into program activities:**

- **Continued efforts by the WID office to increase awareness at all levels in USAID about the importance of gender to development and to provide needed technical assistance; and**

- **Management information and accountability systems that will enable USAID to track the impact of its activities and the integration of its program and hold officials accountable for program results.**(p. 32)

### **Recommendations**

GAO recommends that the USAID Administrators seek to include women as full participants and beneficiaries of AID's economic assistance programs. Specifically they identify five major recommendations: (p. 34)

- ***Require all AID bureaus to establish effective women in development strategies and action plans, and establish reasonable deadlines for their timely completion;***
- ***Require overseas missions to integrate gender concerns into country strategies and action plans, and include reasonable deadlines for reaching stated benchmarks;***
- ***Develop systems and procedures for centrally monitoring the timely completion and effective execution of bureau strategies and action plans and mission efforts to integrate gender into development strategies;***
- ***Direct that, to the extent possible, WID policy objectives be incorporated in nonproject assistance programming; and***
- ***Ensure the timely completion and evaluation of the PRISM system so that USAID has the information needed to more effectively design, implement, monitor, and evaluate WID efforts and more effectively measure the institutional commitment to women-in-development.***

GAO also indicates that Congress should consider emphasizing women in development as a means for accomplishing sustainable development objectives and applying WID to all assistance programs to the extent possible.

### **USAID Comments and GAO Response**

USAID generally agreed with the findings although it did not feel that the GAO sufficiently recognized some of the progress made in bureaus and missions. Both agreed that requiring separate WID action plans by bureaus and missions can lead to a "checklist" approach, and GAO modified its recommendations accordingly. USAID indicated that it would strengthen the capacity of the WID office, both in staff and in capacity to monitor programs and impact. However, GAO stressed that WID cannot ensure gender integration without the active support and leadership of USAID's top management team. (p. 35)

### **GAO Comments on the Department of State**

The rest of the GAO Report focuses on the Department of State whose leadership on gender issues it finds as limited. Despite funding some United Nations programs, the U.S. is not perceived as a strong global leader in promoting women's issues, whether it be through WID programs or in its failure to ratify the 1979 international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The State Department has not developed definitive policy statements in the area of gender. The GAO recommends that the Secretary of State issue policy

guidance for “(1) monitoring the progress of international organizations in integrating women into national economies and professional and policy-making positions at international organizations, and (2) documenting the extent to which U.S. contributions to such organizations have considered the progress of international organizations in promoting policies and procedures for the integration of women in these areas.” (p. 40)

Chapter 4 of the report specifically focuses on the State Department’s Bureau of Refugee programs. It identifies specific acute problems faced by refugee women and the role of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) in this refugee work. GAO recognizes that the Bureau and the U.S. mission in Geneva have strongly supported women’s issues. GAO’s focus was on UNHCR rather than the specific Bureau itself. The major recommendations suggest that the U.S. focus its efforts through increasing UNHCR’s number and distribution of focal points for women’s issues at refugee camps. The Bureau should encourage implementation of UNHCR’s Policy on Refugee Women by its implementing partners; support expanding and strengthening gender training for all those working with UNHCR; and encourage the evaluation of UNHCR’s gender training.

## **Appendix I**

An extensive appendix to the GAO report focuses on Research on the Need for a Gender Focus in Development. This conceptual summary of the role of women in development underlies much of the basis for the GAO study and report.

## **D. USAID Addressing Gender Concerns: The Success of the USAID Gender Plan of Action and USAID Country Programs, A Report to the US Congress, 1999, US Agency for International Development**

This USAID review of its approach and programming to women in development opens by stating “*In recent years the Agency has maintained a powerful commitment to gender integration despite severe budget cuts and closures of a number of Missions.*”

This commitment is reflected by the Agency continuing to support the 1982 Policy Statement calling for gender integration in all USAID programs. In spite of an ‘environment of severely constrained resources for development assistance,’ the WID office was substantially maintained. In fact, the technical expertise of the WID staff had been strengthened. Building on the series of United Nations conferences that particularly focused on women (International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994; World Summit on Social and Economic Development, Copenhagen, 1995; and Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995), USAID saw itself playing a key role in addressing issues that arose from those conferences as well as developing an increasingly collaborative relationship with non-governmental organizations on gender in development.

