

Chapter 6

# The Role of Foreign Assistance in a Resource-Enhancing Approach

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# The Role of Foreign Assistance in a Resource-Enhancing Approach

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Congressional direction regarding foreign assistance reflects the needs of low-resource agriculturalists but lacks clear-cut priorities and is often subject to contradictory nondevelopment interests.
- Stable long-term funding of bilateral development assistance and multilateral programs are required for effective implementation of a resource-enhancing approach.
- The importance of improved, but less burdensome, congressional oversight to ensure the effectiveness of U.S.-supported foreign assistance to Africa has increased due to changes in fiscal year 1988 appropriation bills but the success of oversight also depends upon improved AID/congressional relations.
- A resource-enhancing approach would include support for local-level groups and agricultural institutions, and national level policy formulation and implementation.
  - Though major donors have not had great success using resource-enhancing approaches at the local level, private voluntary organizations and the Peace Corps have had better results, and local African organizations and the rural non-farm private sector provide opportunities for future efforts.
  - AID and the World Bank are among the major donors providing training and other support for African agricultural institutions, though with mixed results. A major problem has been their lack of attention to developing effective links between these institutions and low-resource farmers, herders, and fishers. The International Agricultural Research Centers have had similar problems.
  - AID and the World Bank have made policy reform a major focus of their African programs. Insufficient farm-level analysis and evidence that current policy reform programs may not help and indeed may harm low-resource agriculturalists point to a critical need to evaluate current policy reform programs.
- As the largest agency for U.S. development assistance, AID's capabilities to implement a resource-enhancing approach will have a major effect on U.S. efforts.
  - AID's Africa strategies, while supportive of low-resource agriculturalists in theory, have been less than effective in practice. They also reflect a trend away from direct support for farmers, fishers, and herders in favor of a focus on policy reform and macro-economic growth.
  - Operational difficulties continue to hamper AID's implementation of its strategies and undermine benefits of recent operational changes such as those towards decentralized decisionmaking; longer term, more flexible programming; and improved information and evaluation systems need to be reinforced.

## CONGRESS AND A RESOURCE ENHANCING APPROACH

Congress stands at an important juncture concerning development assistance to Africa (62). The need to decide on a future direction for U.S. assistance stems from the convergence of several factors.

First among these is frustration in Congress over the limited impact past assistance has had. Recurring famine and general economic decline, despite substantial U.S. assistance, have led to considerable doubts about the merits of past programs and to calls for different development approaches.

Secondly, significant modifications in foreign assistance programs have been made since the last major legislative overhaul in 1973 introduced the human needs approach of the so-called New Directions legislation. Further changes have been proposed. The Administration has advocated a macroeconomic approach focusing heavily on policy reform in recipient countries. This change is seen by some as a sharp departure from the New Directions legislation. Others see it as complementary to the objective of providing basic human needs, but this depends on how it is implemented.

A third factor is resistance on the part of many in Congress to increasing foreign assistance at a time of domestic budget tightening. While appropriations for fiscal year 1988 show increased congressional and Administration attention to Africa's development needs, concerns remain over maintaining this commitment for the long term. Contributing to these concerns are the lack of deep political support and a constituency for development assistance as compared with other forms of foreign assistance, for example, military or politically motivated aid (30).

Support for social and economic development for resource-poor agriculturalists, as Congress responds to the challenges of this juncture, would require use of its powers of authorization, appropriation, and oversight:

- **Authorization:** Congress could provide clearer direction on the use of development

assistance, ensure flexibility to account for Africa's diversity and reduce the impacts of contradictory nondevelopmental objectives.

- **Appropriation:** Congress could provide long-term, stable funding for development assistance at levels balanced with other foreign policy and security issues as well as domestic priorities.
- **Oversight:** Congress could improve the quality of oversight while reducing its disruptive effects on development agencies.

### Congressional Direction and a Resource-Enhancing Approach

Most elements necessary in a development assistance approach designed to enhance low-resource agriculture are already included in existing foreign assistance legislation.<sup>1</sup> This legislation emphasizes:

- development;
- long-term strategies;
- focus on the poor majority;
- equitable, self-sustaining economic growth;
- agricultural development and the role of the small farmer;
- leadership and participation by the developing nation and the indigenous people; and
- the role of women in development.

Although these elements are included in legislation, their effect could be enhanced if Congress gave clearer direction, set explicit priorities, and sought to reduce the influence of other political and economic interests.

### Setting Clear Priorities

The proliferation of cumulative congressional mandates concerning development assistance

<sup>1</sup>The congressional direction steering foreign assistance discussed here appears in the development assistance sections of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, as amended.

has hindered the work of executive branch agencies, particularly AID, by providing an overabundance of priorities without clearly ranking them. This has reduced long-term consistency, and forced AID to use resources on mandates that may not be relevant in specific cases or whose goals may not be clear (63,64). In addition, Congress has not fully evaluated current Administration priorities (e.g., policy reform and private sector development) nor integrated them into existing legislative strategies. This lack of clarity has reduced Congress' ability to maintain and modify the direction of U.S. assistance. Clarity in direction and prioritization do not, however, mean rigidity. Africa's diversity and its rapid evolution require flexible direction and priorities from country to country and over time. Rigidity in direction can lead donors to abandon successful forms of support or to use inappropriate methods, as they did during the application of the New Directions legislation of 1973 (30).

Making food security an overarching goal of development assistance offers one means to integrate existing congressional directives and provide a framework for setting priorities. Having food security as a goal could enable AID and other U.S.-supported development agencies to adapt their work to local conditions—whether it be increasing food or export crop production, stabilizing or diversifying agricultural production, or working with non-farm activities. Second, food security could be used to develop indicators of progress in reaching Congress' goal of equitable, self-sustaining economic growth. If economic growth occurs but food security among the poor does not increase correspondingly then growth is not equitable.

#### Reducing the Negative Impacts of Non-developmental Interests

Many political and economic pressures cause Congress and the Administration to use development assistance in ways that maybe less than optimal for developmental goals such as ensuring food security (63,64). Foreign assistance to Africa is influenced by objectives including:

- ensuring pro-U. S. political and strategic re-

lations bilaterally and in international forums;

- ensuring access to strategic commodities;
- promoting U.S. exports including restricting assistance that may potentially cause competition for U.S. exports (e. g., restricting support for research on palm oil); and
- building U.S. domestic political support by directing development contracts to constituents.

Development assistance's weak political constituency and AID's dependent status vis-à-vis the State Department, have allowed others (e.g., the Departments of State, and Agriculture, and Congress) to apply pressure successfully for the use of development assistance for non-developmental objectives. In some cases, non-developmental interests have taken precedence over developmental goals and even, some have argued, undermined overall U.S. foreign policy interests.

Development and non-development goals, however, can be complementary, especially in the long term. For instance, increased African food security and agricultural development can contribute to political and economic stability and, in the long term, can offer the United States increased economic opportunities for trade. This convergence, the significant U.S. humanitarian interest in the region, and the desire to avoid any future need for large-scale famine relief, justify Congress' stated priority on development as the primary U.S. goal in Africa. These factors provide a rationale for resisting the pressures of conflicting interests and for reducing certain program and procurement restrictions.

#### Congressional Funding and a Resource-Enhancing Approach

U.S. funding for agricultural development may go directly to African nations (as bilateral aid) or pass via multinational organizations (as multilateral aid). The implementation of a successful resource-enhancing approach would require long-term, stable funding to support agricultural development in both cases. As will be discussed, agricultural research, training, build-

ing agricultural institutions, and supporting local organizations require long-term commitments and can be damaged by fluctuating support. The likelihood of long-term stable support is problematic, however, given that:

- current mechanisms constrain Congress from ensuring stable levels of funding in support of African agricultural development,
- ongoing pressures to reduce the Federal budget are likely to continue, and
- current implicit priorities favor bilateral security assistance over development assistance.

#### Bilateral Assistance

Economic assistance (versus military aid) comprises the majority of U.S. bilateral aid to Africa (table 6-1) and AID provides the majority of this economic assistance. AID divides congressional appropriations for agricultural assistance primarily into three funding sources: Development Assistance accounts (DA), Economic Support Funds (ESF), and food aid (box 6-1). Of the three sources, DA seems best suited for providing stable levels of funding necessary for a long-term approach to support resource-poor agriculturalists. This is because congressional direction guiding DA is the most compatible with the objectives of assisting low-resource agriculturalists, and because DA funding is the most likely to remain stable overtime. Congress has already shown interest in stabilizing and protecting DA levels for Africa. During the budget reductions of fiscal year 1987, Congress mandated that Africa receive the same percentage of DA as in the previous year (Public Law 99-500). Congress created a separate DA fund for Africa in fiscal year 1988 with an increased funding level (Public Law 100-202). Constraints on the dependability and appropriateness of the other two sources (ESF and food aid) include:

- ESF is allocated primarily for political and security purposes often leading to rapid and substantial changes in annual country allocations.

- Congress normally has earmarked the majority of ESF for countries outside Sub-Saharan Africa. To protect these earmarks in times of budget reduction, Africa has received lower percentages of ESF.
- Food-aid levels can swing substantially due to changing recipient needs and the availability of U.S. grain.
- Significant questions remain concerning the effectiveness and possible negative impacts of using non-emergency food aid to support development.

Military assistance, though not intended to have a developmental impact, may have negative impacts, nonetheless, by absorbing funds that could have gone to development and by fostering local economic distortions in the recipient nations. Military assistance traditionally has been a relatively small component of assistance to Africa, comprising no more than nine percent of total U.S. assistance over the last 40 years (62). However, military assistance doubled between 1980 and 1985 and correspondingly increased from 9.4 percent of the bilateral assistance budget to 13.4 percent. Military assistance is estimated to have declined to 6 percent in 1987. AID has cautioned that "our military aid programs must be undertaken cautiously and with due regard for their possible negative impact on domestic resource allocation as well as on foreign exchange and debt servicing" (51).

