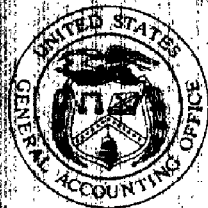


December 1993

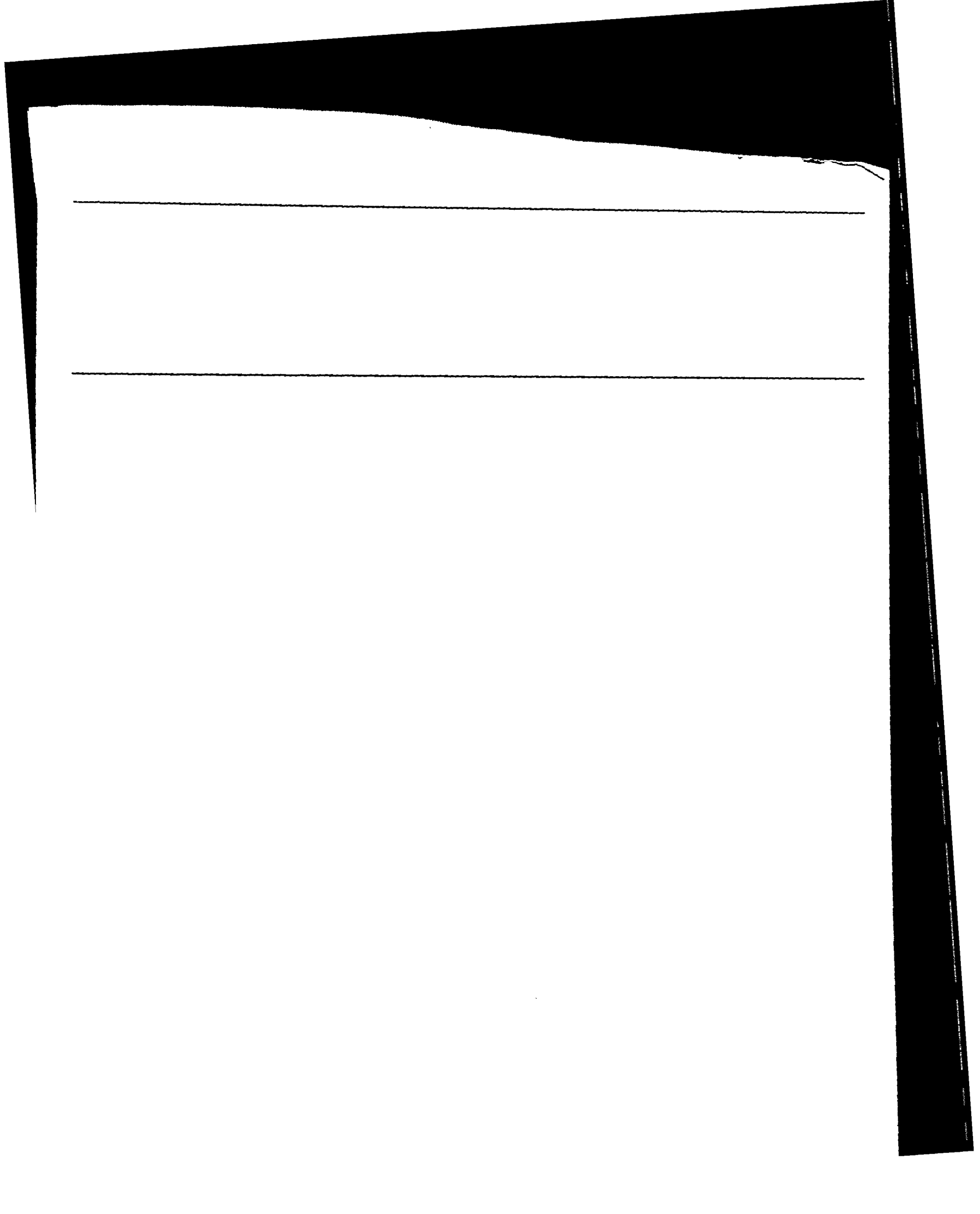
**FOREIGN  
ASSISTANCE**

**U.S. Had Made Slow  
Progress in Involving  
Women in  
Development**



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United States  
General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

**National Security and  
International Affairs Division**

B-254669

December 21, 1993

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Foreign  
Operations  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

The Honorable Lee Hamilton  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Olympia Snowe  
Ranking Minority Member  
Subcommittee on International Operations  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
House of Representatives

The Honorable James Jeffords  
The Honorable Dennis DeConcini  
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
The Honorable Patty Murray  
The Honorable Bob Packwood  
United States Senate

The Honorable Patricia Schroeder  
House of Representatives

In 1973, Congress amended the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to direct the Agency for International Development (AID) to give particular attention in its assistance programs to integrating women into the economies of developing countries. Congress also called on the President to encourage international organizations of which the United States is a member to promote the economic integration of women in member and recipient countries as well as their integration into the professional and policy-making positions in such organizations. This report examines how well AID and the Department of State have done in fulfilling Congress' wishes to more fully integrate gender issues in assistance programs. The report contains recommendations to the AID Administrator and the Secretary of State intended to help strengthen their programs, and suggests that Congress may wish to consider these matters in any new program assistance legislation it may enact.

Unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days after its issue date. At that time, we will send copies of this report to the Director,

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B-254669

Office of Management and Budget; the Secretary of State; the AID Administrator; and other interested congressional committees. Copies will also be made available to other interested parties upon request.

This report was prepared under the direction of Harold J. Johnson, who can be reached at (202) 512-4128 if you or your staff have any questions. Other major contributors to this report are listed in appendix V.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank C. Conahan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "F".

Frank C. Conahan  
Assistant Comptroller General

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# Executive Summary

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## Purpose

In 1991, the United Nations reported that despite decades of assistance to developing countries and the increased international awareness that women play key roles in development, the situation of the world's women had not improved and, in some instances, had deteriorated. Concerned about U.S. leadership on gender issues, several Senators and Members of Congress requested that GAO review the efforts of the Agency for International Development (AID) and the Department of State to comply with a 1973 directive to use foreign assistance as a tool to promote women's economic and political participation in developing societies. GAO evaluated (1) AID'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 U.N. agencies, including issues relating to women refugees.

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## Background

In the early 1970s, Congress became concerned that the U.S. development efforts of the previous decade had not benefited all segments of society in the recipient countries and that women had remained outside the economic mainstream. Congress passed legislation in 1973—section 113 of the Foreign Assistance Act, as amended—which directed that U.S. foreign assistance efforts focus on integrating women into the economies of developing countries. This became known as the “Percy Amendment,” or “women-in-development” directive.

AID created an Office for Women in Development in 1974 as the focal point for technical assistance and research on gender issues and established a policy to integrate gender issues throughout its programs. The policy calls for including women in assistance activities and evaluating the impact of programs on women. For fiscal year 1993, AID's Office for Women in Development had a budget of \$10 million to be used mostly for gender-related training and co-financing technical assistance with AID bureaus and overseas missions.

State Department leadership on women-in-development and gender issues in the international arena is the responsibility of two bureaus—the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs and the Bureau of Refugee Programs.

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## Results in Brief

Twenty years after the enactment of the women-in-development legislation aimed at improving the economic, political, and social integration of women, only recently has AID begun to actively consider the role of gender in its development strategies. GAO found that AID's progress has been slow in incorporating gender into its programs and activities, and it has not adequately monitored the implementation of its policies and strategies or routinely evaluated the impact of its programs and activities on women. Many agency officials view women-in-development as either a narrow special interest issue or as one more directive for an overburdened staff, rather than as a means for accomplishing development objectives. As a result (1) bureaus and missions vary widely in their demonstrated commitment to women-in-development goals, (2) AID has not incorporated gender into its nonproject assistance programs to the extent possible, and (3) integration of gender policies has not met overall targets set in 1989.

The State Department has generally promoted women's issues through its Bureaus of International Organizations Affairs and Refugee Programs. State has not carried out a 1974 legislative directive for U.S. representatives to international organizations to promote women's economic and policy-making participation and to consider progress on women's issues when making U.S. contributions to international organizations. However, the Bureau of Refugee Programs has been more active in addressing the acute problems refugee women and girls face due to their gender.

Refugee women are susceptible to physical and sexual abuse and face discrimination in the delivery of goods and services. Although women and their dependents are the majority of refugee camp residents, women in the four camps GAO visited were largely excluded from participating in decision-making activities and the development of aid programs. The cultural mores of relief officials influence camp conditions for women, yet training on the relevance of gender issues to camp relief and development activities has been inadequate. State has supported training for refugee relief workers to more effectively address the needs of refugee women and girls.

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## Principal Findings

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### AID's Progress Is Slow

Since 1974, AID has issued policies and directed bureaus and missions to integrate gender concerns throughout their assistance activities and to evaluate the impact of these activities on women; however, the bureaus and missions often have been slow to comply with them. AID's policies and various studies support the view that analyzing the roles and responsibilities of women, their access to resources, and their real and potential economic contributions enhances the effectiveness of development strategies. Bureaus and missions were assigned responsibility for ensuring that (1) gender concerns and objectives were incorporated into country program strategies, (2) specific programs and projects were designed and implemented to achieve gender-related objectives, (3) the impact of programs and projects on women were evaluated, and (4) gender-specific data were collected. However, the implementation of AID's women-in-development policy has suffered because the agency has not instituted a system to ensure compliance with these directives.

AID's Office for Women in Development provided bureau and mission staff with gender-related technical assistance and training, which has helped improve staff awareness of the relevance of gender issues to their development objectives. However, the Office does not routinely monitor or report to top management on whether bureaus or missions are carrying out women-in-development policies and directives. Furthermore, AID does not know how much it has achieved its women-in-development objectives because it has not routinely collected and analyzed program data by gender nor has it developed a system for measuring program results.

Because AID has not held bureaus and missions accountable for implementing women-in-development policies, progress has varied widely. Most regional bureaus and missions have developed action plans, contracted for advisers on gender issues, and issued gender-related guidance to staff to promote integration of women into the development assistance program. However, because AID has not collected the required data on women's participation in various sectors of developing economies, the agency cannot determine how much its development activities are incorporating women into the development process. Several units, such as the Bureau for Europe, the Task Force for the New Independent States,

and the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance, have not incorporated gender issues into their program strategies.

The Percy Amendment applies to development assistance funds and not to assistance provided through the Economic Support Fund—the primary vehicle for AID’s nonproject assistance, such as cash grants for budgetary support. Nonetheless, in 1989, AID guidance directed bureaus and missions to incorporate gender issues into all nonproject assistance programs. This direction has not been followed, but GAO believes that the policy dialogue and economic reforms supported by nonproject assistance, under many circumstances, could be useful vehicles for promoting policy changes to improve women’s status in developing countries.

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### State Leadership on Women’s Issues

The State Department can provide U.S. policy leadership on women-in-development and gender issues through its many policy-making roles. Since 1974, provisions in the Foreign Assistance Act have called for (1) the President to direct U.S. representatives to international organizations to promote the integration of women into national economies and the professional and policy-making ranks of such organizations and (2) decisions on U.S. contributions to such organizations to consider progress on integration of women in these areas.

GAO found that State has promoted some worthwhile gender issues, such as encouraging the appointment of women into senior U.N. positions and supporting various U.N. resolutions on women’s economic and human rights. However, officials were unaware of the 1974 legislative mandate, and they could not provide documentation to show that State had carried it out. The State Department has not routinely documented international organizations’ progress in promoting women’s participation or that U.S. decisions on contribution levels have considered such progress. According to U.N. officials, the United States has provided leadership on some gender issues, but has not been as strong an advocate of women’s issues as some other countries.

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### Refugee Women’s Problems Have Not Been Adequately Addressed

Because women and their dependents comprise about 80 percent of the world’s estimated refugee population, women’s participation in the development of relief and assistance programs is considered essential. However, the four refugee camps visited by GAO revealed dramatic problems among women and girl refugees. They are susceptible to physical violence and sexual abuse and face discrimination in the delivery



of food, clothing, shelter, training, and other goods and services. The cultural mores of both camp residents and relief officials influence camp conditions for women, who are largely excluded from participating in decision-making activities. GAO found a lack of gender awareness and training among many officials from U.N. refugee agencies and relief workers of nongovernmental organizations implementing programs for the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR has begun to improve gender training for its officers through a course designed to teach refugee workers how to analyze the relevant socio-cultural and economic factors in a refugee society that can influence the success of planned activities. State's Bureau of Refugee Programs provided \$500,000 toward this training.

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## Recommendations

GAO recommends various actions the AID Administrator can take to strengthen the agency's commitment to its women-in-development policies and its ability to more effectively measure its progress. GAO also recommends actions to be taken by the Secretary of State to strengthen U.S. leadership on women's issues in the international arena and to help alleviate the acute problems faced by refugee women.

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## Matter for Congressional Consideration

Congress and the executive branch have begun the process of reexamining the U.S. foreign assistance program, with a view toward enacting new legislation with fewer, more clearly defined objectives and a means for holding managers accountable for results. A large body of research has shown that incorporating women-in-development concepts into program implementation strategies enhances the likelihood for successful economic development. GAO believes this concept can be applied to most assistance programs administered by AID. These would include project and, under many circumstances, nonproject assistance; food aid programs; and programs authorized by the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989. Congress may wish to consider, for any new foreign aid legislation, emphasizing that women-in-development is a means for accomplishing sustainable development objectives and, to the extent possible, should be applied to all assistance programs.

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## Agency Comments and GAO Evaluation

AID and the Department of State generally agreed with GAO's report, but both agencies said that more progress had been made concerning gender issues than GAO had indicated. State also said that despite the opinions of

some U.N. officials, the United States has been a leader in promoting measures to advance the status of women.

GAO agrees with AID and State that additional examples of the progress by bureaus and missions could be cited, and it has included additional details about these examples. Nonetheless, GAO believes that its report correctly characterizes progress in this area as slow, with inadequate attention on the part of top management by both agencies. GAO notes that most of the actions State cites as evidence of its commitment and progress in the international organization arena are of recent vintage. This could partly explain why some U.N. officials told GAO that the United States had demonstrated less leadership in this area than some other countries.

UNHCR said that GAO's report is generally consistent with its own assessment of progress in implementing its Policy on Refugee Women. UNHCR provided information on recent developments in its efforts to expand gender training and provide protection to refugee women. This information has been incorporated into this report.



# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	14
<b>Chapter 2</b>		<b>16</b>
<b>AID's Progress Is Marginal</b>	AID Has Not Managed the Implementation of Its Women-in-Development Policy	17
	Progress Among Bureaus and Missions Has Been Limited	23
	AID Has Not Incorporated Gender Issues Into Nonproject Assistance	30
	Integration of Gender Policy Does Not Meet Overall Targets	31
	Conclusions	32
	Recommendations	34
	Matter for Congressional Consideration	34
	Agency Comments and Our Evaluation	35
<b>Chapter 3</b>		<b>36</b>
<b>State Department Leadership Is Limited</b>	State's Leadership on Gender Issues Is Limited	37
	U.N. Officials Said U.S. Commitment Is Mixed	39
	Conclusions	40
	Recommendation	40
	Agency Comments and Our Evaluation	40
<b>Chapter 4</b>		<b>42</b>
<b>Problems of Refugee Women Have Not Been Adequately Addressed</b>	Refugee Women Face Acute Problems	43
	UNHCR Has Taken Steps to Address Women's Concerns	46
	Conclusions	48
	Recommendations	48
	Agency Comments and Our Evaluation	48
<b>Appendixes</b>		
	Appendix I: Research on the Need for a Gender Focus in Development	50
	Appendix II: Comments From the Agency for International Development	65
	Appendix III: Comments From the Department of State	72
	Appendix IV: Comments From the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees	77
	Appendix V: Major Contributors to This Report	81

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**Contents**

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**Abbreviations**

GAO	General Accounting Office
AID	Agency for International Development
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
PRISM	Program Performance Information for Strategic Management
SEED	Support for East European Democracy Act

# Introduction

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In the early 1970s, Congress became concerned that the focus of U.S. development assistance during the previous decade, which centered on key economic sectors and large-scale capital improvement projects, had not benefited all segments of society in the recipient countries. Congress passed legislation in 1973 to elevate basic human needs, such as health, nutrition, and education, in U.S. foreign aid priorities and strategies. Recognizing that women had remained largely outside the economic mainstreams of these countries and the flow of foreign economic assistance, this new legislation included an amendment to focus more attention on women. Known as the “Percy Amendment” or the “women-in-development” directive,<sup>1</sup> the legislation directed that U.S. foreign assistance efforts give particular attention to integrating women into the economies of developing countries to “improve women’s status and assist the total development effort.”<sup>2</sup>

Women-in-development does not refer to a program that delivers assistance only to women, nor is it merely a “women’s rights” program or a vehicle for only targeting particular groups of women in developing countries. Rather, it is a conceptual framework for better understanding the roles of women in developing countries, their access to resources, the obstacles to fuller participation in their economies, and their real and potential contributions to their countries’ economic growth. This information is to be used in designing, delivering, and evaluating economic development assistance programs for developing countries.