**In 1996 USAID adopted a Gender Plan of Action (GPA) that continues to exist. Its three main goals are:**

- **Build commitment to the consideration of gender issues as key development issue**
- **Build capacity to address gender in all Agency programs; and**
- **Build incentives for appropriate attention to gender issues.**

WID saw the GPA as already being successful in several areas. By 1999 USAID’s strategic framework had been revised to better reflect the importance of gender considerations, including the framework’s preamble that now ‘explicitly stated USAID’s commitment to full participation by women in all sustainable development activities.’ (p.6) Each priority area also noted this commitment in their strategic objective goals.

**USAID also identified gender as a key cross-cutting issue that must be addressed in what is known as the R4 process (Results Review and Resource Request),** the process by which the Agency is tying the achievement of concrete results in the field to the allocation of resources. Although other reports would challenge this statement, the 1999 report says, “...*we have been quite successful in ensuring that we are able to determine the impact of USAID programs on women in the field*”. (p. 7) This was, however, the beginning of the period when missions and USAID began using sex-disaggregated data, and the report acknowledges that the quality is ‘not uniform and cannot easily be aggregated.’ (p. 7)

The Report also identifies a number of pending actions that were being addressed including personnel-related elements of the GPA; introducing the capacity to address gender as a consideration for awarding contracts, and the need for a new or updated Policy Paper on Women In Development. The report indicates that USAID had been ‘cited as a model for institutionalizing gender considerations by the President’s InterAgency Council on Women, the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA), and the Develop Assistance Committee of the Organization

for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC)' (p. 8), but its further accomplishments on gender integration depend on the implementation of these pending actions.

The majority of the Report then focuses on regional accomplishments and sample programs in the following priority areas: economic growth; population, health and nutrition; environment; democracy and governance; and human capacity development. Separate sections highlight girls' education; women's legal rights; and reproductive health.

## **Conclusion**

*Addressing Gender Concerns: The Success of the USAID Gender Plan of Action and USAID Country Programs* concludes positively by indicating USAID's progress in implementation of the GPA and gender integration. It states: "USAID has made substantial progress in addressing gender considerations throughout its programs and policies. Addressing women in development concerns is seen as a clear priority not only at senior management levels, but also throughout the Agency. While additional progress is required, the institutionalization of gender considerations is solidly underway through programming approaches, and personnel and procurement policies that are making gender a fundamental issue in all of the Agency's work". (p. 32) Other than more subtle indications of pending actions and introduction of new areas for focus, the Report did not present specific recommendations for WID and the future.

**E. Women 2000 Beijing Plus Five: The USAID Commitment**, US Agency for International Development, Office of Women in Development, June 2000

Written for the international five-year review following the UN 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women in 1995, this report highlights USAID's efforts to achieve the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA). By no means a comprehensive report of all USAID's programs, WID combined the 12 critical areas of the PFA into 6 categories and summarized sample programs and concerns in each. [However, only 5 categories were actually identified for this report.] These 5 categories were:

- The girl child (girls' education, combating female genital cutting, reducing adolescent pregnancy);
- Basic human rights (legal literacy; violence against women; anti-trafficking initiatives);
- Health and education (preventive healthcare including pregnancy and childbirth; HIV/AIDs; and basic education, including literacy training);
- Economic growth and poverty reduction (food security, including agricultural research and policies; rural development – farm to market; microcredit for microenterprise; skills and management training; and multilateral cooperation);
- Political participation (grassroots programs, including voter rights, registration; women at the polls and in parliament, running for office).

**Conclusion**

The Agency reiterates its longstanding commitment to “integrate women into the national economics” of their countries through the Percy Amendment passed in 1973 and 22 years before the Beijing Platform for Action was written. The Report recognizes that results in the above areas were uneven, with excellent progress seen in education and human rights, but slow progress in integrating gender in the area of the environment. Changes in the world situation, including post-conflict transitions, economic globalization and the expansion of international trade relations, and information technology all impact the challenges for USAID and its responses to development assistance in the future. Expertise in USAID, non-governmental organizations, international donors and host countries is increasing as USAID continues to pursue its commitment to gender integration.

