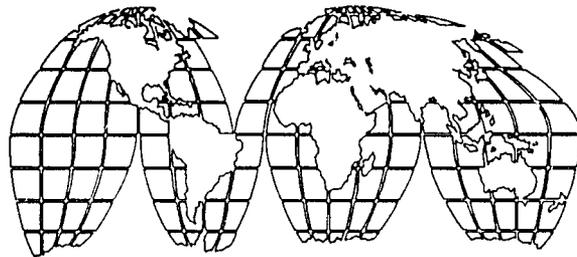


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Gender Development Strategy Review

July 1994

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

GENDER IN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

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SUMMARY

This exercise began as an effort to prepare a CDIE scope of work to assess Agency gender in development experience and program impacts. We quickly encountered seasoned views and substantial literature suggesting a more fundamental, immediate and opportune need. That need is for a broad Agency initiative to:

- a) build people and gender considerations more systematically into how the Agency thinks about development processes and dynamics, i.e. into our development conceptual models; and,
- b) look more comprehensively and strategically at gender issues, ensuring that these are analyzed within a developmentally grounded framework, and that approaches and interventions are tailored to produce meaningful impacts.

The reasons for a conceptual and strategic review include documented difficulties in identifying a consistent flow of impacts from USAID gender-focused interventions, especially impacts which are sustainable, replicable and widespread. Also, over the past 20 years, there has been a growing body of experience and sophistication regarding the nature of gender inequities and evolving approaches (equity, efficiency, empowerment). But, these lessons have been slow to be converted into Agency strategies and practices. Similarly, Agency WID/GID guidance and documentation requirements have continued to mount, but often without any particular direction regarding priorities. On the positive side, current Agency strategic emphases require programs to be people-centered and participatory. This strongly favors incorporation of gender issues at the level of strategic objectives and program outcomes--a more powerful perch from which to generate meaningful and lasting gender impacts than has generally been achievable through isolated project-level interventions.

This review paper develops several broad conclusions based on the Agency's experience to date, including those capsulized below:

--The sum of gender activities across a portfolio (even if cast within a WID Action Plan and involving collection of sex-disaggregated data), may not add up to significant development impact on women.

--We must be insightful and candid about root causes of gender bias and disparities, assess the development implications, adopt strategies commensurate with gender challenges and development conditions, and tailor interventions (direct activities, policy dialogue, coordination) to ultimately bring about desired changes.

--Best results come when gender is of sufficiently high strategic concern to be placed and accounted for within the framework of Mission objectives and outcomes.

The paper encourages broad, coordinated discussion within the Agency regarding conceptual and strategy dimensions of gender in development. Subject to further Agency guidance, the paper proposes possible next steps and studies in three areas:

1) Building Gender into the Agency's Conceptual Approaches. The argument is made that we need to better incorporate mounting evidence of women's development contributions and gains into the conceptual models applied within each of the Agency's sustainable development priority areas. For example, conceptual models explain the dynamics of change within the agricultural transformation process (economic growth area) and the demographic transition process (population area). The people dimensions of these models (e.g. changing labor composition in economic growth) can be gender-disaggregated and enhanced by evidence regarding women's contributions. By applying more "gendered" models in strategy formulation, interventions can be programmed that generate better gains to development and to women. Annex 1 illustrates how this might be approached and suggests a conceptual framework to facilitate more strategic consideration of gender. (See Figure 1. attached.)

Global Bureau's Centers of Excellence, with support from the WID Office, could package and present gender evidence within those tools of analysis and development conceptual models applied in their respective areas. CDIE can support this by studying, for instance, growth processes in recently emerging middle-income countries (Thailand, Indonesia, Chile, Costa Rica) to document shifts in women and men's contributions, and how women were empowered to support and benefit from the change process.

2) Building People-level Results and Appropriate Gender Dimensions Into Strategic Objectives and Program Outcomes. Agency emphasis on people-level impacts greatly facilitates incorporation of gender analysis and issues within Mission strategic objectives and program outcomes. Explicit PRISM-level attention to strategically important gender considerations best assures resources, synergies, performance monitoring and accountability needed to achieve meaningful impacts. Missions will require concerted support and flexibility to "enpeople" and "engender" objectives and outcomes.

The transition to more people-oriented PRISM structures requires flexible, inter-Bureau and coordinated USAID/Washington support (a "matrix organization" model is recommended). CDIE could assess the degree to which different strategic approaches (e.g. gender integration, sectoral gender-led programming, explicit women's empowerment) are suited to levels of problems and results indicated in differing country settings and "gender" environments.

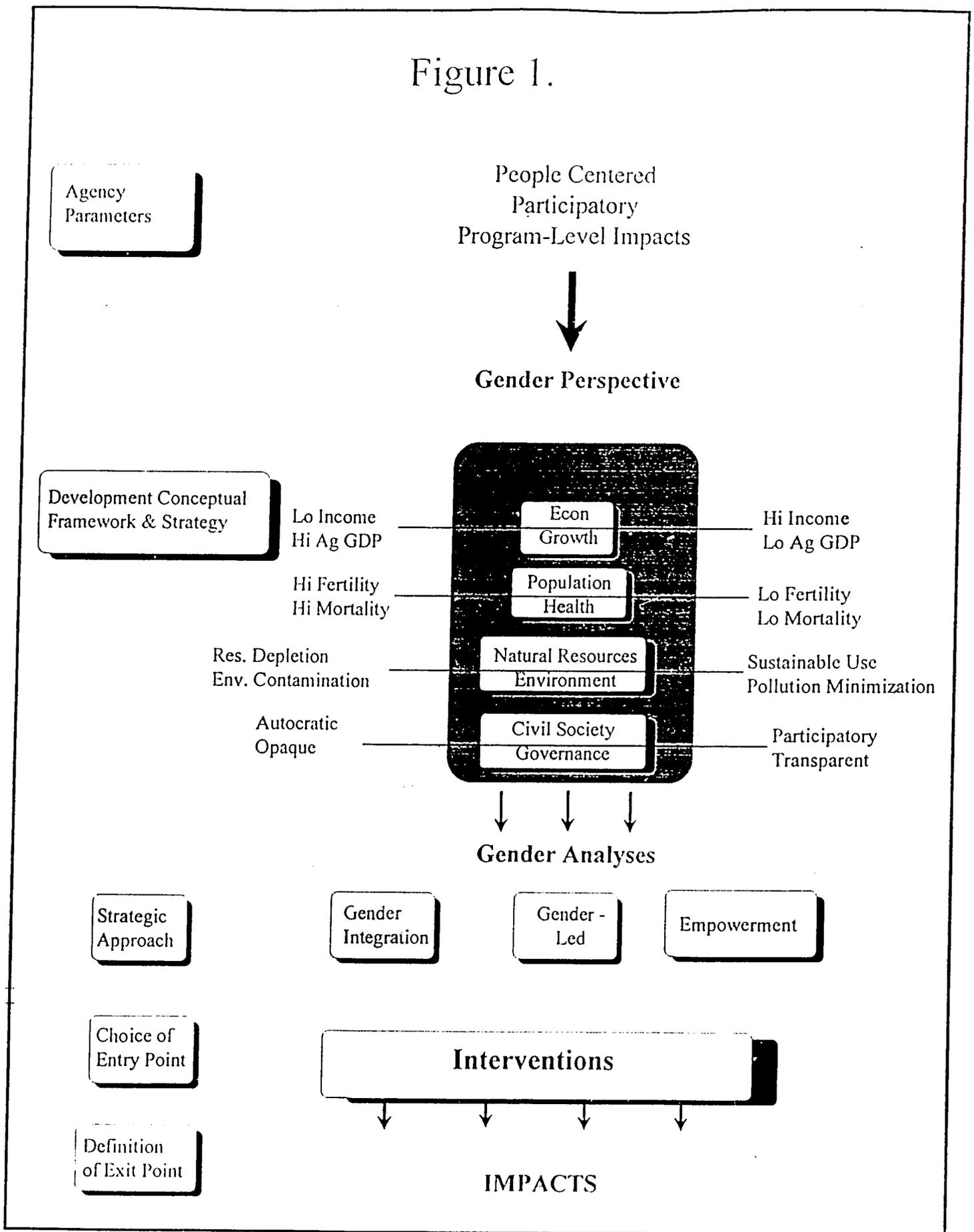
3) Building Gender Sensitivity and Analytical Capacity Within Development Partners. Ultimately, host country stakeholders and development partners must be committed, and creatively respond, if meaningful and sustainable headway is to be made vis-a-vis gender

