

The Politics of Integrating Gender to State  
Development Processes: Trends,  
Opportunities and Constraints  
in Bangladesh, Chile, Jamaica,  
Mali, Morocco and Uganda

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## Preface

The Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995, provides an opportunity for the world community to focus attention on areas of critical concern for women worldwide — concerns that stem from social problems that embrace both men and women, and that require solutions affecting both genders. One of the main objectives of the Conference is to adopt a platform for action, concentrating on some of the key areas identified as obstacles to the advancement of women. UNRISD's work in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women focuses on two of the themes highlighted by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women:

- inequality in women's access to and participation in the definition of economic structures and policies and the productive process itself; and
- insufficient institutional mechanisms to promote the advancement of women.

The Institute's Occasional Paper series for Beijing reflects work carried out under the UNRISD/UNDP project, **Technical Co-operation and Women's Lives: Integrating Gender into Development Policy**. The activities of the project include an assessment of efforts by a selected number of donor agencies and governments to integrate gender issues into their activities (Phase I); participating countries included Bangladesh, Chile, Jamaica, Mali, Morocco, Uganda and Viet Nam. The action-oriented part of the project (Phases II and III) involves pilot studies in five of these countries (Bangladesh, Jamaica, Morocco, Uganda and Viet Nam), the goal of which is to initiate a process of policy dialogue between gender researchers, policy makers and activists aimed at making economic policies and productive processes more accountable to women.

This paper constitutes a critical component of the first set of activities noted above: it provides an assessment of efforts in six of the seven countries to improve public accountability to women in the development process. The paper begins with a brief theoretical discussion of feminist perspectives on the developmentalist state (Part I). It then goes on to provide an overview of some of the more prominent political, economic and social trends of the past two decades, against which efforts have been made to institutionalize gender in state development processes (Part II). In the main body of the paper (Part III), the author provides a historical and comparative analysis of efforts in the six case study countries to institutionalize gender concerns. The picture that emerges is one of extraordinarily fractured trajectories of institutionalization within the public administration.

Most of the gender units within government bureaucracy that are studied here have a mandate to pursue their agenda across other government departments — a project that is sometimes called “mainstreaming”. For this they have devised a range of policy instruments (e.g. gender

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guidelines, gender training) intended to bring about gender-sensitive institutional, policy and operational changes across the public sector in order to make responsiveness to women's interests a routine part of each sector's activities. Despite significant efforts, the attempts to routinize gender concerns have for the most part been ineffective because gender units have been unable to provide the necessary incentives to encourage a positive reception in other departments.

Some of the critical areas for gender mainstreaming considered in the paper include the national development plan and budget which constitute important public statements expressing politically selected priorities for change and progress, and are based on a macro-economic framework designed to create the conditions under which this national vision can be realized. Efforts so far in the countries studied have failed to ensure a systematic connection between national policy commitments to the integration of gender in development and the budgetary allocations that are necessary to realize those commitments. The chronic short-staffing of gender administrative units, compounded by their weak analytical skills, has tended to contribute to this failure. Equally important, however, has been the political weakness of gender constituents outside the state. In the politics of policy-making a critical point of leverage on decision makers is popular pressure and public opinion — the presence of an active constituency.

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May 1995

Dharam Ghai  
Director

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACFODE	Action for Development (Ugandan women's NGO)
BJMS	<i>Bangladesh Jatiyo Mahila Sangstha</i> (Bangladesh National Women's Association)
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CEMA	<i>Centros de Madres</i> (Mothers' Centres, Chile)
CNMMD	<i>Concertacion Nacional de Mujeres por la Democracia</i> (National Coalition of Women for Democracy, Chile)
DWA	Department of Women's Affairs (Bangladesh)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIDA-U	Ugandan Women Lawyers' Association
GAD	gender and development
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
GOMo	Government of Morocco
GOU	Government of Uganda
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (Uganda)
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRC	National Resistance Council (Uganda, in effect the Parliament)
NRM	National Resistance Movement (Uganda, the party in power)
NWC	National Women's Councils
PAPSCA	Programme to Alleviate Poverty and the Social Costs of Adjustment (Uganda)
RC	Resistance Council (Uganda)
RDP	Rehabilitation and Development Plan (Uganda)
SERNAM	<i>Servicio Nacional de Mujeres</i> (National Service for Women, Chile)
UNFM	<i>Union Nationale des Femmes du Mali</i> (National Union of Malian Women) also: <i>Union Nationale des Femmes du Maroc</i> (National Union of Moroccan Women)
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWFCT	Ugandan Women's Finance and Credit Trust
WID	women in development



## Introduction: State-Based Institutions for Gender Equity<sup>1</sup>

Since the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), the demand for policy attention to women's needs in development has often been framed in terms of a project of access, or "integration" to a range of development policy-making and project implementing institutions. Most important of these institutions has been the state, which, in contexts of scarcity and poverty, has been a central arena for the distribution of development resources. Although this is a role which has been seriously problematized over the last decade in processes of economic stabilization and structural adjustment, the state is still a critical arena for the promotion of women's interests. This is because of a growing understanding among gender policy advocates of the role of public authority in underwriting the asymmetrical distribution of resources and values between women and men and hence the importance of improving the quality of the accountability of public institutions to their female constituencies.

This study examines processes of institutionalizing gender and development (GAD) concerns in the state and finds that efforts to integrate gender in development through national "women's machinery" have produced many important strategic gains — above all, in legitimating a place for gender issues in development. WID/GAD government units have innovated policy analysis and monitoring tools such as gender checklists and guidelines for cross-government use. Other new instruments for co-ordinating gender-sensitive planning across the government have been WID/GAD focal points in line ministries and synoptic gender-sensitive national development plans. The WID/GAD issue has had pockets of success in gaining allies and has made critically important gains in revising data bases used for development planning to include aspects of women's lives.

At the same time, WID/GAD national "machineries" have encountered a range of constraints which undermine their ability to pursue their agenda effectively. These include the marginalization of WID/GAD units through under-resourcing in staff, skills and funding and through patterns of institutional location and role assignment which stigmatize and condemn in advance their ambitions for gender-transformative policy change. There seem to be two main constraints on the effectiveness of WID/GAD policy efforts. One is that gender-sensitive policy proposals tend rarely to be traced through to actual budgetary implications and fail to make a direct impact on the main instrument for national development planning: the public expenditure planning process. The second serious shortcoming regards the nature of connections between WID/GAD units in the public administration and the women's constituency in civil society. Ideally a strong constituency base among women's organizations and gender-sensitive NGOs would strengthen the position of the WID/GAD agenda in government, while at the same time sensitizing it to the needs of the national female citizenship. But it has

proven difficult to build up or to exploit this iterative relationship, in part because of mutual suspicion on either side of the state-civil society divide.

The international development community has played an important role in supporting national WID/GAD efforts, through the United Nations Decade for Women and through the aid programmes of individual multilateral and bilateral donors. Though indispensable in the absence of coherent local constituencies mobilized in support of the WID/GAD issue, the overwhelming predominance of donor pressure in some contexts as the impetus for adopting WID/GAD concerns has exacerbated problems of ambivalence in development administrations towards the issue. As a foreign import, the legitimacy of the WID/GAD issue can be undermined and genuine local “internalization” or “ownership” of the issue postponed.