## **F. OECD/DAC: Report of Progress in the Implementation of the DAC High Level Policy Statement “Gender Equality: Moving Towards Sustainable, People-Centred Development”, DCD/DAC/GEN (2000)1/ REV1**

Following the UN 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Women in Beijing, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development endorsed a gender equality statement. This report is a review of the progress of the Members of the Working Party on Gender Equality (WP-GEN) in implementing the 1995 DAC Statement “*Gender Equality: Moving Towards Sustainable, People Centred Development.*” The report assesses the progress toward eight gender equality priorities, with education given special attention. Detailed questionnaire responses from 24 member organizations (19 countries and the European Commission) provide the basis for analysis.

All Member countries appear to have made real strides toward implementing the Statement. The general conclusion is that most have made gender equality a strategic objective for development work, though actual implementation in the field, and operational plans and tools are uneven. Leadership from senior management is key and more, rather than fewer, resources must be devoted to gender mainstreaming. Most have used the 1995 DAC Statement and follow-up 1998 *Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Cooperation* to help support and direct their efforts toward gender mainstreaming. They recommend continuing to work collaboratively and recognize that Members are at different stages of the process.

***The DAC Statement outlines the necessary shift from a woman-based to a gender equality-based paradigm in order to effectively identify and tackle gender disparities and uphold respect for women’s human rights. The mainstreaming of a gender equality and women’s empowerment approach in development co-operation is seen as essential in attaining sustainable, people-centered development. (p. 9)***

Gender within the institutional structure: Strong leadership from senior management is mentioned frequently as critical. Most organizations (16) indicate they have ‘gender units’, with at least the equivalent of one full-time gender advisor. “The number and capacity of gender specialist staff is indicative of the gender unit’s influence within the organization”. Number of staff generally ranges from 1-5, with seven organizations having even more. The location of the unit, particularly whether it is close to decision-making power within the organization and the degree to which it is able to have a policy oversight role, are especially important. Its links with the field also affects its gender integration approaches. (p. 10) The Report affirms: “if mainstreaming is to work it is important that all staff are clear about their responsibility for gender issues and have a plan of action for including it in their work.” (p.11)

The *DAC Guidelines* include two main aspects: 1) integration of gender equality concerns into the analyses and formulation of all policies, programs and projects; and 2) women-focused initiatives to redress gender disparities and enable women as well as men to participate in decision-making across all development issues. Men-focused initiatives also take place. (p. 11)

### **Progress on the DAC Gender Equality Goals**

**Goal 1: Re-emphasize the socio-cultural aspects of development and the general need for a more people-focused approach which integrates social, economic, and political analyses.**

Many Members have re-emphasized the importance and cross-cutting nature of socio-cultural aspects of development, with gender as a central element. Most use or support the development of participatory approaches and analysis, particularly including women in the design and implementation of program activities. They see it as important to use local resources for identifying gender priorities and securing local ownership. However, they caution that this does not always lead to equal involvement of women and men, and stress the importance of ongoing work towards true gender integration.

**Goal 2: Reconsider the impact of non-project forms of cooperation – such as sectoral program assistance, structure adjustment, public expenditure reviews – on men and women.** The DAC statement identified the need to extend gender equality goals from the micro (or project) level to the macro (or policy) and program levels. This means multi-donor involvement and dialogue with partners. The shift to a macro level has been difficult for many, and this is one of two areas (also Goal 8) where *least progress* among Members has been made. (p. 15-16)

**Goal 3: Include gender implications in analyses, policies, country and sector strategies.** Members have made the *most progress* in this area, with a lack of human and financial resources being identified as a serious constraint to including gender integration in all initiatives. (p. 16-17)

**Goal 4: Emphasize these principles in continuing and emerging areas of cooperation, particularly in participatory development and good governance, human rights and conflict resolution.** These areas, including a move towards a rights-based agenda, are new to development work, and there are emerging initiatives for gender integration in program efforts. Work is still at an early stage and progress has not been measured. (p. 17-18)

**Goal 5: Help partners strengthen their institutional capacity to incorporate actions in favor of women and to develop new instruments for addressing gender equality.** For one-third of the Members, this was one goal where they had made most progress. (p. 19) Institutional capacity-building initiatives in host countries (including government, NGOs, women's organizations, national women's mechanisms) are numerous, with some also deeply involved with capacity-building in multilateral organizations.