obstacles. Experience gained within the Agency in building the development case for, and refining more strategic approaches to, WID/ GID now needs to be vigorously extended to host country groups and organizations.

The Global Bureau's WID Office is the central repository of much of the Agency's experience in pulling together and disseminating gender-related information and tools of analysis. As such, that Office, in coordination with Missions, can help frame an assessment of successes in transferring gender approaches (perhaps building upon "Best Practices" case studies currently underway). CDIE could look in depth at specific cases to highlight what works best, why and under which circumstances.

In sum, the Agency is in an excellent position to a) incorporate gender dimensions into how we conceptualize development processes, b) more strategically approach and impact on gender constraints, and c) to transfer the best of what we've learned to our development partners. These steps can ensure positive and sustainable contributions to development and to women.

Figure 1.



DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

GENDER IN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

I. BACKGROUND: AN HISTORICAL OPPORTUNITY

A review of USAID's performance in incorporating gender considerations into strategies and programs is timely. New foreign assistance legislation is to be adopted which sets out a fresh sustainable development mandate for USAID, embracing economic growth, population and health, environment, and civil society and governance. This evolving legislation offers an historical opportunity to set the legislative framework for furthering USG commitment to women in development. The level of concern in Congress, the Administration and Agency leadership suggests that even greater attention be given to what is now broadly recognized as gender in development (GID) issues and, indeed, to women's empowerment where appropriate. Broad Agency guidance further stresses that our programs are to be participatory and have direct and measurable impacts on both women and men which are sustainable and equitable. To ensure this, the Agency is adopting a performance-based strategic management system designed to focus resources, establish accountability and measure program-level results and impacts.

These changes present the Agency with a timely and much needed opportunity to: 1) step back and re-assess its experience to date in converting GID concerns into meaningful, sustainable outcomes; 2) capture the best lessons and state-of-the-art thinking about how to do this from our own experience, as well as that of the broader development community; and, 3) capitalize on this knowledge to more strategically and vigorously improve women's conditions and thereby the overall quality and sustainability of development. Indeed, 20 years of gender in development learning and institutional investment provides USAID with a strong basis to articulate a new forward-looking vision, to intensify strategies, and to provide leadership in this area well into the next century. This opportunity calls for a high-level, Agency-wide initiative, not merely another study.

This review is a modest, but importantly focused, contribution to such an initiative. Specifically, it draws attention to the need to build people and gender more squarely into how we conceptualize development processes and into our program strategies. This choice of emphasis reflects the hypothesis that, all too frequently, USAID's GID initiatives respond to targets of opportunity, or to ad hoc, individual initiatives, rather than flowing from a well-grounded and coherent strategy. Gender issues are often an afterthought during project design and rarely figure prominently within broader strategic planning. This may be at the core of why it is often difficult to achieve and show systemic and sustainable impacts on

women's livelihoods and empowerment, as is now called for by Agency leadership.

It is important to clarify that this review began as a scoping exercise for a proposed CDIE evaluation of Agency GID experience and impacts. That process, outlined in Section II, rendered a set of insights suggesting a more immediate need to look at strategy issues because, ultimately, these frame the types and levels of gender impacts achievable from USAID programs. It is also became clear from a perusal of information readily at hand, that while Agency thinking and documentation on gender in development have evolved, field-level planning and results remain mixed. Section III provides a synopsis of that evolving experience and strategic lessons drawn from it. Section IV draws from the review a set of recommended next steps, including Agency actions falling beyond the purview of CDIE.

Annex 1 provides an initial illustration of how current Agency strategic emphases on people and gender can be better incorporated into underlying development conceptual models. It sketches out a conceptual framework incorporating people and gender considerations at higher strategic levels, thus ensuring more meaningful, program-level, impacts.

II. SCOPING EXERCISE AND FINDINGS

In preparing the groundwork for this exercise, it became clear that significant amounts of recent work, some still in progress, exists that specifically address Agency experience in carrying out gender in development mandates and activities. These include: a recent, and fairly critical GAO Report on USAID'S overall performance in fulfilling its required mandates in this area; documentation of USAID institutional steps to incorporate gender concerns into programs and evaluations done in concert with other OECD Development Assistance Committee members; a series of "best practices" case studies underway in the WID Office; a "combing" exercise of lessons learned from Global Bureau projects; and, Regional Bureau reviews and analyses of Mission strategies, PRISM structures, action plans and progress assessments. In addition, direct consultations were held with numerous agency personnel--GID specialists, bureau program officers, senior Agency managers--many with extensive overseas experience. That informal sampling of documents and views rendered insights and issues that helped to frame this review. Some of the most poignant and thoughtful observations are capsulized below.

--The challenge is to translate Agency gender in development policy and intent into active commitment and creative responses at various levels. Ultimately, that means building shared concern for gender issues within host country institutions and groups. We are not going to achieve

significant results through short-term, piece-meal and process-focused efforts.