A large body of research literature has documented that understanding the roles and situations of both women and men in developing countries is necessary for more equitable and sustainable development and can play a key role in achieving program objectives. (See app. I.) As such, women-in-development has evolved into a concept that addresses the relevance of gender issues to sound development programming. In some instances, women-in-development approaches also set specific gender-based goals, such as increasing the enrollment of women and girls in education and training programs. In addition to addressing the equity issue, such approaches are expected to have a “multiplier” effect,—that is, literacy and training have benefits for increasing women’s participation in economic and civic life.

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<sup>1</sup>Part I, chapter 1, section 113, Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (P.L. 87-195, Sept. 4, 1961).

<sup>2</sup>22 U.S.C. 2151k. Section 113, as added by section 2(3) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-189, Dec. 17, 1973), was amended and restated by section 108 of the International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-88, Aug. 3, 1977).

The Agency for International Development (AID) is responsible for developing U.S. women-in-development bilateral economic assistance policies and implementing them at the program and project level. Since 1974, AID's basic approach for carrying out the Percy Amendment has been to direct all bureaus and missions to evaluate the impact of its programs and projects on women and strive to include women not only as beneficiaries, but also as participants in the development process. Since the enactment of the women-in-development directive, AID has shifted from promoting women-only projects to integrating women into general assistance programs.

In 1974, AID established an Office for Women in Development to provide gender-relevant technical assistance, training, research, and communication. The Office was provided an average of \$2.2 million annually during the 1980s to support its activities. Reflecting congressional concern with gender issues, the Office's funding was doubled in fiscal year 1990 and again in fiscal year 1993, when it reached \$10 million. Of this amount, 60 percent has been earmarked as matching funds to attract the interest and leverage the resources of other AID bureaus and missions.

The Department of State can provide leadership on gender issues through U.S. participation in the United Nations and other international organizations and forums. Legislation enacted in 1974 calls on the President to direct U.S. representatives to international organizations to promote the economic integration of women in member and recipient countries as well as their integration into the professional and policy-making positions in such organizations.<sup>3</sup>

Two bureaus at State have important roles in providing U.S. leadership on gender issues in the international arena. The Bureau of International Organizations Affairs leads in the development, coordination, and implementation of U.S. policy with respect to multilateral organizations. It formulates and promotes U.S. policy toward international organizations, with particular emphasis on those organizations within the U.N. system. State's Bureau of Refugee Programs is responsible for U.S. refugee programs overseas that are carried out in cooperation with other governments, nongovernmental organizations, and international organizations. State can also provide leadership through its growing role as a coordinator of U.S. bilateral aid programs overseas, such as the

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<sup>3</sup>22 U.S.C. 2225, Section 305 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as added by section 54 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974.

assistance programs for Central and Eastern Europe and the New Independent States.

## Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Citing concerns about the commitment of foreign aid institutions in implementing the women-in-development legislative directives, several Senators and Members of Congress asked us to review the efforts of AID and State to comply with the mandate. Our objectives were to evaluate (1) AID's development, implementation, and monitoring of women-in-development policies and programs and the institutional and cultural barriers to effective implementation and (2) State policy development and leadership on women's issues at U.N. agencies, including issues relating to women refugees.

We performed our work at the State Department and AID headquarters in Washington, D.C.; U.N. headquarters in New York; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva, Switzerland; AID missions in Ecuador, Guatemala, Egypt, Kenya, and Uganda; and at four refugee camps in Jordan, Kenya, and Uganda.

At AID, we met with officials from the Policy Directorate; all regional bureaus; the Task Force for the New Independent States; and the Bureaus for Food and Humanitarian Assistance, for Private Enterprise, and for Research and Development. We met with officials from the Office for Women in Development, the Program Office, and most sector offices within the Bureau for Research and Development. At AID missions, we interviewed mission directors and deputy directors, program officers, project officers, and women-in-development advisers. We visited projects in each country and met with officials of nongovernmental organizations. We reviewed women-in-development policy papers, action plans, program and project papers, evaluations, country strategy documents, cables, and mission orders. We also reviewed the research literature on the relevance of gender to development efforts and the impact of various economic strategies on women in developing countries. Because AID has not routinely collected gender-disaggregated data, and its information on program results is uneven in quality, we were not able to evaluate the impact of AID's women-in-development efforts.

At the State Department, we met with officials from the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs and the Bureau of Refugee Programs and spoke with officials responsible for coordinating U.S. aid programs in Central and Eastern Europe. We reviewed various State Department policy



documents on women's issues at the United Nations and on women refugees. At the United Nations in New York, we met with officials of the U.S. Mission, the U.N. Secretariat, and six U.N. agencies. In Geneva, we met with officials of UNHCR and the U.S. Mission and reviewed various documents on UNHCR's policies and strategies for addressing the needs of refugee women. In the countries of the refugee camps we visited, we met with U.S. embassy staff responsible for monitoring the situations in the camps. At the camps, we met with representatives of UNHCR, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and nongovernmental organizations, and we interviewed camp residents.

We did not examine internal AID and State policies for the recruitment and advancement of women employees. We have previously reported on equal employment opportunity matters at these agencies and recommended corrective actions.<sup>4</sup>

We conducted our review between October 1992 and June 1993 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. AID, State, and UNHCR provided written comments on a draft of this report, and their comments are reprinted in appendixes II, III, and IV, respectively.

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<sup>4</sup>AID Management: EEO Issues and Protected Group Underrepresentation Require Management Attention (GAO/NSIAD-93-13, Nov. 23, 1992) and State Department: Minorities and Women Are Underrepresented in the Foreign Service (GAO/NSIAD-89-146, June 26, 1989).

# AID's Progress Is Marginal

Despite 20 years of women-in-development directives and generally sound policies for promoting analysis of gender issues as a key component for successful development, AID has not integrated gender concerns throughout its activities and gender issues are not always considered in developing U.S. economic aid policy. AID has implemented worthwhile women-in-development activities; however, AID's failure to monitor the implementation of its women-in-development policies has permitted AID units to vary in their progress. Top AID management has not ensured that the bureaus and missions comply with women-in-development policies, and there are few incentives for AID units to comply voluntarily. Gender issues have not been incorporated into nonproject assistance programs, a significant portion of AID's assistance. AID has not routinely collected the gender data needed for sound programming and evaluation, nor has it developed a system for measuring the results of its women-in-development efforts.

The U.S. foreign aid program has often been criticized for lack of focus, competing priorities, and vague results. The foreign policy debate has intensified in recent years due to the end of the cold war, dramatic global shifts toward market economies and democracies, U.S. public concern with foreign aid spending, and concern over the growing federal deficit. In response to these criticisms, the executive and legislative branches are currently engaged in a complete reexamination of the foreign aid program, with a view toward enacting legislation to replace the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

On July 14, 1993, the AID Administrator stated in testimony before Congress that the overall goal for a new, revitalized foreign economic assistance program should be equitable, sustainable development to be achieved by focusing on four areas: economic growth, democracy and human rights, population, and the environment.<sup>1</sup> On the same day, the Deputy Secretary of State testified that promoting sustainable development is a key component in achieving overall policy goals, both foreign and domestic. He noted that such a strategy

"involves enhancing human capital by expanding educational opportunities to all segments of society, reducing the rate of population growth, extending improvements in health and nutrition, and expanding the capabilities of women. Sustainable development also depends

<sup>1</sup>Statement of the Honorable J. Brian Atwood, Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development, before the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, Trade, Oceans, and Environment, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, July 14, 1993.

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upon the elimination of obstacles to participation and creation of opportunities that will allow all people to be more productively engaged in building their country's economy."<sup>2</sup>

AID policies and numerous analytical studies support the view that analyzing the roles and responsibilities of women, their access to resources, and their real and potential contributions enhances the effectiveness of development strategies and better ensures that equitable, sustainable development will be achieved. The proposed development goals of the administration and the ongoing debate on the future of foreign assistance will benefit from careful consideration of the women-in-development directive and its application for emerging foreign aid strategies.

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## AID Has Not Managed the Implementation of Its Women-in-Development Policy

AID's women-in-development policy has rested on the premise that thorough analysis and consideration of gender roles are essential for equitable and sustainable development. AID has required that all programming units ensure that relevant gender issues are addressed throughout their activities. Appendix I discusses many examples in which understanding the roles and contributions of women and men in developing countries increases the likelihood that program objectives will be achieved.

AID has allowed its units considerable latitude in developing and implementing strategies for carrying out its policies; however, 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.

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## AID Policy Is to Integrate Gender Throughout Its Program

AID's women-in-development approach has been promoted in two agencywide policy documents. In 1974, the AID Administrator (1) determined that AID was mandated to design programs that integrate women in the development process and (2) directed bureaus and field missions to institutionalize women-in-development concepts throughout the programming process. The bureaus and field missions were also directed to collect information on the roles, status, and contributions of women in developing countries.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Statement of the Honorable Dr. Clifford Wharton, Jr., Deputy Secretary of State, before the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, Trade, Oceans, and Environment, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, July 14, 1993.

<sup>3</sup>Policy Determination-60, *Integration of Women Into National Economies* (Sept. 16, 1974).

In 1982, AID issued a comprehensive women-in-development policy paper that outlined the rationale for the policy, policy issues in key sectors, and responsibility for implementation.<sup>4</sup> The 1982 paper recognized that the cross-cutting nature of gender issues and the lack of reliable gender-specific data could hinder effective implementation of the women-in-development directive. To address these constraints, bureaus and missions were, among other things, to (1) require country strategy and project identification and planning documents to explicitly describe strategies to involve women, the benefits and impediments to women, and benchmarks to ensure women's participation; (2) desegregate by gender the data collected for country strategy formulation and project identification, design, implementation, and evaluation to provide a basis for measuring success or failure in terms of gender; and (3) train more women in developing countries. AID has not issued agencywide policy guidance on women-in-development since 1982, although in 1988 the Administrator issued "action items" that reiterated the need for integrating gender concerns throughout programs and collecting gender-specific data more systematically.

Although we believe that AID's women-in-development policy is basically sound, gender issues are not at the forefront of AID's economic assistance policy. No agencywide mission statement has articulated improving the status of women as a goal, although the equity issue is indirectly addressed through AID's overall goal to achieve broad-based, sustainable development. A December 1991 "Family and Development" initiative<sup>5</sup> emphasized the importance of family member roles and responsibilities to sound development planning, but this initiative had little effect on the course and direction of AID programs in the field.

### Gender Policies Compete Among Blurred Priorities

Many AID officials with whom we met supported gender concepts but were frustrated by AID's competing priorities and objectives. They acknowledged that gender analysis and women's concerns can often be eclipsed by other pressing issues, such as macroeconomic reform. One official in the Regional Economic Development Services Office for Eastern and Southern Africa best expressed this frustration by stating that women-in-development is "a priority among priorities—everything is a priority." This official added that women-in-development is best

<sup>4</sup>AID Policy Paper: Women in Development (PN-AAL-777, Oct. 1982).

<sup>5</sup>This initiative was issued by the AID Administrator along with three other program initiatives on the environment, democracy, and a partnership with U.S. and developing country private sectors, and two management initiatives on strategic management and evaluation.

accomplished when clearly stated as an objective—for example, “to increase incomes of men and women small farmers.” This forces the collection of gender-specific data and better ensures attention to the constraints to women’s participation in an activity.

Some AID officials with whom we met did not consider women-in-development issues relevant to their development objectives beyond areas in which women have been traditional beneficiaries, such as health and family planning. Some AID officials told us that the requirement to incorporate gender strategies and data into all documents has led to perfunctory analyses because, in many cases, project officials did not consider gender a relevant issue.

Despite this confusion over priorities and relevance, many AID officials were committed to Percy Amendment objectives, and they clearly understood that addressing gender issues was important in successfully accomplishing economic development goals. However, when asked why some were more committed or knowledgeable than others, AID officials replied that commitment differed depending on the personal initiative of staff and management, rather than on a systematic effort to hold individuals accountable for results in women-in-development efforts.

An organization’s incentive system can indicate its priorities. We found that AID has no mechanisms for rewarding accomplishments in women-in-development. AID officials did not believe that they would be rewarded for attention to women-in-development issues. Most stated that commitment to women-in-development plays neither a positive nor negative role in staff ratings, reassignments, promotions, and rewards.

In 1988, and again in March 1992 and June 1993, we reported that having so many objectives has made it more difficult to hold AID accountable for achieving any particular objective.<sup>6</sup> Our reports noted that a lack of strategic direction and the diffusion of the foreign aid program constrain AID’s ability to effectively deliver assistance. We recommended, among other things, that AID adopt strategic management principles and play a leadership role in developing a strategic direction for U.S. foreign

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<sup>6</sup>The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 has been amended many times and now contains more than 30 separate objectives covering a wide range of assistance activities—including women-in-development. In addition, administrations over the years have added their own initiatives to AID’s agenda. We have addressed the issue of unfocused and competing priorities in several reports: Foreign Economic Assistance (GAO/OCG-89-23TR, Nov. 1988); AID Management: Strategic Direction Can Help AID Face Current and Future Challenges (GAO/NSIAD-92-100, Mar. 6, 1992); and Foreign Assistance: AID Strategic Direction and Continued Management Improvements Needed (GAO/NSIAD-93-106, June 11, 1993).

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economic assistance. Such a strategic management process would help ensure that newly focused foreign aid priorities, such as women-in-development, are implemented and monitored and that accountability for program results is strengthened.

AID has begun to implement strategic management concepts, and the new AID Administrator is working to forge a consensus on the direction of foreign economic assistance. Shortly after his appointment, the Administrator acknowledged that AID's resources were spread too thinly to be effective. He has articulated a vision for foreign economic assistance to achieve development that is sustainable, equitable, and participatory. By October 1993, he had developed draft strategies in four broad areas to achieve these development goals: population and health, economic growth, the environment, and democracy.

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## AID Has Lacked Central Oversight

AID is a highly decentralized organization. This management approach reflects AID's belief that the missions, which understand local conditions, are in a better position than headquarters to make programming decisions and that they would be protected from "special interests" in Washington. However, as we reported in June 1993, AID has not established the strong central controls necessary to ensure that the AID Administrator could adequately oversee operations of the various elements of the agency and hold them accountable for implementing agencywide policy. AID's implementation of its women-in-development policy has suffered from the agency's failure to provide central oversight to ensure compliance with directives and management procedures.

Bureaus and missions are responsible for ensuring that gender concerns and objectives are incorporated into country programs. However, bureaus and missions have varied in their progress toward incorporating women-in-development issues and in some areas, such as nonproject assistance, these issues have received very little attention. Although AID's Office for Women in Development provides needed gender-related technical assistance and training, it has not provided oversight or ensured compliance with AID's directives. Even if the Office had oversight authority, its staff of three professionals would be unable to handle AID's workload of more than 2,000 active projects.

The new AID Administrator recognized that the agency had drifted into various fiefdoms and announced, on October 1, 1993, a reorganization that merges several regional bureaus, places all technical expertise in one

bureau, and replaces the Policy Directorate with the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination. This reorganization, to be completed by January 1994, is intended to facilitate interagency communication, provide clearer policy direction, and provide needed technical assistance more readily.

### AID Has Not Routinely Collected Required Data

AID guidance issued in 1988 and a 1989 House Appropriations Committee report reemphasized previous agencywide requirements for gender-disaggregated data in all program areas. However, according to an October 1992 study funded by AID, data disaggregated by gender was heavily concentrated in traditional "women's" program areas, such as family planning and maternal and child health care.<sup>7</sup> Our review of bureau and mission documents and discussions with officials also disclosed unevenness in the collection and analysis of data. Further, AID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation reviewed a sample of 268 project evaluations from 1989 and 1990 and concluded that attention to gender issues and disaggregated data had decreased over the prior 2-year period. The Center plans to follow up on this data by analyzing project evaluations from 1991 and 1992.

According to AID officials in Washington and the field, the reasons for the unevenness in gender data are that such information is too costly and time-consuming to collect and disaggregate, especially when its usefulness is not apparent, and a lack of clear consensus on the types of information to be collected. AID's Office for Women in Development noted that most missions lack the staff to do their own research. However, they stated that a variety of options are available to assist missions, including

- the Office for Women in Development matching fund program to contract for assistance;
- a program in which the services of the U.S. Bureau of the Census are available to assist in training host governments in gender disaggregation;
- "rapid appraisal" assessments to obtain sufficient gender information for incorporation into project design<sup>8</sup>;
- reliance on existing data and local knowledge where available; and
- coordination of research needs with other donors or the World Bank to prevent overlap and share costs.

<sup>7</sup>Integration of People-Level Impacts and Gender-Disaggregation in AID's Program Performance Reporting System, Management Systems International, October 31, 1992.