The primary data on which this report is based is drawn from interviews commissioned by UNRISD and conducted by researchers in each of the six countries. The six countries studied here are each at different stages of integrating gender to development processes. They also differ vastly in their degree of economic development, their political histories and the nature of their main economic constraints. What they have in common is a reasonable degree of civil stability and democratic governance, though the specific contours of civil society and democracy differ in each country. They were selected by UNRISD primarily because democratic conditions of governance in each provide opportunities for future collaboration with the UNDP to strengthen gender planning capabilities. The singling out of these countries is not intended to give the impression that they are either particularly remiss or progressive in their approach to institutionalizing women’s interests in development — when it comes to institutionalizing women’s interests in policy processes, no country in the world can be considered “developed”. Although Australia, Canada and the Scandinavian countries, for example, are held up as examples of progress in this respect, they face the same problems as do the countries under review here — profound bureaucratic resistance to the gender-equitable integration of women as subjects of public policy.

The interviews were held with members of state bureaucracies, NGO representatives, members of women’s organizations and academics, almost all of whom in one way or another were involved in promoting improved state attention to women’s needs and interests in development. The interview data is rich in subjective assessments of official policy efforts but, perhaps because of this, there is considerable unevenness in the detail provided on formal policy measures and their impact. Also largely missing are detailed “insider” accounts of efforts to pursue gender policy agendas at particular instances, accounts which would illuminate aspects of the gendered politics of policy-making, although I have made some inferences. The absence of this kind of data is unsurprising, as bureaucratic decision-making is notoriously impervious to outside scrutiny; it dwells in the minutia of everyday slights and omissions, of memos unsent or “not received”, of forgotten meetings, of secret alliances.

This report also draws on national and sectoral policy statements, on a wide range of documents from multilateral and bilateral agencies working in these countries and on secondary literature on gender and development issues in each country. Inevitably, more information was available on some countries than others and regrettably, not as much secondary literature on the two francophone countries, Mali and Morocco, was available to me as on the other countries. In consequence, the following analysis will provide more detail on the experience of institutionalizing gender concerns in some countries than others, with particular attention to Bangladesh and Uganda, countries with which I have more familiarity.

Before proceeding to an analysis of individual country efforts to improve public accountability to women in the development process, a range of analytical and conceptual issues need to be clarified. These are: a gendered perspective on the state and public administration in development, the meaning of institutionalization, the concept of women's interests from a political and policy perspective and the distinction between WID approaches and GAD approaches. Part I explores these issues. Part II reviews contemporary international and domestic economic and political trends which have implications for state responses to women's needs in development. Part III reviews individual country experiences of integrating gender in development and Part IV revisits and summarizes obstacles to and opportunities for improving the impact of these efforts.

## **PART I**

### **A Feminist Perspective on Development, the State and Public Administration**

The injustices worked in women's lives by the power asymmetries attached to gender differences across most social institutions have historically commanded a very weak response from public authority in Third World states as elsewhere. Nevertheless, the state has been a focus of feminist efforts to redress these injustices on the grounds that it is assumed to have a degree of autonomy from patriarchy and hence, to the degree that the state assumes responsibility for women's interests, it can provide a resort of appeal against the power of men in more intimate institutions such as the family.

#### **Gender, the state and development policy**

The growing body of feminist literature theorizing the state<sup>2</sup> has put paid to assumptions of state neutrality or "autonomy" when it comes to gender. Part of the definition of the state and the delimitation of the state's proper sphere involves the active codification and policing of the boundaries between the "public" and the "private". In many states these boundaries also delineate gendered spheres of activity, where the

paradigmatic subject of the public and economic arena is male and that of the private and domestic arena is female. By confirming and institutionalizing the arrangements that distinguish the public from the private, states are involved in the social and political institutionalization of gendered power differences. For example, states can set the parameters for women's structurally unequal position in families and markets by condoning gender-differential terms in inheritance rights and legal adulthood, by tacitly condoning domestic and sexual violence, or by sanctioning differential wages for equal or comparable work.

This has practical implications for women and men's experience of state development policy. Typically, states have both assumed and construed women's identity for public policy as being conditioned by their social relationships as dependants of men and have made them the objects of family welfare policy — sometimes almost exclusively so, as in family planning. Even in efforts to integrate women to economic policy sectors, striking gender differentials persist in the design and implementation of policy. Sometimes labelled a problem of policy "misbehaviour" (Buvinic, 1986), policies for women tend not to provide women with institutional survival bases — such as employment or asset ownership rights — which might be alternatives to dependence on men. At best, such policies improve women's survival at the margins; at worst, they can reinforce the traditional gender ideologies which contribute to women's disadvantaged position in their efforts to mobilize physical and human capital for their self-development.

There has been a persistent mis-routing of feminist policy ambitions towards traditional "welfare" concerns (Buvinic, 1986), or the "instrumental" use of women's subsistence and family maintenance work to serve efficiency goals (Kandiyoti, 1988, Moser, 1989). This process has raised awareness of the fallibility of assumptions of state neutrality when it comes to gender interests in development policy. It directs attention to the relationship of public authority to patterns of gender inequality in society and requires an exploration of gender politics in the institutional contexts in which WID/GAD knowledge and policy are produced. This is the prime concern of this paper, which concentrates on efforts to integrate women's interests to state institutions.

### **Gendered institutions**

Feminist theories of the state suggest that the state is gendered, largely oriented to male interests, but that it is a complex set of institutions with conflicting interests offering differing prospects for feminist incursions (Connell, 1990). "Male interests", for a start, are not entirely coherent; "men", like "women", do not represent a monolithic category, although they tend to act more cohesively in defence of their gender interests than do women. In part, this owes to their longer acquaintance with public citizenship, to their literal dominance of decision-making, and to the historical embedding of their needs and interests in the structures and practices of public institutions.

These two issues — participation in decision-making and the nature of institutional structures — have rightly been the focus of feminist efforts to change the gendered outcomes of development processes, although perhaps too little attention has been paid to institutional change until recently. In part, this owes to an insufficient awareness of how deeply men's interests are embedded in the everyday rules and structures of institutions, though there is now a growing body of feminist institutional analysis to illuminate this problem (Staudt, 1985; Acker, 1990; Cockburn, 1991). It is important to make a distinction between institutions and organizations. Using Douglas North's definition, institutions are not organizations — although they embrace them — but are best understood as a set of formal and informal rules, which are administered by organizations (North, 1990). An analogy is often made to sport, where institutions are “like the ‘rules of the game’ in competitive sport. They are created by the participants and they set the social and physical parameters in which the game is played” (Evans, 1993). This is a useful conceptualization because it is a reminder that when new participants — women, for example — participate in institutions, the rules of the game may be stacked against them, structured around the physical and social needs and capabilities and the political interests of those who designed them in the first place. New players to an established game have to adapt their behaviour to existing rules. They may learn to win, but often at the cost of bringing their “different” perspectives into play — as when over-achieving women managers become “sociological males”.