Development Assistance (DA) to Africa has fluctuated since 1980 and did not keep pace with overall increases between 1980-1985 in total bilateral assistance worldwide and to Africa (table 6-1). U.S. foreign assistance worldwide increased dramatically over that period primarily due to increases in ESF (\$4 billion increase) and military assistance (\$5.4 billion increase). Africa received a relatively small portion of this increase, mainly through ESF, except for 1985 when high levels of food aid were provided. When measured in constant dollars, DA declined for Africa between 1980 and 1987. Fiscal year 1988 congressional appropriations of \$500 million in DA for Africa plus \$50 million for projects of the Southern African Develop-

**Table 6-1 .—U.S. Bilateral<sup>a</sup> Economic and Military Assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa, 1980-87**

Year	Total Military plus Economic Assistance	Military Assistance (MA)	Percent of MA+EA	Economic Assistance (EA)	{	Components of Economic Assistance									
						Development Assistance		Economic Support Fund		Public Law 480		Peace Corps		African Development Foundation <sup>a</sup>	
						Obligations (millions \$)	Percent of EA	Obligations (millions \$)	Percent of EA	Obligations (millions \$)	Percent of EA	Obligations (millions \$)	Percent of EA	Obligations (millions \$)	Percent of EA
	Obligations (millions \$)	Obligations (millions \$)	MA+EA	(millions \$)	Obligations (millions \$)	Percent of EA	Obligations (millions \$)	Percent of EA	Obligations (millions \$)	Percent of EA	Obligations (millions \$)	Percent of EA	Obligations (millions \$)	Percent of EA	
1980 . . .	824.1	77.3	9.4	746.8		282.2	38.0	132.7	18.0	293.3	39.3	38.6	5.2	—	—
1981 . . .	908.9	84.7	9.3	824.2		300.3	36.4	163.0	19.8	322.1	39.1	38.8	4.7	—	—
1982 . . .	1,064.1	191.3	18.0	872.8		328.8	37.7	294.8	33.8	208.6	23.9	40.6	4.7	—	—
1983 . . .	1,015.6	134.0	13.2	881.6		315.3	35.8	286.1	32.5	239.3	27.1	40.9	4.6	—	—
1984 . . .	1,143.4	153.3	13.4	990.1		340.4	34.4	333.1	33.6	271.3	27.4	43.6	4.4	1.7	0.2
1985 . . .	1,679.0	168.0	10.0	1,510.9		352.2	23.3	417.8	27.7	689.4	45.6	47.0	3.1	4.5	0.2
1986 . . .	1,126.1	103.2	9.2	1,024.0		378.9	37.0	245.2	23.9	347.6	33.9	46.3	4.5	6.0	0.6
1987 . . .	836.4	52.3	6.3	784.0		328.1	41.8	162.8	20.8	237.7	30.3	48.8	6.2	6.6	0.8

<sup>a</sup>Bilateral assistance does not include contributions to multilateral institutions nor obligations of central AID bureaus or the State Department. Figures have been rounded.

<sup>b</sup>The African Development Foundation became operational in 1984 to provide relatively small amounts of assistance to local African groups.

NOTE: For fiscal year 1988, \$550 million in DA was appropriated for Africa along with \$90 million earmarked for ESF.

SOURCES U.S. Agency for International Development, Congressional Presentation, fiscal years 1981-87.

### Box 6-1.—The Language of Foreign Aid

**Agricultural assistance:** a generic term for any U.S. economic assistance funding used for supporting agricultural development.

**Agricultural Portfolio:** activities in support of agricultural development funded through AID's Africa Bureau using DA and ESF funds. It does not include activities funded by Public Law 480 nor by AID's other bureaus.

**Bilateral assistance:** assistance provided by the United States directly to African nations. For this report, bilateral assistance includes ESF, Public Law 480, DA provided by the Africa Bureau of AID, Peace Corp funding, and military aid.

**Economic assistance:** used to refer to all non-military assistance.

**Development Assistance (DA):** DA suffers from a multitude of definitions. For the purpose of this report, DA is the set of bilateral U.S. funds:

1. whose principle use is the support of development,
2. that are administered by AID,
3. whose funding levels are directly set by Congress, and
4. whose development goals are set by Congress in Chapter 1, Part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

These funds include, the Private Enterprise Revolving Fund, the Science and Technology Fund, the Sahel Development Program, and six Functional Development Accounts:

1. Agriculture, Rural Development, and Nutrition;
2. Population Planning;
3. Health;
4. Child Survival;
5. Education and Human Resources Development; and
6. Private Sector, Environment, and Energy.

Congress created a 1-year separate African DA account of \$500 million for fiscal year 1988 in addition to \$50 million for projects supported by the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference. This fund will replace the six Functional accounts and the Sahel Development Program as the primary source for African DA.

**Economic Support Fund (ESF):** Through ESF, AID supplies economic assistance to countries where the United States has political, economic, or security interests. ESF can be provided in cash transfers, U.S. commodities, or project aid (similar to DA-funded projects). Cash and commodities are quick ways to supply budgetary support, ESF is not governed by the same congressional mandates as DA and is authorized under Part II, chapter 4 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. Congress sets the overall funding level for ESF and commonly earmarks a majority of it for specific countries (i.e., Congress mandates certain amounts of ESF for certain countries with the division of the remainder left to the Administration's discretion).

**Food Aid:** Excess U.S. agricultural commodities may be provided as aid on a concessionary loan or grant basis primarily under three laws:

1. The Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (Public Law 480)
  - a. Title I of Public Law 480: provides long-term credits [authorized on an annual basis] at low-interest to buy U.S. farm products. Local currencies generated by the in-country sale of the food can be used for development activities,
  - b. Title II of Public Law 480: provides food aid grants during famine or other emergencies and supplements regular feeding programs.
  - c. Title III of Public Law 480: known as Food for Development, Title 111 uses Title I funds but offers multiyear programs and loan forgiveness in return for undertaking specific development activities.
2. Section 416 of the Agricultural Act of 1949 offers a second source of grant food aid to support Title II-like programs.
3. Food for Progress, which is authorized under the Food Security Act of 1985, provides additional Title I and Section 416 resources in return for agricultural policy reforms.



ment Coordination Committee halted the actual and relative decreases in DA. Questions remain, however, as to whether this reversal will be maintained in the longer term.

Assistance provided for agricultural development in Africa also fluctuated between 1980 and 1987, first rising then falling. Obligations in the Africa Bureau's agricultural portfolio rose from \$265 million in 1980 to a peak of \$400 million in 1985 and then declined to an estimated \$317 million for 1987. Changes in ESF funding have been responsible for much of the change in AID's agricultural assistance (table 6-2). The use of ESF funds as a significant component of agricultural assistance poses two possible problems that could constrain agricultural development. First, as seen in table 6-1, year-to-year fluctuations in ESF levels for Africa are substantial, making it difficult to build a development program based on long-term ESF financial commitments. Second, ESF is used primarily for policy reform and budget support (58). Reliance on ESF as a major source of agricultural assistance could thus bias the overall U.S. strategy away from local-level agricultural development. The risk of such a bias has declined since 1985 due to reductions in ESF levels for Africa.

Current bilateral funding mechanisms have made it difficult for Congress to direct funds towards agricultural development in Africa. AID's agricultural funding is derived from several separate congressionally authorized and appropriated sources, primarily ESF, public Law 480, and two DA accounts (Agriculture, Rural Development and Nutrition, and the Sahel Development Program). All but the latter fund agricultural assistance worldwide and are not restricted to Africa. The Sahel Development Program, in addition to agriculture, includes

all types of development programs for nine West African countries.<sup>z</sup>

Neither Congress nor AID has expressed interest in creating additional earmarked African agricultural funds. The Administration and Congress in 1987 proposed a single fund for African DA to help maintain stable levels of DA for Africa, provide AID with the opportunity for longer term planning, and allow AID increased programming flexibility. Congress funded such an African DA fund with a one-year appropriation of \$500 million in the Continuing Resolution for appropriations in fiscal year 1988 (Public Law 100-202). While it is too early to determine the fund's impact, its success will in part depend on whether Congress maintains its commitment to the fund, on how AID uses the increased flexibility provided, and on whether AID and Congress ensure that the appropriations to the fund are not diverted to other programs.

Like the earlier DA accounts, the new fund does not provide Congress with the means to set levels directly for agricultural assistance. The fund does contain target levels of spending for health, voluntary family planning, and maintaining the renewable natural resource base, but neither earmarks nor targets are included for agriculture. The 1987 authorization bill for the fund contained language directing support for agricultural development, but it did

<sup>z</sup>The issue of the amount of bilateral funds being spent on African agriculture is further clouded because of involvement of more than one AID Bureau. While a majority of funding for Africa goes through the Africa Bureau, other bureaus such as Science & Technology, Policy and Program Coordination, Private Enterprise, and Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance, have programs concerning agriculture development in Africa. No single AID data system provides a breakdown of all AID's agricultural funding to Africa for each of these bureaus (or for AID as a whole).

**Table 6-2.—AID Economic Support Funds (ESF) as a Percent of the Africa Bureau's Agriculture Portfolio<sup>a</sup>, 1979-87**

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987 (est.)
Obligations . . . . .	12.5	24.6	20.3	20.2	28.9	34.5	42.4	28.9	29.0
Expenditures. . . . .	6.6	24.2	26.5	11.7	27.9	27.5	32.9	34.5	32.8

<sup>a</sup>The agriculture portfolio includes AID's Africa Bureau funding for DA and ESF. It does not include Public Law 480 funding nor funds used by other AID Bureaus

SOURCE U S Agency for International Development, Africa Bureau, *Agriculture and Rural Development Functional Review FY 1978-1987*, July 1986, updated 1987

not pass. The Conference Report (Report 100-498) concerning fiscal year 1988 foreign assistance appropriations includes only vague direction for agricultural uses of the fund. Congress' difficulty in directing funds specifically to African agricultural development and the resulting increased flexibility for AID to determine the level and direction of its program indicate an increased importance for effective congressional oversight regarding AID's support for resource-enhancing approaches to agricultural development.

### Multilateral Assistance

U.S. multilateral development assistance makes up about 11 percent of the total U.S. foreign aid budget for fiscal year 1988 and is provided to several types of organizations (45). The multilateral development banks (MDBs) receive the majority of U.S. assistance and two of them, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, support agricultural development in Africa. The World Bank is the primary lender. A second set of organizations has been lumped under the funding category International Organizations and Programs which, like the MDBs, have their individual funding levels set by Congress. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), each with African agriculture-related programs, receive

the majority of the funding under this category (at least 75 percent since 1981). A third category is organizations in which the United States participates and which assess the United States a membership fee, usually a percentage of the organization's budget (e.g., the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, which assesses the United States a fee equal to 25 percent of its annual budget). Other international organizations may receive funds directly from U.S. agencies. For example, the 13 international agricultural research centers of the Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research (CGIAR) system receive their U.S. contributions through AID.

Funding to the first two groups, international organizations and multilateral development banks, has followed the general trend in bilateral assistance by increasing between 1980 and 1985 and then declining through 1987 (table 6-3). Although the following discussion focuses on multilateral development banks, the other or animations can also play important roles in the enhancement of low-resource agriculture. For example, a 1985 AID evaluation found that "I FAD is making a significant contribution to improving the economic conditions of the rural poor in developing countries" partly through the use of technologies adapted specifically for small, low-income farmers (52).