<sup>8</sup>This approach is currently being tried in Eastern Europe, although not necessarily for gender information.

## AID Is Still Developing Measurable Performance Indicators

In 1990, AID disseminated indicators for assessing the integration of gender considerations into AID activities. These indicators were intended to measure (1) integration of gender issues into program, project, and reporting documents; (2) the extent of gender training of AID staff; and (3) the extent of training for women in participant training programs, including constraints to their participation and opportunities for improvement. We found that, although these indicators could be useful measurements of AID's efforts to include gender in these areas, they did not measure the impact of AID's efforts on women in developing countries.

AID is in the process of implementing its Program Performance Information for Strategic Management (PRISM) system to help it monitor, effectively measure, and report on the progress and results of its assistance efforts. This system will provide an agencywide framework for program performance reporting and evaluating efforts through strengthening mission information systems and developing agencywide program performance indicators. The PRISM system currently covers 60 missions, and AID expects the system to cover all its central, regional, and bilateral programs by the end of fiscal year 1994. Of the 60 missions participating in the PRISM project, a 1993 review showed that 54 had developed strategic plans with adequate PRISM indicators. Of these, the missions in Africa, Latin America, and the Near East were the most advanced in developing meaningful program indicators.

According to an official of the Office for Women in Development, PRISM is intended to measure the institutionalization of women-in-development efforts within AID. PRISM will measure commitment by the extent to which gender concerns have been adequately considered at the program and project levels. PRISM will include measurements for the impact of development activities on the population as a whole, but it will not require specific indicators for measuring impact by gender. According to this official, reports such as The Situation of Women: Selected Indicators, periodically issued by the United Nations, are sufficient for determining the status of women in developing countries. However, these indicators, while useful for tracking women's progress in key sectors, do not link AID's efforts to improvements in women's economic, social, or civil status.

In commenting on a draft of this report, AID stated that PRISM will not provide all the information needed to design and evaluate women-in-development strategies and programs. AID added that institutional measures for holding its program staff accountable for



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achieving results need to be identified and monitored—an effort that goes beyond the PRISM system.

We agree that PRISM will not provide AID's top management with all the information it needs to design and develop women-in-development strategies. However, if AID ensures that gender is incorporated appropriately into strategic objectives, program indicators, and outcomes, information by gender will be reflected in reports on development outcomes. Moreover, PRISM is intended as an important step in helping AID managers obtain and analyze the information needed to measure program results and make management decisions accordingly. AID's top managers can use this information to review how units are progressing toward stated program objectives, identify problematic or successful program strategies for in-depth assessment, and improve program guidance and strategies, based on knowledge of which program approaches achieve their objectives and which do not.

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## Progress Among Bureaus and Missions Has Been Limited

AID has implemented many worthwhile projects and activities; however, the agency's progress in carrying out women-in-development policies has been slow. A similar conclusion in 1987 by an AID consultant and subsequent legislation led to renewed efforts to incorporate gender considerations throughout the agency. Despite these efforts, bureaus and missions have had varied success in implementing these directives. Some have made significant progress, while others had not implemented the directives. AID has not incorporated gender into its nonproject assistance program—a significant portion of the agency's program funding. Moreover, AID cannot be sure that it is meeting its targets for increasing women's participation.

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## Women-in-Development Efforts Criticized in Late 1980s

Despite previous directives and guidance, Development Associates reported in 1987 that AID's progress had been slow in implementing its women-in-development directives.<sup>9</sup> 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) 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. The report noted that few incentives or sanctions exist for policy

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<sup>9</sup>Evaluation of the International Center for Research on Women Cooperative Agreement Program With AID PPC/WID, Development Associates (Dec. 1987).

conformity. Development Associates also evaluated the effectiveness of the cooperative agreement arrangement in providing technical gender assistance to missions and recommended that the Office for Women in Development adopt more precisely defined contracts and matching fund programs.

Following the report by Development Associates, AID interpreted the report language from the fiscal year 1989 foreign assistance appropriations bill as guidance intended to strengthen AID's attention to the women-in-development mandate. For example, AID noted that it was directed to ensure that country strategies, programs, and projects were designed to increase the percentage of women beneficiaries to their traditional participation in a given activity or their proportion of population levels, whichever is higher.<sup>10</sup>

In its report on the 1990 foreign aid appropriations bill,<sup>11</sup> the House Committee on Appropriations urged AID, among other things, to (1) systematically collect gender-disaggregated data and include such information in all country, program, and project documents, where appropriate; (2) identify obstacles to women's participation in programs or projects in which women-in-development goals cannot be reasonably incorporated; (3) develop and implement gender training for AID staff; and (4) increase training opportunities for women of developing countries. In addition, the AID Administrator was to ensure that senior-level staff oversee the implementation of the women-in-development directives and provide assistance to the missions, design means to ensure that all staff are similarly committed to achieving women-in-development goals, and establish specific criteria for measuring and evaluating AID performance in incorporating women-in-development activities into its programs.

In response to these congressional committee reports, the AID Administrator issued women-in-development guidance that reiterated some of AID's previous guidelines and added specific requirements. All bureaus and missions were required to develop and implement women-in-development action plans that would include systems, procedures, and benchmarks to address and monitor gender issues throughout their programs and projects. In addition, requirements for relevant gender data and specific strategies to promote

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<sup>10</sup>H.R. Rep. 100-983, p. 15 (Sept. 1988) and Sen. Rep. 100-395, p. 41 (June 1988). Although "proportional participation" was not enacted into law, AID has considered the concept to be congressional direction, particularly as similar language has surfaced in other congressional reports since that time.

<sup>11</sup>H.R. Rep. 101-65, p. 97 (July 1989).

women-in-development were to be included in all program and project documents and women-in-development training was to be made a priority for AID personnel. Bureaus and missions were also directed to improve the overall number of women in participant training programs and increase girls' access and retention in primary and secondary schools.

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**Progress on Directives Has Varied**

We found varied responsiveness to the Administrator's renewed directives. Most bureaus have developed or are developing gender action plans, contracted for advisers on gender issues, and issued gender-related guidance to the field. Other bureaus had not yet taken such steps. The Asia Bureau has hired an adviser and developed an action plan focusing on three areas: (1) institutionalization by encouraging top-level commitment and establishing gender advisers and committees, action plans, and workshops; (2) analysis of program strategies based on country-specific, gender-disaggregated information; and (3) program development based on an examination of how interventions will independently affect male and female populations.

The Bureau for Africa had the most innovative approach of AID's bureaus in its initiative to improve the status of women through its programs and projects. For example, the Bureau had contracted with three gender advisers—one in Washington and two regional advisers in sub-Saharan Africa—to assist missions in tapping additional resources in the field. During our fieldwork, we found the regional adviser for East Africa, the mission gender adviser, and a Washington contractor were collaborating on a workshop to provide information and advice on the special concerns of Ugandan women regarding acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Mission staff were concerned that the traditional training and outreach approach for AIDS, which had been targeted for the general population, had been oriented toward men and that the information provided had not been useful for assisting women in slowing the spread of AIDS.

Some bureaus have responded more slowly. The Bureau for the Near East, for example, which became a separate bureau after AID's October 1991 reorganization, is developing a gender action plan but had not hired a gender adviser at the time of our review. The Bureau for Research and Development, in which AID's Office for Women in Development is located,

has encouraged gender plans among its functional offices but has not yet issued a Bureau-wide strategy.<sup>12</sup>

In commenting on a draft of this report, AID said that the Near East Bureau is now giving women-in-development concerns priority as evidenced by its recent hiring of an adviser who is responsible for conducting evaluations of each program in the Bureau to assess the integration of gender issues and implement systematic procedures to ensure appropriate program design, monitoring, and evaluation. AID also said that the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean has recruited a women-in-development adviser, carried out gender training, implemented a women-in-development strategy, developed a gender research agenda and improved dissemination of research results and guidance to the field, helped missions incorporate women-in-development into program strategies, and analyzed reporting and results. The Asia Bureau's Democracy Program also recently funded a study on the relationship between gender and political participation in three countries, and the Asia Bureau and Office for Women in Development recently provided a 1-year grant to the Asia Foundation for a women's political participation program in several countries in Asia and the Pacific.

The Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States<sup>13</sup> had not implemented the women-in-development directives at the time we completed our evaluation. For example, the Bureau did not have a policy, action plan, or adviser for women-in-development issues. Bureau officials said, however, that some projects had benefited women, such as a carpet-weaving project in Albania and a family planning project in Romania. Also, in June 1993, the Office for Women in Development began assisting the Bureau's deputy for development resources in drafting a women-in-development strategy.

Officials from the Bureau for Europe and its regional mission in Washington stated that women in Eastern Europe are considerably better off than women in most developing countries. However, studies have indicated that the sweeping changes toward a market economy and privatization have caused much more unemployment among women than among men and that fewer women now hold key positions in government

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<sup>12</sup>On October 1, 1993, AID implemented a reorganization plan that placed the Bureau for Research and Development and the Bureau for Private Enterprise within the Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support, and Research. The reorganization also merged the Bureau for Asia and Bureau for the Near East into the Bureau for Asia and the Near East.

<sup>13</sup>The Bureau for Europe and the Task Force for the New Independent States were merged into the Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States.

than before democratization. (See app. I.) The Bureau had not studied the effects of these changes on women nor had it developed a strategy to alleviate these effects. The Bureau also had not collected program information by gender—with the exception of training data. Bureau and mission officials noted that their initial mandate was to quickly design and implement U.S. assistance programs and establish an in-country presence. The pressure to start funding programs precluded long-term strategic analysis of priorities. According to Bureau officials, in-country officials are beginning to develop country assessments and strategies that are to include gender considerations.

The Bureau for Europe had stated that it will attempt to meet AID's women-in-development goals; however, AID's legal counsel does not consider the Bureau legally bound by the legislative directive because the authorization<sup>14</sup> for its activities is contained in legislation that is not related to part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, which includes the women-in-development directive. We agree that programs funded under the SEED Act are not legally bound by the directive. Nonetheless, AID's Office for Women in Development was continuing to encourage the Bureau to hire an adviser for gender issues and develop a gender strategy,

Officials of AID's Task Force for the New Independent States (the former Soviet Union) said that the economic and political changes in the former republics have, in some respects, adversely affected women. However, at the time our report was drafted, the Task Force—whose activities are funded under the Freedom Support Act<sup>15</sup>—did not have a gender strategy, had not yet implemented any women-in-development activities, and had not developed program data on a gender-specific basis. Several proposals—including one to study the legal status of women in the former Soviet Union—had been delayed due to other priorities and confusion in coordination with the State Department and AID's Office for Women in Development over co-funding activities.

Task Force officials told us that the nature of the program in the former Soviet Union and the pressure to quickly program funds made it difficult to go through AID's normal design approach, which includes collecting and analyzing data before making programming decisions. The Task Force had a women-in-development working group, but two officials associated with

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<sup>14</sup>Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989 (P.L. 101-179, Nov. 28, 1989).

<sup>15</sup>The Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets (FREEDOM) Support Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-511, Oct. 24, 1992).

the group said that they had been somewhat frustrated with its slow pace on addressing relevant gender issues.

The Task Force had not sought AID's legal opinion on whether the women-in-development directive applies to its activities. However, we believe that the women-in-development directive generally applies to AID programs in the former Soviet Union because the Freedom Support Act is an amendment to part I of the Foreign Assistance Act. However, it appears that the directive does not apply to Freedom Support Act activities funded with fiscal year 1993 appropriations because the Freedom Support Act contains a provision that fiscal year 1993 funds may be used "notwithstanding any other provision of law," except for specified exceptions. Women-in-development is not among the listed exceptions. The Task Force had stated that it planned to follow AID's policy guidance on women-in-development, unless for some reason it found it could not do so.

In commenting on a draft of this report, AID stated that the Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States has now hired a women-in-development adviser, established a women-in-development working group, commissioned several studies on gender issues, conducted Bureau-wide and regional women-in-development assessments, and developed a draft women-in-development strategy with recommendations for a Bureau policy and action plan. AID also said that the Bureau is currently conducting several program and data collection efforts that address gender concerns in the New Independent States. These efforts include a comprehensive household income survey intended to demonstrate the impact of aid efforts over time, a study on women's legal status, business and private voluntary organizations linkage activities that specifically target women as beneficiaries, and a feeding program for infants, pregnant women, and mothers.

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## Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance

AID's Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance is primarily responsible for food aid and disaster assistance programs, often through nongovernmental and private voluntary organizations. The Bureau does not have Bureau-wide or office-specific women-in-development policies, action plans, or gender advisers, although officials stated that the Bureau actively considers gender in its programming.

Because food aid programs are authorized separately from the Foreign Assistance Act, AID officials at the Food and Humanitarian Assistance

Bureau do not consider these programs legally bound by the women-in-development legislative directive. According to an AID official, the Food for Peace Office, which carries out food aid programs, does not have a women-in-development policy. An official at the Bureau's policy office had no knowledge of any Bureau-wide gender policy directives. According to an official in AID's Office for Women in Development, the Food for Peace Office issued a women-in-development action plan in 1988, but it has fallen into disuse.

An official at the Food for Peace Office told us that no policy directives are needed because (1) gender is now integrated throughout AID, (2) the nongovernmental organizations with whom the Office works consider gender programming a priority, and (3) the priority of the Office is not gender issues, but food availability and access. Despite the Food for Peace Office view that guidance is not needed, an official of the Office for Women in Development said that the Food for Peace Office should revitalize its action plan due to a perceived languishing of gender initiatives in the food program. With the exception of the U.N. World Food Program, which receives U.S. food aid funds, a 1992 study<sup>16</sup> found that no organization has tried to determine how gender issues relate to food aid. The study identified several constraints, including reductions in AID food aid officers, resistance to more data collection, and inadequate commitment to gender issues and training among private voluntary organizations.

In commenting on a draft of this report, AID stated that Bureau programs have direct and immediate impact on women because women and children are most affected by natural and man-made disasters. AID said that it provides food and humanitarian assistance through private voluntary organizations that are sensitive both to gender issues and to providing the type of community-level assistance that benefits women. We agree that many of the Bureau's activities can directly affect women; however, as we discuss in chapter 4, awareness of the needs of women and girls in disaster and emergency situations enhances relief efforts. Furthermore, as noted above, a 1992 study found that private voluntary organizations can vary in their commitment to gender issues.

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<sup>16</sup>Gender and Food Aid, Mayatech Corp. (Oct. 1992).

## AID Has Not Incorporated Gender Issues Into Nonproject Assistance

Nonproject assistance is generally provided through cash grants or commodity transfers from the United States to a host country for general or sectoral budget support or to generate local currency for jointly approved development projects. Often the funds are used to offset the adverse effects of structural economic reforms in a particular sector. Project assistance can also be used as leverage to encourage reforms and policy changes, but, according to AID, nonproject assistance can be particularly effective because, in many cases, funds are disbursed as specific conditions are met. Excluding cash grants to Israel,<sup>17</sup> nonproject assistance has averaged over one-third of AID's program obligations from fiscal years 1980 through 1992.

Much of the nonproject assistance provided by AID is funded through the Economic Support Fund, but development assistance programs, including the Development Fund for Africa, also incorporate nonproject elements. The women-in-development legislation applies to development assistance funds, but not to assistance provided through the Economic Support Fund.<sup>18</sup>

AID policy since 1974 has been to consider gender issues in the design, implementation, and evaluation of all its programs, and the Administrator's 1989 action items specifically directed including gender issues in nonproject assistance programming. However, several agency officials in Washington and the field indicated that this has been a particularly difficult problem and stated that the agency has not institutionalized gender-related concerns in this area. For example, a 1991 study of AID's policy reform programs in six Africa countries found that in no case did the social analyses evaluate the impact of economic policy reforms on women.<sup>19</sup>

Some AID officials did not see the need to incorporate gender issues in nonproject assistance because they believe that macroeconomic reforms automatically benefit all segments of society, including women. Other AID officials said that nonproject assistance offers potential for affecting women's issues, but they question whether gender might be too sensitive a

<sup>17</sup>We have excluded Israel because cash grants to Israel are provided without conditions attached.

<sup>18</sup>The Economic Support Fund is authorized under part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, which deals mostly with security assistance. The women-in-development legislation generally applies to assistance provided under part I of the act.

<sup>19</sup>A.I.D. Program and Operations Assessment Report No. 1, A.I.D. Economic Policy Reform Programs in Africa: A Synthesis of Findings From Six Evaluations, Center for Development Information and Evaluation (Dec. 1991).



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topic to raise at a policy dialogue level. The mission director in Egypt told us that AID's primary nonproject assistance objective is to promote policy actions to improve Egypt's economic situation and that adding gender issues to its policy agenda at this time could cause problems in their ongoing economic dialogue with the Egyptian government.