**Goal 6: Increase policy dialogue with partners.** Members, both in formal discussions and negotiations, as well as in less-structured, ongoing contacts, apply this goal increasingly. Ensuring gender issues are included in policy dialogue with multilateral agencies is considered essential in a few organizations such as the Swedish MoFA. However, “*not all agencies and Ministries were able to report progress. . . One lesson learned was that policy dialogue with partners that tackles gender equality issues requires preparation and patience. Commitment on both sides has to be firm. Furthermore, the involvement of women's organizations and NGOs is crucial in direct policy dialogue.*” (p. 20)

**Goal 7. Focus on local communities' abilities to identify gender priorities and support actions in partnership with aid agencies.** Members are increasingly implementing this goal. They have learned, however, that there is “*the need for a substantial commitment of time over a long period if local*

*communities are to be supported effectively and projects are to be sustainable. A typical project duration of three to five years may well be inadequate.”*

**Goal 8. Emphasize gender equality in competence development, management responsibility, accountability, and adequate monitoring reporting of results. This could involve increased financial commitments and re-writing job descriptions and responsibilities to include gender criteria.** “This goal lies at the heart of successful gender mainstreaming’ and is one of the two [also Goal 2] where *least progress* has been made. More progress has been made on competence development and less on management responsibility and the monitoring and reporting of results. In fact, many Members found it easier to complete the questionnaire for this report and could report on activities undertaken, rather than *results* achieved. Mainstreaming needs a well-resourced gender unit and integration process, and strong senior leadership at the top. And incentive mechanisms and accountability are a way forward. (p. 21-23)

**Greatest achievements and most successful strategies** were identified as:

- Expansion of gender staff;
- Progress in gender mainstreaming;
- Shift to gender equality focus;
- Use of gender policy markers;
- Gender training; and
- Development of gender analysis tools.

**Challenges for implementation** that are particularly significant are:

- Lack of human resources;
- Attitudes and lack of commitment from senior management;
- Budgetary constraints; and
- Monitoring and reporting of results.

**Key lessons learned** include:

- Gender mainstreaming is a long, ongoing and, at times, difficult process;
- Only a people-centered participatory approach will ultimately lead to successful gender mainstreaming;
- Support by senior and middle management for actions to motivate staff, such as incentive mechanisms, is vital;
- Methods and instruments for mainstreaming, including implementation tools and performance indicators are crucial for implementation of gender integration.

### **Special focus on Girls’ Education**

The OECD Report has a special section on “closing the gender gap in education”. It follows some of the goals in the broad DAC Statement, with an emphasis on policy dialogue with partners, the importance of national ownership, and recognition that monitoring and evaluation of

implementation is weak. Socio-cultural factors (including negative attitudes towards the education of girls, direct and indirect costs of schools, girl's safety, distance and poor school resources) contribute to a disparity in girls' education. (p. 25-29)

### **Role of the Working Party on Gender Equality**

The WP-GEN is seen as crucial in providing 'a catalytic, advisory, and support role' for the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of OECD and implementation of the 1995 DAC Statement. It is the center for providing support, monitoring implementation, developing tools, and meeting the needs of its Members. One of its major achievements was the development and approval of the "DAC Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation", and its supplement the *DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality*.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The Reports indicates that the DAC and its Members have made substantial progress in addressing gender equality, and particularly highlight the strategic value of the DAC Statement. Implementation is uneven, with areas of leadership responsibility, accountability, resources, expertise, and tools and incentive mechanisms still needing to be addressed and more progress made. Non-project forms of cooperation, moving from micro to macro policy areas, and newer cross-cutting issues are areas for growth. Progress in mainstreaming gender into education has also been made, though is challenged by continuing socio-economic and cultural issues. Even for DAC and its Secretariat, monitoring and evaluation needs to be encouraged and upgraded. The Report concludes by encouraging the Working Party to continue to provide its leadership role in supporting and encouraging gender mainstreaming among its Members.

Although the OECD does not compare each goal and issue agency by agency, throughout the detailed report it highlights specific examples and best practices. The countries identified specifically most often were Sweden (SIDA), Denmark (DANIDA), Australia (AusAID), New Zealand (NZODA), Italy (MoFA), and Germany (BMZ). USAID was mentioned in three areas:

- Human rights based agenda – "Nine... USAID missions are now supporting programmes specifically focused on women's rights." (p. 17)
- Competence development – "The USAID 1996 Gender Plan of Action mainstreams gender equality issues into all their staffing considerations. For example, staff recruitment decisions take into account the candidate's understanding of gender issues. The job descriptions for agency programme officers are to be revised to include responsibility for addressing gender." (p. 21)
- Management responsibility and staff accountability – "USAID has a plan to introduce a WID Performance Fund to provide performance incentives to programmes." (p. 23)