The World Bank and the African Development Bank provide two types of loans. The

**Table 6-3.—U.S. Support of Multilateral Development Institutions, 1980.88**

Organization	Obligations (millions \$)								
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988 <sup>a</sup> (est.)
International Organizations and Programs <sup>b</sup> . . . . .	208 <sup>c</sup>	210	215	270	315	362	266	237	245
Multilateral Development Banks . . . . .	1,478	986	1,262	1,487	1,324	1,548	1,143	1,207	1,206
Total . . . . .	1,686	1,196	1,476	1,757	1,639	1,910	1,408	1,444	1,450

<sup>a</sup> Congressional appropriation

<sup>b</sup> Includes support for certain development, humanitarian, and scientific programs of the United Nations and the Organization of American States funded by voluntary government contributions, according to the AID Congressional Presentations, fiscal years 1980 through 1988.

<sup>c</sup> 1980 data do not include \$52 million for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency in order to provide consistent data. Funding for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency was switched from the international program funding to the U.S. Department of State's Migration and Refugee Account in the years following.

SOURCES: U.S. Agency for International Development, *Congressional Presentations*, for fiscal years 1981 through 1988 (Washington, DC: AID).

U.S. Department of State, *United States Contributions to International Organizations: Report to the Congress for Fiscal Year 1985* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 1986).

Sanford, Jonathan, "Multilateral Development Banks: Issues for the 100th Congress," IB8731B (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Jan. 12, 1988).

World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) borrow from world capital markets and provide loans to developing countries at near-market interest rates. The World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) and the African Development Bank's African Development Fund (AfDF) provide long-term, below market interest loans to the poorest developing countries (countries having per-capita GNP below \$791 in 1984 dollars). IDA has provided the majority of World Bank lending for African agricultural development and is especially important in the poorest countries but, IBRD has also provided a significant portion of agricultural funding, especially for West Africa (75).

U.S. funding of the World Bank has been erratic over the past decade (table 6-4). For IDA 8 (the 3-year replenishment beginning in 1988), the United States has pledged a total of \$2.875 billion or approximately \$960 million per year, subject to congressional appropriation. In the past, Congress has stretched some 3-year commitments to 4 years and thereby reduced the

United States' contribution. For fiscal year 1988, Congress has appropriated \$915 million for IDA. Forty-five percent of all donors' contributions to IDA 8 are earmarked for Africa and approximately 60 percent are intended for policy reform.

U.S. contributions to AfDF have risen more predictably from \$10 million in 1978 to \$90 million in 1987. Contributions to AfDF have not been reduced by the current budget reductions in part because AfDF receives a comparatively small contribution and because its work is readily identifiable with African development.

U.S. contributions to IBRD and AfDB are more difficult to assess because both banks borrow money on capital markets for their lending. Donors contribute to each in two ways: through direct capital contributions and via money held against potential defaults (callable capital). Part of the U.S. contribution (7 percent for the IBRD in 1987) is used to increase the financial stability of the bank, increase its borrowing ability, and act as a source of funds if recipients default (44).

**Table 6-4.—U.S. Contributions to Multilateral Development Banks Funding African Development, 1978.87**

Year	Congressional appropriations (millions \$) <sup>a</sup>				AfDB <sup>b</sup>	AfDF <sup>c</sup>
	The World Bank					
	IBRD <sup>c</sup>	IDA <sup>d</sup>	Special Facility for Sub-Saharan Africa <sup>e</sup>	IFC <sup>f</sup>		
1978 . . . . .	38.0	800.0	—	38.0	—	10.0
1979 . . . . .	16.3	1,258.0	—	40.1	—	25.0
1980 . . . . .	16.3	1,072.0	—	19.0	—	25.0
1981 . . . . .	32.8	520.0	—	—	18.0	41.7
1982 . . . . .	146.9	700.0	—	14.5	—	58.3
1983 . . . . .	126.0	945.0	—	—	—	50.0
1984 . . . . .	79.7	945.0	—	—	18.0	50.0
1985 . . . . .	139.7	900.0	—	—	18.0	50.0
1986 . . . . .	105.0	669.9	71.8	27.8	15.5	60.0
1987 . . . . .	55.8	830.1	64.8	7.2	20.5	90.4
1988 <sup>g</sup> . . . . .	40.2	915.0	—	20.3	9.0	75.0

a Data for IBRD and AfDB reflect paid in capital and do not include callable capital.

b AfDB and AfDF African Development Bank and African Development Fund. These are African equivalents to the IBRD and IDA, respectively, and provide near-market rate loans and concessional rate loans to the poorest countries in Africa.

c IBRD: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. IBRD borrows from world capital markets and makes loans at near-commercial interest rates for productive purposes mainly to middle income countries.

d IDA International Development Association, IDA makes concessional (no interest) loans to the poorest countries for productive purposes. Funding is obtained from developed countries and IBRD earnings.

e Special Facility for Sub-Saharan Africa, A special 3-year fund set up in 1985 to make loans in support of policy reform work in IDA-eligible African countries. Funding is obtained and supplied along IDA lines.

f IFC International Finance Corporation, The IFC makes loans and equity investments in local privately owned firms in developing countries

g Data for 1988 do not include a \$44.4 million, first-time contribution to the new Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency of the World Bank whose purpose is to provide noncommercial risk insurance for private investment in developing countries.

SOURCES: Jonathan Sanford, "Multilateral Development Banks: Legislation Affecting U.S. Participation" (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, June 29, 1987). Jonathan Sanford, "Multilateral Development Banks: Issues for the 100th Congress," IB8731 B (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, Jan. 12, 1988)

Legislated congressional direction to multilateral banks working in Africa has recently stressed the need to ensure environmental sustainability of funded projects, increase attention to the poor and to women, and increase participation of indigenous organizations having grassroots connections to the poor (H. R. 3750 which was passed as part of the Continuing Resolution for fiscal year 1988). Congress has not given agricultural development the same attention. In fact, legislation reauthorizing U.S. participation in the multilateral development banks is concerned more with possible agricultural competition with the United States than the type of agricultural development the banks are supporting (H.R. 3750).

Congress cannot set agricultural funding levels because these organizations are independent agencies. It can, however, direct the U.S. representative to each bank to lobby for making agricultural development even more of a priority. Twenty-seven percent of the World Bank's assistance to Africa went to agriculture and rural development between 1981 and 1985, and in 1985 the AfDF allocated 38 percent of its funding to agriculture. Because appropriating money directly for development of African agriculture is not a possibility, congressional oversight, backed by appropriations activity, will remain an important way to influence these organizations.

#### Congressional Oversight and a Resource-Enhancing Approach

More effective congressional oversight is crucial to the implementation of an approach to enhance low-resource agriculture via bilateral and multilateral programs. Congress has legislated many elements of such an approach and appropriated funding for agricultural development. But concerns remain regarding AID and the World Bank's apparent difficulties in carrying out programs which support resource-poor farmers, herders, and fishers.

#### Coordinating and Improving Oversight

In-depth and long-term oversight is hampered by the time constraints and lack of relevant

knowledge facing Members of Congress and their staff. Individual members and small staffs have little time to respond to complex long-term development issues when these are only one part of their wide and demanding responsibilities. Responding to inadequately prepared oversight activities may divert donor agency resources and can have adverse impacts on development programs. These problems are aggravated and others are created by the many congressional actors involved in development assistance oversight and the lack of coordination among them. In addition to individual member queries, seven committees (and additional subcommittees) have direct jurisdiction over U.S. agricultural assistance, and still others have oversight authority.

This duplication of effort also at times results in contradictory directions from Congress. It could be reduced by increasing formal and informal cooperation among those currently involved in oversight. Such cooperation has the potential for increasing the quality of oversight without increasing the energy and money spent on it, helping maintain consistency in U.S. programs as individuals and issues change, and reducing the wasted resources involved in AID and others having to respond to similar requests from different sources.

To improve the quality of information available, interested committees could improve their expertise in development by establishing groups of development experts to advise them on AID and other donors' work. Congress could increase its consultation with persons having long-term AID experience in the field and in Washington, DC. This could be accomplished by increasing informal contacts, increasing the provision of congressional fellows from AID, and by having congressional staff attend meetings of AID mission directors and development officers in the field.

Oversight could also be improved by increasing the availability of information concerning how and where assistance is used. The Congressional Research Service's computerized foreign assistance budget could be expanded to provide a better view of where money is be-

ing spent. AID's own ability to provide information on its agricultural work in Africa is severely constrained by the lack of a central disaggregated database.

#### Reducing the Burden of Oversight

Congress has placed a series of reporting and procurement requirements and restrictions on AID's work. According to AID, these have used up large amounts of resources while reducing their ability to respond to the diverse conditions in Africa. Though a detailed analysis of AID's operations was not included in this assessment, other OTA work indicates cause for concern (64). AID has testified that at least 200 person-years are necessary to respond to congressional reporting requirements and information requests regarding AID's work worldwide (67). These requirements and restrictions include:

- notification of reprogramming of funds;
- responses to information requests by multiple committees and individual members;
- mandated reports;
- procurement requirements (e.g., buying only U.S. products unless a time-consuming waiver can be obtained);
- restrictions on aid to individual countries;
- restrictions on aid aimed at increasing production of specific commodities;
- informal earmarking of funds; and
- formal earmarking of funds.

Direction on the use of funds and effective congressional oversight are crucial responsibilities of the U.S. legislative branch of government. But opportunities clearly exist for Congress to reduce the unnecessary burden of its demands and restrictions on AID. Previously discussed steps to improve the quality and depth of oversight such as clarifying priorities, coordinating oversight, and reducing pressures to use aid for non-developmental purposes would be likely to also decrease oversight's burden. Other congressional actions that could increase AID's effectiveness include reducing the need to buy only U.S. equipment and commodities. These restrictions often result in the acquisition of goods which are more expensive and often inappropriate to African conditions.

Alternatively, they require substantial paperwork to qualify for an exemption. For fiscal year 1988 Congress addressed this concern by exempting the new African DA fund from the restriction to buy only U.S. products.

Another way to reduce AID's reporting burden would be to modify the requirement that AID notify Congress of funding changes. AID has argued that since only about 3 percent of such notifications are of interest to congressional committees, notification of low-level changes in funding, perhaps of 10 percent or less of a project's budget, could be eliminated (67). Congress did reduce reprogramming notifications for DA in the fiscal year 1988 appropriations. Evaluating the impacts of this reduction and the "buy-American" exemption for Africa will be important for considering their extension and possible expansion.

The issue of congressional earmarking for the use of funds is more controversial. Disposing of formal earmarks and reducing pressures for informal earmarks would increase AID's flexibility, but it is uncertain that AID would use that flexibility to carry out Congress' intentions. AID's failure to address the needs of resource-poor agriculturalists, despite congressional direction to do so, raises concerns about the effects of providing AID with additional flexibility. Earmarks are a visible means (though not necessarily always an effective one) for Congress to ensure that assistance funds are spent in accordance with congressional direction. Congress has done away with the majority of earmarks for African DA for fiscal year 1988. While three spending targets (each one 10 percent of the fund) are set for health, voluntary family planning, and renewable resources, the fund provides AID with increased flexibility to program remaining money. A successful outcome for this greater flexibility will depend on more responsiveness on AID's part, and on more effective, less burdensome oversight. Continuing and increased flexibility can then be based on AID's carefully monitored *performance*.