Despite these reservations, AID is beginning to explore the use of nonproject assistance to promote gender issues and leverage sector assistance. For example, prior to 1989, the Africa Bureau strategy for basic education in the region had been based on a traditional project approach, such as training teachers and providing educational materials. The Bureau's new approach to using nonproject assistance in the education sector aims to encourage needed host country reforms and sustainability. Recognizing that girls are less likely to attend and stay in school, the Bureau is using nonproject funds in some countries to address these inequities.<sup>20</sup>

An official of the Office for Women in Development stated that several avenues can be explored to assist bureaus and missions. For example, bureaus and missions can apply for matching funds from the Office or coordinate with other agencies to alleviate the costs of conducting studies and collecting the data needed as a basis for incorporating gender issues into policy dialogue. Another option is to expand gender training for AID staff to include a more relevant module on how gender issues can be addressed as part of the policy dialogue process.

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## Integration of Gender Policy Does Not Meet Overall Targets

AID guidance in 1989 directed that participation of women in its development activities be proportional to the number of women involved in that sector or to their representation in the total population, whichever is greater. However, AID cannot determine if these goals have been reached because sectoral data have not been routinely collected and disaggregated by gender.

Efforts to quantify the extent to which gender has been considered in program strategies were carried out by AID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation in 1991 and 1992. The Center analyzed

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<sup>20</sup>Overview of A.I.D. Basic Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa, A.I.D. Technical Paper No. 1, Office of Analysis, Research, and Technical Support/Bureau for Africa (Jan. 1993).

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185 strategic objectives submitted by 55 reporting missions<sup>21</sup> and categorized them into 15 program areas. The results showed that gender was heavily integrated into mission strategies for programs in which women have traditionally benefited, such as maternal and child health and family planning programs. However, gender was considered very little—sometimes not at all—in strategic objectives for environment and natural resource management programs and democracy and governance issues. Under the rubric of economic development, gender was considered in 50 percent of the strategic objectives for increasing economic participation and 22 percent in objectives for increasing production and productivity.

AID has collected data on men and women from developing countries included in academic and technical participant training programs. This information indicates that the total percentage of women to men steadily increased from 21.8 percent in 1982 to 38 percent in 1990. In 1991 and 1992, the percentages slipped slightly to 37.2 percent and 36.9 percent, respectively. We did not verify the accuracy of AID's data. AID studies and our own fieldwork suggest that women training participants are still mostly represented in the "traditional" sectors of health, family planning, and education.

AID officials with whom we met were comfortable with addressing gender issues in projects that relate to most traditional basic human needs sectors, such as health, family planning, and education. However, the agency has not yet fully incorporated gender into other sectors, such as agriculture and natural resource management, despite the fact that in developing countries women are heavily engaged in the agricultural sector and in providing fuel for family needs.

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## Conclusions

AID's progress in implementing the 1973 women-in-development directive has been slow, although the pace improved during the late 1980s, due mostly to congressional actions and subsequent direction from the AID Administrator. AID staff have also become increasingly aware of the relevance of gender issues to projects through the increased training and technical assistance provided by the Office for Women in Development. AID has implemented some activities that benefit women and included them in the development process, particularly in the areas of training, health, family planning, and girls' education.

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<sup>21</sup>The study did not include activities in Europe and the New Independent States. It also did not include centrally funded programs or activities of the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance, except in cases when such programs were reflected in mission programs.

Despite these activities, institutionalization of women-in-development issues at AID remained incomplete because AID lacked central oversight to ensure policy conformity. AID had not always sought opportunities to incorporate gender into its nonproject assistance programming and some AID units were not actively engaged in attention to gender issues. AID could not effectively design or measure the impact of its women-in-development efforts because it had not routinely collected gender data or developed meaningful program performance indicators to link its efforts to program results.

The U.S. foreign aid program has often been criticized for lack of focus, competing priorities, and vague results. In recent years, global changes and U.S. domestic realities have precipitated a new debate on foreign assistance. The executive branch and Congress have recognized the need for refocusing foreign aid priorities, and a complete reexamination has begun with the expectation that new authorizing legislation for foreign assistance will ultimately be enacted. Administration officials have testified that the overall goal for foreign aid should be sustainable development and that AID, in its strategies for achieving this goal, should promote four essential areas: economic growth, democracy and human rights, population and health, and the environment. We believe that the policies for promoting analysis of gender issues as a key component for successful development remain valid and are consistent with the principles articulated for guiding a new reformed foreign aid program.

We believe that, whether or not the objectives articulated by the administration for a reformed foreign aid program are ultimately adopted, two efforts hold the most promise for successfully incorporating women-in-development concepts into program activities: (1) continued efforts by the Office for Women in Development to increase awareness at all AID levels about the importance of gender to development and provide needed technical assistance and (2) management information and accountability systems that will enable AID to track the impact of its activities and the integration of gender issues throughout its program and hold officials accountable for program results.

Women-in-development legislation generally applies to development assistance programs authorized under part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. It does not apply to Economic Support Fund activities, programs authorized under the Support for East Europe Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989, or to Public Law 480 food aid programs. However, those programs can often also provide meaningful opportunities

for integrating women into the economic mainstream and ensuring that foreign assistance is used to reach all segments of developing societies.

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## Recommendations

Within the ongoing efforts to redefine U.S. foreign aid strategies, we recommend that the Administrator of AID seek to include women as full participants and beneficiaries in AID's economic assistance programs. Because we found instances of noncompliance with existing policies regarding women-in-development, we recommend that the Administrator

- 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 its development strategies;
- direct that, to the extent possible, women-in-development policy objectives be incorporated in nonproject assistance programming; and
- ensure the timely completion and evaluation of the PRISM system so that AID has the information needed to more effectively design, implement, monitor, and evaluate women-in-development efforts and more effectively measure the institutional commitment to women-in-development.

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## Matter for Congressional Consideration

Congress and the executive branch have already begun the process of reexamining the U.S. foreign assistance program, with a view toward enacting new legislation with fewer, more clearly defined objectives and a means for holding managers accountable for results. A large body of research has shown that incorporating women-in-development concepts into development program implementation strategies enhances the likelihood for successful economic development. We believe that this concept can be applied to most assistance programs administered by AID. This would include project and, in many circumstances, nonproject assistance, food aid programs, and programs authorized by the SEED Act of 1989, as well as those financed by development assistance funds. Accordingly, we believe that in any new foreign aid legislation, Congress should consider emphasizing that women-in-development is a means for accomplishing sustainable development objectives, and to the extent possible should be applied to all assistance programs.

## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

AID generally agreed with our findings regarding its implementation of policy guidance on women-in-development; however, it said that the draft report did not sufficiently consider the progress some bureaus and missions have made. We agree with AID that some bureaus and missions have made more progress than others in implementing the policy guidance on women-in-development, and we have included additional information on this progress in the text of this chapter.

AID expressed reservations about implementing some of our recommendations. AID stated that most bureaus currently have women-in-development strategies and action plans but acknowledged that others had only recently finalized them. AID also said that integrating gender concerns into its mission's overall plans has been more effective in promoting good development than requiring separate women-in-development action plans. AID stated that its assessment indicates that separate action plans often become checklists of required processes rather than a thoughtful strategy for including women in the country's development, tending to set women-in-development apart from the country program. We found that the missions had not yet fully integrated gender throughout their programs; however, we agree with AID that separate mission action plans can become checklists. We have modified our recommendation accordingly.

In response to our recommendation that AID develop systems and procedures for centrally monitoring the efforts of bureaus and missions, AID stated that it would strengthen the capacity of the Office for Women in Development, both in terms of staff and the capacity to monitor women-in-development programs and program impact. We agree that this is an important step; however, as we have discussed, this Office cannot ensure that bureaus and missions will carry out the agency's women-in-development policies without the active support of AID's top management team.

AID agreed that incorporating women-in-development policy objectives into nonproject assistance programming is important and stated that the agency is pursuing this goal. The text of AID's comments is printed in appendix II.

# State Department Leadership Is Limited

The Foreign Assistance Act calls on the President to direct U.S. representatives to international organizations to “encourage and promote the integration of women into the national economies of member and recipient countries and into professional and policy-making positions within such organizations, thereby improving the status of women.”<sup>1</sup> The act further states that the President should consider the progress of such organizations in adopting and implementing policies and practices to integrate women when considering contributions to them. The legislation included such international organizations as the United Nations, the World Bank, regional development banks, the International Monetary Fund, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.<sup>2</sup>

The Bureaus of International Organizations Affairs and Refugee Programs have the primary responsibility within the State Department for promoting U.S. policy at international organizations such as the United Nations. The Bureau of International Organizations Affairs has promoted some worthwhile gender issues. However, Bureau officials responsible for promoting women’s affairs were unaware of the legislative directive, and they could not identify documentation to indicate compliance with it. U.N. officials said that the United States has not provided consistent leadership on gender issues.

The Bureau of Refugee Programs has actively promoted the interests of refugee women at international organizations concerned with refugee and relief activities. This Bureau provides aid to international relief organizations to assist people who flee from persecution, civil strife, and other disasters. The Bureau has promoted at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) such key women’s issues as supporting a training program, offering assistance to field offices, and urging the hiring of more women at UNHCR. Issues related to women refugees are discussed in chapter 4.

<sup>1</sup>22 U.S.C. 2225. Section 305 was added by section 54 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974, which inserted it at the end of part III, chapter 3. Section 313(b) of P.L. 94-161 reinserted it at the end of part I, chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup>Our review was limited to the State Department and its promotion of gender issues at U.N. organizations. We did not review the gender promotion efforts of other U.S. government agencies, such as the Department of the Treasury, which is responsible for promoting U.S. policy at the World Bank, regional development banks, and the International Monetary Fund.

## State's Leadership on Gender Issues Is Limited

The Bureau of International Organizations Affairs is responsible for developing, coordinating, and implementing U.S. multilateral policy. According to Bureau officials, policies are developed as issues surface within international organizations and are not contained in a policy document. For example, according to a Bureau official, if the U.N. Development Program plans a board meeting on an agricultural program, Bureau officials develop a U.S. position paper that incorporates gender issues, if relevant. However, the Bureau does not have a broad policy document for either gender or sectoral issues.

Bureau officials were unaware of the legislative directive regarding the U.S. promotion of gender issues at international organizations; nonetheless, the Bureau has provided some leadership on gender issues at the United Nations. The Bureau has collected biennial reports from the Commission on the Status of Women, but a Bureau official stated that these reports are of limited value in determining the extent or impact of U.N. efforts to promote women's issues. Bureau efforts to promote women-in-development and gender issues within the United Nations are directed primarily through the Ambassador-at-Large for Human Rights and Women's Affairs, who is also the U.S. representative to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission was established in 1946 by the General Assembly's Economic and Social Council to report annually on women's rights in the political, economic, social, and educational areas and recommend solutions to problems involving women's rights.

The United States has in many cases supported and participated in the Commission's activities. For example, the United States helped develop and then endorsed the Commission's draft resolution on the Convention on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which was adopted at the March 1993 Commission meeting. The United States has also supported, among other things, resolutions on victims of rape and abuse in the former Yugoslavia, improving women's legal literacy and access to legal services, the participation of refugee and displaced women in program planning and implementation, and protection of migrant women workers against discrimination.

A main focus of the Ambassador-at-Large for Human Rights and Women's Affairs was to improve the profile of women at the United Nations. This effort stemmed from the ambassador's concern at the time of her appointment in 1989 that only 1 of the 39 U.N. organizations was headed

by a woman.<sup>3</sup> According to the ambassador, the United States is pushing hard on resolutions to get women into higher level positions in which policies are developed and decisions are made. The ambassador also promoted at the General Assembly the U.N. goals adopted in 1985 that identified specific areas for actions by governments and the international community to improve women's economic and political participation and address issues of violence against women.

At the Bureau staff level, the Officer-in-Charge of International Women's Programs within the Office for Democracy, Human Rights, and Social Issues (formerly the Office of Human Rights and Women's Affairs) is the focal point for gender issues within the Bureau as well as its coordinator on women's issues with other bureaus and U.S. government agencies. Due to the lack of policy guidance and knowledge on gender issues, Bureau officials turn to her office for information and assistance. She told us that many officials within State are unfamiliar with legislative direction on women's issues and are unaware of the relevance of incorporating gender into their policy or program efforts. She added, however, that staff are slowly becoming more knowledgeable and aware of when such information could have an impact on their activities.

Some Bureau officials stated that commitment to women-in-development and gender issues generally has not existed at the highest levels of State management. However, the Ambassador-at-Large for Human Rights and Women's Affairs stated that the Assistant Secretary for International Organizations Affairs was instrumental in promoting women's issues within State and the United Nations and helped finalize U.S. position papers presented in U.N. organizations.

In commenting on a draft of this report, State cited several examples of U.S. leadership on women's issues in the international arena. Some were discussed in the draft report. Other examples include co-sponsoring resolutions at the June 1993 session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights recommending the appointment of a special rapporteur on violence against women and encouraging special rapporteurs and working groups to include gender disaggregated data in their human rights reports.

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<sup>3</sup>The first U.N. agency to be headed by a woman was the U.N. Population Fund. Currently three additional agencies are headed by a woman—the World Food Program, the U.N. Environment Program, and UNHCR.



## U.N. Officials Said U.S. Commitment Is Mixed

The United Nations has provided some leadership on women's issues over the years through various resolutions and conventions and has funded efforts to improve the lives of women in developing countries. Various U.N. agencies take different approaches to promoting women-in-development goals, ranging from designing programs specifically to benefit women to attempting to integrate gender considerations throughout programs. Some key agencies, such as the U.N. Development Program and the U.N. Children's Fund, have established women-in-development offices and activities. However, many U.N. women-in-development professionals said that their efforts were hampered by a lack of financial and human resources, expertise, gender-disaggregated data, and relevant program performance indicators.

The United States has provided some support for U.N. agencies specifically concerned with women's issues and has initiated and supported many resolutions on gender issues at U.N. agencies. For example, U.S. actual and pledged contributions to the U.N. Development Fund for Women—the only U.N. agency focused on direct project support for women in developing countries—have totaled \$12.7 million since its inception in 1975. Although this averages to less than \$1 million per year, a State official noted that this program often leverages funds from other U.N. agencies. For example, in Bangladesh, the Fund initiated a \$350,000-vocational training program for 4,000 needy women, and the U.N. Development Program subsequently funded \$650,000 for program expansion. U.N. officials generally noted that, although U.S. funding for women-in-development programs is considered minimal, the United States provides intellectual guidance on gender concerns and is mostly a steady advocate for women's issues.

Despite these views, several U.N. officials did not perceive the United States as a strong global leader in promoting women's issues and noted that most support for women-in-development within the U.N. system comes from Canada and the Scandinavian countries. According to one official, U.N. officials do not perceive that the United States places a high priority on women-in-development and gender issues at the U.S. policy level. This perception of U.S. commitment is based on such actions as U.S. failure to ratify the 1979 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. According to an official from the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs, the United States opposed the Convention due to implementation issues—specifically, whether federal, state, or local governments would bear the costs of ensuring compliance. In June 1993, at the World Conference on Human Rights, the

Secretary of State stated that the administration strongly supports the goals of the Convention. He further stated that, following Senate ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the administration would focus attention on other treaties signed but not ratified, including the women's discrimination Convention.

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## Conclusions

While the Bureaus of International Organizations Affairs and Refugee Programs have worked to promote gender issues in the international arena, the State Department has not developed definitive policy guidance in this area, and the United States is perceived as not being a strong leader on gender issues. The Bureau of Refugee Programs and the U.S. mission in Geneva have monitored UNHCR's progress on promoting issues related to refugee women. The Bureau of International Organizations Affairs could not document that it has routinely monitored the progress of international organizations in promoting women's issues nor has it determined that decisions on contributions have taken such progress into account as required by the Foreign Assistance Act. Therefore, State cannot always ensure that the United States has provided consistent leadership on gender issues at international organizations.

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## Recommendation

We recommend that the Secretary of State, in implementing the provisions of section 305 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, 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.

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## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In commenting on a draft of this report, the State Department provided several examples of U.S. commitment and leadership on gender issues to show that it has pursued the goals of section 305 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. We agree that the actions cited, and other activities discussed in our report, are consistent with the legislative guidance and direction. However, it should be noted the actions cited by State are very recent and do not by themselves demonstrate a pattern of consistent U.S. leadership since 1974 when the legislation was enacted.

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Furthermore, State could not document that it has routinely directed and monitored the efforts of U.S. representatives to international organizations nor could it document that decisions on U.S. contributions had considered the organizations' progress on women's issues. State said that it will issue guidance to U.S. representatives to international organizations on encouraging and promoting the integration of women into national economies and into professional and policy-making positions. Also, State will consider progress in adopting and implementing such policies when making contributions to such agencies. The text of State's comments is reprinted in appendix III.