Historically, the purpose of establishing institutions has been to reduce uncertainty by routinizing certain preferred forms of social interaction, thereby limiting choice. The project of institutionalizing gender-sensitive policy, therefore, should be oriented to routinizing gender-equitable forms of social interaction and limiting the possibilities for choosing discriminatory forms of social organization.

The extent to which state institutions are gendered — in other words, promote men or women's interests — will vary according to the gendered history and politics embedded in institutional rules and processes. The form of state response to women's needs will also depend on the gender construction of the family and the degree of gender polarization in civil society and the economy. Other factors affecting the state's response to women's gender interests are the nature of state-civil society relations, the nature of women's activism in civil society, the degree of state autonomy and the basis of state legitimacy. These conditions add up to distinctively gendered political and policy opportunity structures.

The case countries are distributed along a continuum of openness to gender-related political and policy activism according to the above criteria. Legacies of military rule, which many of the case countries have experienced, will affect the degree to which state institutions are gendered, given the generally conservative interpretations of appropriate gender roles in society which they have promulgated. The stability and sustainability of fledgling democracies and state institutions after

decades of military rule and civil strife vary — with Chile being the strong case, but Uganda showing great promise, where President Museveni's National Resistance Movement government enjoys strong legitimacy as the first régime in decades to achieve a tangible degree of national reconciliation. Both of these régimes express strong top-level support for gender equality. The capacity and autonomy of state institutions to promote women's interests will also strongly affect the fate of gender policy initiatives; interestingly, weaker bureaucracies have been open to taking on WID/GAD goals, but have not been able to enforce their realizations.

Currently at a democratic high point is Chile, where a unique opportunity for feminist activism has been provided through a recent régime change from an authoritarian dictatorship to popular democracy. The broad legitimacy base of the new régime, as well as the role of women in the struggle for democracy, has opened up new — though still uneasy — opportunity spaces for the expression and legitimation of women's concerns in state institutions. At the other extreme is Mali, which lacks a democratic tradition and in which women's organizations have not in the past had the autonomy to consolidate themselves into expressing a gendered position on national decision-making processes. Relatively low degrees of polarization between the sexes in family life and the economy obtain in Jamaica, where women are highly visible as household heads and economic actors, while in countries with Islamic traditions, polarization is more marked, with Bangladesh representing a more extreme case than Morocco. In these countries, the extent to which the state takes on the mantle of Islamic orthodoxy will compromise the prospects for gendered institutional change strategies within the state. In Bangladesh, where the secular basis of state legitimacy has worn thin owing to the failure of the national development project and the prominence of the army in national decision-making, the state has turned increasingly to a traditional form of legitimacy based on theocratic orthodoxy. Here, where the state participates increasingly in religious matters, the legitimate arena of state action shifts significantly, justifying a conservative interpretation of women's rights. In Morocco, state institutions have persisted in retaining some autonomy from traditional orthodoxies, although a powerful constraint on feminist incursions on the state is represented by Morocco's monarchy. This expresses a double form of traditional patriarchy closed to women's participation, where the king is not just the head of a family dynasty as the country's temporal leader, but is also the *amir al muminin* — the commander of the faithful.

### **Women's gendered interests**

So far here, the terms "feminist" and "women's interests" have been used uncritically to imply a notion of transformation based on a concept of women's interests as gendered individuals. They are both deeply contested concepts, however. In the West alone, there are many different forms of feminism and in the South, "feminism" often carries negative associations of being anti-male and anti-family, as well as being associated with promiscuity and social dislocation. In this paper, the



concept is used to describe analytical and practical approaches based on the premise that women are oppressed and a commitment to end that oppression.

With regard to the term “women’s interests”, the observation that women and men have differing life chances under the same systems of social organization — the family, the class structure, the market, the state — has led to the assertion in feminist politics that the sex/gender relationship generates specific social, economic and political interests. But the concept of “women’s interests” is difficult to define, given that the multiple causes of women’s subordination and the variability of its forms across class, race, age, ethnicity, nation and culture, have undermined attempts to speak of a unitary category of “women” with common needs and interests.

Following Molyneux, concepts of “women’s interests” have been replaced by “gender interests”, understood as interests which women and men may develop by virtue of their social positioning through gender attributes. This allows for the fact that differently positioned women will have different social, economic and political interests (Molyneux, 1985:232). Molyneux makes a further distinction between “practical gender interests”, as those which respond to immediate, situationally specific needs and which may not challenge prevailing forms of gender subordination and “strategic gender interests”, which entail transformative goals such as women’s emancipation and gender equality (ibid.:232-233).

However, Molyneux stresses that strategic gender interests cannot be **assumed** in advance or out of context for particular groups of women. This makes it difficult for feminist policy analysis to establish a set of values for evaluating policy measures. Jonasdottir argues that a feminist notion of interests which is respectful of difference yet attentive to transformative projects can begin by reviving the original content of the concept of interest: as a matter of “being among” (from the Latin: *inter-esse*) the members of a political community (1988:39). This stresses the positive “agency” aspect of interests, where “interest” refers to conditions of control over choice and returns us to concepts of institutionalization, where patterns of choice and their limits are determined. It means that interests cannot be determined in advance for any category of women, but that it is in the interests of women to build up a concrete “controlling presence” over the conditions of choice. It is difficult to establish, however, whether women, even once they have access to decision-making, are acting in women’s strategic gender interests. For example, conservative women, such as women’s wings of Islamic parties, or groups such as “REAL Women” in North America or “Women Who Want to be Women” in Australia, are making political gains and have non-feminist claims to represent women’s needs and interests. What we are looking for is the establishment of a “strategic presence” for women’s gender interests in policy-making, where there is legitimacy for the expression of the interests of woman as a gendered social category endowed unequally with values and resources and with potentially different ambitions for the way policy is pursued. In the end,

value judgements are inescapable in policy analysis. And in the absence of conditions for establishing women's control over policy choices, policy outcomes must be assessed according to the degree to which they promote women's freedom to make their own choices.

In the politics of institutionalizing gendered perspectives on development policy, different experiences of policy according to gender are taken to represent a challenge, not of political interest revolving around the question of **inclusion**, but rather a challenge involving divergent meanings of social and economic change and the ideal world development proposes. In this sense, efforts to "integrate" women to development policy are not necessarily transformative, so the concept of "institutionalizing" women's interests in policy processes is used here to indicate a more transformative process. Sometimes the term "mainstreaming" is used to indicate this process, but "institutionalizing" will be preferred here because it puts the accent on institutional change.

This distinction is embedded in the ways WID policy and GAD policy are used in this paper. The term "Women in Development" (WID) itself implies an integrative project and it is taken here to imply a discourse preoccupied with issues of access; a preoccupation which can, but does not necessarily, intend a feminist outcome in terms of expanding the power and autonomy of women in controlling their own lives. In contrast, the term Gender and Development (GAD) policy describes the political project intended by feminist analyses of gender relations in development. Here, the technical project of access, as numerical inclusion, is seen as insufficient to challenge the unequal allocation of values which sustain oppressive gender relations. The stress on gender is a reminder that men must also be the target of attempts to redress gender inequities, that their interests are also socially constructed and amenable to change.