Congress can also increase the effectiveness of its albeit less direct oversight of multilateral

development agencies receiving U.S. funding. For example, changes occurring at the World Bank offer Congress an opportunity to encourage reforms there. A major reorganization

in which the Bank is improving its capability to do environmental analysis was partly the result of congressional pressure.

### THREE CATEGORIES OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR A RESOURCE-ENHANCING APPROACH

Three distinct though interrelated categories of aid or recipient groups offer substantial opportunities for development assistance to address the needs of resource-poor agriculturalists:

1. local level activities, including support for local institutions, households, and individual agriculturalists;
2. the formal agricultural institutions supporting agricultural development including those providing research, education, extension, and marketing; and
3. national policy formulation and implementation including assistance for the development of supportive national policies and of national capabilities to create, implement, and evaluate them.

After evaluating the general lack of success of U.S. efforts to support African agricultural development, most experts agree on the need to refocus on the "small farmer." General agreement also exists on the need to address all three categories listed above, but that U.S.-supported organizations have differing abilities to work with each of them.

#### Development Assistance at the Local Level

The common goal of most current assistance at the local level is to increase the food security of the farmer, herder, or fisher while setting the stage for further development (34,54). To do so it will be necessary to develop new technologies and make them available along with appropriate existing ones in order to increase agricultural production and income. This is a two-way process which allows agriculturalists to take advantage of opportunities offered by agricultural institutions and govern-

ment policies while communicating their needs to make the institutions and policies more effective. However, in the majority of cases local level assistance provided by major donors has not been successful in supporting development because the assistance has not been appropriate to local conditions nor applied in a way that would be sustained by the resource-poor farmer (1,30,65,72). Two lessons have been learned from this lack of success. One is that assistance activities must work with technologies that are appropriate to local environmental and socioeconomic conditions (discussed in ch. 5). The second lesson is the need for farmer participation to ensure that assistance is appropriate to local conditions and that development started with external assistance will be maintained (7,19,41).

Major donor organizations (e.g., AID and the World Bank) have not been effective at working at the local level nor with local institutions whose membership includes resource-poor agriculturalists. But certain other U.S.-funded organizations have been more effective. These include: U.S. private and voluntary organizations and the Peace Corps. Both have become increasingly active in bridging the gap between local organizations and the major donors. At the same time, local African organizations and the rural non-farm private sector are also emerging as effective actors in their own right.

#### U.S. Private and Voluntary Organizations

An estimated 300 U.S. private and voluntary organizations (PVOs) had African programs and were carrying out 2,700 projects in 1985. About \$460 million was spent by those PVOs, 60 percent of it from U.S. Government foreign



Photo credit: Redenius/U.S. Peace Corps

The U.S. Peace Corps, like U.S. PVOs and local African groups, provides assistance with local level projects such as this vegetable garden in Burkina Faso.

assistance (50 percent in emergency food aid and 10 percent in development assistance) (28). Under Section 123 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, a minimum of 13% percent of the funding for the six Development Assistance functional accounts, the Sahel Development Program, and International Disaster Assistance are to be made available for the activities of private and voluntary organizations. PVOs received \$62.8 million from AID's Africa Bureau in fiscal year 1986, and in fiscal year 1987 they received an estimated \$42 million (24). The decline in emergency needs and the recognition that relief alone would not solve the root causes of famine have led PVOs to increase their attention to long-term social and economic development, with agriculture being an important subset of that work.

PVOs are commonly considered to have several significant advantages and strengths appropriate to a resource-enhancing approach at the

local level (18,28,47,55). These include their ability to:

- work with the poor under difficult conditions and help make public resources available to them,
- work with indigenous organizations,
- understand local conditions,
- address equity issues,
- work in regions where development has been neglected,
- use a participatory process,
- use a long-term approach,
- be flexible,
- work in small projects, and
- extend a proven technology [when favorable policy and infrastructural conditions exist).

Caution is necessary, however, in assuming that these general strengths apply to each individual PVO or PVO project given their tremendous

diversity and differences from country to country and project to project even within a single organization.

These strengths, AID's difficulties in working with the resource-poor agriculturalists, and an increasingly politically active PVO community have motivated Congress to consider increasing the role of PVOs in U.S.-supported development in Africa. However, as their role is increased, certain common PVO weaknesses should be acknowledged and addressed (18,28,47). PVOs often:

- are unable to reach the very poorest,
- lack technical expertise,
- fail to address the role of women,
- lack innovation,
- depend too much on the continued presence of individuals capable of mobilizing the population,
- lack project replicability and sustainability,
- have poor or nonexistent project evaluations,
- lack wide-scale impact, and
- are difficult to coordinate because of their large numbers.

Some PVOs are making efforts to overcome these weaknesses. For instance, some are being linked with formal research organizations to overcome their lack of technical expertise. In this way, PVOs are involved in testing and extending technologies to farmers while transmitting needs and ideas back to the scientists. Also, AID has facilitated the work of PVOs in some countries by setting up quick-funding

sources at the mission level, known as umbrella projects, that require less paperwork for small PVO projects. In conjunction with these efforts at increasing PVOs' effectiveness, there remains the more difficult task of evaluating individual PVOs on their actual abilities to support development at the local level. A further challenge is present in the growing abilities of African indigenous organizations. PVOs may need to play a more supportive role by supplying resources, training, and other assistance to such organizations rather than directly implementing their own projects.

### The Peace corps

The Peace Corps has volunteers and programs in 25 African countries (68). Its overall and Africa budgets have both increased steadily since 1980 (table 6-5). The Peace Corps' mandate is to support the personnel needs of developing countries (especially for meeting the basic human needs of the poor) with trained Americans. Additionally, its goals are to promote a better understanding of the United States within the developing countries and a better understanding of developing country's societies by the American people (Public Law 87-293 as amended). Its programs respond to locally identified needs, emphasizing individual training and strengthening local organizations (68). In Africa, the Peace Corps emphasizes agriculture, private sector development, health, and education.

With 25 years of experience in people-to-people work, the Peace Corps has come to be

**Table 6-5.—The Peace Corps in Africa, 1980-87**

Year	Obligations worldwide (millions \$)	Obligations for Africa (millions \$)	Volunteer years in Africa
1980	103.3	38.6	2,035
1981	104.7	38.8	2,048
1982	104.7	40.6	1,989
1983	108.5	40.9	2,114 <sup>a</sup>
1984	115.0	43.6	2,086
1985	129.5	47.0	2,124
1986	124.0	46.3	2,236
1987 <sup>b</sup>	130.0	48.8	2,175

<sup>a</sup>Estimate

<sup>b</sup>Data for 1987 are estimates and do not include data from the \$7.2 million supplemental appropriation received in fiscal year 1987

SOURCES: Agency for International Development, *Congressional Presentations, fiscal years 1982 through 1988*; Peace Corps, *Congressional Presentations, fiscal years 1982 through 1988*.



appreciated by the African governments seeking its help; many requests for volunteers remain unfilled. It has identified skills needed to work at the local level and developed the ability to train its volunteers in local languages and culture. Most volunteers work in conjunction with African government programs and are placed at the local level where they often provide links between national and local organizations. Recognizing the technological constraints facing agricultural development, the Peace Corps has made efforts to recruit an increased number of technically trained volunteers.

Because of these abilities, the Peace Corps may have an even greater role to play in enhancing low-resource agriculture. In addition to its direct work with resource-poor farmers and herders, it also is in the position to be an important intermediary between the larger donors; formal agricultural organizations; local organizations; and individual farmers, herders, and fishers. For example, AID is providing small-project assistance funds for local groups associated with volunteers. Such an approach increases the resources available to the local groups but it has a potential disadvantage in that it could change the Peace Corps' role (and the African perception of it) to a funder rather than a provider of skills and training.

The quality of the Peace Corps' agricultural work varies from country to country and program to program. The short-term nature of its 2-year volunteer tour and high volunteer attrition contribute to this unevenness as does the agency's lack of effective institutional memory. Short tours of service for staff add to these problems. High turnover rates, in part due to the short tours but also to other difficulties, have made long-term planning and implementation difficult.

The overall impact of the Peace Corps' work is difficult to judge because it lacks an internal formal evaluation process. African conditions are changing rapidly and it is not clear whether Peace Corps programs are keeping pace. Effective future work, based on actual strengths

rather than anecdotal evidence, will require an improved evaluation system.

The Peace Corps' African Food Systems Initiative (AFSI) is an attempt to respond to some of these problems by developing long-term (5 to 10 years), localized approaches to food security in each country. The program includes collaboration with AID and PVOs. For example, AID has supported individual members of the Peace Corps AFSI programming teams. The Peace Corps has committed significant resources to AFSI and will need continued funding for its success. Currently, AFSI operates in Lesotho, Mali, Niger, and Zaire with a fiscal year 1987 budget of \$1.9 million. During its first 2 years, fiscal years 1986-87, 162 volunteers were involved, with 99 of them beginning their tours in fiscal year 1987. The program is projected to expand to Guinea, Senegal, and the Central African Republic in fiscal year 1988. One potential weakness of AFSI, like that of the peace Corps generally, is that evaluation has not yet become a well-defined, integral component.

#### Local African Organizations

Many donors over the past decade, have come to recognize that indigenous groups can be effective at the local level. Most often local groups have received donor assistance to carry out donors' activities. To some donors, however, local organizations are being seen as increasingly capable partners that can implement their own programs.

Despite this growing awareness, however, these groups' potential has been largely untapped, especially by the major donors who instead have focused on supporting more formal government agencies and institutions (7,18,19,42). The African Development Foundation is not among the U.S. organizations included in these discussions since it is the subject of a separate OTA assessment. It is, however, one of the U.S. agencies attempting to maximize the role of indigenous organizations (66).

Local organizations (also known as local membership institutions or grassroots organizations) are diverse. Some are informal, self-

help groups; others are formal and organized at the regional or national level. They may be organized along single interests lines to manage a common resource, such as water-use societies and pastoral associations. Or they may provide a single service as in the case of marketing cooperatives and rotating credit associations. They may be organized for multiple functions and act as indigenous voluntary development organizations comparable to non-African PVOs (7,19). Approximately 100 such groups from 18 countries in May 1987 formed the pan-African Forum of African Voluntary Development Organizations (FAVDO). FAVDO hopes to link these organizations and to provide help in identifying development needs and mobilize African and non-African support.