USAID was specifically highlighted in Section III on 'Closing the Gender Gap in Education' in a discussion on education reform and sector-wide approaches. USAID's objectives to improve girls' and rural children's basic education by supporting changes to government policy, institutional reform, and resource reallocation in eight African countries and examples of results were highlighted in a separate information box. (p. 26-27)

**G. NEW AGENDA FOR GENDER EQUALITY**, Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid (ACVFA), 2000, Ambassador Sandy Vogelgesang, Leader of Assessment

For preparation of this summary, additional materials for review included: the ACVFA Quarterly Meeting Detailed and Summary Reports, May 10, 2000, and ACVFA's Recommendations for the USAID Administrator. This Summary will focus on the *New Agenda* Report since each of the other documents were generated from it.

*New Agenda for Gender Equality* is an extensive 50-page independent assessment of the progress made by USAID with a shorter Summary Report. It was requested by the Advisory Committee of Voluntary Foreign Aid and funded through the ACVFA Secretariat by USAID. It focuses primarily on the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action (GPA) issued by USAID in 1996 following the UN 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women in Beijing. The Report was based on over 500 interviews, a review of relevant USAID documentation and literature on gender equality, a field survey of all USAID missions; and field study in three countries (Guatemala, Morocco, and Uganda, with a short visit to Egypt).

Beginning with a short review of the global development scene, the report notes that one of the major shifts at the Agency was from an emphasis on "women in development (WID) in the 1970s, to more focus on the concept of "gender and development" in the 1990s.

**Part II. The Gender Plan of Action – Status Report**

This is a major section of the ACVFA report. Early initiatives of the U.S. Congress and USAID are identified: the Percy Amendment, 1973; the establishment of the WID office at USAID, 1974; the Women in Development Policy Paper, 1982; and the Women in Development Action Paper, 1988. Additionally, the reports notes USAID's involvement in the 1990s UN conferences, particularly Cairo and Beijing, and its role in encouraging more focus on women and development, and gender equality through the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization of Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD). In 1996 there was clear consensus between USAID and ACVFA leaders on the need for more action on gender equality, thus the GPA of March 1996 was issued.

A short document, the GPA addresses three areas: (p. 9-13)

- Commitment to greater consideration of gender in Agency Policy (such as the USAID Strategic Plan);
- Increased capacity to address gender through changes in procedures for personnel evaluation, procurement, training and evaluation, including the WID Fellows program and the appointment of a Senior Gender Advisor; and
- Incentives for performance and follow-up.

The Status Report includes a report rating implementation of various activities under the GPA (e.g. done, some done, little done, not done). Only two categories were noted as 'done' – the WID Fellows and procurement changes. Most indicated 'little' or 'not done' at all.

**Obstacles to Action:** Critical is the Report's finding that ***“most of those interviewed inside USAID and in the PVP 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.”*** (p. 14) Various reasons are identified including external problems (budget cuts, earmarks, uncertainty over fate of USAID from 1996-99, headquarters move, situations in host countries), and internal issues (poor communication, inadequate consultation process, skepticism about the institutional approach, proliferation of priorities, re-engineering, electronic Management System). (p.14-16)

**Impact:** Over 90% of those interviewed in USAID and the PVO/NGO community said that the GPA has not had any measurable impact on Agency operations; in fact “NO USAID personnel, outside G/WID could cite examples of progress made because of the GPA.” (p. 16) Most USAID personnel never read the Plan; most PVO representatives had never heard of the Plan. At the same time, most Agency staff responding indicated that they were committed to incorporating gender equality in their work, but that they could do more and could benefit from training. Personnel in the field ‘want much more latitude to use resources so they then can address gender equality as a cross-cutting issue and capitalize on new or unique opportunities.’ (p. 18)

### **Part III. Gender Plan of Action – Next Steps**

**A. Policy and Program Commitment:** Both USAID and PVO respondents recommended attention, *in priority order*, to the integration of strategies for gender equality in three Agency documents: (p. 19-22)

- Country Strategic Plan (CSP) of each USAID Mission;
- Agency Strategic Plan (ASP), revised every three years in response to a Congressional requirement. Most favored strong identification of gender as a cross-cutting theme, together with a concern for gender equality into all six of the Agency's substantive Strategic Goals (economic growth and agricultural development; democracy and good governance; human capacity built through education and training; population, health, and nutrition (PHN); natural resource management and the environment; humanitarian assistance; USAID a premier development agency);
- Policy Paper on Women in Development is dated 1982; a new short, updated one is favored.