## **PART II**

### **International and Domestic Political, Economic and Social Trends**

Efforts to institutionalize gender in development in the countries under review have occurred over two decades which have seen tremendous political, economic and social changes within both the national and international policy environments. With the exceptions of Morocco and Jamaica, each country has seen profound changes in political régimes. Without exception, each has been in deep economic crisis. But these shared political and economic conditions are experienced very differently in each country, according to their degree of economic development, cultural stability and the nature of their international linkages. Half of the case countries — Bangladesh, Mali and Uganda — are among the very poorest nations of the world, with very high levels of absolute poverty and alarmingly poor human development indicators. In contrast, Chile, Jamaica and Morocco are middle-income countries with

reasonably healthy human development indicators, although they vary: Chile's social indicators are close to those of higher-income countries, Jamaica's are reasonably good but have deteriorated since the 1970s, whereas Morocco, with a similar level of GNP per capita as Jamaica, has much poorer social indicators.

### **Economic changes**

A unifying economic experience for all the case countries has been chronic dependence on imported financial capital and subjection to World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) macro-economic and structural adjustment policies over the last 15 years. These policies tend to be introduced by radical economic stabilization measures such as devaluation of the currency, disinflation, stabilization or reduction of the budget and balance of payments deficits, and tend to be followed by economic restructuring through market liberalization to favour export production and market-determined internal and external pricing of goods. Adjustment measures have also entailed the promotion of the private sector and the shrinking (or "rationalization") of the public sector.

The implications of these processes for women are still somewhat uncertain, depending on their labour market involvement and on the nature and extent of social service provision. Many adjustment measures have been targeted at bloated public sectors, organized labour and urban white-collar interests, sectors in which women's stake is often indirect through their male relatives. As a consequence, though women have always been active in the informal sector, more women in some countries have moved into informal sector or new export-oriented manufacturing employment to compensate for men's loss of employment. These effects have been most sharply experienced in the three case countries — Chile, Jamaica and Morocco — which are more urbanized and have mixed economies with linkages to industrially mature economies. Morocco has seen a dramatic increase in women's urban employment over the last 30 years, with women representing 25 per cent of the urban labour force. In Jamaica, women's rate of labour force participation has always been high: over 64 per cent among women 14 years and older (compared with 76.5 per cent for men). There, women's high rate of engagement in the formal and informal economies reflects the country's historical development from a plantation economy based on slave labour, in which men were unable to fulfil obligations to families, making consensual unions relatively fluid and leaving women with the balance of responsibility for family survival. In Chile, women make up approximately one third of the labour force, but have suffered greatly recently from unemployment, reflecting the greater numbers of women actively seeking employment. In each of these countries, women are concentrated in lower wage sectors and significant male/female wage differentials persist.

Improved price incentives for commercial agriculture have in some countries increased economic opportunities for women, although there is some evidence that institutionalized practices of excluding women from

direct market access or access to economic and financial services like agricultural extension and credit have kept women producers from responding to new production incentives. Instead, a frequent pattern — at least in Africa — is that their labour is increasingly solicited by their male partners for the production of tradables, at the expense of food crop production. This has obvious negative implications for food security and family nutrition.<sup>3</sup> These concerns relate most strongly to the three agriculture-based economies among the case countries: Bangladesh, Mali and Uganda. Indicators of women's formal labour force participation in these countries disguise their role in agricultural production. In Uganda, it is very high — women produce 80 per cent of food crops and provide 70 per cent of agricultural labour. Figures are not available for women's contribution to agricultural production in Mali, but it is likely to be high. In Bangladesh, a revision of definitions of "employment" in recent labour force surveys to include women's labour-saving and crop processing work revealed a 67 per cent rate of rural women's involvement in agricultural production (BBS, 1992:95). Women in Bangladesh have also had increasing opportunities over the 1980s to participate in new export-oriented manufacturing industries, where they represent about a quarter of the labour force, mostly concentrated in garment production (*ibid.*).

Shrinking state investment in social sectors such as education, housing and health is likely to have a gender-differential effect, where the imposition of cost-recovery measures may oblige families to make trade-offs in the amount they invest in the health and education of girls and boys. In poorer countries, however, state investment in social services may never have had much of an impact on the majority of women and children, given the limited reach of state services. As a result, it is in the better-off of the case countries that the most negative impacts of social spending cuts have been seen. In Jamaica, social services and supporting infrastructure have deteriorated seriously with cuts in state spending on health, education and housing over the past 15 years. Real spending on education, for example, fell by 30 per cent over 1980-1986. The result has been a secular erosion of Jamaica's social indicators since the 1970s and a dramatic decline in the standard of living of the poor (UNDP, 1993:1). Particularly hard-hit have been female-headed households, of which there is a high incidence in Jamaican society (43 per cent in urban areas and 36 per cent in rural areas). In Morocco, the impacts of state social sector spending cuts have been most sharply felt in cuts in consumer subsidies, particularly in urban areas. Combined with urban male unemployment, this has contributed to an explosive social problem, provoking mass demonstrations and riots in the mid-1980s and in 1990.

Chile embarked on radical economic restructuring reforms earlier than the other case countries, following the coup of the market devotee General Pinochet in 1973. As a result, the social impact of measures to shrink the state and cut public spending were felt early on, with dramatic wage cuts, massive redundancies and the elimination of price controls in the mid-1970s halving the purchasing power of the average wage. Another crisis was caused by a sharp fall in the price of copper in the early 1980s. Combined with inflation and unemployment, this provoked

widespread social unrest in 1983-1984 and increasing poverty. The first democratically elected government in 16 years, which took power in 1990, immediately instituted new tax measures to generate new resources to finance expanded social programmes.

In the poorer case countries, managing debt servicing is putting government social service budgets under tremendous strain and with the accent in adjustment-inspired economic management firmly on growth, concerns with the distributional impact of growth sometimes take second place. The burden is then put on the poor to satisfy their social development needs. In Uganda, for example, cost recovery schemes have been introduced to increase the local financing of social services such as education and health, and there is some evidence that the burden of these costs falls on women's incomes (Evans, 1994).

The increasing levels of poverty attendant on protracted economic recession have had an impact on traditional familial and community economic coping strategies, diminishing their viability and re-defining, in particular, women's economic roles. Male unemployment in more urbanized countries and the consumption crises which attend this can result in social unrest. Changing family forms have prompted backlash reactions by conservative patriarchal forces, such as fundamentalist organizations. In some contexts, such as Chile, changing conditions for family survival have also prompted the political mobilization of women, in a paradoxical process in which they mobilize in defence of traditional family roles but in the process, transform them. In other contexts, such as Jamaica, neo-liberal policies which put even more pressure on women's income-generating responsibilities have also undercut the time and energy women can devote to organizing politically and socially.