# Problems of Refugee Women Have Not Been Adequately Addressed

Refugees, as a group, are among the world's most vulnerable populations. They are often victims or potential victims of human rights abuses, armed conflicts, and other acts of aggression. Because they are often outside their native countries, they are unable or unwilling to avail themselves of protection. Women and children comprise about 80 percent of the world's estimated refugee population of 16 million. Therefore, provisions for women refugees, including their participation in the development of aid programs, are considered essential to efficient humanitarian and development assistance programs. Despite the emphasis UNHCR officials have placed on the problems faced by women and children refugees, and the training being provided to better integrate women's needs into its programming, the refugee camps we visited<sup>1</sup> revealed dramatic problems among women refugees and a lack of gender awareness and training on the part of many UNHCR officials and relief workers of nongovernmental organizations.

The mission of the State Department's refugee program, administered by the Bureau of Refugee Programs, is to uphold the humanitarian principles of the United States by aiding victims of persecution, civil strife, and disasters that compel people to flee their homelands. The Bureau's responsibilities include (1) determining the level of U.S. contributions to international organizations for refugee relief and encouraging greater participation on the part of other governments, (2) reviewing the activities of international organizations to ensure effective use of U.S. funds, (3) administering grants and cooperative agreements to voluntary agencies for their help in refugee work, and (4) guiding the activities of the refugee assistance offices at the U.S. diplomatic missions and U.S. missions to international organizations concerned with refugee relief and resettlement.

The Bureau has estimated that about \$265 million is needed for overseas refugee assistance in fiscal year 1993 and provided about \$233 million in fiscal year 1992. The Bureau received \$222 million for overseas refugee assistance in fiscal year 1991.<sup>2</sup>

The Bureau and the U.S. mission in Geneva, Switzerland, have strongly supported women's issues. For example, in October 1992, the U.S.

<sup>1</sup>We conducted fieldwork at four camps: Baqa'a in Jordan, which is operated by the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and three camps operated by UNHCR—El Wak and Kakuma camps for Somali refugees in Kenya, and Ogiyebe, a camp for Sudanese refugees in Uganda.

<sup>2</sup>The Bureau is also responsible for the resettlement of refugees in the United States and has requested about \$208 million for refugee admissions in 1993.

representative to the UNHCR Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters concluded that the UNHCR had increased its attention to integrating the needs and skills of refugee women into its programming efforts but also noted that further progress was needed. The United States at that time offered funding assistance to UNHCR field offices in program planning and design to further such efforts. It also urged the implementation of guidelines to increase the number of women at UNHCR, particularly at the senior level and as protection and field officers. Bureau and U.S. mission officials told us that they actively pursue the needs of women refugees, and UNHCR officials noted that the United States has been a major contributor to training efforts.

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## Refugee Women Face Acute Problems

Living conditions for refugees are often hard, but women and girl refugees face particular problems. Women and girls are susceptible to physical violence and sexual abuse in flight, the country of asylum, and the camps. Women also face discrimination in receiving food, clothing, shelter, training, and other goods and services and rarely participate in decision-making activities. Physical threats and discrimination are often rooted in the cultural attitudes and practices of refugee societies as well as relief workers.

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## Women Are Vulnerable to Violence

During our field visits to Somali refugee camps in Kenya, women from various ethnic clans recounted stories of terror and violence en route to the camps as well as inside the camps. They told stories of attacks and rapes by men from different clans and bandits as they fled Somalia. They said that attacks and rapes have continued inside the camps and in the surrounding border area of eastern Kenya. They are particularly vulnerable when they are outside the camp gathering firewood.

According to refugee relief workers, violence against women and girls in Somalia is endemic. When asked to characterize the situation, one U.N. official stationed in Mogadishu replied, "There isn't a woman left in Mogadishu who has not been raped at least once." According to a UNHCR protection officer, every attack by one clan against another clan is accompanied by rape. Somalis believe that rape "ruins" women and is the ultimate insult one man can give another.

Host countries are responsible for the physical protection of refugees. However, according to relief officials working with Somali refugees in Kenya, the Kenyan police and military are overwhelmed by the scope of

violence and lawlessness along their eastern border. Kenya's ineffectiveness at providing physical security for refugees is not unusual. Historically, developing countries have often lacked the political or military capability to provide security for refugees. In addition, according to UNHCR, the violence is often exacerbated by the conditions in the camps, such as overcrowding and the loss of traditional family structures. UNHCR protection officers monitor and report on security issues but do not provide security. Protection officers are primarily concerned with refugees' legal issues.

In the Palestinian camp we visited, domestic abuse rather than random violence was the primary form of violence against women and girls. Officials attribute the low rate of nondomestic violence to the stability of the camps, some of which have existed since 1948. However, domestic violence against women and girls is very high. According to camp officials and experts on women's issues in Jordan, domestic violence in the camps mirrors that found in some Arab societies. According to officials of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, they are attempting to deal with domestic violence by sponsoring legal literacy seminars to raise women's consciousness about these issues and inform them of their legal rights.

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### Women's Needs Were Often Not Addressed

Relief organizations have not effectively incorporated women's needs into their emergency response and camp management procedures. Relief officials believe that "emergency" needs take precedence and that gender-relevant programming is a luxury to be addressed if time permits. In a July 1992 report on refugee women, UNHCR concluded that the response to many refugee situations is emergency-oriented and insufficient attention is paid to the conditions under which refugees are expected to live.

The distribution of food at Somali camps in Kenya illustrates the low priority accorded women's needs and the lack of gender awareness of relief officials. In Somali society, women are the traditional food preparers. However, relief organizations did not consult with the women about their traditional diet and food preparation. As a result, some women were unable to prepare the food provided.

In the El Wak refugee camp for Somalis in Kenya, the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere delivers bulk food to the refugee committees, composed entirely of men, who then distribute the food among the

refugees. Unaccompanied women (widows, single women, or women whose husbands are absent) are routinely denied their food ration by the refugee committees. We were told that unaccompanied women have no one to protect their rights and are therefore forced to beg for food from other women.

A lack of sensitivity toward women was also found in acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) training for refugees at the Ogijebe camp in Uganda. Medicins sans Frontieres, an international private voluntary organization, had been contracted to conduct an AIDS awareness program in the camp in an attempt to limit the spread of the AIDS virus among the refugees. However, Medicins sans Frontieres only trained male medical staff from the camp who then provided the information to other men. Although women are a target group for slowing the spread of AIDS, their lack of participation in the program reduced its effectiveness.

The Somali and Sudanese refugee camps we visited both lacked women's clothing and personal hygiene articles. Women in these camps told us that they do not have the means to purchase or produce these items.

According to UNHCR officials, the presence of staff from UNHCR's Social Services Division is a key factor in determining whether vulnerable groups, such as women, receive appropriate attention in refugee camps. Social Services staff ensure that the most vulnerable groups receive assistance and are not ignored in the programming process. A UNHCR official described Social Services staff as the "eyes and ears" of the camp for vulnerable refugees. No Social Services staff were at the camps we visited.

We found no designated person or organization responsible for addressing women's needs in any of the camps we visited. Relief officials stated that the designation of a women's focal point in each camp would better ensure that the particular needs of women are being met.

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### Cultural Mores Influence Camp Conditions for Women

Cultural beliefs and practices in developing countries, among refugee populations, and among program staff pose formidable constraints to meeting the needs of refugee women. In many of these cultures, men dominate decision-making processes and women are often denied these opportunities.

In the refugee camps we visited, we found little opportunity for women to have a voice in camp operations through membership on refugee committees or councils. Only Kakuma camp in Kenya had women serving in decision-making roles. Several officials we interviewed stated that the rising influence of Islamic fundamentalism is eroding some small gains women have made. For example, according to relief officials, women in the Palestinian camps are increasingly denied decision-making roles, educational opportunities, and income-generating activities.

The attitudes of relief officials are also an important factor in the lack of attention paid to women's needs. During our fieldwork, UNHCR was often criticized by various officials who believed that many of its staff carried significant "cultural baggage." According to U.N. relief officials, U.N. agencies have many professional staff from developing countries and Islamic countries who oppose women-in-development and gender activities.

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## UNHCR Has Taken Steps to Address Women's Concerns

UNHCR has recognized the importance of addressing gender issues in achieving its humanitarian goals. UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Women, which was adopted in various stages in the late 1980s, states that it is important for relief workers to understand that refugee women, as single women and women with children, represent approximately 80 percent of UNHCR's target population and that programs can be effective only if they are carried out with an adequate understanding of this group. To help accomplish these policy goals, in 1989, UNHCR appointed a Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women who reported directly to the High Commissioner for Refugees. A primary goal of the Coordinator was to integrate appropriate programming for refugee women within ongoing UNHCR processes. In 1993, this position was moved to UNHCR's Office for Programs and Operational Support so that women's issues could be more readily incorporated into the development and implementation of refugee programs.

According to UNHCR documents, training is a key component in the implementation of the UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Women. UNHCR is taking steps to improve gender training for its officers through a 2-day training course, entitled "A Framework for People-Oriented Planning in Refugee Situations: A Practical Planning Tool for Refugee Workers." The training is designed to provide refugee workers a framework for analyzing the socio-cultural and economic factors in a refugee society that can influence the success of planned activities. UNHCR hopes to convince staff that



specific factors must be introduced into program planning so that target populations benefit equally from protection and assistance activities. According to officials of State's Bureau of Refugee Programs, which provided \$500,000 for the pilot program, this training is a significant effort toward improving the situations of all refugees—women, men, and children.

Preliminary assessments of the program and feedback from workshop participants have been positive. However, UNHCR participation as of April 1993 represented only about 10 percent of total staff, so the impact is therefore difficult to measure. As of this date, UNHCR had held 26 workshops with 20 to 25 participants for each session, 2 training-of-trainers workshops, and 1 follow-up session for trainers. UNHCR noted in May 1993 that its training program was young and still gathering momentum. UNHCR has also revised its program management course to include modules incorporating the programmatic aspects of special refugee populations, such as women and children. UNHCR plans to offer this course in late 1993. In addition, UNHCR plans to incorporate gender concepts into its Emergency Management Training Program. In commenting on a draft of this report, UNHCR stated that a module of the "People-Oriented Planning" course is now included in the Emergency Management Training Course and that the Head of the Emergency Unit is taking steps to ensure that every sectoral presentation in the training addresses the impact of emergency intervention on women.

Relief workers whom we interviewed in Kenya and Uganda had not received any training on gender issues, and they lacked practical skills for analyzing gender needs and conducting gender-relevant programs. Relief workers of nongovernmental organizations told us that their agencies do not systematically incorporate gender concerns into program design, implementation, monitoring, or evaluation. Several relief workers told us that they were personally sympathetic to women's issues but did not know how to approach the particular needs of refugee women in their projects.

The lack of gender training and programming among nongovernmental organizations has reduced UNHCR's effectiveness because UNHCR relies extensively on these organizations as implementing partners in providing services to refugees. UNHCR officials serve as overall camp coordinators, while relief workers of nongovernmental organizations provide the health care, food distribution, sanitation, water, and other basic services to refugees.

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## Conclusions

Despite UNHCR's emphasis on the need to pay special attention to the needs of refugee women and children, refugee situations were still often handled as emergencies with little regard for gender differences or the conditions under which refugees are expected to live. Women remain susceptible to violence and sexual abuse both during flight and in the country of asylum. Cultural factors often preclude women from any participation or voice in activities affecting them and their children. Although these women are largely responsible for the care of the family, they face discrimination in the provision of food, shelter, training, and other needs.

UNHCR and nongovernmental organizations, as implementing partners, play a key role in providing services to women refugees, but their staff often lack a conceptual understanding of the importance of gender-based programming or practical skills for its incorporation. UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Women provides an operational framework to guide all UNHCR implementing partners in ensuring that gender issues are integrated into a relief organization's area of competence, and UNHCR has strengthened its training in this area.

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## Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of State (1) encourage UNHCR to increase the number and distribution of focal points for women's issues at refugee camps and to require its implementing partners to apply UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Women, (2) support expanded and strengthened gender training for UNHCR staff and officials and relief workers of nongovernmental organizations and other agencies working with refugees, and (3) encourage UNHCR to evaluate the efficacy of its gender training programs.

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## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

UNHCR stated that our report is consistent with its own assessment of progress in implementing the Policy on Refugee Women, and it discussed additional actions being taken to expand gender training and protect refugee women. UNHCR said that it agreed conceptually with our recommendation that the Secretary of State encourage UNHCR to increase focal points for women's issues at refugee camps. However, it stated that its preference is that each staff member assume responsibility for ensuring that refugee women benefit from UNHCR programs. UNHCR expressed its concern that some relief officials might not see this as their individual responsibility if focal points are formalized. We agree that UNHCR should encourage individual responsibility in ensuring that the needs of all refugee populations are met, and we agree that the efforts of the informal

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**Chapter 4**  
**Problems of Refugee Women Have Not Been**  
**Adequately Addressed**

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network of focal points who are committed to gender issues are important. However, increasing focal points should not lead to lax implementation on the part of other camp officials, nor should the presence of such officials replace individual responsibility. Instead, we believe that a focal point for women's issues at refugee camps should be a reminder to all relief officials that gender issues are important to successful programming.

UNHCR agreed with our recommendation that the Secretary of State encourage UNHCR to evaluate its gender training programs, but it stated that such efforts are premature until more staff and implementing partners have received the training. UNHCR noted that establishing cause and effect between the training and improved programming for women may be difficult because many variables influence these outcomes. We agree that evaluating impact is a challenge in the development and humanitarian assistance arena, but we believe UNHCR should continue to pursue efforts to assess its training program and modify its programs if the evaluations indicate that this is necessary.

The text of UNHCR's comments is reprinted in appendix IV.

# Research on the Need for a Gender Focus in Development

Our study included a review of the literature on women-in-development and gender issues in less-developed countries. Most of the research on this topic supports the view that a thorough understanding of women's roles, access to resources, and cultural and social constraints is key to achieving sustainable and equitable development. This appendix summarizes the research on how gender issues can affect development programming.

## Host Countries Often Resist Gender Focus in Development

The Percy Amendment requires a gender focus in U.S. foreign assistance to improve women's status and bring them into the mainstream of development activities. However, cultural resistance is frequently cited by AID personnel as inhibiting a gender focus in development. According to one AID Assistant Administrator, such norms represent 90 percent of the difficulty in promoting women-in-development. Gender issues go to the crux of family and social life, making them very sensitive topics. Research corroborates the view that effecting change in the social standing of women has been an immense challenge for developing nations.

The available literature concludes that women throughout the world have faced discrimination, whether subtle or blatant, and they have had to endure a lower social status than men.<sup>1</sup> In some instances during recent years, women's status has actually regressed. The hallmark of discrimination has been gender role stereotyping that binds women to home, marriage, and motherhood. Women who choose to postpone either marriage or motherhood are often deemed by their communities to be "deviant." According to a 1991 U.N. report, many women are allowed no choice but to accept these rites of passage.<sup>2</sup> Once married, women rarely have the option of initiating divorce. Only 22 countries (most in the industrialized world) have granted women equal rights in matters of divorce and family property. Studies cite various cultural practices that reinforce male control and women's secondary status, such as seclusion, "female circumcision," and the dowry.<sup>3</sup> Women's "roles" in marriage can carry not only sexual and labor obligations, but also the expectation that they will remain "in character." This can include strictures of obedience, passivity, and self-denial.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Winnie Hazou, The Social and Legal Status of Women (New York, Praeger: 1990), p. 193.

<sup>2</sup>Women: Challenges to the Year 2000, United Nations Department of Public Information (New York: Dec. 1991), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>Alison C. Meares, "Demographic Data as a Catalyst for Gender Analysis: Two Asian Case Studies," draft report prepared at the GENESYS Project (Washington, D.C.: 1993), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Hazou, p. 147.

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**Appendix I**  
**Research on the Need for a Gender Focus in**  
**Development**

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Some religions have affected the status of women. Research opinions vary as to the interplay between religious codes and cultural beliefs, but suggest that religion is often interpreted in such a way as to justify keeping women in a separate and inferior status in large areas of the world.<sup>5</sup> A U.N. study notes that people often interpret religious dictates in ways that devalue and subjugate women.<sup>6</sup>

Laws can affect the status of women, whether as an agent of change or the status quo. One study on the legal status of women contends that while social engineering to remedy inequities is a basic trait of modern law, enforcement is obstructed by entrenched culture that accepts gender inequality as normal.<sup>7</sup> Thus, despite the enactment of laws and treaties on women's rights, a gap remains between law and actual custom. The United Nations reports that laws have sometimes become instruments of control over women, restricting their access to resources and power and perpetuating social inequities.<sup>8</sup>

The marginal social status of women in many countries inhibits them from entering the mainstream of development. Even if host governments seek to elevate the gender focus in development, they may be unsuccessful, if, for example, a woman cannot open a bank account, seek a loan, or work without the permission of her husband. As was stated at the 1980 World Conference of the United Nations for Women, women are less able to share in development because sex role typecasting relegates them to the domestic sphere.<sup>9</sup>

A U.N. report contends that sex-based roles have been so ingrained and glorified that even women are somewhat desensitized to their own inferior portrayal.<sup>10</sup> Another study maintains that women have not been taught by their culture to have a sense of their own exploitation. "True equality between men and women," it contends, "cannot even be imagined where

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<sup>5</sup>Lynne Brydon and Sylvia Chant, Women in the Third World: Gender Issues in Rural and Urban Areas, Rutgers University Press, (New Brunswick: 1989), p. 26; and trans. Elizabeth Jelin, Women and Social Change in Latin America, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (London: 1990) p. 2.