Local organizations can enhance the effectiveness of development assistance programs by increasing their relevance, cost-efficiency, and sustainability. These groups can be effective in transferring information on local needs and conditions to outside development agencies while also representing farmers to donors, the private sector, and government agencies. They can mobilize resources such as labor, management, and money for development work and thus reduce demands on overburdened government organizations and reduce the need for external support of recurrent costs. In addition, working through such groups allows donor assistance to reach more farmers. Sustainability can increase where group members are involved in the design and management of assistance activities since such involvement often leads to greater commitment to implementing the work and maintaining it once outside assistance ends (7,19,23,71).

Certain conditions for successfully working with local organizations are being identified. Local organizations can best support development if: they are involved in project decision-making; they retain a high degree of self-reliance and autonomy; their members and beneficiaries maintain a degree of control over the organization; and the organization can shift project activities to meet the needs of its beneficiaries (71). They cannot be successfully forced into existence or managed by donor

organizations or national governments because their success depends on membership commitment. Their effectiveness can be destroyed, moreover, by attempts to co-opt them into larger bodies, by pushing them to exceed their capacities, using them only as implementors of donor activities, or by overfunding.

Large donors and national governments may find working directly with local and intermediary institutions discouragingly difficult (7). The formation and development of these groups is not predictable and takes time. Program funding needs are comparatively low, increasing the proportion of funding used in administration. It is often difficult for large donors working with local organizations to spend all their funds within a required timeframe (usually on an annual budget cycle). Also, significant donor resources are needed to identify and evaluate these groups. Despite these drawbacks, increased support for large donor organizations will be necessary as the number and abilities of these local groups increase and their needs outstrip the capabilities of smaller donors (e.g., PVOs) who presently support them (48). Large donors may also have a role in linking these organizations with formal agricultural institutions so that the formal institutions better address their needs.

#### The African Rural Non-Farm Private Sector

Though even more diverse and often more dispersed than local organizations, the rural non-farm private sector could have significant direct and indirect positive impacts on resource-poor agriculturalists. The non-farm sector can be defined as all economic activity apart from crop or livestock production. Data on these activities are sparse and country-specific, but it appears that the majority of rural non-farm enterprises are small (95 percent have fewer than five workers), have modest capital requirements and show seasonal fluctuations in output and labor demands (25).

Typically, 10-20 percent of rural employment (with a range from 3-73 percent) and 25-30 percent of rural income are derived from rural non-

farm activity, Because non-farm earnings are converted to money more often than agricultural products, they constitute a large share of cash income, often 50 percent. Surveys have shown that 15-65 percent of farmers also have secondary employment in non-farm enterprises and that farm households devote 15-40 percent of their working hours to income-generating non-farm activities. These activities also provide women, especially in poorer households, with opportunities to earn income (25).

Besides offering rural employment and income, the non-farm private sector also provides the agriculturalist with agricultural inputs, markets for products, and consumer goods. The first forms a relatively weak market because of African agriculture's relatively small use of inputs but could increase if more appropriate inputs were made available and if credit systems were improved (25,32). Providing a market for products is the most significant of the three roles. Local processors and particularly distributors purchase a major share of commercialized produce in many areas. The market for consumer goods and services provided to farmers by the private sector is seen as an important stimulus to the growth of the rural non-farm economy both because of its potential high growth rate as farmers' income rises and due to the large amount of labor it could absorb with such growth (25).

Four means have been identified for supporting the development of non-farm enterprises. First, and most importantly, increasing agricultural productivity and income would increase agriculturalists' demand for goods and services while also providing secure food supplies for non-agricultural workers. Second, national policies can be redesigned to avoid discrimination against non-farm enterprises in such areas as credit availability, tariff structures, access to foreign exchange, licensing requirements, and restrictions on the goods or services they can provide. Third, direct assistance to non-farm enterprises can be provided in forms such as credit, technical assistance, and training in marketing and management. Evaluations have shown these types of programs to be cost-effective if they focus on one

major constraint to the enterprises instead of trying to address all at once. Fourth, rural infrastructure (e.g., roads, water, transportation, and electricity) can be improved, though it is not yet clear in what sequence the infrastructure should be provided (25). Controversy exists over the attention paid to infrastructural development. Some see it as essential for increasing the adoption of new technology (11), but others argue against significant assistance for infrastructure because it may divert capital from agricultural production and often benefits urban areas more than rural ones (36). Some do not consider AID to have a comparative advantage in infrastructural work even though such projects have been used as an effective means to absorb sudden increases in assistance to a country (30).

The potential of the indigenous private sector in a resource-enhancing approach varies significantly across Africa and, therefore, the sector's needs for assistance vary as well. Much of the current private sector assistance provided by major donor organizations overlooks non-farm rural enterprises and little national policy reform work has been geared toward their support.

Major donor organizations have been directing most agricultural policy assistance at larger, more formal marketing and input supply services, such as government marketing boards and parastatals, sometimes with the purpose of turning them into private firms. Parastatals' roles are decreasing in many countries because of increasing budget deficits and these efforts by donors (21). Such privatization has contributed, in some cases, to increases in agricultural production (43).

Important to private sector assistance will be opening the marketplace to multiple private sector enterprises and not just the conversion of non-viable public monopolies and their replacement with private ones (2). In some cases the public sector may continue to be necessary to serve resource-poor farmers and herders in commercially unprofitable and geographically isolated locations. Private sector assistance needs to be monitored and evaluated as to

whether benefits are being captured primarily by larger enterprises.

#### Development Assistance in Support of Formal Agricultural Institutions

The development and strengthening of African agricultural institutions (research, education, extension, credit, marketing organizations, etc.) is a second high priority category of assistance in a resource-enhancing approach. Supporting the development of agricultural institutions offers several general benefits. First, well-developed African institutions will be more efficient than external donors in providing direct services to agriculturalists. Second, development programs are more likely to continue after donor assistance ends if in-country institutions are capable of maintaining them. Third, sound national policies and good economic management can be encouraged and supported by donors, but their implementation and follow-through will primarily depend on the abilities of the African institutions. Fourth, the ability of recipient countries to absorb and use foreign assistance in part depends on the capacity of their institutions (71).

Agricultural development will depend on strengthening African institutions in such areas as research, education and training, policy analysis, and administration (38,46). Equally important for the development of low-resource agriculture will be the ability of these institutions to address the specific needs and constraints of resource-poor agriculturalists.

Support for staff training and other institutional development of agricultural institutions will require relatively high levels of long-term, stable funding usually available only from larger donor organizations. Cooperation and coordination among donors working with each individual institution and between institutions providing interlocking services to the same agriculturalists will also be essential.

#### Training

Training is a major focus of AID's efforts to strengthen African agricultural institutions. It

provides training to African professionals through numerous programs in the United States, in the recipient country, and in other developing countries. Data on the total number of people trained in-country or in third countries are sparse, but the numbers are considerable because most AID projects contain a training element. From 1980 to mid-1987, 3,523 Africans received short- and long-term agricultural training in the United States, primarily at universities (59).

AID funds training in several ways. Individual bilateral projects programmed by the mission can have training components. Centrally funded programs overseen by AID's Science and Technology Bureau (e.g., the African Graduate Fellowship Program, the African Manpower Development Project, and the Sahel Manpower Development Program) also provide training. Finally, AID supports agricultural schools in Africa that provide training for faculty and students. As part of its 1985 "Plan for Supporting Agricultural Research and Faculties of Agriculture in Africa," AID is supporting seven schools of agriculture in Cameroon, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, and Lesotho (the first three receive high levels of support). In all seven cases, the actual training is being carried out by U.S. universities under contract to AID. The Africa Bureau spent between 4 and 7 percent of its agricultural portfolio on training (1979-87) (table 6-6). Data for overall AID African training expenditures are not available.

Several factors are important for such training to enhance low-resource agriculture. Assistance for training needs to:

- build increased understanding of the specific features and needs of low-resource agriculture,
- ensure that women receive adequate training opportunities and that men are trained in working with women's needs,
- provide as much training as possible in Africa,
- support changes in African curricula to ensure their relevance to African low-resource conditions, and

**Table 6.6.—AID Funding for Agricultural Education and Training<sup>a</sup>  
in the Africa Bureau's Agriculture Portfolio<sup>b</sup>, 1979-87**

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987 (est.)
<b>Expenditures</b>									
Total (millions \$) . . . . .	5.9	7.6	14.6	15.1	14.8	14.0	13.0	14.9	23.8
As a percent of total agriculture portfolio . . . . .	5.0	4.3	6.0	7.7	6.2	5.6	5.3	4.9	4.9
<b>Obligations</b>									
Total (millions \$) . . . . .	14.1	14.4	14.6	20.4	17.4	12.7	14.5	16.6	21.1
As a percent of total agriculture portfolio . . . . .	6.4	5.4	5.2	6.5	5.5	3.7	3.6	4.7	6.7

<sup>a</sup>These are funds for training individuals. A separate budgetary category contains funds for the infrastructural needs of training institutions

<sup>b</sup>The agriculture portfolio includes Africa Bureau funding from DA and ESF. It does not include PL 480 funding nor funds used by other Bureaus

SOURCE U.S. Agency for International Development, Africa Bureau, Agriculture and Rural Development: functional Review FY 7978-1987, July 1986, updated 1987

- educate Africans at U.S. institutions able to provide suitable knowledge while supporting graduate and postgraduate research in Africa.

Questions have been raised concerning the relevance of AID-supported training to African conditions. Although U.S. assistance has led to large numbers of trained Africans, it has not yet had a major impact on the rural sector (26). AID relies heavily on U.S. universities, especially State agricultural schools, for training. Although the existence and abilities of these universities is one of the strengths of U.S. development assistance (30), there are also drawbacks. The majority of U.S. schools operate in ways not necessarily relevant to African agricultural needs (4,56). For example:

- Low-resource agriculture is not a focus of most U.S. schools.
- African technical needs often require different technologies and often focus on different crops than those used by U.S. agriculture.
- The resources a student has available and comes to depend on at U.S. universities may not be available upon return to an African institution.
- U.S. agricultural disciplines tend to be narrow, with little opportunity to engage in broader problem-solving work.
- U.S. schools generally provide few incentives for doing international work or for supporting long-term efforts.

### Institution-Building

Support for agricultural training will not have its full impact if African agricultural institutions are not developed concurrently. At present, many trained Africans find their skills unused or underused because they have no institutional base from which to work. Therefore, support for building African institutions themselves is an important adjunct to training. Experts agree that the provision of institution-building assistance can be most effective if it:

- provides long-term support (for 15-25 years) combined with steady levels of funding;
- provides core funds for institutions to cover costs not met by funds from individual projects;
- develops incentives and provides funds for policy makers, researchers, and extension agents to do field work;
- links research, extension, educational, and policymaking institutions with one another and with local institutions;
- uses flexible approaches that can match changing local needs;
- supplies newly trained Africans with start-up funds and support for collaborating with senior scientists; and
- develops methods for institution-building that promote links between agricultural institutions and resource-poor agriculturalists.