## **Governance**

Over the last decade there have been two broad trends in international politics, one towards democratization, transparency and human rights observance and other towards increasingly patrimonial and exclusive forms of nationalism, regionalism and mobilization on the basis of ethnicity. Military régimes and dictatorships have succumbed to popular pressure for democratization in the 1980s in Latin America and after 1989 in Africa. Four of the case countries are still adjusting to significant political change towards democracy — with the collapse of military dictatorships in 1989 in Chile, 1990 in Bangladesh and 1991 in Mali and with the culmination of two decades of civil war in Uganda in 1986. Moments of political systems change when the distribution of power is in flux offer great opportunities to women, provided that women are politically organized. In particular, these situations offer opportunities to make women's social preferences part of the calculus of state legitimacy. In Uganda, where women participated in the National Resistance guerrilla movement, there is evidence of a new social compact embracing women. They have been extensively consulted, for example, in the framing of the country's new constitution. In Chile, women's informal shanty town survival networks and human rights organizations were a critical element in forcing the military government

to submit to a popular referendum putting an end to its political dominance. However, the innovative, flexible and decentralized forms of organization they developed did not translate effectively into the conventional élitist and patronage-oriented party politics which immediately resumed and they failed to find a seat at the new democratic political table (Jaquette, 1994).

Recently, these democratization processes have been supported by the promotion of a new “governance” or “good government” policy agenda by international development donors. Governance in women’s interests has simply not figured in these agendas, except in relation to human rights issues and to concerns to support the diversification of associational life in civil society (cf: World Bank, 1993a:52; Landell-Mills, 1992). By and large, this new policy discourse has been oriented to public sector management, where the subtext is a concern to eliminate corruption and to create an enabling environment for private initiative by ensuring the security of contractual arrangements. Nevertheless, the appearance of this new policy discourse represents an opportunity, largely not yet taken up, for efforts to improve public accountability to women. One positive spin-off has been the greater tolerance for non-governmental and women’s organizational activities in certain countries, such as Mali. Often these kinds of institutions evolve more transformative interpretations of women’s needs and interests in development than those of the state and can exert a demonstration effect to influence state policies.

### **Religious fundamentalism**

Moving contrary to trends to greater national openness and respect for universalized notions of human rights is the simultaneous growth in fundamentalism in the major religions of the world, often in response to changes in values underwriting the family and sexuality which come with women’s changing social and economic roles. Most politically visible of these conservative reactions are various forms of Islamic fundamentalism, although Hindu fundamentalism in India and Christian fundamentalism in the Americas and parts of Africa also seek political expression and promulgate conservative versions of women’s proper social roles (cf: Chhachhi, 1989; Lehmann, 1994). Islamic fundamentalisms give central place to paternalistic interpretations of women’s appropriate roles, as symbolic of a coherent social and national identity and as a cultural marker against Western influences. In Morocco and Bangladesh, Islamic discourses conflict with national secular principles, especially in relation to women’s rights. While Morocco has resisted, until very recently, politicized Islamicist interests, Bangladesh began a long process of yielding to theocratic interests in the mid-1970s. Lately, its contradictory discourses on women’s role in development have been put to a violent test by Islamic groups, who have directly attacked development projects working with women and girls. The ambivalence in official responses to this underlines the fragility of twenty years of efforts to integrate gender in state policy processes; women, as a policy constituency, are clearly less significant than Islamic

groups to current régime legitimation efforts and their interests are being played off against the more powerful Islamic constituency.

### **Local and international feminisms**

Coinciding with all of the above developments have been the proliferation of women's organizations the world over, many of them espousing gender-transformative social politics and the impact of international feminism on international development processes. This latter phenomenon has occurred primarily through the vehicle of the United Nations Decade for Women and the various international conferences which punctuated it. The United Nations imprimatur set in motion national exercises for generating data on women's status and setting up national institutions to respond to women's needs in development. However grudging these national responses, they have provided domestic women's organizations with a toehold in the public administration and with opportunities to hold their governments to account. The increasing availability of development resources from international donors for women's development has likewise provided opportunities locally for inserting women's interests in the development process.

### **Summary**

A few key implications for strategies to integrate gender issues in economic planning can be inferred from this review of international and domestic economic and political trends. First, stabilization and neo-liberal economic policies have had gender-differential impacts across a range of sectors. In the social sectors this has included spending cuts and a move towards privatization, or at the least, community provision, with implications for women's time and income. Liberalization policies more generally have provided formal and informal employment opportunities for women. In combination with growing poverty in some contexts this has meant that more women are moving into the workforce, but the unstable and transient nature of employment in many new forms of manufacturing and service industries, as well as the informal sector, may undermine any employment gains. This is shifting conventions around the gender division of labour, though not necessarily changing perceptions of the value of women's work, since these forms of employment tend to involve low-skill, part time and under-valued work.

Second, debt servicing constraints in some countries and low revenue generation capacities in the poorest countries, mean that resources are extremely scarce for equity-oriented policies. Because of male resistance to gender-redistributive policies which imply "zero-sum" trade-offs between resources for women and men, equity-oriented policies such as those promoting equal opportunities tend to find a more ready hearing in times of plenty and are the first to go in periods of austerity. Third, in periods of austerity, governments are sensitive and vulnerable to urban protest movements which tend to be triggered by high rates of male unemployment and the consumption crises this provokes. As a result, concerns to secure male employment will tend to take precedence over

efforts to engineer a structural change in labour markets to enhance women's participation. Fourth, weak administrative capacities in countries such as Bangladesh, Uganda and Mali may mitigate any gains which are made at the policy level in securing attention to gender-specific concerns. Finally and most importantly, the emphasis in neo-liberal economic policies on growth may detract from concerns with distributional issues, where issues of gender equity have more potential for gaining policy legitimacy. The temptation, in response, to frame gender equity concerns in terms of social and economic efficiency gains will run a serious risk of losing sight of concerns with gender justice and women's empowerment.

## **PART III**

### **Institutionalizing WID/GAD**

#### **Introduction**

In no country has WID/GAD machinery had a stable, continuous history. Most such machineries have experienced extraordinarily fractured trajectories of institutionalization within the public administration. Promoted to ministerial status under one régime, brought under the chief executive's wing in the president's office in the next, or shunted from one peripheral ministry to another (the case of the Bureau of Women's Affairs in Jamaica being the most extreme), no WID/GAD unit has been able to consolidate a place in the national bureaucracy. The institutional fate of WID/GAD units has been hostage to the shifting needs of different régimes for legitimacy, but much less in response to domestic female constituencies than to international pressures as exerted through the United Nations Decade for Women or through Western donors, domestic concerns to demonstrate a commitment to democracy and secularism, or contrary pressures exerted by conservative or fundamentalist interests. The degree of aid dependency and the source of aid for individual countries has had an important bearing on this process.

In each of the countries under review, there are political and institutional antecedents to the current pursuit of the WID/GAD agenda at the national level which have left important legacies in women's organizations in civil society and in state bureaucratic behaviours and orientations.