--We do not have the luxury to pursue and account for gender as a side issue. Where gender considerations are of clear, strategic importance to achieving sustainable development, we must reflect that in our objectives, programs and performance monitoring. Alternatively, if gender considerations are not central or highly relevant in a given situation, we need to developmentally make that case and not trivialize the issue by paying lip service to it.

--Emphasis on integrating gender across mainstream programs brings gender issues to light, heightens gender sensitivity, and improves project-level results. But, mainstreaming gender concerns across the portfolio can also spread increasingly scarce Mission resources too thinly across too many activities to appreciably and sustainably impact on underlying gender constraints.

--A more analytical and strategic assessment of priority gender issues and opportunities is likely to identify structural impediments and power relationships as root problems. These call for explicitly gender-led objectives, interventions, and focused resources, that move gender beyond an ancillary issue within activities in a portfolio.

--To be more strategic, we need to capture, assess and internalize the body of evidence linking investments in women's participation to the achievement of sustainable development outcomes in each Agency priority area. We must credibly demonstrate why (as well as which and when) investments in relieving a gender constraint yield as high, or higher, development returns than alternative investments. In this way we can be assured of the sound use of our scarce resources, and, most importantly, host country institutions can be persuaded to actively embrace these issues.

--To the extent strategic objectives, program outcomes and projects are defined in terms of people-level impacts, gender considerations are more likely to be identified, addressed and measured.

Given transformations occurring within USAID and observations noted above, there is an immediate and compelling need for developmentally grounded debate and discussion leading to a clear re-statement of Agency gender in development policy and strategic guidance. This review paper contributes to that process by tracing the evolution of Agency concepts and strategic approaches to gender, drawing out lessons learned, and recommending steps to broaden and deepen Agency contributions to this important issue.

III. EVOLUTION OF WID/GID APPROACHES AND EXPERIENCE OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS

A. Summary of Agency Policy Guidance

USAID's attention to gender concerns has been driven by the 1973 amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act. The, so called, Percy Amendment directed U.S. foreign assistance efforts to focus on integrating women into the economies of developing countries. Corresponding Agency "Women in Development" policy (1974) was to integrate gender issues, and to include women, in all assistance activities and to evaluate the impact of programs on women. This policy was updated in 1982, providing more detailed sectoral and programming guidance, requiring collection of sex-disaggregated data, and building gender analyses into country strategies and various stages of project design, monitoring and evaluation. Notably, it defined impact in terms of improvement in gender differentiated access to, and control over, resources. In 1988, Administrator Alan Woods issued instructions for Bureau and Mission WID Action Plans in order to better institutionalize the integration of women into the Agency's overall development program. In 1994, USAID's "Strategies For Sustainable Development" reinforce the need to give special attention to the role of women, including a focus on women's social, political and economic empowerment. Concurrently, USAID strategy emphasizes people-centered impacts, participatory processes, and civil society and governance. As discussed in more detail in Annex 1., these strategic emphases greatly favor translation of Agency gender policies into developmentally meaningful and sustainable improvements in women's status and opportunities. USAID's recent initiatives invite new thinking about how to raise gender from a tactical to a strategic consideration.

B. Evolution of Agency Approaches to Gender Issues

Increasing understanding of gender issues is reflected in the evolution of Agency approaches. At the same time, shifting Agency programming priorities did not always mesh with and support progress in this area.

Attempts to further WID policies in the 1970s were framed in terms of equity and were implemented in the context of an overriding "New Directions" policy aimed at reaching the poor majority and at poverty alleviation. Thus, women as a group were targeted to ensure that they shared in the benefits of poverty reduction programs. Interventions frequently included specific and separate activities for women. By and large, women were perceived as passive beneficiaries and efforts to target women separately frequently made women's activities a side issue which only attracted a trivial proportion of total resources. These efforts were largely judged to be ineffectual. It is now clear, however, that bringing women together is often a necessary step

for enhancing self-awareness and building solidarity around women's needs.

The equity theme was submerged within the **efficiency** arguments for GID emerging in the 1980s. This still prevalent view holds that, to be successful, development requires full mobilization and contributions from both women and men. Women are no longer seen as beneficiaries but rather as active participants in the development process. Major contributions have been made in compiling and presenting the evidence linking women's participation to enhanced development progress in most programming areas--agriculture, community resource management, micro- and small enterprise and services, and labor intensive exports, not to mention population and child survival.(1)(2). This efficiency approach, coupled with concerns for equity, has greatly advanced the technical arguments for women's full partnership in national development. At the same time, the application of this learning within USAID and the production of major impacts was slow. One reason is that during this period, USAID (and other donors') programming priorities had shifted toward the macro-economic and institutional enabling conditions needed to support growth and private sector investment. The practical "stretch" from dealing with issues at these levels to showing attributable impacts on women was, in many cases, too great to be meaningfully entertained in Mission projects.

Emerging along with this experience was a body of theoretical and empirical evidence indicating that gender-based relationships, conventions and roles may very well cause women's needs and opportunities to be subordinated to those of men. This "gender in development" perspective would seek greater equity in those often unequal and prejudicial relationships by ensuring women greater control over resources and a greater voice in decision-making. Such **empowerment** would go beyond engaging women for the contributions they make toward development goals. It would bring women's particular needs and social concerns to figure more prominently in the national agenda. While this was inherent in the idea of equity framed in the 1970s, it has taken 20 years to mature. It does so now, however, within an exceptionally supportive USAID policy environment which, foremost among other things, requires programs to show links to, and have measurable impacts on both women and men.

This evolution over time of USAID conceptualization and thematic consideration of gender in development is displayed below.

1970s	1980s	1990s
Women as recipients [EQUITY]	Women as participants and contributors [EFFICIENCY]	Women as empowered actors [EMPOWERMENT]

Thus, the past 20 years demonstrates considerable evolution and growing sophistication of GID issues. However, such advances have been slow to be reflected in the way USAID does business. The Agency has had a hard time demonstrating that gender focused policies and guidance have resulted in wide-spread, significant, replicable, and sustainable impacts on women. The reasons for this are many and periodically confronted in major reviews and evaluations. The degree to which gender policy intent lost out to, or was not supported by, other over-riding Agency priorities was alluded to in the preceding discussion. The time and resources it takes to accumulate experience, compile credible development evidence, train staff and inculcate gender awareness throughout the Agency was probably underestimated. Perhaps most significant is the growing acknowledgement that deep-rooted gender biases, institutional barriers and cultural attitudes found in many developing countries can not be easily changed. As the evolution of gender in development thinking implies, we may have lacked sufficient understanding of the root causes of the problem. Thus, many initiatives have been inadequate, dealt with symptoms, or otherwise lacked sufficient strategic coherence and synergy to produce major systemic or behavioral impacts.