<sup>6</sup>Challenges, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup>Hazou, p. vii.

<sup>8</sup>Challenges, p.7.

<sup>9</sup>Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, A/Conf.94/34 (Copenhagen: July 1980), p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>Challenges, p. 9.

prevailing customs are based on the restriction of educational opportunities for women."<sup>11</sup> Under these conditions, women often acquiesce to their lower status.

This is the milieu that development agencies often enter as they seek to promote a gender focus. Some women may not be receptive to development activities, feeling it could place them beyond their prescribed roles. Other women may be inclined to participate but find they are not allowed. For example, AID's Office of International Training provides educational opportunities for thousands of individuals each year through participant training in the United States and in third countries. However, women sometimes decline, or are denied the opportunity, to attend due to social pressures that discourage women from traveling alone. We observed in the field that even when development opportunities are brought to their communities, women are sometimes restricted by their husbands from becoming involved. On some occasions, when women gain access to development resources, the success they attain can stir resentment and even prompt men to co-opt their activity.

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## Evolving Rationale for Women-in- Development

Women-in-development has suffered from the perception that the subject was an isolated concern pushed by a narrow special interest group. In the minds of some development professionals, women-in-development was synonymous with welfare and subsidy.<sup>12</sup> Donor and host countries at times promoted women-only projects with limited market potential in the margins of the mainstream economy.<sup>13</sup> Rather than questioning their approach, some saw the mediocre results of many of these efforts as confirmation that women-in-development was an unproductive welfare issue.

In the early 1970s, women-in-development research began focusing on the long-neglected roles, needs, and potential of women. As indicated in this appendix, research indicated that neglecting women's roles and access to resources could result in program or project goals not being achieved. Conversely, consideration of gender dynamics could ensure that resources were targeted more effectively and equitably and that results were more

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<sup>11</sup>Hazou, pp. 199-200.

<sup>12</sup>Mohini Malhotra, "Why Bother With That Gender Issue?," *Developing Alternatives*, Development Alternatives, Inc. (Washington, D.C.), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>*Gender Issues in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management*, Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination, Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 1989), p. 5.

sustainable. These findings led to the rationale that the study of gender was essential for equitable and sustainable development.

The argument that attention to women-in-development is necessary for equity and sustainable development supports AID's stated policy goals of working toward equitable and sustainable development.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the Percy Amendment recognized this rationale in its call to enhance women's status and improve the total development effort. Equity and sustainable development were also stressed in congressional report language on the Percy Amendment referring to "the importance of actively integrating women into development for reasons of equity and economics."<sup>15</sup>

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## Attention to Gender Considered Essential for Equity

Initially, the concern for equity was a stronger impetus for women-in-development advocates. The Percy Amendment directed that U.S. foreign assistance be used as a tool that would help ensure that women as well as men benefited from development activities, thus elevating their status. As noted in chapter 2, congressional report language in the late 1980s reinforced the notion that equity requires a certain proportionality. It directed AID to design its activities so that the percentage of women to receive assistance be in approximate proportion to their traditional participation in a given activity, or their proportion of the population, whichever is higher. Measuring these proportions can be a challenge because women's traditional responsibilities are rapidly changing and their participation in the economic life of their countries is often underestimated.<sup>16</sup>

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## Women Have Not Received Assistance Commensurate With Their Numbers or Contributions

Women are the sole breadwinners in one-fourth to one-third of the families in the world, and they provide most domestically consumed food in developing countries. Demographics are forcing even greater responsibilities upon women. Due to the pressures of population and poverty, men in many nations have emigrated to urban areas in search of employment. The result has been an increasing workload and contribution

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<sup>14</sup>Women in Development, Agency for International Development, Policy Paper, AID (Washington, D.C.: AID, Oct. 1982), p. 2.

<sup>15</sup>Report 101-165 (with H.R.2939), Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: July 1989), p. 97.

<sup>16</sup>1989 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, United Nations (New York: 1989), p. 291.

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**Appendix I**  
**Research on the Need for a Gender Focus in**  
**Development**

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by women, particularly in agriculture.<sup>17</sup> Increasingly, the small farmer producing food throughout the developing world is a woman.

However, cultural patterns have typically limited women's access and control over development resources.<sup>18</sup> For example, marriage and inheritance laws often deny women ownership of land, which is the main source of livelihood and collateral. Although women constitute half the world's population, they own less than one-hundredth of its property, the United Nations reports. As the landholding majority, men are more likely to benefit from financial and technical extension programs—the usual means employed by aid agencies to reach farmers. Therefore, despite their contributions, female farmers typically have had limited access to such technical assistance, training, or credit.

Moreover, conventional development practices have sometimes had the effect of diminishing rather than enhancing women's status. Development policies emphasizing exports or cash crops sometimes shift land and resources away from women engaged in subsistence farming or compound their unpaid workload.<sup>19</sup> The effect has at times been to diminish women's status, rather than enhance it.

Despite the merits of the "equity" rationale, it appears not to have been an argument that could persuade both donors and recipients to embrace women-in-development.<sup>20</sup> To some extent, the rationale appeared to rest on western concepts of "feminism" that did not transfer well to developing nations.<sup>21</sup> However, when considered the antecedent or determinant of sound development, the equity case was strengthened. AID's 1974 policy document claims, as one of its primary tenets, that equity is integral to development itself.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Gender and the Environment: Crosscutting Issues in Sustainable Development, Bureau for Research and Development, Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.), p. 4.

<sup>18</sup>Women in Development: A Report to Congress, FY89-FY 90, Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination, Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.: 1991), p. 38.

<sup>19</sup>Jodi L. Jacobson, Gender Bias: Roadblock to Sustainable Development, Worldwatch Paper 110 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 1992), p. 7.

<sup>20</sup>Judy C. Bryson, et al., Gender and Food Aid, Bureau for Research and Development, Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 1992), p. viii.

<sup>21</sup>D. Caro and D. Rubin, "Making a Better Case: Reassessing the Concept of Gender in Development," A paper presented at the International Development Conference (Washington D.C.: Jan. 1993).

<sup>22</sup>Integration of Women into National Economies, Policy Determination No.60 for the Agency for International Development and the Department of State (Washington D.C.: Sept. 1974), p. 1.



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## Gender Analysis Considered Essential for Sustainable Development

The gender analysis approach is increasingly considered by many development professionals as a means to an end—to improve project efficiency and effectiveness by releasing the full economic potential of women as well as men.<sup>23</sup> A distinction can be made between short- and long-term efficiency. For example, in some instances, it may be more “efficient” in the short term to focus development resources on males. They are often more readily able to absorb training because their social standing affords them more education and free time than females. Demographers have found, however, that given mobility patterns, men often do not stay in the place or the activity for which the training was intended. In contrast, women are afforded comparatively less mobility and comprise much of the “institutional memory” in some sectors. It is therefore often desirable to invest more resources in the female portion of the work force to achieve more sustainable, efficient development.

Consideration of gender issues does not need to represent yet another chore. AID emphasizes in its training that such consideration is central to the achievement of its primary objectives.<sup>24</sup> A 1985 review of 101 AID projects by AID’s Center for Development Information and Evaluation found that when women’s participation rate was high, project success was high, and when women’s participation rates were low, project success tended to be moderate or low.<sup>25</sup> Women-in-development is the cross-sectoral common denominator for all development activities. AID has stated that gender roles are a key variable that can be decisive in the success or failure of any development plans and that involving women throughout the various sectors of development is critical to achieving sustainable economic growth.<sup>26</sup> U.N. studies also assert that the consideration of women’s contributions and potentials is critical to the outcome of development planning.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>IFAD’s *Strategies for the Economic Advancement of Poor Rural Women*, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Governing Council, Fifteenth Session, Agenda Item 8 (Rome: Jan. 1992), p. 2.

<sup>24</sup>“Gender Dimensions of Program Effectiveness: A REDSO/WCA Regional Workshop,” training material prepared and conducted by the GENESYS Project (Washington, D.C.: 1993), sec. 1, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup>“Concepts, Tools and Applications for Considering Gender in Development: Integrating Gender Considerations Into Strategic Planning,” training material prepared and conducted by the GENESYS Project (Washington, D.C.: 1992), sec. 1, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup>Report to Congress, FY 89-90, pp. 6 and 10.

<sup>27</sup>1989 *World Survey*, pp. 291 and 299.

## Understanding Gender Dynamics Is Key to Program Efforts

Women's contributions to critical sectors have often been masked by conventional assumptions about household spending in developing nations. The development community historically presumed that household incomes were (1) dominated by the contribution of the male "breadwinner," (2) pooled with supplemental income from women and children, and (3) redistributed within the family according to need. However, subsequent research has contradicted these long-held assumptions. It has been learned that the prevailing pattern of household economics is that of separate and distinct income streams and expenditures.<sup>28</sup> Studies in many nations show that it is more often women's income that meets the family's basic needs, such as food, clothing, health care, and education.<sup>29</sup>

Evidence also indicates that development resources targeting the "farm household" typically reach men and fail to "trickle across" to women. Indeed, a variety of research reveals that it is quite possible for the standard of living within a single household to be lower for the wife and daughters than for the husband and sons.<sup>30</sup>

Not only can consideration of women or gender increase the chance of obtaining optimal results in development work, but it can also help avert outright failures due to misconceived and ill-targeted aid. As AID training now emphasizes, failure to include gender in a project design is a major cause of negative outcomes in development work.<sup>31</sup> Whatever the sector of development, the failure to consider gender variables is in itself a development flaw. Because AID's Office for Women in Development has for several years placed priority upon agriculture, private enterprise, education, and environmental/natural resources, our following discussion of the relevance of gender to development focuses on these sectors.

## Agriculture

Women have acquired a wealth of knowledge about indigenous crop varieties, cropping systems, and sound cultivation that is waiting to be tapped. International development agencies, including AID, assert that tapping this potential can be not just a matter of development but of

<sup>28</sup>Women in Development, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup>Rae Lesser Blumberg, Making the Case by the Gender Variable: Women and the Wealth and Well-being of Nations (Washington, D.C.: 1989).

<sup>30</sup>Diane Elson, The Impact of Structural Adjustment on Women: Concepts and Issues, University of Manchester (1987).

<sup>31</sup>"Concepts, Tools and Applications," sec.1. p. 2.

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survival itself.<sup>32</sup> The First Lady of a West African nation asserted that enlisting women is critical to her country's food security. The key is access and control over resources. Studies have shown that when women are afforded the same inputs and resources as men, their agricultural production is often higher.<sup>33</sup>

In Africa, women perform as much as 80 percent of the agricultural labor, but are not extended corresponding levels of assistance, which has led to dire consequences. The report to the 1985 Nairobi Women's Conference asserted that women's systematic denial of access to land and of control over inputs for modern agriculture contributed to Africa's acute food shortages.<sup>34</sup> AID policy affirms that, whatever the region, unless women are allowed such access, attempts to raise production and achieve national self-sufficiency will be thwarted.<sup>35</sup>

Even when attempts are made to involve women in agricultural development activities, project goals will not be achieved if consideration is not given to gender dynamics. For example, for a rice project in Cameroon, women were asked to assist the men by transplanting and harvesting rice. The men were given the agricultural inputs and control of crop sales. Not only were the benefits and inputs not directed toward women, but they were asked to contribute labor, while at the same time continuing with their traditional cultivation of sorghum. The women did not participate, and the project failed in its objectives. Had gender analysis been conducted in advance, this outcome might have been prevented.<sup>36</sup>

## Private Enterprise

Small informal businesses constitute a large part of the economy in developing nations. While often uncounted in official surveys, women represent a significant and growing portion of such enterprises.<sup>37</sup> Conventional methods of "incorporating" women into private enterprise have typically steered them toward activities with limited potential, such as handicraft production. Such ventures have done little to improve the long-term economic needs of poorer women and have sometimes even

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<sup>32</sup>Guidelines for Action for the Economic Advancement of Poor Rural Women, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Governing Council, Fifteenth Session, Agenda Item 8, Annex (Rome: Jan. 1992), p. 3.

<sup>33</sup>Guidelines for Action, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup>Women: The Roots of Rural Development, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup>Women in Development, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup>Women in Development, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup>Mari H. Clark, "Gender Issues in Microenterprise Assistance," New Directions in US Foreign Assistance and New Roles for Anthropologists, No. 44 (Apr. 1991), p. 111.

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**Appendix I  
Research on the Need for a Gender Focus in  
Development**

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diverted them from subsistence activities critical to the family.<sup>38</sup> AID's 1982 Policy Paper notes that the impact of such an approach has been to keep women in the unproductive sectors of the economy.

Women face institutional and cultural barriers in attempting to establish themselves in business, despite evidence that when women are provided access to business assistance, they perform as well as or better than their male counterparts in generating employment and operating their businesses.<sup>39</sup> A study produced by an AID collaborative project concluded that properly administered credit provided to female entrepreneurs can be an effective way to stimulate business development.<sup>40</sup> Experience is also showing that women in developing nations tend to have significantly higher loan repayment rates than men and are better at accumulating savings.<sup>41</sup> These findings point to the positive impact that an increased role for women can have in that sector.

## Education

Female education often has an impact far beyond a woman's own self improvement. Because of the pervasive role of women in many African societies, this view is captured in an African proverb: "If you educate a man, you educate an individual. If you educate a woman, you educate a nation." A report recently prepared for AID claimed that female basic education is perhaps the most cost-effective way of launching women into the development process.<sup>42</sup>

Women and girls face cultural and logistical impediments to their access to education. The impediments exist despite the mounting evidence that success or failure in numerous other development sectors closely correlates to female education.<sup>43</sup> These sectors include environmental protection, economic productivity, health, nutrition, family planning, infant mortality, and life expectancy. For example, one sectoral study found that child mortality decreases by 9 percent for each year increase in

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<sup>38</sup>Malhotra, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup>Clark, p. 113.

<sup>40</sup>Report to Congress FY 89-90, p.43.

<sup>41</sup>C. Jean Weidemann, Financial Services for Women: Tools for Microenterprise Programs, the GEMINI Project (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 1992), p. 1.

<sup>42</sup>Joseph C. Wheeler, Issues in Supporting Sustainable Development Objectives, prepared for the Bureau of Research and Development, Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 1993), pp. 10-11.

<sup>43</sup>Education Strategy Development, Bureau of Research and Development, Agency for International Development, (Washington, D.C.: July 1992), p. 1.

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**Appendix I**  
**Research on the Need for a Gender Focus in**  
**Development**

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the mother's education. It further found that in African nations, a 1-percent increase in the population's literacy is associated with a 2-year gain in life expectancy.<sup>44</sup> Due to such findings, the World Bank has called female education "one of the best investments a country can make in its future growth and welfare."<sup>45</sup>

Despite the undisputed benefits of education, a gender gap still exists in terms of female educational attainment.<sup>46</sup> Two-thirds of the world's 950 million illiterate adults are women. The rate of female illiteracy is growing at a pace faster than male illiteracy. This disparity also applies to the younger generation. Of the 100 million children who have no access to primary school, a majority are girls. To some degree, this reflects a conscious decision made by parents.<sup>47</sup> For example, U.N. Children's Fund report conducted in Latin America found that both fathers and mothers favored a higher level of education for their sons than for their daughters.

Individuals who do not have basic education find it much more difficult to take advantage of higher levels of training and skills development later.<sup>48</sup> The handicap, however, extends beyond these individuals. It is AID's view that without a major increase in the number of girls who attain primary and secondary education, no significant progress in raising the levels of education in society as a whole is possible.<sup>49</sup>

**Environment/Natural  
Resources**

AID policy indicates that environmental sustainable development—balancing the use of natural resources with resource conservation—is at the heart of all of its programs.<sup>50</sup> Women in developing nations know much about the attributes of forest products and play a primary role in the conservation of scarce resources. Furthermore, as AID affirms, women are also important providers and consumers of energy.

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<sup>44</sup>FY 92 Plan of Action, Bureau for Science and Technology, with the Office of Education, Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.: 1992), p. 1.

<sup>45</sup>Women in Development, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup>Education Strategy Development, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup>1989 World Survey, p. 26.

<sup>48</sup>Mary B. Anderson, Gender Issues in Basic Education and Vocational Training, submitted to the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination, Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.: 1986), p. 3.

<sup>49</sup>Women in Development, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup>Gender and the Environment, p. 2.