The results of past donor attempts at institution-building have been mixed. The World Bank is among the most active donors

in this type of program but evaluations of its work have been critical of its methods and results. Only 50 percent of the World Bank's agricultural projects achieved some degree of success in institution-building in 1985, a drop from the 63 percent success rate over the period 1979-84 (74). The Bank's institution-building objectives have often been tacked onto agricultural projects, taking a backseat to production goals and the need for rapid disbursement of funds. The needs of recipient institutions have not been well analyzed and foreign technical assistance has been used to circumvent institutional problems instead of working to solve them. Overall, the World Bank has not been effective at supporting development of agricultural institutions such as universities, research institutions, and co-ops nor has it been successful at linking farmer organizations with supporting institutions (71).

The World Bank recently completed a detailed analysis of ongoing African research and research needs which in part details the importance of long-term strengthening of African national research systems, universities, and training. Although this work makes it clear that research must address the actual conditions faced by the small farmers there is little recognition of the role farmers, their organizations, and their knowledge can play in supporting

technology development and diffusion nor does it suggest a role for the World Bank in linking farmers, herders, and fishers to African national research institutions (77,78).

Nevertheless, positive changes in the World Bank's efforts can be seen in some of its work begun in the 1980s. A number of projects have begun with more thorough analyses of the recipient institutions' needs, with institutional development their primary goal, and with long-term training programs (71). The World Bank also has increased lending for African agricultural institutions providing research, extension, training, credit, and marketing services (34,71, 79). Despite these improvements, evaluation of the World Bank's East Africa portfolio found that promoting agricultural growth will require substantial additional investment in training, and in building and strengthening agricultural institutions. According to the study, major efforts are needed to increase institutions' capacities to provide a full range of services, and perform the data collection and analysis on which to base critical decisions (35).

AID is considered to have a comparative advantage in providing assistance for institutional development, although its work too has had only moderate success and its emphasis in this area is insufficient. For example, a recent evaluation of AID's work in six African countries found that 13 percent of assistance was spent on education and training while only 2.3 percent was spent in support of agricultural research (30).

AID has taken several steps to improve its ability to provide assistance for institution-building, especially agricultural research. The agency estimates that \$55 to \$60 million are spent annually for these purposes by all bureaus. This increased emphasis is shown by Africa Bureau funding (table 6-7). AID released its "Plan for Supporting Agricultural Research and Faculties of Agriculture in Africa" in May 1985 as another part of this greater emphasis on training and research institution-building. The plan focuses U.S.-supported research by directing the majority of AID's resources to 22 countries, 8 agricultural commodities, and a small set of



Photo credit: F. Botts/U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization

**A resource-enhancing approach to African agriculture places a high priority on supporting African research institutions. This is a laboratory of the Burundi Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.**

**Table 6-7.—AID Funding for Agricultural Research and Research Capacity in the Africa Bureau's Agriculture Portfolio<sup>a</sup>, 1979-87**

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987 (est.)
Expenditures									
Total (millions \$) . . . . .	10.4	16.2	25.8	26.6	29.5	29.1	30.2	37.8	51.0
As a percent of total portfolio . . . . .	8.8	9.2	10.6	13.6	12.4	11.7	12.2	12.5	10.5
Obligations									
Total (millions \$) . . . . .	31.3	32.5	46.0	45.9	39.8	40.1	34.3	44.1	45.6
As a percent of total portfolio . . . . .	14.3	12.3	16.4	14.7	12.7	11.6	8.6	12.5	14.4

<sup>a</sup>The agriculture portfolio includes Africa Bureau funding from DA and ESF. It does not include Public Law 480 funding nor funds used by other Bureaus.

SOURCE Agency for International Development, Africa Bureau, *Agriculture and Rural Development: Functional Review FY 1978-1987*, July 1986, updated 1987

research problems. For example, the plan emphasizes mixed crop/animal farming instead of assistance to pastoralists due to past failures in range management. In 8 countries that have relatively strong research capacity, assistance will support increased capabilities to produce technologies. The 14 other countries with lower research capacity are to be supported in developing their ability to import and adapt technology. In addition, research networks are to be supported that address regional needs, that support countries with the weakest research systems, and that provide links with the International Agricultural Research Centers. Currently AID is supporting work on all 8 commodities, and is active in 7 of 8 "technology generating" countries, and 13 of 14 "technology adapting" countries.

AID's approach to institution-building is based on its understanding of the importance of improving African technical capabilities; that successful technology development requires a long-term approach; and that farming-systems research is one way to bridge the gap between researchers and farmers, herders, and fishers. Overall, AID has developed a strategy that emphasizes small farmers, food crops, and increased donor coordination. Many of the promising technologies identified in this report are being supported by AID (53).

AID's research plan is an important step in focusing attention on the technical needs of African agriculture. However, the plan may be too narrow in several respects. The AID Plan, much like the World Bank's approach, does not address the role of the farmer in technology de-

velopment. Farming systems research is presented less as a vehicle for farmer participation than as a means to ensure the acceptability of new technologies. Also, serious questions have been raised regarding AID's commitment to farming systems research. Another concern is the reduced number of commodities to be researched. While this reduction can help focus resources it also means that regionally important minor crops playing a large role in African nutrition and making up an important component of many farming systems may be neglected. Also, too little effort has been given to research and development of technologies for processing well-adapted tropical crops into desired food products (5). Parallel attention to research for livestock systems, fisheries and forestry, upon which many low-resource agriculturalists depend, has also been lacking.

A significant common weakness of much donor assistance to African agricultural institutions has been the failure to promote links to resource-poor agriculturalists. The lack of impact of agricultural assistance as a whole can be traced in part to a failure to develop technologies relevant to African agriculture, African extension agents find themselves with nothing to offer farmers and herders. Evaluations have shown that donor support for technology development has been inappropriate for resource-poor agriculturalists. Reasons for this inappropriateness include (6,14,40,72):

- failure to analyze if the technology was tailored to the needs of resource-poor agriculturalists, for example, by avoiding expensive inputs or minimizing risk;

- ignoring the importance of other farm operations, local cultural and ethnic factors, and the local environment;
- ignoring the effects of the new technology on recipients;
- ignoring gender differences and not ensuring female participation;
- a lack of farmer involvement and on-farm testing;
- an absence of multidisciplinary research;
- an emphasis on short-term projects; and
- failure to account for national policies.

If future technology development by African institutions is to avoid repeating these mistakes, attention must be paid now to how institution-building can be done in a way supportive of developing low-resource agriculture. Development organizations need to address this issue and draw together the expertise of the universities, the private sector, international agricultural research centers, and African institutions that have worked in this area.

An important part of drawing together this expertise will be an increased coordination of efforts. Coordination of research activity is particularly necessary to prevent duplication of efforts by the large number of donors, national governments, and networks involved in research. An example of increased coordination in research is the Special Program for African Agricultural Research (SPAAR), established in 1985 by 15 major donors to support coordination and strengthen African national research institutions. It has a small secretariat located at the World Bank and six working groups: regional research networks; promising technologies; an information system on donor-funded research; guidelines and strategies for building national research capabilities; forestry; and education and training (77,78). In addition, SPAAR supplies small grants to African scientists through the International Foundation for Science in Stockholm.

#### The International Agricultural Research Centers

Thirteen International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCS) located worldwide, with a

combined budget in 1986 of \$235 million, are supported by 39 national, multinational, and private donors under the auspices of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Each has responsibility for certain food crops, animals, or farming systems and all have programs concerning Africa. They are internationally staffed and independent of their host governments. Four are located in Africa: the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in Nigeria, the International Livestock Center for Africa in Ethiopia, the International Laboratory for Research on Animal Diseases in Kenya, and the West African Rice Development Association in Liberia. Seven other centers have personnel stationed in Africa and two centers research African policy and research management issues. With increasing international attention on Africa, the centers have increased their African work, and about 50 percent of the CGIAR system's resources are now devoted to Africa. Questions have been raised, however, about the propriety of an organization with worldwide responsibilities spending such a large percentage on one region (29).

AID has funded the CGIAR system since its founding through contributions to core funding and through special projects. From 1978 to 1986, AID funded at least 25 percent of the system's annual core budget. U.S. core contributions peaked in 1986 at \$46.25 million and declined to an estimated \$40 million (21 percent of the core budget) in 1987 (60). The United States also supports specific projects at the centers. U.S. funding of such projects totaled \$14 million in 1986 (10).

In addition to the CGIAR system there are approximately one dozen other international agricultural research centers. Those with relevance for African agriculturalists include the International Fertilizer Development Center, and the International Soybean Program, both in the United States, and the International Council for Research on Agroforestry and the International Center for Insect Physiology and Ecology, both in Kenya.

The CGIAR and non-CGIAR centers' work in Africa have had less than their anticipated





Photo credit: Donald Plucknett/Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

Scientists from the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and the Rwandan national research system cooperate on bean research. Such collaborative work is important to increasing the benefits of research sponsored by the International Agricultural Research Centers.

impact on agricultural development. Recently, CGIAR has reevaluated its goals and research methods and has determined ways in which to increase the impact of its work (8, 11):

- including multiple new crop varieties, each adapted to different local conditions, instead of one or two single “breakthrough” varieties;
- addressing farming systems and moving the location of research away from research stations to do so;
- modifying research goals for new technologies which reduce the farmer’s risk in addition to increasing production; and
- strengthening African national research centers.

These new attitudes are reflected in the centers’ increased outreach programs, increased work on farmers’ fields, attention to African crop and livestock varieties, research on African farming systems, and attention to environmental sustainability. The centers are working toward an improved balance between field work and work done at the experiment stations. The effects of these changes are important also be-

cause national research institutions often adopt approaches used by the international centers (31).

While the CGIAR system claims to be increasing its attention to on-farm conditions, criticisms remain that centers have not fully implemented this shift. For example, concerns have been raised about the relevance of on-station work for the farmer. Some feel that too little effort has been made to grow diverse varieties in farmers’ field (or under simulated farmer conditions). Plant breeders have not focused on ensuring that improved varieties provide stable yields throughout the area where they are to be grown and on ensuring that their resistance to pests is durable (5). A further constraint is the lack of commitment to including the farmer as a partner in research and even to talking with farmers and consumers to guide the setting of objectives early in a crop or livestock breeding program.

The issue of where to focus research is also unresolved. Arguments in favor of directing research to the most favored geographic areas to reap the quickest and most economical results contrast with arguments to increase research on the more marginal areas where large numbers of people live and raise their food (11, 37). Disagreements between centers located inside and outside Africa over responsibility for specific commodity research, for example, maize, have also hampered the system’s work and need to be resolved. Overall, the centers would benefit from stronger ties to African and non-African scientists through better communication and joint projects (5).