C. Where Missions Have Been Successful

Notwithstanding the statements above, USAID has a record of developmentally sound, creative and strategically focused GID initiatives and accomplishments in a number of Missions and country contexts. These illustrate how different approaches, when well-matched to country-specific situations, are leading to lasting impacts on women's conditions and opportunities. Notable commonalities do exist among "leading edge" Missions. These include:

- * a broad, strategic view of the problem;
- * consistent, gender-sensitive leadership and application of resources;
- * participatory approaches and wide dialogue; and,
- * a developmental sense of the synergies operating across the portfolio.

The Bangladesh Mission is a good example of an across-the-board, gender integration approach that is having impacts. The Mission has regularly reviewed and up-dated its gender-in-development strategy and Action Plan and consistently funded activities which ensured women's participation within all program areas. Impacts on women's conditions and opportunities are becoming evident in country-appropriate and women-enhancing program areas such as women's microenterprise and small business development, women's legal awareness and legal rights, as well as in family planning and related health services. This is not to say that the process is complete, nor have underlying gender problems become the explicit focus of Mission strategic

objectives. Still, Mission goals/subgoals, objectives and outcomes are generally stated in people-level terms, supported in many cases by sex-disaggregated indicators.

More explicitly gender-led strategies have been adopted in Malawi and Uganda. The Malawi Mission has identified, at the country strategy level, an over-arching development imperative to bring more women, more quickly, into the development process. This is argued on both efficiency and equity grounds. Projects aimed at sectoral problems conscientiously address gender concerns. At the same time, gender impacts are not explicitly reflected in statements of Mission strategic objectives and two out of 12 program outcomes are gender-disaggregated. Still, this is a consistent and long-standing initiative which is consciously oriented to ensure significant gender-related impacts.

While relatively new, the Uganda Mission strategy also considers the lag in women's participation in national development to be of major importance. The Mission has placed relative emphasis on sectors, or activities within sectors, which are apt to have a high degree of participation by women, i.e. small traders and microenterprise, girls' education, family planning and women's health. The Mission's first strategic objective is stated in terms of increasing incomes of men and women rural producers. Very notably, important aspects of natural resource management and protection are monitored using gender-disaggregated indicators.

It is noteworthy that the draft Asia and Near East Bureau gender in development strategy (being prepared as part of an Agency-wide response to critical GAO findings) advocates a more aggressive gender-led approach in that subset of countries where standard indicators of women's conditions (e.g. birth rates, literacy rates, employment) indicate major problems and/or where women's progress lags significantly behind that of men. The rationale is that severe gender constraints and inequalities must be significantly remedied if those societies are going to develop.

While both Malawi and Uganda programs are conceptually gender-led, neither one explicitly targets or advocates female empowerment, per se, in their goals, strategic objectives or program outcomes. Women's empowerment has surfaced recently as an underlying strategic consideration within the Nepal Mission, as it also has within an important, NGO supported program outcome under USAID/India's population strategic objective. However, it is premature to say if, or how, these considerations will be strategically articulated and tackled.

Notwithstanding the gender initiatives found in the above Missions (and some others), a recent CDIE sponsored analysis of sex-disaggregated information gleaned from PRISM structures of

Missions across all Regional Bureaus (3), shows relatively few sex-disaggregated strategic objectives and program outcomes. Furthermore, the preponderance of those that are sex-disaggregated fall, as expected, in the Human Development (population, health, education) program category. This raises questions about the levels at which gender issues are being strategically addressed, and consequently the levels at which impacts are being achieved, especially in the other three Agency priority areas.

D. Lessons Gleaned from USAID's Experience

It is clear from the above discussion and various documents that many valuable insights have been gained regarding gender in development, and that there is growing sophistication about how gender issues can be more strategically approached in order to produce major impacts. Conversely, we can also recognize what hasn't worked and avoid perpetuating past mistakes. Below, in abbreviated form, are some of the major conclusions gleaned from Agency experience.

--Definitions: "Its about women, stupid!".The "genderfication" of the discussion, while introducing a very important concept, has led to a confusing progression of labels--from WID to GID, GAD and GCID. For non-specialists, this may mask, rather than clarify, the central issue. Essentially, in developing countries, it is the status of women that needs to be improved. Changing men's roles and attitudes viz-a-viz women may be important to a solution, but equitable empowerment will be driven by women acting individually and in groups.

--The sum of gender activities across a portfolio may not add up to significant development impact. In the absence of a well conceived strategy, the sum of gender activities across a portfolio, even if cast within a WID Action Plan, may not add up to significant development impact. Thus, the critical observations in the GAO's review of Agency WID performance, and the difficulties encountered in extracting gender impacts from USAID project evaluations. In fact, it has been observed that requiring integration of women's concerns across all sectors (including activities where gender may be of low strategic importance) can dilute GID efforts and resources and prevent sufficient concentration of effort needed to produce systemic and sustainable change in high pay-off areas.

--Accounting for processes does not ensure impacts. For example, the existence of a WID Action Plan, or presentation of sex-disaggregated data, may not, by themselves, provide any real insight s to whether something is fundamentally improving for women. To be cost-effective, collection, tracking and analysis of sex-disaggregated information needs to be of high strategic importance. We have created some confusion between process and

impact through a proliferation of across-the-board guidance, checklists, plans and documentation and reporting requirements. As noted above, these may divert already scarce Mission staff time and resources to activities with relatively low strategic gender pay-off.

--We must be insightful and candid about root causes of gender bias and disparities, assess the development implications, adopt an appropriate strategic approach, and programmatically tailor interventions to ultimately attain meaningful change. As noted earlier, country-specific circumstances dictate whether gender integration across the portfolio is preferable, whether a more concentrated gender-led approach is indicated in a given sector/program area, or whether a far-reaching and fundamental empowerment strategy is ultimately called for. In Caroline Moser's terms (described in Annex 1.A.3.), the choice of approach may depend on whether we choose to address practical gender needs, couched within women's socially accepted roles, or strategic gender needs necessitating change in traditional gender relationships. Similarly, the choice of intervention or "entry point" may be a tactical choice determined on the basis of initial receptivity and latitude found in particular country circumstances. This should be explicitly acknowledged and distinguished from, (but strategically linked to), the desired "exit point", or impact, resulting from accumulative and complementary activities over time.