They therefore have a large stake in the success of the agency's reforestation projects.<sup>51</sup>

Gender analysis can be employed to harness women's potential in this sector. For example, a project in Kenya sought to enlist women in conservation activities, but ignored a social soundness analysis that pointed to time constraints faced by these women. Midstream into the activity, project managers recognized that their targets for the women were not realistic and readjusted the time frame for their conservation work. The project subsequently achieved its objectives due to this adaptation, which was due, in turn, to gender analysis.<sup>52</sup>

AID strategy documents hold that sustainable forest management programs cannot succeed without including women.<sup>53</sup> A case in point is rural Africa, where about 60 to 80 percent of all fuel wood is collected by women. Yet, as one study suggests, countless forest conservation programs have failed because development planners did not consult women.<sup>54</sup>

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## Attention to Gender Considered Important for Economic Restructuring

The World Bank has maintained that no development project can succeed if the host country policy environment is flawed with "markets distorted by inappropriate regulation and price supports" and inefficient, excessive government expenditures. Restructuring economic policy through dialogue with host governments became an important objective of U.S. aid to developing countries during the 1980s, and, according to one study prepared for AID, may continue to increase in scope during the early 1990s.

In a similar vein, restructuring, or facilitating the transition from socialism to the open market, is now an overriding consideration for U.S. assistance to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. These diverse nations share the common task of moving from command economies to market economies. They also share the common risk that, in so doing, the women of their countries may be disproportionately harmed by the changes.

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<sup>51</sup>Women in Development, p. 8.

<sup>52</sup>Concepts, Tools and Applications, sec. p. 8.

<sup>53</sup>Rosalie H. Norem, Gender Issues for the AID Environmental Strategy, Bureau of Research and Development, Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.: 1991), p. 1.

<sup>54</sup>Jacobson, p. 8.

## Women Disproportionately Hurt by Structural Adjustment Programs

U.N. research, as well as a 1988 report prepared for the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development warned that structural adjustment may have a short-term, disproportionate negative impact on women's employment, income, and consumption as well as their access to vital goods, services, and resources.<sup>55</sup> The report also contends that girls' access to education, which is already limited, is curtailed even further by government cuts and families' needs to pull daughters from school to assist their mothers whose responsibilities have greatly increased under the adjustment programs.

Lengthy research carried out for AID in 1992, as well as AID training materials used in 1993, assert that women tend to experience adjustment "particularly severely."<sup>56</sup> The research challenges the notion that women eventually benefit from adjustment through employment opportunities in growing sectors of the economy. It finds this to be a "weak argument," claiming instead that women do not typically participate in the higher wage sectors, thereby limiting the income redistribution effects of adjustment.

Women are often more than proportionately represented in the public service, and thus may bear the brunt of wage or job cuts that adjustment can force upon this sector. Furthermore, primarily due to their child-bearing and child-care roles, women have a greater dependency on public services. They bear an inordinate share of social responsibilities, such as family health and education, that reforming governments are shifting to the private sector. As a result, women have been forced to act as "shock absorbers" for structural adjustment, thereby increasing their workload and curtailing their own consumption.<sup>57</sup>

Both the U.N. Children's Fund and the U.N. International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women have warned of the huge amounts of labor—often not socially recognized—that structural adjustment programs have been extracting from women.<sup>58</sup> The 1991 U.N.

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<sup>55</sup>Susan Joekes, et al., *Women and Structural Adjustment, Part II: Technical Document*, prepared for the meeting of the Women in Development Expert Group of the OECD Development Assistance Committee OECD/DAC (Paris: 1988), p. 32.

<sup>56</sup>Ron Hood, et al., *Gender and Adjustment*, the Mayatech Corporation, prepared for the Bureau of Research and Development, Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 1992), p. xii.

<sup>57</sup>Hood, p. xiv.

<sup>58</sup>U.N. agencies quoted in *Reaganomics and Women: Structural Adjustment U.S. Style, 1980-1992*, (Washington, D.C.), p. 28.

publication *World's Women* states that women were hit particularly hard by the economic upheaval in many nations during the 1980s.<sup>59</sup> Many women now work 60 to 90 hours per week just to maintain the marginal standard of living they possessed a decade ago. Another U.N. report refers to this compensatory labor by women as "the invisible adjustment."<sup>60</sup>

While many governments and international agencies increasingly support women-in-development initiatives, not all have emphasized comparable attention to women's concerns in the process of designing adjustment policies.<sup>61</sup> Various studies assert that there is a lack of information upon which to make informed women-in-development policy prescriptions. They urge the collection and analysis of gender-specific data on various aspects of structural adjustment in order to better monitor the conditions women face during these periods.<sup>62</sup>

Studies of two West African nations conducted for AID found that gender-related constraints can place a strong brake on structural adjustment efforts.<sup>63</sup> They found that failure to address women's lack of access to resources such as education has a high opportunity cost. The studies concluded that "gender-neutral" restructuring that undervalues women or does not address the constraints they face only makes adjustment more difficult. Similarly, the U.N. Children's Fund argued that women's concerns should be consciously addressed when formulating adjustment policies "with a human face."<sup>64</sup> Donor nations have the opportunity, through policy dialogue, to emphasize gender concerns, thereby safeguarding women and optimizing the structural adjustment efforts.

### Women Disproportionately Hurt in Some Instances by Transition From Socialism

The assertion that women are suffering more than men appears substantiated in some but not all of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Moreover, given the pace and turmoil

<sup>59</sup>Women's World, United Nations (New York: 1991).

<sup>60</sup>Challenges, p. 22.

<sup>61</sup>Dr. Richard Jolly, *Women's Needs and Adjustment Policies in Developing Countries*, UNICEF, (New York: Oct. 1988), pp. 15-16.

<sup>62</sup>Susan Joeques, et al., *Women and Structural Adjustment, Part I: A Summary of the Issues*, prepared for the meeting of the Women in Development Expert Group of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (Paris: 1988), p. 1.

<sup>63</sup>Gender and Adjustment, p. 153.

<sup>64</sup>Caroline O.N. Moser, "Gender Planning in the Third World," *World Development*, 17/11, London School of Economics and Political Science (London: 1989).



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**Appendix I**  
**Research on the Need for a Gender Focus in**  
**Development**

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of events, such substantiation sometimes lies more in the form of media reporting than empirical evidence. Finally, whatever the decline in status that recent events have forced upon women of these nations, they still fare considerably better than their counterparts in other developing nations.

Even with these stipulations in mind, the impact of current events upon women of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union has been noteworthy. For example, the *Moscow Times* reported in February 1993 that Russia's Labor Minister openly contended that women should not compete with men for jobs, but rather should concentrate on maintaining the household.<sup>65</sup> The Supreme Soviet is considering legislation that would provide incentives for women to stay home. In eastern Germany, the media reports that the proportion of unemployed who are female went from roughly one-half to two-thirds in the period of about a year.<sup>66</sup>

An AID report on Poland found that the number of women without jobs had been consistently rising faster than the number of men without jobs since January 1990.<sup>67</sup> It also quoted Polish analysts who maintained that unemployment among women is likely to surge once sectors where they are heavily represented are forced to cut back. Another AID study conducted in Hungary, however, found that men suffered greater rates of unemployment because the heavy industrial sectors, which tend to hire men, have been most affected by the changes.<sup>68</sup> In neither country did AID find legal barriers to women's participation in the private sector, nor did it detect any weakening in the labor law or family benefits that constitute social security in these two countries. The report on Poland warned, however, that a gap could emerge between labor law and practice, given the uncertainty over whether the new private sector could afford to help sustain such social benefits and still be competitive.

These AID studies have found that gender is important to consider in the context of making a sustainable transition to the market economy. Given their levels of education and skills, women can be a valuable resource that

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<sup>65</sup>Jennifer Gould, "Women Should Stay at Home, Minister Says," *The Moscow Times* (Feb. 11, 1993), p. 1.

<sup>66</sup>Peter Gartner, "Women the First to be Sacked as Closures Boost Unemployment," *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* (Sept. 4, 1992).

<sup>67</sup>Poland: *Gender Issues in the Transition to a Market Economy*, prepared by the Bureaus of Research and Development and of Private Enterprise, Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 1991), p. 52.

<sup>68</sup>Hungary: *Gender Issues in the Transition to a Market Economy*, Prepared by the Bureaus of Research and Development and of Private Enterprise, Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 1991), p. 53.

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**Appendix I**  
**Research on the Need for a Gender Focus in**  
**Development**

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should be tapped on behalf of this transition. The studies identified areas of programming in which a gender perspective could both optimize restructuring efforts and lessen the adverse effects upon women. Training was considered the most important programming area. While contemporary East European women have been fairly well represented in the financial sectors, they now must adapt to the demands of the market economy. The research contends that if women are not trained in the skills for competing in a market economy, both women and the East European economies could suffer.<sup>69</sup>

Another vital area of programming identified by these studies was the collection of gender-specific data. Given the changing economic conditions, to which some groups are more vulnerable than others, they found that it is important to monitor trends on a gender-specific basis. The research concluded, however, that host country officials often associated concern for a gender perspective with "feminism" and did not grasp the benefits, particularly in the changing private sector, of gender-specific data.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, these studies found no evidence that gender-specific data had been collected for U.S. assistance projects in Poland and Hungary. Another report submitted to AID, covering the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary, found a comparable lack of gender-based data in these nations. It also found that gender issues were not a major concern of government officials or private sector companies.

As with structural adjustment programs, donor nations involved with assistance to formerly socialist countries have the opportunity through policy dialogue to emphasize gender concerns, thereby safeguarding women and optimizing the transition to a market economy.

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<sup>69</sup>Poland: Gender Issues, p. 57.

<sup>70</sup>Hungary: Gender Issues, p. 59.

# Comments From the Agency for International Development

Note: GAO comments supplementing those in the report text appear at the end of this appendix.



U.S. AGENCY FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

NOV 4 1993

Mr. Frank C. Conahan  
Assistant Comptroller General  
United States General  
Accounting Office  
441 G Street, N.W. - Room 5055  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Conahan:

I am pleased to provide the Agency for International Development's (A.I.D.) formal response on the draft GAO report entitled "FOREIGN ASSISTANCE: U.S. Has Made Slow Progress in Promoting Women in Development Issues" (GAO Code 472315, June, 1993).

The analysis in your report is timely since this Administration intends to enhance the priority given to gender issues in development.

A.I.D.'s response to the report's recommendations is attached, along with a summary of factual corrections.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the GAO draft report and for the courtesies extended by your staff in the conduct of this review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M. Sherwin", written in a cursive style.

Michael Sherwin  
Acting Assistant Administrator  
Bureau for Management

Attachment: a/s

320 TWENTY-FIRST STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20523

Appendix II  
Comments From the Agency for  
International Development

A.I.D. Comments on the GAO Draft Report, "FOREIGN ASSISTANCE:  
U.S. Has Made SLOW Progress in Promoting Women in Development  
Issues" (GAO Code 472315, June, 1993)

**I. FACTUAL CORRECTIONS**

Paragraph 4, GAO page 29:

"A.I.D. has not yet implemented a system of program performance monitoring to effectively measure and report on the progress and results of its assistance efforts. A.I.D. is developing the Program Performance Information for Strategic Management (PRISM) system, an agencywide framework for program performance reporting and evaluating efforts through strengthening mission information systems and developing agencywide program performance indicators. The PRISM system currently covers 55 missions, and A.I.D. expects the system to cover all its central, regional, and bilateral programs by the end of fiscal year 1994. Of the 55 missions participating in the PRISM project, a 1991 review showed that 39 had developed strategic plans with adequate PRISM indicators. Of these, the missions in Africa and Latin America were the most advanced in developing meaningful program indicators."

There are a few errors in this paragraph and therefore we recommend the paragraph read:

A.I.D. is currently implementing a system of program performance monitoring to effectively measure and report on the progress and results of its assistance efforts. A.I.D. is developing the Program Performance Information for Strategic Management (PRISM) system, an agency-wide framework for program performance monitoring and reporting, including strengthening mission information systems and developing program performance indicators. The PRISM system currently covers 60 missions, and A.I.D. expects the system to cover all its central, regional, and bilateral programs by the end of fiscal year 1994. Of the 60 missions participating in the PRISM project, a 1993 review showed that 54 had developed strategic plans with adequate PRISM indicators. Of these, the missions in Africa, Latin America and the Near East were the most advanced in developing meaningful program indicators.

**II. COMMENTS ON OVERALL GAO INTERPRETATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

In general, A.I.D. does not disagree with the report findings which identify problems related to A.I.D.'s

See comment 1.

Now on p. 22.

Appendix II  
Comments From the Agency for  
International Development

implementation of policy guidance on women in development. However, we feel that the report does not sufficiently take into account the fact that some Bureaus and missions have made significant progress. For example:

- o The efforts of the Africa Bureau as described in the GAO draft report do not fully reflect the priority and initiative devoted to WID by the Bureau. Africa was the first Bureau to spearhead a major WID initiative that recognized the critical importance of additional resources in the field that USAID Missions could easily access. The placement of WID advisors/advocates in East, West and Southern Africa as well as an Africa Bureau WID advisor represents the Bureau's commitment to act boldly and broadly towards improving the status of women through A.I.D.'s programs and projects. The Bureau has clearly demonstrated its preparedness to innovate and go beyond routine measures in order to promote the needs and aspirations of African women.
- o The Latin America and Caribbean Bureau is not mentioned in the report. This bureau has recruited a WID advisor and carried out WID training, implemented a WID strategy, articulated a WID research agenda, improved dissemination of WID research results and guidance to the field, helped missions incorporate WID into their program strategies, and has analyzed reporting and results.
- o The Asia Bureau's Democracy Program recently funded a study on the relationship between gender and political participation in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Thailand. The WID Office and the Asia Bureau recently provided a one-year grant to the Asia Foundation for a women's program in political participation in several countries in Asia and the Pacific. The Asia Bureau, like the LAC Bureau, has hired a gender/WID advisor to assist in the development and implementation of a Bureau WID Action Plan, focusing particularly on mission needs.
- o Near East Bureau management is giving women in development concerns priority as evidenced by the hiring of a full-time WID advisor who is responsible for conducting evaluations of each program in the Bureau to assess the integration of gender issues and implement systematic procedures to ensure appropriate program design, monitoring and evaluation.
- o In July 1993, the Bureau for Private Enterprise hired a full-time WID advisor who is responsible for conducting evaluations of each program in the Bureau to assess the integration of gender issues and establish systematic

Now on p. 26.

Now on p. 26.

Now on p. 26.

Appendix II  
Comments From the Agency for  
International Development

procedures to ensure appropriate program design, monitoring and evaluation.

- o The Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States (ENI, formerly EUR and NIS) is presently engaged in a number of program and data collection efforts which address gender concerns in the NIS. The Bureau is putting in place an evaluation and monitoring system, which among other things, will have the capacity to monitor impact on women. ENI/NIS also is conducting a comprehensive household income survey which will demonstrate impact on women over time, a study on the legal status of women, focussing on national growth and social stability, numerous business development and PVO linkage activities which specifically target women as beneficiaries and a vulnerable groups feeding program for infants, pregnant women and mothers.
- o Since the Report was written, ENI/Europe has hired a WID Advisor, established a WID working group, commissioned several studies on gender issues, conducted a Bureau and region-wide WID assessment, and developed a draft WID strategy with recommendations for a Bureau policy and action plan. The strategy should be finalized within the next few weeks and gender issues will be incorporated into program strategies.
- o Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance (FHA) programs have direct and immediate impact on women, especially since women and their children are unfortunately the most affected by natural and man-made disasters. FHA provides substantial assistance (both food and non-food) through PVOs which are sensitive both to gender issues and to providing the sort of community level assistance which benefits women.

III. COMMENTS ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT

RECOMMENDATION 1:

"Require all A.I.D. bureaus and missions to establish, in accordance with existing directives, effective women in development strategies and action plans and establish reasonable deadlines for their timely completion."

RESERVATION IN TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

Most A.I.D. bureaus currently have women in development strategies and plans to guide the integration of gender issues into bureau programs. Several were finalized after initial GAO interviews and therefore are not reflected in this report.

At the mission level, integrating gender concerns into overall action plans has been more effective in promoting good

Now on p. 28.

Now on p. 28.

Now on p. 29.

See comment 2.

Appendix II  
Comments From the Agency for  
International Development

See comment 2.

development than requiring separate mission WID action plans. Our experience with separate mission WID action plans suggests that they tend to become a checklist of process actions, e.g. training courses held. Hence, they tend to marginalize WID concerns as a "special interest," something apart from the mission program. Therefore, we will revise our guidance to emphasize integration of gender concerns into overall action plans, including the establishment of reasonable deadlines for reaching stated benchmarks.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

"Develop systems and procedures for centrally monitoring the timely completion and effective execution of bureau and mission strategies and action plans."