#### **Antecedents: The role of domestic women's pressure groups**

In terms of histories of women's efforts to press their interests on the state, four main patterns of political mobilization emerge: anti-colonial struggles; liberation and democratization movements; traditional patterns; and emancipatory women's organizations. Women were involved in the anti-colonial struggles in Mali and Morocco, in the war of liberation from Pakistan in Bangladesh and the National Resistance Movement which overthrew the second Obote régime in Uganda in



1986. In each case, the consequences for the construction of women's needs in public policy were different. As Ben Barka stresses for the Malian case, women were involved in **men's** anti-colonial struggles in which their interest **as women** were not expressed (1994:9). In Mali, women's associations which had participated in the independence struggle were dissolved after 1960 and replaced by a single organization linked to the ruling party. Thus the independent development of women's organizations was repressed and although there were numerous local rural women's groups, these were oriented towards voluntary social and community welfare work and tended to be closely tied to régime interests (UNDP, 1994b). That situation changed with the unprecedented popular mobilization in favour of democratization in 1990 and 1991 which saw an efflorescence of women's involvement in protests and the creation of new women's organizations.

In the case of Bangladesh, women were involved in the Bengali "culture as nationalism" movement prior to the independence war of 1971. Their form of dress, freedom of movement and cultural activities symbolized the secular ambitions of Bangladeshi nationalists as against the more orthodox Muslim nationalism of Pakistan (Kabeer, 1989). In the context of the Islamicist backlash which has been building up in the country since the 1980s, women's groups have been able to make important capital out of this role as cultural activists, reminding the state of the secular principles upon which it was founded. A contrasting legacy emerged from women's experience during the actual war of liberation. Though deeply involved in the struggle, often in support roles, what remains burned into the national memory is not women's participation but the deliberate policy of miscegenation pursued by Pakistani troops in which tens of thousands of Bangladeshi women were raped.<sup>4</sup> Thus it has been as victims that women are remembered in cultural celebrations of the event (Ahmed, 1985:30) and as victims — widowed, displaced, raped — that their needs initially found an institutional place in the new state and a response from the international community, imposing a legacy of relief and welfare programmes for women.

Women's participation in the civil war during the 1980s in Uganda, though no less horrific in terms of their suffering, has produced a different outcome. During the Amin and the two Obote régimes, women's organizations were oriented to welfare and religious work and were largely co-opted to state concerns through the Uganda National Council of Women, established by Amin in 1978.<sup>5</sup> Two decades of state terror and civil strife pushed women into more radical roles as active combatants in Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA), while non-combatant village women performed vital supply and intelligence roles in a guerrilla movement which was strongly supported by the civilian population. This experience created a momentum which was sustained after the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government took power in January 1986, where there has been an impressive range of official efforts to create new forms of women's access to the state.

Chile has a long history of organized urban women's groups — both middle class and poor — participating in politics. Allende's socialist Popular Unity government of 1970-1973 was opposed through highly visible popular protests by an urban middle and upper class women's organization, supported by the extreme right party *Patria y Libertad* (Country and Liberty). The brutality and repression of General Pinochet's subsequent military régime was protested by *pobladores* (shantytown dwellers') movements which came to be overwhelmingly dominated by women. These were either oriented to subsistence activities, such as running communal kitchens, or, with more devastating political visibility, to protesting human rights abuses. The popular mobilization triggered by these women's groups accelerated the momentum towards a return to democracy in the country. Common to both eras of women's political activism was a pattern of mobilizing around traditionally feminine identities such as motherhood, in what Alvarez calls "feminine" as opposed to "feminist" movements (1990:23). In the context of the repression of traditional forms of political activity during the Pinochet régime, women were able to pioneer a new form of opposition by radicalizing traditional private-sphere roles and extending them into public space as militant mothers. This strategy rests on a powerful irony — women may mobilize on the basis of existing social relations, but those in power are unable to counter this subversion without undermining the norms informing their own social rhetoric. While women may appear to be acquiescing to conventional role definitions, trespassing from the private to the public has generated a form of genuine grassroots feminism, where solidarity links and communication networks were set up around a new awareness of common interests, all of which now informs the NGO sector in Chile and its focus on women's poverty and on human development issues (Pollack, 1994b:8). The return of electoral and party politics, however, has seen the demobilization of the *pobladores* groups and the return of a class-based form of traditional politics which effectively excludes them (Oxhorn, 1994; Salman, 1994).

This process was resisted by a new organization formed during the democratic process: the Concertación Nacional de Mujeres por la Democracia (CNMD, National Coalition of Women for Democracy) which rallied feminist organizations around a slogan of "democracy in the country and at home" in 1988. It established an agenda in 1989 for government action, much of which was taken up by the Aylwin government and included the establishment of a new unit representing women's interests in government.

In Jamaica more than in the other countries, women's groups were directly involved in promoting the WID agenda in the early 1970s, collaborating in a National Advisory Committee on the Status of Women in 1973. Two different forms of women's organization influenced this agenda, what Mariott calls "traditional activists" — established middle class women's organizations — and groups of younger women who had been deeply influenced by the black civil rights activism of the 1960s in the United States (1994:1). This latter movement evolved into a rich women's movement based on identity

politics, with organizations such as the Sistren Collective and with a vibrant women's studies community at the University of the West Indies.

To summarize, women's political mobilization in these countries up to the early 1970s has sometimes been co-opted into promoting state welfarist agendas, but in other cases has established forms of activism which have endured as powerful resources for the women's movement — around secularism in Bangladesh, around radicalizing domestic roles in Chile and around local resistance to tyranny in Uganda. With the exception of Jamaica, few women's organizations, in the early 1970s, were directly mobilized in support of the emergent international WID agenda. This changed during the 1980s as a result of a number of factors: increased employment for women in public and private sectors; social and economic changes which increased women's poverty and challenged the stability of the family; increased exposure to the international feminist movement, initially through the medium of the United Nations Decade for Women conferences; and the increasing availability of aid resources for WID/GAD programmes.

### **The institutional inheritance**

Antecedents to current patterns of institutionalizing women's presence in the state have primarily taken two forms: welfare agencies oriented to supporting women's traditional roles, sometimes through income-generating programmes, or political support units linked to ruling party interests. Sometimes the two functions have been merged indistinguishably. In the first category are the Centros de Madres in Chile (CEMA) organized by the Frei government in the 1950s to provide crafts skills to poor women to enable them to supplement their incomes. In 1977 these were put under the control of Pinochet's wife, Lucia Hircart de Pinochet and became a vehicle for promoting the military's view of motherhood. The volunteers were organized in the Secretariat Nacional de la Mujer (SNM), the direct predecessor of the current national women's service (SERNAM) discussed below. With a mandate to enable women "to better carry out their role as mothers, wives and housewives" (cited in Waylen, 1992:306), its legacy has persisted in one of SERNAM's main objectives: "to strengthen family values" (Pollack, 1994a:2). In Bangladesh, an important institutional antecedent was the Bangladesh Women's Rehabilitation Foundation, set up in 1972 for the rape survivors and the estimated one million war widows. Its approach was to offer training in unmarketable domestic skills and efforts to staunch the haemorrhage of female virtue by arranging marriages with state-provided dowries. In Morocco, on a rather different tack, a women's bureau was set up in the Ministry of Youth and Sport in 1941 to support the income-generating efforts of illiterate married women. This unit has endured and has shown flexibility in shifting away from its original paternalism to refashion itself into a service responding to the employment needs of young women through professional vocational training in non-traditional skills.