--Best results come when gender is of high strategic concern. Explicit placement of gender issues within the framework of Mission goals, strategic objectives or program outcomes bestows them with better analyses, resource levels and synergies, performance monitoring, and management accountability. Incorporation of critical gender dimensions within country development strategies and PRISM structures also makes them less dependent upon passing individual interest or a particular Mission chemistry. While population and health areas often reflect gender considerations in corresponding objectives and outcomes, this is much less the case in other Agency priority areas. It should be recognized that not all Mission activities lend themselves to a gender emphasis. Where options are possible, those cast in gender terms can be selected. For instance, a Mission objective of increasing off-farm employment can be presented in a gender-disaggregated form, and depending on country circumstances, be made to preferentially (and measurably) impact on poor women (e.g. microenterprise, agro-processing, garment manufacturing).

--There are more blanks than silver bullets. The complexities of different societies and their differing levels of economic and institutional development, work against overly standardized prescriptions for achieving effective and sustainable gender impacts. Experience does show that certain

interventions are more likely to produce higher development returns in specific contexts, e.g. girls' education where attainment is low and especially as a multiplier in support of population programs. Therefore, pursuing girls' education in, say, Indonesia would yield marginal returns compared to Pakistan. In the same vein, the severity of gender constraints might also suggest different strategic approaches, e.g. a gender integration approach could suffice in Costa Rica whereas more explicitly gender-led or fundamental women's empowerment approaches might make better sense in Cambodia or Nepal.

Achieving improvements in women's conditions and contributions (and thereby sustainably improving their societies) is a stated Agency objective. To do this better we need to be developmentally grounded, strategically focused and also encouraged to creatively mix and match the choice of approaches and interventions at our command. Specific steps that will help USAID bring greater strategic coherence to gender initiatives are proposed in the next section of this report. Subsequently, Annex 1 expands on, and illustrates, how USAID might build concern for gender issues more squarely into the way we conceptualize development processes and presents a framework to facilitate more strategic choices.

IV. NEXT STEPS

This review has attempted to capture broad strategic and conceptual considerations important to positioning USAID assistance in support of developmentally significant and sustainable gender impacts. Below are key issues requiring Agency attention and study. Essentially, steps need to be taken to: 1) internalize gender evidence into the way we think strategically about development processes and dynamics; 2) place people-level and gender targeted results centrally into USAID's performance-based management system; and, 3) inculcate a strategic sense of the importance of gender within our development partners.

Again, it should be noted that most of the suggested steps and activities would need to be addressed by the WID Office, Global Bureau Centers of Excellence, Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, Regional Bureaus and field Missions. CDIE can support this exercise, and some possible studies and assistance are mentioned below. However, final determination of specific CDIE contributions awaits further Agency discussion and guidance.

A. Steps to Build Gender into the Agency's Conceptual Models.

An expanded and systematic initiative is needed in each major Agency priority area to identify and internalize mounting

evidence linking gender to attainment of sustainable development purposes. Ample information on women's development contributions is readily available in the Global Bureau's WID Office, as well as in a growing body of literature. An exercise is needed to capture that documented experience and integrate it into the prevailing conceptual models which guide how the Agency looks at underlying development processes in economic growth, environment, population and health, and civil society and governance. For example, we draw on empirically grounded working models to explain processes and dynamics inherent in structural transformation of agrarian economies into more urban, industrialized ones. Increasing knowledge of women's contributions within the labor force at different stages of that economic growth process allows us to choose interventions that are more strategic. (Annex 1 of this paper suggests an analytical framework for ensuring such strategic choices.) These models need to be further "engendered" by drawing existing development evidence linking specific gender-based interventions (e.g. girls' education) to achievement of broad development goals (population growth rate, export activities). What additional evidence is lacking or insufficient in prevailing models to further corroborate and illustrate gender dimensions? How can this information best be obtained? Answers to such questions are needed in order to change a perception of gender as a peripheral special interest and put it on credible development footing in each Agency priority area.

The newly established Centers of Excellence within the Global Bureau are to be USAID's sources of development technical guidance and direction pertaining to each sustainable development priority area. Therefore, Centers could take initiative in packaging and presenting gender evidence within the context of those development tools of analysis and conceptual models employed in each priority area.

CDIE could deepen understanding of gender contributions to development by undertaking several different types of studies. For example, CDIE could look more closely at underlying processes and relationships within recently emerging middle-income countries (e.g. Thailand, Indonesia, Chile, Costa Rica). Of particular interest would be identification of phases in the economic growth process during which women's and men's contributions shifted and the ensuing implications for economic and political development. The review could examine if, when and how women's subordination and empowerment (e.g. control over resources, influence in decision-making) influenced events and were taken into account. Another important area of study is that dealing with the synergies obtainable from complementary interventions across sustainable development priority areas. For instance, what does country-level evidence tell us about the magnitude and sustainability of population program impacts when, say, girl's educational attainment is high and when it is low? At

different phases of development are there particularly potent combinations of gender interventions?

B. Steps to Build People-level Results and Appropriate Gender Dimensions Into Strategic Objectives and Programs Outcomes.

The reasons for this have been outlined earlier. The point to emphasize here is that, within USAID's new strategic planning system, accountability for unit and, ultimately, individual performance is tied to achievement of Mission/Bureau strategic objectives and program outcomes. Where gender is of strategic importance, it needs to be counted and accounted for within PRISM structures. Otherwise, gender considerations run the very real risk of becoming marginalized. It warrants reiterating that, even if couched in people terms, there may be some strategic objectives or program outcomes that do not warrant specific gender interventions or sex-disaggregated tracking. (For instance, a program outcome tied closely to economic regulatory reform might only affect broad categories of people.) Underlying technical, social and gender analyses should clearly determine the level of strategic importance and attention gender issues require.

The above task requires further work by individual Missions to both "enpeople" and "engender" PRISM objectives and outcomes. This will occur as Missions prepare or adjust Country Program Strategic Plans, undergo successive annual performance reviews, adjust existing projects and bring new activities into the portfolio. This progressive and transitional process can be expedited by highly coordinated support from Regional Bureaus, PPC, and Global Bureau's WID Office and appropriate Centers of Excellence. Therefore, a "matrix organization" model for providing coordinated support and maximum flexibility to Missions during the intensive, transitional period would be highly appropriate. This means setting in place, temporary, task-oriented management structures that provide a single, highly responsive conduit for resources, technical guidance and support, information and training, as required, to forge Mission and development partner agreement on more people-oriented and appropriately "engendered" objectives.

CDIE could usefully look at whether, and under what circumstances, a particular strategic approach to gender concerns (i.e. gender integration, gender-led, empowerment) may be needed to produce meaningful impacts. For instance, in some country contexts, gender issues slow down, but do not cripple, socio-economic progress. In those situations a steady, across the board approach to sensitizing local institutions, through presentation of development evidence and informed dialogue, may suffice. In other situations, the exclusion of women might be more severe and structural, and seriously compromise major development headway.