**B. Increased Capacity to Address Gender Through Changes in Procedures:** Again, *in priority order*, recommended focus areas are: (p. 22-26)

- Training, not in gender per se, but in applied, “how-to” material;
- Reporting, monitoring and evaluation, with better data collection using international indicators on gender equality such as those developed by the OECD/DAC and stronger reinforcement of the R4 (Results Review and Resource Request) process; there was criticism that no overall evaluation of WID had been done since the Agency issued its Policy Paper in 1982;
- Procurement should reflect gender;
- Personnel policy, including evaluations and work requirements, and guidance for Ambassadors since they annually evaluate USAID Mission Directors, as well as foreign service nationals (FSNs);

- Full-time senior gender advisor, with USAID personnel seeing little need for this position while PVO representatives wanted to extend the portfolio to the Senior Social Scientist appointed in 2000 to full-time.
- WID Fellows Program garnered mixed reviews, and the report recommended need for review before the next phase of the program is implemented, particularly in the area of experience quality of Fellows.

**C. Incentives for Performance:** Although G/WID had dropped a proposal for a Performance Fund because of budget crunch, most interviewees still thought there should be some form of reward for advocacy of gender equality. Several proposals included: 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 Office of the Counselor has a larger support staff. PPC should work in collaboration with G/WID in this monitoring. Continued monitoring should also be done by ACVFA and there should be regular reviews of the GPA.

#### **IV. Conclusion: Looking Ahead – Options for Dialogue**

**A. Process:** The Report identifies a number of areas that respondents suggested for ways to promote gender equality:

- Advocacy inside USAID, possibly creating a ‘gender network’ or a ‘senior management team’
- Role of the Office of Women in Development, ranging from elimination to strengthening a renamed Office of Gender Equality (G/GE)
- Funding promotion of gender equality, from the *status quo* to a special fund to encourage innovation and implementation in the field
- Increased collaboration within the U.S. Executive Branch, with greater linkage between State and USAID policy and resource planners; expanded role for the President’s InterAgency Council on Women; the Peace Corps and public diplomacy officers
- More outreach to Congress, American public and USAID ‘customers’, including the creation of a U.S. Council of Gender Equality for the domestic audience, an International Council on Gender Equality for USAID customers abroad, and a Professional Exchange Program between USAID and the PVO community
- Donor Coordination, particularly with host countries and international financial institutions.

**B. Program:** The Report concluded with a look at the specific Strategic Goal areas and identified questions for planning for each.

#### **Recommendations:**

The Report concludes that the Gender Plan of Action is well-intentioned in institutionalizing gender equality at USAID. But “*it’s significance, however, pales in comparison to issues raised by other USAID work in this area before and after 1996.*” (p. 53) **It strongly finds that ‘much more must be done to provide forward momentum for USAID’s work on gender equality...’** And it outlines a seven-point program for USAID policy:

- 1) Statement and demonstration of clear consistent Agency leadership in Washington and the field. The senior leadership of USAID must “walk the talk”.... (p. 53)**
- 2) Commitment to change**
- 3) Increased funding**
- 4) Commitment to organizational change**
- 5) Expanded outreach to promote gender equality**
- 6) Shift to greater focus on program issues**
- 7) New Substantive priorities**

These priorities represent a consensus from the assessment for this extensive study and interview process conducted by ACVFA as with the hope that the Agency will move forward in the twenty-first century with a “New Agenda for Gender Equality.”

## **H. Women & Development Aid**, Ritu Sharma, Foreign Policy in Focus, Vol. 6, Number 33, September 2001

In her article focusing on women and development aid, Ritu Sharma, co-founder and executive director of Women's EDGE, a coalition of groups advocating economic policies and human rights that support poor women worldwide, asserts that despite solid statistical economic evidence, evaluation results and directives from the US Congress, "U.S. development assistance programs have largely ignored gender integration. (p.1)...and have not caught up with the facts". (p. 2) She reviews major documents that direct or evaluate the progress of gender integration in US development policy and programs, beginning with the 1973 Percy amendment, through the 1993 Government Accounting Office review, to the post-Beijing Gender Plan of Action in 1996, and the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Assistance (ACVFA) analysis in 2000.