Examples of political support units include the Union Nationale de Femmes de Mali (UNFM) and the Bangladesh Jatiyo Mahila Sangstha (National Women's Association, BJMS) both set up by military presidents. Both have been manipulated by incumbent régimes to mobilize women behind the ruling party and have had difficulty escaping association with such functions as "*animation folklorique*" and "*accueil des délégations officielles*" (Ben Barka, 1994:9). These institutions have, to varying degrees, been vehicles for ruling party interests to control directly the WID/GAD agenda as pursued within the public administration. In Bangladesh, the BJMS has had direct administrative links to the various incarnations of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, giving its party-nominated personnel — including, after 1986, the sister-in-law of the then President Ershad — access to bureaucratic decision-making. In addition, it takes a cut of the already paltry national resources devoted to the WID sector and it has a parallel field structure to ministry's line agency, contributing to a lack of institutional co-ordination and poor management in the WID sector. In Morocco the 1969 Union Nationale des Femmes du Maroc has been more pro-active in pursuing women's issues autonomously, in spite of its close links to the state. Its founder and president is a member of the royal family, the princess Lalla Fatima Zohra, and its members are all women civil servants.

In most cases, state measures to institutionalize WID/GAD machinery have been uneven and often in reluctant response to pressures exerted either by foreign donors or the international feminist movement through the United Nations system. In these cases, the main impetus came from the requirement of the 1975 United Nations Conference on Women in Mexico City to generate data on the national status of women and to set up national machinery to promote women's integration in development. Unsurprisingly, initial efforts simply followed these earlier patterns in assuming a natural convergence between national social welfare concerns and women's needs in development. In only two of the case countries — Chile and, to a lesser extent, Jamaica — did a national concern with WID/GAD and the establishment of government machinery emerge in direct response to coherent internal pressure from the women's movement. In another case — Uganda — the integration of women to national **political** structures has been the result of an unusually strong commitment by the country's top leadership. The following section examines the evolving institutional manifestations of WID efforts.

### **Institutionalizing WID**

The case countries fall into two distinct groups with regard to the periodization of the WID agenda. In one group — Bangladesh, Jamaica and Morocco — the WID agenda was aired in development policy discourses from the mid-1970s onwards and made an institutional foothold, albeit a shifting one, in a range of development sectors, thereby enabling WID/GAD advocates to develop new policy instruments to make some incursions into the national planning process. This early and constantly evolving process owes more than a little to the

influence of foreign donors on the development scenario in the country and depends to some degree — in the cases of Jamaica and Bangladesh — on the activism of the women's movement. In the second group — Mali, Chile and Uganda — the protracted dominance of military governments during the 1970s to the late 1980s (and 1991 in the case of Moussa Traore's régime in Mali) effectively postponed serious consideration of the WID agenda. In these cases, the potential influence of domestic women's organizations was either contained through repression, or oriented to oppositional politics focused primarily on political liberation. The influence of the international feminist movement and the United Nations system was limited either through disengagement by the countries concerned, or by the strength of military ideologies which, in the cases of Mali and Uganda, often framed WID as a liberal feminist issue of concern to professional women and hence not of relevance to predominantly rural populations.

The following analysis of processes of institutionalizing gender issues in national development planning traces the sectoral location of WID/GAD institutions, bureaucratic tools employed for introducing concerns with gender equity across the administration, national planning exercises, the definition and production of gender-sensitive data for planning, alliance-building with gender-aware constituencies within and outside the state and changes over time in the conceptualization of WID and GAD issues.

### *Structural and sectoral location*

Unlike many other development concerns, the WID/GAD agenda does not fall neatly into a single development sector which might then dictate its institutional location (Staudt, 1985:59-63). Gender policy challenges the purpose and practice of development across all development arenas: from each specific development sector, to overarching systems of law, property ownership, political representation and labour force organization. Two responses to the question of finding an institutional location for the WID/GAD agenda have been common. One is to set up an advocacy unit at a central level with a mandate to influence planning processes across all development sectors. Staudt's detailed analysis of this kind of response in USAID shows how this can be a method for placating troublesome constituencies while at the same time ensuring that the issue is contained because of the inherent difficulties of pursuing cross-sectoral change, especially where the advocacy unit is desperately under-resourced, as tends to be the case (ibid.:19). The other response is to set up a WID/GAD desk in a sector which is seen as most closely identified with the issue, or indeed to create a new WID/GAD sector. Typically this enclaves the WID/GAD issue in a social welfare sector, where it may share in a general derogation of social welfare issues as being marginal to main development concerns such as growth. Alternatively it may be lumped in as a new quasi-sector with a range of residual and marginalized concerns — such as culture, youth and sports. This section traces the institutional location of the WID/GAD concerns in the case countries from the point of view of their proximity to power in the central state directorate (vertical location) and their thematic or sectoral location (horizontal location).

The different formal roles that WID/GAD units have been assigned fall into the following typology:

- “Advocacy” or “advisory” units, located either in a central political unit, such as the office of the prime minister or president, or in a central economic planning unit, such as the Ministry of Planning. In this role, the WID/GAD unit is responsible for promoting attention to gender issues and giving advice to various government units. Very often, however, it is under-equipped in terms of staff numbers and technical skills and becomes essentially the representative of a “special issue” in an unfortunate and often resented or easily dismissed policy pleading role.
- Policy “oversight” or “monitoring” units, which may have rather more robust powers to the degree that they may be granted automatic rights to review projects before approval by central economic planning units, or to review submissions for Cabinet decisions.
- Units with implementation responsibilities. This allows WID/GAD units to create programmes which may have a demonstration effect on other government activities and also to respond to policy needs not well catered for elsewhere — for example, by setting up shelters for victims of domestic violence. But the typically low level of resources for policy implementation means that these efforts are isolated and cannot produce broad-based policy changes across the public administration.

In practise, WID/GAD units play a combination of most of these roles. A combination of policy oversight, monitoring and advocacy roles is likely to be most successful in producing cross-governmental change, on condition that the oversight role is backed by clear powers to reject inappropriate policies and the monitoring and advocacy roles are grounded in strong technical skills for policy analysis and the proposing of alternatives, followed through in terms of direct budgetary implications. As the following review suggests, no one WID/GAD unit has achieved this. The current WID/GAD unit in Uganda seems to have the basic elements in place, but still lacks direct access to central planning decisions and the technical skills necessary to make an input to them.

Central advocacy or “oversight” WID/GAD bureaux within the central state directorate have been set up in Chile and Mali. Chile’s SERNAM has a curious statutory basis: it is a unit within the Ministry of Planning yet it is headed by a State Minister. Neither a full ministry with an input to Cabinet decisions, nor an established boundary-bridging body, it straddles two administrative identities in a way which diminishes its potential impact. In principle its institutional location provides it with access to the “technical core” of policy making and indeed rhetoric about gender equity now figures in the Ministry of Planning’s work. However, it lacks clear mechanisms for ensuring concrete changes in government decisions — such as automatic review of all new investment decisions, or clear means of ensuring cross-ministerial compliance with the WID/GAD policy mandate. Women’s desks and gender-sensitive programmes do exist in some other ministries and SERNAM supports

these. Its formal mandate explicitly excludes project implementation functions, except for demonstration and experimentation purposes. However, its limited impact on cross-ministerial decision-making has obliged it to retreat to a focus on public awareness-building and on implementing pilot projects which are donor funded and often executed by NGOs, prompting the observation that SERNAM behaves more like an NGO than a part of the public administration (Pollack, 1994a:20). In these activities it focuses, importantly, on activities which are neglected in other areas of government, such as sexual violence, adolescent pregnancy and female-headed households.