In such cases, integrating women into an inherently unequal system may prove frustrating and inadequate. A more explicitly gender-led or women's empowerment strategic approach might be essential. CDIE can look at a selection of differing country/program areas, and assess the adequacy of explicit or implicit Mission strategic approaches to the level of problems encountered and change needed.

C. Steps to Build Gender Sensitivity and Analytical Capacity Within Development Partners.

Gender concerns have often come across as western feminist cultural baggage. This perception is likely to have been shared by many aid officials. The increasing evidence of women's development roles and contributions (efficiency argument) has brought a notable change within USAID development staff. Still, headway within conventional host country implementing agencies has been slow. There has been much more receptivity within NGOs. This overall situation needs to improve if meaningful, program-level gender impacts are to be achieved and made sustainable. For this, local organizations need to internalize a strategic, development-based, perspective on gender. The Agency's record of successes and lessons learned in transferring gender perspectives, evidence, strategy guidance and analytical tools to local institutions is yet to be adequately assessed.

Aside from various Mission project and WID officers, Global Bureau's WID Office is the best repository of Agency experience organizing materials, conducting training and disseminating gender-related experience to LDC partners. That Office could frame an assessment, with field participation, of the processes used to successfully get host country entities to adopt gender sensitive strategies and programs. A starting point might be further analysis of "Best Practices" Mission case studies (currently in progress within the WID Office) to see how well gender-based strategies and approaches have been transferred. This could be complemented by more in-depth CDIE analyses of country or program cases, to illustrate what works, or doesn't, why and any key factors. CDIE's ongoing assessment of the role of advocacy NGOs in strengthening civil society is expected to contribute insight regarding indigenous strategies used in strengthening women's roles in democratic development.

The upshot of all of this would be a better understanding of, and sharper emphasis on, how USAID can strategically galvanize processes within host countries leading to gender sensitive planning, programming and development results.

ANNEX 1, GID

The purpose of this Annex is to suggest, and begin to illustrate, how consideration of gender in Agency programs can be more developmentally grounded and strategically placed. It is intended to stimulate further thinking and to serve as a point of departure for a broader, more thorough exercise.

A. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS FOR PEOPLE-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT

This discussion reviews how we organize our thinking about development processes and how those conceptual frameworks can be used to strategically program USAID assistance to better impact on women's lives and opportunities. The discussion attempts to add to, and augment the power of, the numerous tools and procedures for gender analyses. Gender analysis tools have been predominantly applied as a means to integrate gender considerations into various stages of project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. With a shift of Agency focus to program-level results, there is a need and opportunity to think in broad strategic terms about how to appropriately intervene in development processes to achieve higher order, more systemic results. This needs to be done within the parameters of USAID's new sustainable development policy guidance and priority program areas. Therefore, this exercise compels us to examine how gender considerations are reflected, or can be better be reflected, in prevailing conceptual models used to analyze and strategically intervene in each priority area. To the extent USAID incorporates gender perspectives into program conceptualization and strategy formulation, the more likely its impacts on women's needs and opportunities will be relevant and sustainable.

1. Agency Strategic Parameters

As mentioned in Section I, there is high level concern and political support for improving the Agency's performance in terms of impacts on women's livelihoods and conditions. Other favorable factors include the following USAID strategic emphases:

a. An Emphasis on People-level Impacts. This may do more for promoting women's concerns than any other factor. Significant experience exists showing that, when objectives and outcomes are defined in terms of people-level impacts, the step (and relevance) of dis-aggregating women's and men's roles and participation (contributions and benefits) is greatly facilitated, if by no means automatic. Such analyses still require thoughtful examination, interpretation and translation into appropriate interventions with plausible linkages to people- and gender-level impact.

b. Emphasis on Participatory Development. The emphasis on engaging a more complete set of actors and stakeholders in

defining and fine-tuning USAID assistance programs will help heighten the profile of women's particular needs and concerns, strongly reinforcing the attention drawn to these by the people-level impact approach.

c. Measurement of Impacts at a Program-Level. The shift to defining performance in terms of meaningful impacts at the program level (longer-term, multi-faceted, systemic-oriented) can foster a strategic approach to gender issues that conventional projects (shorter-term, subsectoral, narrowly technical) rarely achieve. Conceptualization of development problems from a program-level perspective greatly improves the likelihood that root causes of gender problems, not merely their symptoms, will be identified and be more comprehensively addressed. This can lead to more widespread and sustainable impacts. Again, such an outcome is more likely, but not necessarily ensured, unless conscientious efforts are made to include, and programmatically respond to, gender analyses.

d. Underlying Commitment to Civil Society and Good Governance. While this is a discrete Agency priority area, it can become a powerful "systems energizer" affecting a range of issues fundamental to women's advancement and empowerment in other areas. For example, there is a plausible link between women's empowerment in community and civic affairs and their advances in economic opportunity. This might be as powerful as the relationship between girls' education and birth rates. USAID is uniquely positioned to build on and further analyze the results of this type of integration.

As supportive as these Agency parameters are for promoting solid and far-reaching gender related impacts, contradictions remain in the system which will require time and ingenuity to resolve. One is reduced program flexibility due to declining budget levels, compounded by sizeable earmarks. Similarly, the bulk of resources Missions do have are locked into on-going commitments which may only partly reflect the new parameters. Thus, in many cases, there is a significant disjoint between what Missions are now being asked to do and what their portfolios will allow them to do. In PRISM (Program Performance Information System for Strategic Management) terms, what is within Missions' scope of manageable interests to impact on, may only be partly responsive to new parameters and priorities. (This may account for some of the abstractness in many PRISM objectives.) The process of rationalizing resources, strategic objectives, and program outcomes to fit the new parameters can not occur overnight. It will take time, consistent leadership and resource flexibility. But, it also presents us with an opportunity to revisit and get more strategic in the way we think about gender interventions.

2. Conceptual Frameworks

The abovementioned set of Agency parameters, including the four sustainable development priority areas, will ultimately play out in a wide variety of country contexts. To think strategically about how USAID resources can best impact on gender constraints within that wide range of development experiences, it will be useful to look at those conceptual models commonly used in each of the Agency sustainable development priority areas to analyze and describe underlying change processes. Conceptual models, such as those used to illustrate the agricultural structural transformation process or the demographic transition process, tend to be the shared frame of reference and lingua franca among donor, host country and other development professionals. Thus, to the extent that these models embrace behavioral aspects (i.e. people), then gender analysis can be more credibly introduced and seriously considered. The outcome can be a clearer notion of the relative importance of gender to the underlying development process and more strategically grounded, higher impact interventions.