The CGIAR system has played an important educational role, providing training to about 6,200 Africans between 1962 and 1984 through short courses, degree programs, and post-doctoral work. This figure underestimates the actual number trained because it counts only those trained at the headquarters of each center (9). Training makes up about 12 percent of the funds CGIAR spends in Africa (29). However, training programs need to increase emphasis on training women who make up less than 10 percent of those trained by the system

(8). Training impact also would be improved if the centers' increased their collaboration with African universities (29).

The CGIAR system has recognized the importance of supporting the development of national research systems but it spends only 1.6 percent of its operational budget on such support (11). In addition, only a small part of its training has been related to institution-building at the national level. The International Service for National Agricultural Research was established in 1980 as the lead center in support of national agricultural research systems. Although its impact has not been evaluated, demands for assistance have outrun its capacity to respond. Institution-building is seen as a high priority for future CGIAR work (11), but questions remain regarding how much the system is willing to divert from its primary focus on research. The centers will remain important sources of agricultural research and training and have potential for support and strengthening national research institutions. However, donors' assistance to the international centers can complement but cannot substitute for directly supporting the development of national research systems.

#### Development Assistance To Support National Level Policy Reform

A third focus of development assistance in a resource-enhancing approach involves a wide range of programs that support African policy reforms at the national level. One lesson learned in the 1970s by donors was that assistance for local and institutional development can be offset by unsupportive and counterproductive national policies (33). Such policies have resulted from multiple factors but include a lack of attention to the needs of low-resource agriculture, over-investment in other sectors, and a dependence on export agriculture to finance other efforts. National governments and donors have contributed to these errors.

AID and the World Bank have placed increasing importance over the past decade on the need to adjust national policies (tables 6-8 and 6-9), concentrating on a set of macroeconomic and

agriculture-specific policies identified as constraints to broad economic development. They and other donors supply large amounts of non-project lending, cash, and commodity aid to encourage national governments' agreement to institute changes such as (76, 57):

- reducing overvalued exchange rates and restrictions on imports,
- reducing government expenditures,
- removing biased tax and trade policies,
- increasing farmgate prices that are below national and world markets,
- reducing the monopolies of both state marketing boards that maintain low commodity prices and inefficient agricultural input distribution organizations,
- increasing opportunities for the private sector,
- cutting subsidies for costly agricultural inputs used primarily by the richest farmers, and
- cutting consumer food subsidies.

Theoretically, these policy reforms could help resource-poor farmers significantly by ending policies that are favorable to large farms and encourage food imports, and by increasing farm prices, investment in infrastructure, and the efficiency of the market (30). It is not clear, however, if current policy reform efforts are having these impacts. Reform is often focused on broad macroeconomic changes and, in some cases, has not yet been tailored to adjust agricultural policies more specifically (16). Where changes have occurred in agricultural policy their impacts on resource-poor farmers are unclear.

The swift rise in funding for policy reform has outpaced efforts to evaluate its impacts. Programs have been based on hypotheses regarding responses to policy changes rather than on data of actual responses. This lack of macroeconomic work in the agricultural sector has left macroeconomic analysis inadequately linked to actual farmer behavior (34). The deficiencies of macroeconomic analysis and lack of adequate evaluation of policy reform's impact on resource-poor farmers leads to concerns over how quickly reform has become a priority for de-

**Table 6.8.-AID Funding for Policy Reform and Economic Stabilization in the Africa Bureau's Agriculture Portfolio<sup>a</sup>, 1979-87**

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987 (est)
Expenditures									
Total (millions \$).....	7.9	39.6	57.3	18.0	60.5	69.7	79.5	108.4	170.9
As a percent of agriculture portfolio . . . .	6.7	22.5	23.6	9.2	25.4	27.7	32.1	35.9	35.2
Obligations									
Total (million \$)....	26.9	57.9	47.9	60.7	81.4	124.3	172.9	123.3	90.2
As percent of total agriculture portfolio . . . .	12.3	21.9	17.1	19.5	25.8	36.0	43.2	34.9	28.5

<sup>a</sup>The agriculture portfolio includes Africa Bureau funding from IDA and ESF. It does not include Public Law 480 funding nor funds used by other Bureaus.

SOURCE U S Agency for International Development, Africa Bureau, Agriculture and Rural Development: *Functional Review FY 1978-1987*, July 1986, updated 1987

**Table 6.9.—World Bank Policy Reform Lending to Sub-Saharan Africa, 1984-87**

Fiscal year	Commitments to Sub-Saharan Africa	Reform lending <sup>a</sup>	Reform lending as a Percentage of commitments
	(\$ millions)		
1984.....	2,338	819	35 %/0
1985.....	1,598	193	12 %/0
1986.....	2,582	1,210	470/0
1987.....	2,285	1,261	550/0

<sup>a</sup>includes IDA and IBRD lending.

SOURCE World Bank, Special Office for African Affairs, 1987

velopment assistance. Results from initial evaluations have not yet confirmed the theoretical benefits for resource-poor agriculturalists and in some cases have proved that the initial assumptions used are wrong (17). While some evaluations show that policy reforms in conjunction with other conditions (e.g., good weather) can lead to increases in national crop production, it remains difficult to link reforms specifically with increases in resource-poor agriculturalists' income and production. Where such links can be made, it appears that the minority of better-off small farmers are the primary beneficiaries (22, 69, 70).

Within policy reform activities, the basis for the current emphasis on pricing has also been questioned. Real prices for food and/or export crops were already increasing in many African countries in the 1970s and declining real food and export crop prices were not common (20). Also, price reforms may have less impact on total production and food security in reality than they do in theory. Depending on the circumstances, farmers often sell commodities

for a higher or lower than official price in private or informal markets. In response to raising the price of one commodity, farmers may grow more of that commodity but less of other important crops. Price policies are important but require careful macroeconomic analysis on a country-by-country and even local basis. Blanket pricing policy changes thus do not seem to be a wise strategy for the entire continent.

Initial results show that reform may actually hurt segments of the rural population including resource-poor agriculturalists. Macroeconomic reforms have been encouraged by donors without full regard to the negative effects on poor people's income and welfare (especially children) caused by deflationary effects on the economy and reduced government spending (12). In addition, increases in food prices also may have had adverse impacts on the poorest farmers. For example, about 40 percent of the farmers in Mali are net food buyers who perform non-farm work to be able to afford enough food. Increased food prices have forced them to spend more of their income on food (17). At-

tention to how reform affects farmer income could help avoid such negative impacts. Reform needs to be more concerned with maintaining economic growth to provide increased jobs and incomes. It should also include provisions for supporting programs (e.g., nutrition or health) for vulnerable populations (12, 73).

An important component for the success of reform programs is the relationship between donors and national African governments. It is commonly believed that reforms require donor pressure and stringent conditions to ensure African governments' compliance. However, such pressure can constrain actual reforms and replace real change with complex agreements and paper gains (3). Instead of this pressure, a more cooperative approach between donors and African governments could take advantage of African knowledge, and be based on the fact that governments will support reforms that are in their own interest, and that maintaining reform requires African support.

Few African governments currently have the capacity to gather and analyze data necessary to plan reforms, to implement them, and then to modify them as conditions change. But the continued responsibility of expatriates for these tasks makes policy reform expensive, less sustainable, and sometimes inappropriate to local conditions. While donors have been increas-

ing their support for policy reforms, their support to improve African capabilities to participate in these decisions has not kept pace (33, 38). For example, AID's Africa Bureau expenditures for building African policy capabilities reached a high in 1981 and have declined since, although overall spending for reforms has continued to increase (58). The World Bank has come under strong criticism for failing to draw on and further develop the analytical capability of African governments as well (35).

Opportunities exist to use policy reform programs to enhance low-resource agriculture. As noted earlier, reforms can help end discrimination against small, private, rural producers and enterprises. Donor assistance has already increased government attention to the agricultural sector in general. An example of positive donor assistance to reform programs is being carried out by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) which has begun sending consultants to round-table discussions organized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) where African governments and donors discuss policy reforms. UNIFEM's participation at those round tables has led to increased data collection on women's activities, promoted women's needs in policy decisions, and helped governments and donors find ways to include women in their work (39).

## AID AND A RESOURCE-ENHANCING APPROACH

The U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), as the principle U.S. implementing agency for economic assistance, would have lead responsibility for incorporating an approach to enhance low-resource agriculture into U.S. foreign assistance. The broad roles of AID in implementing such an approach are discussed in the first part of this chapter. Some more specific questions regarding AID's Africa strategy and the institutional factors that affect its ability to implement a resource-enhancing approach are raised here.

### AtD's Strategy

Under AID's current strategy<sup>3</sup> for African development, a resource-enhancing approach could be initiated, though its implementation would require some changes and more clarity in AID's activities. Agricultural development

<sup>3</sup>AID's strategy for development in general and specifically for Africa is set out in three documents:

- the 1984 *Africa Bureau Strategic Plan* (51),
- the 1985 *Blueprint for Development: The Strategic Plan of the Agency for International Development*, (54) and
- the 1986 *U.S. Assistance Strategy for Africa 1987-1990* (57).

is one of AID's top three priorities in its strategy for African aid (57) and support for agriculture comprises over 50 percent of the Africa Bureau's budget (table 6-10). With agricultural development a priority, several areas are already receiving attention that would be part of a resource-enhancing approach:

- policy reforms favorable to farmers, agricultural research,
- linking research to farmer needs through farming systems research,
- training African researchers and providing support for African research organizations, and
- attempting to relate natural resource and agricultural issues.

But whether AID activities actually will support low-resource agriculture depends, in part, on how successfully AID can address certain specific issues, including: participation, sustainability, local institution building, support for women in agriculture, reducing risk, and the technical needs and labor constraints facing farmers. AID has identified the importance of these issues in several cases, but has been less effective in implementing its findings. For example, the 1984 *Africa Bureau Strategic Plan* highlights the importance of local participation in development activities, including agricultural research, but does not incorporate this conclusion into the report's agricultural objectives. The 1985 *Blueprint for Development* again identifies the need for local involvement to help ensure successful development but does not include it when discussing agricultural de-

velopment specifics. The other issues are treated similarly; they are recognized as being important but information is lacking on how AID could make them integral parts of its development activities.

AID's strategy papers do not acknowledge that local resources can provide important opportunities. While AID's overall strategy assumes that local resources can be used more productively (i.e., reforms in agricultural policies can stimulate increased production), it does not focus on direct support for developing and making improved use of those resources.

Of additional concern, AID's strategy documents have attributed less importance to certain of these issues over time. For example, local participation and sustainability, while mentioned in earlier reports are not included in the 1986 strategy. A 1978 agricultural development policy paper and a 1981 Africa Bureau food sector assistance paper address many of these issues but they are no longer explicitly contained in AID's most recent strategies (49,50).