RESERVATION IN TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

A.I.D. plans to strengthen the WID office, both in terms of direct-hire staff and in terms of its ability to monitor the Agency's WID programs and programmatic impacts.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

"Direct that women in development policy objectives be incorporated in all nonproject assistance programming."

RESERVATION IN TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

Incorporation of women in development policy objectives into nonproject assistance programming is important, and A.I.D. is pursuing this goal. The experience of other donors confirms A.I.D.'s experience that measuring people-level policy impact is complex and challenging. Effective implementation requires better research to measure the impacts of policy reform on people. The central WID Office is supporting such research.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

"Assure the timely completion and evaluation of the PRISM system so that A.I.D. has the information needed to more effectively design, implement, and evaluate women in development efforts and to more effectively measure the institutional commitment to women in development."

RESERVATION IN TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

PRISM is not a program or strategy design or evaluation system and will not provide all of the information that the Agency will need to design and evaluate WID strategies and programs.

See comment 2.

See comment 2.

Appendix II  
Comments From the Agency for  
International Development

PRISM, or subsequent systems, can provide information on development outcomes, including sex-disaggregated data and other women in development information, only to the extent that the missions and other operating units have included these concerns in their strategic objectives, program outcomes and indicators.

However, other more direct, operationally relevant measures of institutional commitment would need to be identified and tracked. These might include, for example, establishing Agency women in development targets and deadlines for addressing gender issues, locating authority and accountability in key line management positions within the organization, instituting reporting and review requirements and providing adequate incentive systems to achieve results. This effort goes well beyond the PRISM system.



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**Appendix II  
Comments From the Agency for  
International Development**

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The following are GAO's comments on the Agency for International Development's letter dated November 4, 1993.

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**GAO Comments**

1. Additional information on the development of PRISM has been incorporated into the report on p. 22.
2. AID's comments on our recommendations are addressed in the "Agency Comments and Our Evaluation" section in chapter 2.

# Comments From the Department of State



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520


NOV 8 1993

Dear Mr. Conahan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your draft report, "FOREIGN ASSISTANCE: U.S. Has Made Slow Progress in Promoting Women-In-Development Issues," GAO Job Code 472315. On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer, we are submitting comments and suggested changes.

If you have any questions concerning this response, please call Sharon Kotok, IO/DHS, at 647-1155.

Sincerely,

  
Carolyn S. Lowengart  
Director  
Management Policy

Enclosure:  
As stated.

cc:  
GAO - Ms. Solis  
State - Ms. Kotok

Mr. Frank C. Conahan,  
Assistant Comptroller General,  
National Security and International Affairs,  
U.S. General Accounting Office.

Appendix III  
Comments From the Department of State

**GAO Draft Report: "FOREIGN ASSISTANCE:  
U.S. has made Slow Progress in Promoting  
Women-in-Development Issues,"  
GAO Job Code 472315**

The Department of State has reviewed the GAO draft report on women in development (WID). The Department has taken several actions to promote the full integration of women in development and is committed to increasing its focus on WID issues, as evidenced by the following.

Secretary of State Christopher announced at the World Conference on Human Rights that the Administration will ask the Senate to take up ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. After the Senate acts on the Race Convention, the Administration will move toward ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. We believe this step-by-step approach toward human rights treaty ratification--developed in consultation with interested Senate offices--will best ensure broad and bipartisan support for the human rights treaty ratification process.

Although the GAO report states that some UN officials have said the U.S. has not been as strong an advocate of women's issues as other countries, the U.S. has been a leader in promoting measures to advance the status of women. For example, at the 1993 Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNHRC), the U.S. introduced a resolution on the rape and abuse of women in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, which condemns the rape and abuse, reaffirms that all persons who perpetrate or authorize crimes against humanity and other violations of international humanitarian law are individually responsible, and requests the Special Rapporteur to pursue a specific investigation into the rape and abuse.

At the UNHRC, the U.S. also co-sponsored resolutions entitled "Integrating the Rights of Women into the Human Rights Mechanisms of the United Nations," which recommends the appointment of a special rapporteur on violence against women, and "Human Rights and Thematic Procedures," which encourages special rapporteurs and working groups to include gender disaggregated data in their reports.

See comment 1.

Now on p. 38.

Appendix III  
Comments From the Department of State

At the 1993 session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the U.S. took the lead in introducing three of the CSW's 16 resolutions. The U.S.-sponsored resolution on the rape and abuse of women in the territory of the former Yugoslavia--which condemns the rape and abuse and urges governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations to provide physical, social, and psychological rehabilitation services for women and children subjected to rape--marked a significant development at the CSW: consideration of a country-specific situation other than the resolutions on Palestinian women and apartheid.

The U.S. also introduced a resolution on women and legal literacy, which urges governments to ensure that persons responsible for enforcing and interpreting the law are aware of rights set out in international instruments, and a resolution to strengthen the CSW communications procedure, a procedure whereby women can file complaints of gender discrimination.

In addition to introducing three resolutions, the U.S. co-sponsored three: the "Draft Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women," "Women, Environment, and Development," and "Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat."

Over the past several years the U.S. has either introduced or co-sponsored resolutions in the CSW and the UN General Assembly to improve the status of women in the UN Secretariat. These resolutions have set goals for increasing the number of women in professional level positions in the UN Secretariat and the specialized agencies. (The 1995 goal is for an overall participation rate of 35% and a 25% participation rate in posts at the D-1 level and above.)

In summary, the Department has pursued the goals of Section 305 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, which reads as follows:

"The President is requested to instruct each representative of the United States to each international organization of which the United States is a member (including but not limited to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) to carry out their duties with respect to such organizations in such a manner as to encourage and promote the integration of women into the national economies of member and recipient countries and into professional and policy-making positions within such organizations, thereby improving the status of women. The

Appendix III  
Comments From the Department of State

President is further requested, in making United States contributions to such organizations, to take into account the progress, or lack of progress, of such organizations in adopting and implementing policies and practices which encourage and promote the integration of women into the national economies of member and recipient countries, and into professional and policy-making positions within such organizations, in accordance with the World Plan of Action of the Decade for Women."

The Department of State will issue guidance to U.S. representatives to international organizations of which the U.S. is a member to carry out their duties in such a manner as to encourage and promote the integration of women into national economies and into professional and policy-making positions of such organizations. In addition, when making U.S. contributions to such organizations, we will take into account the progress, or lack of progress, in adopting and implementing policies and practices which encourage and promote the integration of women into national economies and into professional and policy-making positions in such organizations.

See comment 2.

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The following are GAO's comments on the Department of State's letter dated November 8, 1993.

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## GAO Comments

1. Information on recent State actions to promote women's issues has been incorporated into chapter 3.
2. Although State said that it "will issue guidance" on how U.S. representatives should implement section 305 of the Foreign Assistance Act, it has yet to issue such guidance, despite the fact that this has been a legislative requirement since 1974.

# Comments From the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees

NATIONS UNIES  
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POUR LES REFUGIES



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HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR REFUGEES

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CH-1211 Genève 2 Dépôt

5 November 1993

Dear Sir,

The High Commissioner has asked me to respond on her behalf to your request for comments on the draft review of US progress in promoting women-in-development issues, and in particular chapter 4 of this report which focuses on refugee women. I apologize for my delay in not meeting your 30 October deadline. Nevertheless, I hope you will consider the comments for inclusion in the final report.

As an overall comment, I believe your review is generally consistent with UNHCR's own assessment of progress in implementation of the Policy on Refugee Women. The report is based on visits to two countries, Kenya and Uganda, which, while they are important programmes, should not be seen as necessarily representative of our global implementation. Enclosed please find recent papers presented to the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme which update our progress.

I would like to make some specific observations which may be useful in elaborating certain points. As the report correctly points out, refugee women face acute problems, particularly related to physical violence and sexual abuse. On page 59, the report mentions the difficulties faced by Somali women, noting that "protection officers are primarily concerned with refugees' legal issues". I would point out that a paper on "Certain Aspects of Sexual Violence" (enclosed) was endorsed by the Executive Committee in October 1993. This paper clearly designates responsibility for physical protection to various organisations working with refugees, including UNHCR. The implementation of recommendations from this report will include, *inter alia*, extensive training of local police, immigration staff etc. in the appropriate standards of treatment for refugee women. Indeed, using the funds provided by the US Government, a protection analytic framework has since been developed for our People-Oriented Planning courses which will be integrated throughout our protection training, along with a case study to illustrate the situation of

See comment 1.

Mr. Harold J. Johnson,  
Director, International Affairs Issues  
United States General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548  
United States of America

**Appendix IV  
Comments From the U.N. High  
Commissioner for Refugees**

- 2 -

sexual violence. Specific to the Somali situation, a special project was submitted by our Office in July which aims at prevention as well as treatment of rape victims.

An area which would not have been picked up during your field visits is UNHCR's active efforts in advocacy - drawing international attention to the situation of refugee women and calling for appropriate responses. The most recent example of this is our participation in a Commission on the Status of Women Expert Group on Violence which resulted in extensive recommendations calling for international implementation of our Guidelines on Protection of Refugee Women. Another example is the work done on behalf of women refugee claimants which has resulted in more sensitive handling of such claims by asylum countries and, in the case of Canada, has contributed to the formulation of national guidelines on the issue.

Your report correctly points out that emergency response may be particularly insensitive to the concerns of refugee women. A module of our People-Oriented Planning course is presently included in the Emergency Management Training Course and the Head of the Emergency Unit is taking active steps to ensure that every sector presentation in the training addresses the impact of emergency intervention on women. Training of stand-by sectoral specialists will also include a focus on gender differential impact. In addition, stand-by arrangements with Swedish Save the Children have been recently completed which will permit the rapid fielding of community services officers in the first stage of an emergency. We hope these measures will go a significant way to addressing this problem.

I note that the report mentions the need for implementing partners such as NGOs to make increased efforts to ensure that their programmes benefit women and, in particular, that they be exposed to gender training. In this regard, UNHCR typically includes implementing partners in our POP training and has made active efforts through the Federation of Red Cross Societies and two umbrella organisations for implementing partners, the Canadian Council for International Cooperation and the Norwegian Refugee Council, to expose our training materials to them in the hope that they will adapt the training to their needs. In Cambodia, we have translated our training into Khmer to facilitate its use among local NGOs, and we are planning Portuguese translations for Mozambique. In our recent Executive Committee meeting, we challenged NGOs to analyse their own performance in the area of programming for women and repeated our offer of training materials. We are presently reviewing our options for reinforcing requirements for NGOs to apply the Guidelines and Policy on refugee women within our agreements with them.

With regard to the three report recommendations, I would like to make the following observations:

Increasing "Women's focal points to better ensure that the particular needs of women are being met" is, in some cases, indeed the most effective approach to ensure that our Policy is implemented. Your Government has in fact generously financed such posts when this is judged the most appropriate response. Nevertheless, we still prefer to insist that every staff member is

See comment 1.

Now on pp. 48-49.



Appendix IV  
Comments From the U.N. High  
Commissioner for Refugees

- 3 -

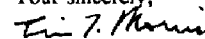
responsible for ensuring that refugee women benefit from our programmes. Specific posts are rather used to place particular emphasis in the short-term on "how to do it" rather than to replace individual accountability for implementation. We do, however, have an informal network of focal points, people who have expressed interest in working with refugee women. This group, along with our newly named focal points for the 1995 World Conference on Women, bring their own initiative and enthusiasm to the work without being formally tasked with the responsibility for implementation, which may lead other staff to abrogate their responsibilities in this area if there were formalised focal points.

Your second recommendation calling for expanded and strengthened gender training is already being implemented, thanks to increased funding provided by State Department for this purpose. In addition to the original People-Oriented Planning training, we now have modules being integrated into programming, protection and emergency training. The latest plan is to ensure integration into technical specialists training and into proposed field officer training.

Your third recommendation relates to evaluating the efficiency of gender training and is indeed necessary, but until we reach a critical mass of staff and implementing partners, this may be difficult to assess. Also, it is difficult to establish a cause and effect between the training and improved programming for women since there are many other factors which will influence this. In this regard, we are interested in learning from the USAID experience which has a \$ 10 million budget for this purpose for 1993 alone and has been conducting such training for over a decade, and therefore has a great deal to teach us.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for your interest and support to our programmes. Delivering programmes to refugee women presents particular difficulties not encountered by bilateral development agencies such as USAID. The report has identified some - the sensitivity of such programmes in a multicultural organization and the complexity of ensuring a focus when life-saving activities require rapid response. In addition, the breakdown of traditional social, cultural and economic structures requires constant monitoring to ensure that response is appropriate to the changed and changing situation. As well, problems related to physical security of the refugees and refugee workers are a constant threat in many cases. Nevertheless, I am pleased that in the four years that we have had a staff member specifically dedicated to this issue we have made major steps forward despite competing demands and the limited resources available for this task.

Your sincerely,



Eric Morris, Director,  
Division of Programmes and  
Operational Support

Now on p. 47.

Now on p. 49.

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**Appendix IV  
Comments From the U.N. High  
Commissioner for Refugees**

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The following is GAO's comment on the letter dated November 5, 1993, from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

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**GAO Comment**

1. Much of the information provided on gender training and protection updates our text and is reprinted in this appendix for clarification.

# Major Contributors to This Report

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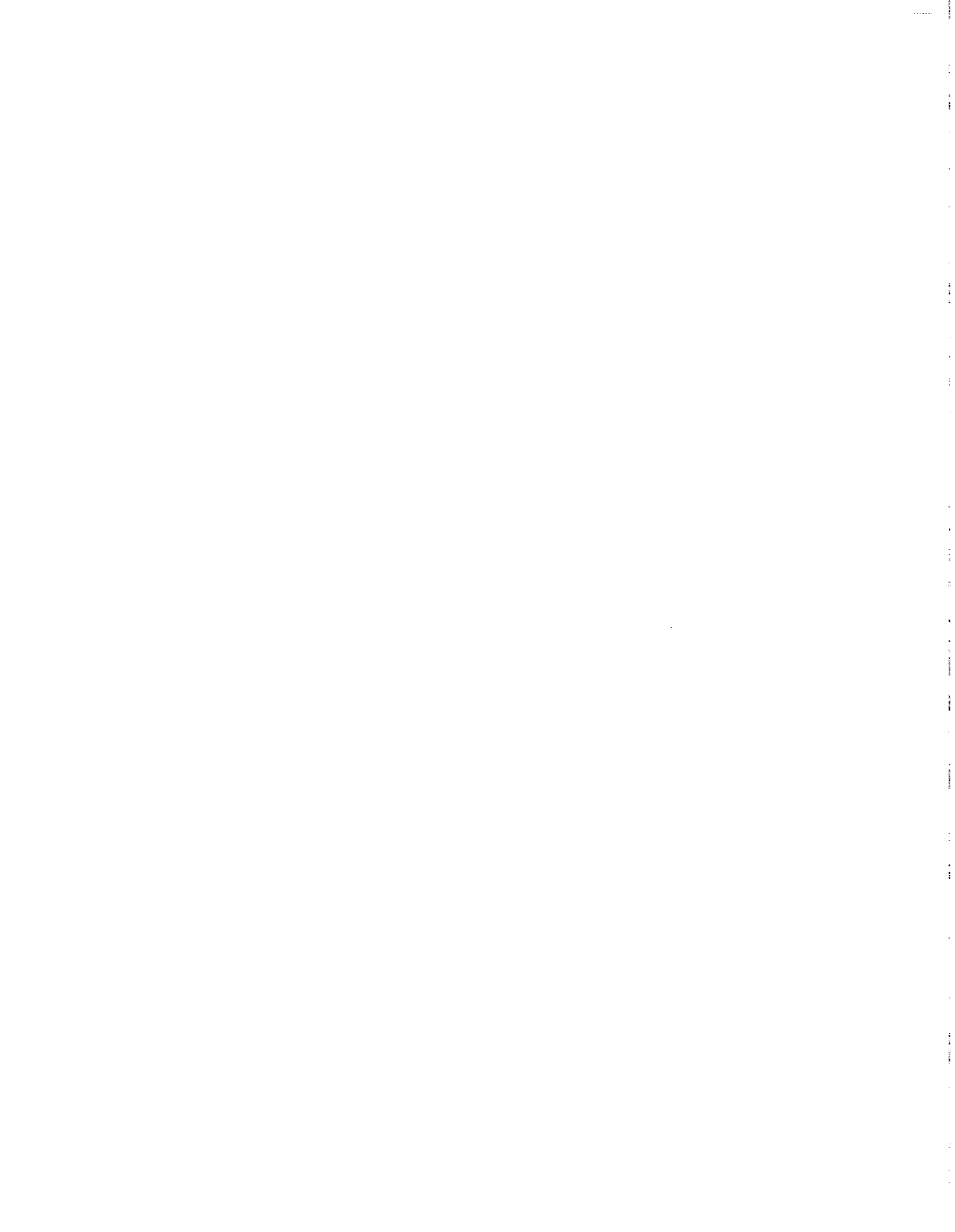
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