This can be illustrated by examining the conceptual model employed by the ANE Bureau to depict the agricultural transformation process. In brief, this model outlines the evolution of economies from a status characterized by low incomes and high contribution of agriculture to GDP, toward an economy with relatively high per capita income and where contributions of industry to GDP surpasses those of agriculture. The model reflects empirical evidence on how most LDC economies evolve, allows countries to be characterized by their position along a growth continuum, and suggests what types of policies and programs are needed to ease and lead the transition through the different stages of the process.

In abbreviated form, the model holds that increases in basic cereal productivity, (by introducing high yielding varieties, improved infrastructure, and supportive production services and grain prices), lowers real food prices for urban consumers, increases demand in rural areas for off-farm manufactured products and services, and fuels growth in non-agricultural investments and incomes. Shifts in consumer demand for processed and higher quality food stimulate higher value agriculture and growth in agroprocessing. As cereal yield growth tapers off, labor begins to move out of agriculture to higher income, faster growing sectors. The ANE Bureau applied the following characterization to subsets of countries within that Bureau (4).

CATEGORY	PER CAPITA INCOME	AGR. AS % OF GDP
low income, agric. economies	below \$250	more than 50%
middle income, transitional economies	between \$250-\$750	more than 35%
middle income, industrializing economies	greater than \$750	less than 20%

At different stages along the growth path, different sets of strategic and programmatic emphases are most appropriate. Thus, public investments in basic infrastructure, adoption of food production technologies and basic input and commodity pricing policies would be highly appropriate in low income agricultural economies. Similarly, off-farm employment, private sector expansion and export favoring foreign exchange rate policies would produce higher development returns in middle income, industrializing economies.

An important human dimension of this model is an evolving labor market. To the extent we understand how labor markets respond to the transformation process, we can develop a better understanding of when, and how, women's and men's roles and participation can best enhance, and be enhanced by, that process. For example, ensuring women's access to cereal production technologies could be a very high return intervention during the transition when men are either moving to higher value crop production or to off-farm jobs. Providing women with access to agro-processing and microenterprise opportunities might be most appropriate in the middle income, transitional economies. Girls' secondary education and technical training could be more strategic in the transition to middle income industrializing status. Depending on where an economy currently lies on the growth continuum, and the particular contextual constraints women face, a more appropriate and strategic choice of gender related interventions can be identified, developmentally explained and justified.

This same type of illustration can be drawn from our understanding of models of population and health, and although with less consensus, in the area of natural resources and environment. The conceptual working models for civil society and governance are also emerging (5). It is not the intent of this review to go into these models in detail. But rather, to make the point that we have fairly well accepted, dynamic models or frameworks that help us to characterize where a country or program area lies developmentally, where it is heading, and which program choices and priorities make the most sense in terms of

facilitating further development. Each model might be depicted as transition along a development continuum. The continua for the four Agency priority areas might be characterized as follows.

Lo Income	Economic	Hi Income
Hi % Ag. GDP	Growth	Lo % Ag. GDP

Hi Birth Rate	Population	Lo Birth Rate
Hi Mortality	Health	Lo Mortality

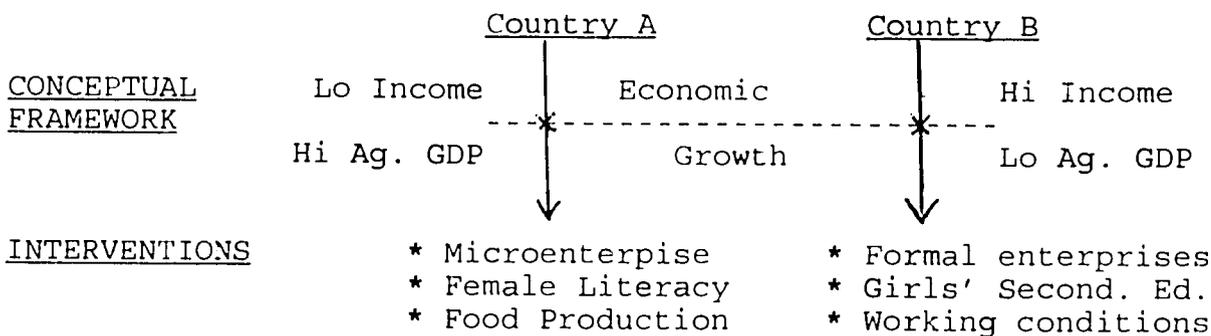
Res. Depleting	Natural Resources	Sustainable Use
Env. Contamination	Environment	Lo Pollution

Autocratic	Civil Society	Participatory
Opaque	Governance	Transparent

Much work remains to be done to clarify and "engender" conceptual models in the four Agency priority areas. Fortunately, there is increasing empirical evidence relating how specific interventions (e.g. girls' education, microenterprise) can contribute to the achievement of broader strategic goals and objectives (e.g. population, poverty reduction). Connecting these findings with appropriate development priorities drawn from the conceptual analytic framework will greatly enrich and empower our efforts to implement more strategic, high impact gender programs. These connections are illustrated in the diagram below.

AGENCY PARAMETERS

People-Centered
Participatory
Program-level Impact



3. Alternative Conceptual Approaches

There are problems in using the conventional development models as a means to target and accelerate women's development opportunities. As discussed earlier in Section III, this approach is based on efficiency grounds linked to the achievement of broad development goals (i.e. relieving strategic gender-related constraints produces high development returns) and a sense that women should receive their fair share of benefits. Such approaches may mask root causes of gender inequities--causes that require shifts in women's roles in decision-making and control over resources--in short, issues of empowerment. While Agency policy parameters are conducive to an empowerment approach (e.g. people-centered, participatory, civil society and governance), there is less evidence and consensus around conceptual frameworks that can guide this approach. Two alternative approaches are outlined below.

Caroline Moser (6) employs a "gender planning" construct through which women's subordination can be relieved and women more fully empowered. The point of departure is recognition that men and women play different roles, have different needs and exercise different control over resources. Moser's approach emphasizes the identification and categorization of women's needs. She distinguishes practical gender needs which are couched within their socially accepted roles (e.g. intra-household, community service, income earning), from strategic gender needs (e.g. equality of power and control) which change the terms of traditional gender relationships. This conceptualization of the issues would strategically identify and distinguish between interventions according to whether these focus on changing fundamental power relationships (strategic gender needs) or on enhancing women's performance within the framework of existing gender roles (practical gender needs). In this way, the gender planning approach helps clarify and keep in mind the nature of the problems which interventions are designed to solve and, consequently, the scope and importance of impacts likely to be achieved.