To a large extent, these issues have been replaced by an emphasis on policy reform and economic stabilization. Central to AID's current strategy is the concept that accelerating economic growth is the best means to support African development. Economic growth, accomplished by increasing income, is seen as the best means to eliminate the extremes of poverty and to meet basic human needs. The tacti-

**Table 6-10.—AID Funding for Agriculture in the Africa Bureau's Budget, 1979-87**

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987 (est.)
<b>Expenditures</b>									
Total (millions \$) . . . . .	118.2	175.7	242.8	195.9	237.8	251.5	246.9	302.1	485.7
Agriculture portfolio as percent of Bureau budget 69		63	63	50	47	52	53	54	56
<b>Obligations</b>									
Total (millions \$) . . . . .	218.9	264.8	280.9	311.9	315.4	345.5	400.6	353.3	317.1
Agriculture portfolio as percent of Bureau budget 69		64	60	50	51	50	48	50	59

SOURCE: Agency for International Development, Africa Bureau, *Agriculture and Rural Development' Functional Review FY 1978-1987; updated July 1987*

cal mechanisms to reach accelerated economic growth are primarily macroeconomic and sector-specific changes in African national policies. Under this view, U.S. development assistance principally should be used to support and encourage African policy reforms while helping to stabilize the economy (e.g., through balance of payments' aid) so that reforms can be carried out.

As policy reform has become central to AID's strategy, other concerns have received less direct attention. Low-resource agriculture cannot develop without supportive policies, and failures in agricultural development have been due partly to flawed national policies. But, as already discussed, policy reform that is not well-linked to supporting low-resource agriculture may divert the benefits of development funding to other groups and may indeed be harmful to low-resource agriculturalists.

### AID's Operations

The ability of AID to implement a resource-enhancing approach will depend not only on the clarity and appropriateness of its strategy but also on its operational capabilities. Past OTA work has identified a set of well-known constraints affecting AID operations [box 6-2]. Besides these constraints (which need to be dealt with by AID), several promising trends in AID's operations may affect AID's future ability to address low-resource agriculture. They include:

- c increased decentralization of decisionmaking to the field,
- a shift to longer term support and greater flexibility, and
- support for sustainability of activities and improved use of evaluations.

#### Increased Decentralization

AID's recent moves towards decentralization have given field missions increased authority to make and implement decisions. AID field personnel give the agency a comparative advantage over donors who do not have permanent field offices (30). Field staff gain on-the-ground knowledge and can have the day-to-day inter-

actions with African policy makers and implementors necessary for collaborative decision-making. AID has attempted to cut paperwork requirements by giving missions increased authority over project approval. At the same time, the number of new projects has been reduced. AID also has increased average staff tours by 8 to 9 months and increased the use of foreign nationals in an attempt to maintain continuity. Short tours of duty are still the norm in Africa, however, and increased rewards may be necessary to encourage staff to stay longer in the posts in Africa that they view as less desirable.

Decentralization's potential contributions to a resource-enhancing approach are jeopardized, however, by concurrent personnel cuts and an attrition rate that exceeds hiring. Staff levels (including direct hire staff and foreign nationals) dropped 19 percent between 1981 and 1985 (61). Mission staff in the Sahel countries of Western Africa were cut by 25 percent in 1985 (67). Fewer personnel make it difficult for missions to carry out the detailed work necessary to address local conditions and to consider alternative programs (30). Technical staff have been cut the most and those remaining face the problem of being overworked and unable to make use of their technical skills or to update them. Evaluation activities have been particularly hard hit by staff reductions.

#### Shift to Longer Term Support and Greater Flexibility

AID has stated that its activities need to be carried out over longer periods of time and has now provided for project commitments of up to 10 years as well as for multiple extensions of shorter projects. Longer project commitments will be necessary particularly for successful agricultural research and the development of African institutions.

To a lesser extent, AID is also recognizing the need for more flexible implementation. Lessons learned from planning and implementing past projects and programs have led to calls for less pre-planning and more flexibility to change activities during project implementa-

### Box 6-2.—Constraints on AID's Operations:—Lessons From the Sahel'

The challenge for future development efforts in Africa is to move to new modes of assistance that are more consistent with the nature of the region and the long-term goals of food security, environmental stabilization, and economic growth. The United States can continue to play a key role in this multinational development effort if it can incorporate the past decade's experiences into a more effective strategy. However, the Agency for International Development's (AID) effectiveness in applying the lessons of the past decade face constraints in four areas:

- the ambiguity of some AID policies and strategies,
- internal institutional characteristics of AID,
- the sometimes adversarial nature of AID's relationship with Congress, and
- the lack of agreement about the role of development assistance in overall U.S. foreign policy.

These constraints can be illustrated by examining AID's role in the multinational development effort in the Sahel region of Africa. After 10 years of assistance, AID's Sahel strategy has undergone much change in attempts to improve on failures. The most recent strategy statement incorporates many of the past decades' lessons: it places high priority on agricultural research and production, policy reform, health and family planning, training, infrastructure, conservation, and environmental protection. In addition, it calls for coordination among all donors. However, AID's strategy is at times ambiguous and its implementation sometimes is not consistent with the past decade's lessons and existing congressional mandates for foreign assistance. For instance, the changing focus toward policy reform, institutional development, and infrastructure—although consistent with the lessons learned—could signal a retreat from direct assistance to the poor, depending on how that focus is implemented. Despite the high priority stated for agricultural research, AID has no Sahel-specific research strategy. AID has not seriously addressed the issues of effective farmer participation or given adequate attention to the specific role of women in Sahelian production, processing, and distribution systems. Although the United States is the largest single donor of food aid in the Sahel region, there is little effective integration of food aid into overall assistance strategies.

AID's effectiveness in implementing its strategy also is constrained by internal institutional characteristics. One basic problem is that the numbers and skill levels of AID's staffing in the Sahel have not been commensurate with the level of U.S. commitment. Although French language and Sahel-specific technical skills have improved, they are still inadequate. The proportion of managers to technicians is high and too few personnel have appropriate skills in agricultural and environmental sciences, macro- and micro-economic analysis, and human resource development. The use of outside contractors, particularly from U.S. universities, has increased the talent pool, but quality is still uneven, turnover is high, and institutional learning is limited. Sahelian staff are often underused and AID contact with beneficiaries and counterparts is often inadequate,

Another problem is that AID's program and project design systems are cumbersome, slow, inflexible, and often directed toward short-term, physical objectives rather than longer-term development goals. Sahelian input, be it governmental or local, is often pro *forma*.

An additional institutional constraint affecting AID's performance in the Sahel concerns AID's relationship with Congress. Congress played an important role in the original U.S. commitment to the Sahel and has continued a high level of interest and support. Nonetheless, aspects of the Congress-AID relationship actually constrain the attainment of foreign assistance goals. For instance, congressional policy mandates to AID under the Foreign Assistance Act and other legislation are cumulative and without priority. While each may be desirable in itself and the impact of many themes (e. g., basic human needs, the environment, women in development, child welfare) has been at least partially effective, their number and frequency of changes hamper the development of consistent, long-term strategies. Consequently, these mandates sometimes are not taken seriously. In another area of con-

<sup>1</sup> As part of the assessment of Low-Resource Agriculture in Africa, OTA111986 released a special report addressing U.S. assistance to the Sahel, *Continuing the Commitment: Agricultural Development in the Sahel*, OTA-F-308 (Springfield, VA: National Technical Information Service, August 1986). This box summarizes the conclusions of that work concerning AID's operations.

Box 6-2.—Constraints on AID's Operations:—Lessons From the Sahel<sup>1</sup>—(Continued)

cern, procurement and financial controls are often unrealistic relative to African realities, and they do more to increase costs, create delays, and tie up AID and Sahelian management time than to accomplish their intended purposes. In addition, extensive congressional oversight—and sometimes over-attention to management detail like requiring notification of minor project funding changes—not only increases paperwork, it restricts the agency's flexibility to respond to evolving needs and opportunities.

The role of foreign assistance within U.S. foreign policy creates a fourth set of constraints for development assistance goals. The Sahel Development Program, for example, was born of the U.S. commitment to humanitarian concerns and a vision of long-term social and economic development. Yet it is not uncommon for short-term foreign policy objectives (e.g., political or commercial objectives) to conflict with this long-term perspective. Increased bilateralism, the use of conditionality with respect to political stances rather than development performance, and assistance tied to U.S. commercial interests all act to reduce the effectiveness of U.S. commitments in the eyes of Africans and other international donors.

tion. Critics argue that excessive pre-planning leads to problems because plans maybe over 4 years old before being initiated or there may be a reluctance to change pre-planned activities despite significantly changed circumstances (14). "Rolling designs" have been proposed as an alternative. In these, an activity, though still planned in advance, can be changed by its implementors to respond to local capabilities and constraints (41). Under a rolling design, on-going contact with recipients is used to monitor the need for changes and continuous reevaluation is used to modify the activity accordingly. In addition, the rolling design may help overcome problems caused by AID's structural separation of design and implementation where implementors may be faced with activities designed by others and unsuitable for the evolving conditions in which they work.

#### Support for Sustainability of Activities and Use of Evaluation

AID has increased its attention to ensuring that development activities will continue once donor assistance ends. The prior AID Administrator, M. Peter McPherson, dubbed sustainability one of the "twin engines of development," along with economic growth. AID, like other donors, has had difficulty in making its projects and programs sustainable (14). This is in part due to operational problems (e.g., African and U.S. staff turnover and the short time period of assistance) which interrupt building in-

digenous management ability, but it is also due to a failure to provide sustainable technologies for resource-poor agriculturalists. Increasing the sustainability of AID's work will necessitate more effective support for institution-building, coupled with a better linking of supported institutions with the needs of low-resource agriculture.

AID has also been strengthening its information and evaluation systems since the early 1970s (30) and it can go farther in this direction. Two problems still plague this work. First, until an AID-wide data system is created that includes the Africa Bureau, the central bureaus, and the missions, it will not be possible to determine in full how much money is being spent to support agricultural development in Africa and how it is being spent. This problem is particularly acute for Public Law 480 local currency funding. Data currently available in different publications commonly are contradictory.

Second, and more important, too little use is made of evaluations when designing new work. For example, a review of AID's livestock program in Kenya between 1960 and 1984 found that the work failed to take advantage of lessons learned by the British and instead introduced technology without regard to the local environment or existing herding systems. When the AID projects began to fail, evaluations noted the need to address these two points. Yet this information was not used in the devel-



opment of later livestock projects and these also failed, leading AID to drastically curtail its livestock work in Kenya. Part of the reason for poor design was the pressure to obligate an existing budget quickly, but more important was AID's failure to draw on past evaluations to improve future work (16). AID's moves towards decen-

tralization; longer and more flexible support; and increased attention to sustainability, information systems, and the improved use of evaluation will all need to be reinforced if the agency is to play a more effective role in a resource-enhancing approach to African agricultural development.

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