Sharma highlights the fact that the GAO report evaluating USAID progress in meeting the directives of the Percy Amendment found that USAID *"has only recently begun to consider the role of women in its third-world development strategies, despite the fact that 20 years have passed since Congress directed that AID assistance programs focus on integrating women."* (p. 3) She praises the creation of the Gender Plan of Action (GPA) in 1996 with its three-step mechanisms that she feels 'really matter' – bids and contracting systems, performance evaluations and promotions, and USAID's 4Rs process of Results Review and Resource Request. Yet she raises concerns that four years later, the ACVFA analysis stated that: *"Over 90% of those interviewed in USAID and the PVO/NGO community said that the GPA has not had any measurable impact on Agency operations."* (p. 3) This, Sharma notes, was not due to faults in the plan, but because it was not promoted or implemented by the Agency's leadership.

Sharma identifies key problems with current U.S. policy. First, there are four obstacles to integration:

- Lack of zeal of USAID leadership
- Absence of accountability mechanisms
- Shortages of resources
- Lack of staff training for conducting gender analysis

She cites a reluctance of foreign policy leaders to impose our culture and ideas of human rights on others, that they too often view women as just another sector rather than a constituency to be integrated into every program, that there is a lack of communication from Washington to USAID bureaus, missions and partners about the GPA, and that there are no real incentives for implementing integration throughout the Agency and its programs. For true integration to take place, it must come from leadership at the top – quoting the 2000 ACVFA report: *"... senior leadership, particularly the chief executive must 'walk the talk' -with vision, commitment built on consensus, re resources and training, and clear accountability."* (p. 5)

Additionally, WID lacks the technical staff and resources to adequately assist USAID personnel even if they proactively seek to analyze gender and/or target women as part of their work. Finally, Sharma indicates that USAID's economic portfolio has sifted from building domestic enterprises to assisting developing nations in joining and adhering to international trade pacts and collaborating with the World Trade Organization. (p. 6)

Because there is a push from Congress to show results on the effectiveness of development assistance, USAID may be forced by outside forces to strengthen its efforts of the integration of gender in aid programs. ‘Statistical evidence of the feminization of poverty is becoming harder to ignore.’ (p. 7)

**GAINS for Women and Girls Act (Global Action and Investments for New Success for Women and Girls)** has been introduced into Congress with strong support from a coalition of more than 60 organizations put together by Women’s EDGE, the NGO founded and headed by Sharma. She sees this as the most comprehensive legislation on international women’s issues ever introduced. The GAINS Act identifies 10 areas of concern for U.S. development programming: gender integration; poverty reduction and economic growth; education; health care; agriculture and food security; human rights; violence; conflicts and peace building; leadership and participation; and environmental protection. The GAINS Act details how gender can be integrated into each of the sectors covered in the bill.

### Recommendations

Four of Sharma’s recommendations are based on proposals identified by a working group led by the International Center for Research on Women. These include:

- **Create financial incentives** for integrating gender and targeting women and girls, including the establishment of a matching fund within the WID office to help USAID missions or specific project with the resources for gender integration;
- **Provide adequate funding** for and elevate the Office of Women in Development and its leadership, ideally situating it within the economic growth and agriculture division. The WID director should be elevated to the level of deputy assistant administrator or the equivalent, and the office should receive up to \$30 million/year to support WID programs;
- **Establish a WID Management Group** within the Agency, consisting of deputy assistant administrators who should monitor and assist with ongoing implementation and compliance of gender integration policies and programs;
- **Form an Interagency Council** to coordinate and promote the advancement of women and girls in all U.S. federal agencies and departments, and to provide a means for partnership with nongovernmental organizations.

Additionally, recent USAID reorganization suggests that the Office of Program, Policy and Coordination (PPC) will conduct all planning, policy development, and budgeting for the entire Agency. If this is so, Sharma states, “*it is absolutely critical that the PPC include a full-time political appointee to ensure that gender integration and women’s programs get their due attention.*”

Sharma finishes by encouraging advocates of gender integration to facilitate USAID’s integration of gender by bringing a vocal constituency to monitor and advocate for it, and by focusing on both private voluntary organizations and the private sector to understand the gendered impacts of policies and institutions, including multilateral organizations, if women are to gain from the globalizing economy.