Adopting a more micro-level analytical point of departure, Monique Cohen (7) argues that taking the family as the unit of analysis brings sharper appreciation for those decision-making dynamics that ultimately condition how people react and contribute within the development process. This approach provides an enhanced sense of family (versus gender alone) considerations, and individual and group dynamics, that underlie resource allocation, control and other critical decisions. This behaviorally grounded perspective can augment and supplement knowledge about the social context within which gender constraints must be addressed. In fact, Rosalie H. Norem's (8) contextual analysis of gender and social and economic issues provides a broad framework for identifying gender constraints and

inequities interwoven throughout the socio-economic environment, starting with, and working out from, the family and household.

Again, the point of this discussion is two-fold. First, it places gender considerations within the context of USAID's programming priorities and parameters, for these condition (and significantly favor) meaningful results. Second, it suggests how gender issues can be more closely integrated into prevailing conceptual frameworks in each of the Agency's sustainable development priority areas. Also, it raises questions as to whether efforts to better integrate gender considerations through conventional conceptual frameworks are sufficient. Or, as Caroline Moser and others argue, further integration of women into inherently unequal development processes may deflect attention away from the fundamental problems and corresponding solutions, i.e. women's subordination and increased empowerment.

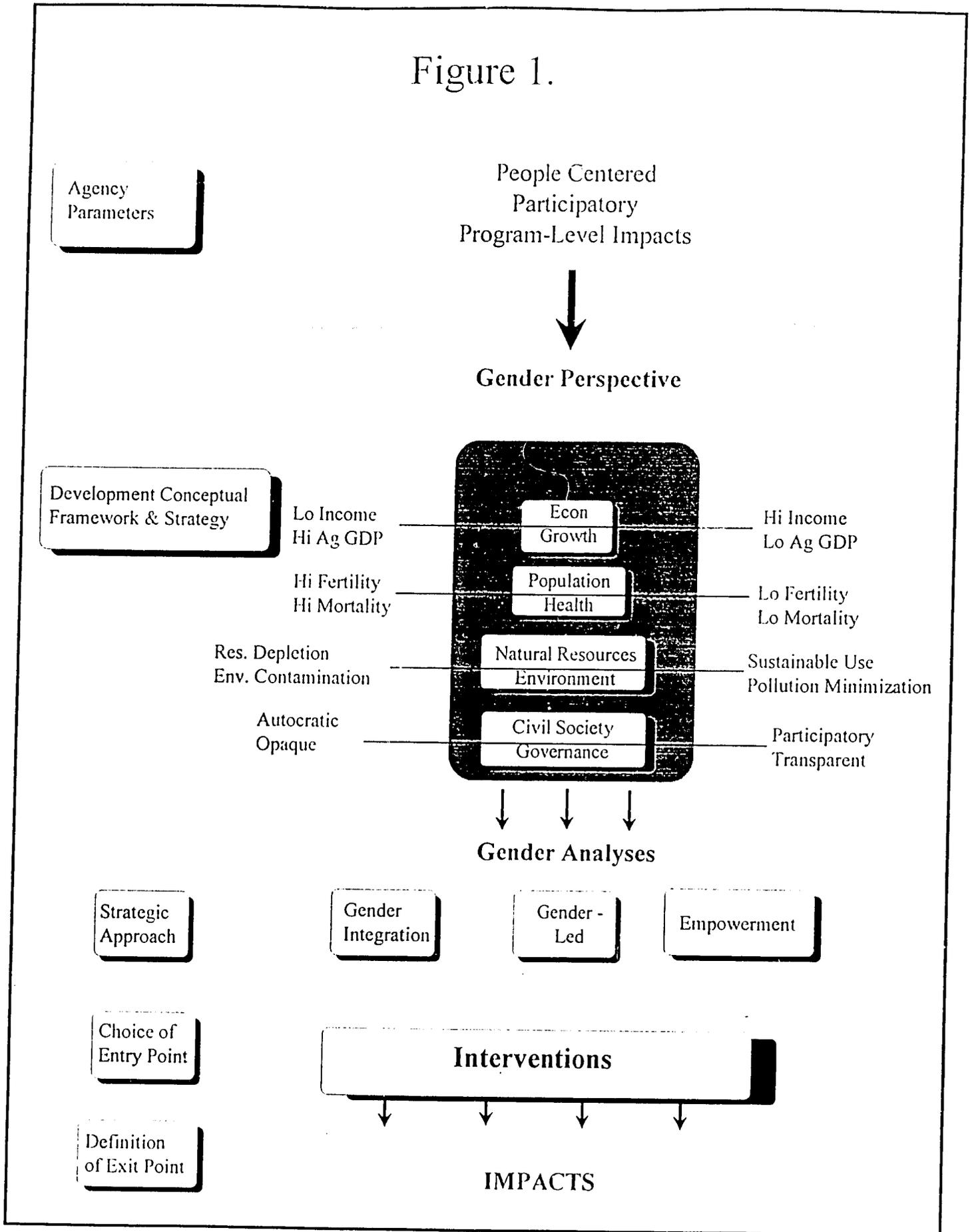
B. MAKING STRATEGIC CHOICES

The above discussion has touched on various perspectives and constructs which can ensure that USAID's limited resources have greater impacts on gender dimensions of development. Considering where a country lies along the development spectrum is important to targeting those gender issues most critical to galvanizing that process. Applied within this context, gender analysis can help define the root causes, ramifications and suitable entry points. Accordingly, choices of strategic approach need to be considered, i.e. whether impact is best achievable by integrating gender considerations across the portfolio, by adopting a more gender-led program, or by explicitly tackling women's empowerment in its multiple dimensions. Specific interventions can be drawn from the growing body of evidence linking certain interventions to effective attainment of development goals (e.g. microenterprise impact on women's incomes, particularly at that stage where the informal sector is building up in an economy). Given a conceptual appreciation for the dynamics of the change process, then the choice of entry point activity becomes a conscious, tactical decision which may not, by itself, resolve the underlying constraint. However, it should be clear how that activity can lead to, or complement other initiatives capable of producing, significant and sustainable improvements in women's status and participation.

The key elements of the these various considerations and concepts are presented in diagrammatic fashion in Figure 1. on the last page. This visual presentation highlights linkages between Agency policy, country/program development status, gender analysis and resulting strategic gender approach, tactically selected entry points, and desired impacts. It elevates the conceptualization of gender issues and opportunities beyond the project level, encouraging adoption of gender strategies that are more comprehensive, systemic and capable of program-level

impacts. The framework also encourages an explicit choice of strategic approaches and interventions based on sound understanding of problems discerned from thoughtful gender analysis. Again, the thesis is that a broad, developmentally grounded, strategic perspective will support the programming of progressive and synergistic interventions necessary to produce solid, far-reaching gender impacts.

Figure 1.



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