

WEST AFRICA R4 PHN TECHNICAL REVIEW

Summary Highlights & Emerging Themes

May 11, 2000

Introduction. As a part of the formal R4 review process, AFR/SD hosted technical review meetings for the PHN sector. The formal West Africa R4 review was held on May 11, 2000 and chaired by Khadijat L. Mojidi, AFR/SD.

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Phase 1: PHN R4 Reviews. Prior to the formal review, AFR/SD, Global PHN, and some of the country desk officers for West Africa held intense meetings to review the R4s, seek clarification on technical issues, and generate a summary of highlights for each country. Technical review summary sheets (attached) were generated in preparation for the formal review for: Benin, FHA/SRP, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal. Although no summary sheets were generated for Sierra Leone and Niger, Country Desk Officers did provide an oral brief on both countries during the formal review. The process was positive and productive and enabled SD, G/PHN and Country Desk Officers an opportunity to reflect and analyze WA mission programs.

Phase 2: SD Formal Review:: Prior to the meeting, Hope Sukin, Chief, AFR/SD, reminded participants of the purpose of the formal review. The purpose of the meeting was to review progress, identify what's working, identify constraints to mission's achieving their objectives and come to consensus about emerging themes across the R4s. For each country, West Africa Country Desk Officers provided 3-5 minute overview on significant social, economic or political events in each country that might impact or influence mission programs.

Following the overview, each G/PHN technical counterpart (with the exception of the Mali team member) highlighted technical comments from summary sheets for each country. The sheets were subsequently revised to reflect some comments raised during the formal review. This is to commend all participants (list attached) from G/PHN, WA CDOs, DP, OMB, PPC, SD and others who contributed to stimulating and fruitful during the nearly 4-hour session.

Key Findings. Overall, most technical reviewers were positive about the reporting of mission progress and felt that missions should be commended on their performance given the human, technical and financial constraints many face in doing their work. However, there were several instances where reporting was incomplete and neither the narrative nor data tables helped to convey trends or progress made over the last R4 period.. While it was recognized that the R4 format limits reporting on progress, in some cases it was found that the missions did not highlight some of their key successes or innovations. On the other hand, some missions made great use of annexes and made reading of the "success stories" exciting.

Key Themes. Some of the key themes that emerged during the regional review include the following:

- Given increasing demand for family planning and reproductive services, more attention and efforts are needed at increasing **contraceptive supplies and STI drugs**.
- Although **HIV/AIDS** prevalence is low in West Africa, more donor advocacy, TA and funding are required to ensure focus on keeping the rate low. In particular, more focus is needed on **Youth in RH and HIV/AIDS programs**.
- Conversely, given **high maternal mortality and morbidity rates**, WA missions need to increase importance given to reporting what they are doing to address maternal health.
- **Twinning of WA mission** responsibilities is increasing the (contracting & legal) management burdens, overstressing program staff and increases the bilateral own's program extremely vulnerability, e.g. Senegal, Guinea, Mali.
- **Weak performance measures and indicators** did not accurately capture performance and progress although major expenditures were being made with POP, CS and HIV/AIDS funds. USAID/Washington is prepared to work with missions to strengthen reporting for next year's R4 including more strategic use of space in narrative and data tables.
- **Scaling up** successful interventions will be a challenge, e.g. Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and West Africa Regional Program (WARP). While there has been successes on a pilot bases in many countries, more attention will be needed in how to adequately phase in implementation.

Next Steps: It was agreed that the technical summary sheets would go back to the mission through the Country Desk Officers and dialogue on technical issues would proceed between SD and G/PHN counterparts directly with the mission. In addition, country team meetings will continue in order to follow-up on technical issues and recommendations made by the reviewers in order to strengthen R4 reporting next year.

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