In Mali, following the coup of March 1991, the transitional government under Colonel Traore moved rapidly to involve women formally in the new administrative and political processes, making an official commitment to the promotion of women's interests, nominating women to higher civil service positions and repealing several statutes which discriminated against women's commercial activities, including their important role in cross-border trade. After the elections of 1992 and the ministerial reorganization of 1993, a Commission for the Promotion of Women was established in the office of the prime minister. This Commission's role is primarily an advisory and advocacy one. It chairs an Inter-Ministerial Committee to monitor WID/GAD policies across the government administration, co-ordinates the work of delegates to various sectoral ministries charged with monitoring WID/GAD policy implementation, manages regional representatives of the Commission and chairs a Co-ordinating Commission with government, NGO and women's organization representatives to monitor WID/GAD policies in the NGO sector.

No information is available on the actual resources available to the Commission to carry out its functions, but it is already clear that it has not been awarded a status commensurate with its responsibilities. Although it has the status of a state ministry, it does not participate in the Council of Ministers and hence is limited in its impact on formal government decision-making. The Commission also suffers from competing roles within the public administration for pursuing the WID/GAD agenda. In 1992 a Ministry of Health, Solidarity and the Promotion of Women was created and charged with organizing a forum for interested parties to list priorities for WID/GAD actions and to plan a national strategy. A State Secretariat for the Promotion of Women was also set up and has organized a seminar to define sectoral WID/GAD policies and to co-ordinate funding for a five-year action plan to implement these policies. In these circumstances it is becoming clear to some observers that — like its predecessor, the Commission Nationale pour la Promotion de la Femme which was set up in 1976 and vanished in 1988 — the Commission has been set up purely to comply with United Nations requirements and to ensure an appropriate form of representation for Mali at the forthcoming Beijing Conference (Ben Barka, 1994:26).

In Bangladesh and Uganda the WID/GAD agenda has been institutionalized in distinct ministries, but in both cases they share space

with marginalized public concerns: children, in the case of Bangladesh and youth and culture in Uganda. Both ministries suffer from underresourcing, significant distance from the central state directorate, association with residualist welfare or community issues and overlapping roles with ruling party-linked women's units.

In Bangladesh the central WID/GAD unit has had a long but very administratively discontinuous history. It has been entirely hostage to shifting political currents, having been promoted to Ministerial status under the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) régime of President Zia ul-Rahman in the 1970s, demoted to a Department of the Social Affairs Ministry under President Ershad in the 1980s and reinstated as a ministry under the current BNP régime of Zia's widow, Begum Khaleda Zia. These changes owe less to any significant variation in the official commitment to the WID/GAD agenda than to its utility at various times in generating international political capital by demonstrating a progressive national position. The credibility of these positions has been highly compromised by simultaneous concessions — which have increased in significance over time — to Islamicist interests. What has remained a constant in these opportunistic administrative *tergiversations* has been an unclear mandate and deficiencies in staff, financial resources and administrative privileges.

The current Department of Women's Affairs is part of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. The ministry's formal mandate combines an advocacy role with a programme implementation role. However, it is under-equipped to carry out either role. Its one direct link to national economic planning processes is through the Women's Desk in the Planning Commission, where a sole officer is also responsible for sports, culture, youth, social welfare and media, a clustering of responsibilities which signal women's place among a residuum of planning concerns. It has just begun to experiment with WID focal points across sectoral ministries, which will be discussed in the next section. Since 1990 it has been granted right of oversight and appraisal over projects of other ministries and agencies, where it is given 10 days to review new projects before they are forwarded to the Planning Commission. However, just two staff members are available for this and they are constrained by the tight time limit and by a lack of gender analysis skills. On the operational side, its tiny budget for implementing programmes (just 0.22 per cent of the national development budget) restricts it to small projects which are largely urban-centred, although it uses these to promote issues neglected by other ministries, such as working women's need for hostels and child care, shelters for domestic violence, legal education and legal aid, and vocational training. Many of its top-level posts are vacant and have been for years and it is quite unable to fulfil its functions as a line ministry, with staff in less than a quarter of sub-districts. In this, its role conflicts with the better-resourced ruling party-linked Bangladesh Jatiyo Mahila Sangstha (National Women's Association), which is located within the ministry and which has staff in all districts.



In Uganda the central WID unit has also suffered from a certain amount of administrative precarity, where the 1988 WID Ministry was demoted to one of the three sections of the Ministry of WID, Youth and Culture as a result of adjustment-inspired civil service reforms in 1991. Unlike the situation in Bangladesh, it has focused on its advocacy and policy co-ordination role, concentrating on provoking sustainable attitudinal and procedural changes across other ministries and has made some strategic gains in consequence. Its main activity since 1991 has been a cross-sectoral review of development policy with a view to formulating a National Gender-Oriented Policy Statement whose implementation will be the responsibility of the government's chief economic planning unit, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. It has supported this process with gender awareness training for senior civil servants and by instituting WID focal point officers in each ministry. It has also embarked on a unique process designed to enhance women's participation in civil society and their impact on national politics as an active electorate, through a civic education programme and through a nation-wide consultative process which elicited women's views on the country's new constitution, currently being debated by the Constituent Assembly.

Every one of these activities relied on donor funding. Many, also, are governed by what one WID official calls a "contingency approach... when something is happening, we focus on it and develop a programme to address a specific issue at a certain time, for a specific need" (cited in Kwesiga, 1994:18). While this illustrates a laudable capacity for flexibility, the nearly total reliance on outside funding undermines the sustainability of these efforts and at the same time reveals a lack of long-term strategy and institutionalized mechanisms for promoting the WID agenda. For example, the UNDP-funded Umbrella Project through which gender awareness training was provided to senior civil servants served at the same time as a mechanism for communication between WID and focal points in ministries. The project is now over and in consequence the important point of entry and communication it provided has been severed.

Another threat to sustainability, paradoxically, is the extent to which the WID agenda relies upon the strong support of President Museveni, who has institutionalized a positive role for women in his National Resistance Movement government. Aside from the obvious precarity inherent in having support for the WID agenda reside so prominently in one individual, the association of the WID concern with the NRM — which, for all its genuine cross-party democratic inclusiveness is still a single ruling party — poses problems. There is a Directorate of Women's Affairs within the NRM Secretariat, which has been headed by women who were active combatants in the civil war. The Director of Women's Affairs is responsible to the National Political Commissar and the Directorate's role is the political education and mobilization of the country's female constituency. It has played a very important role in ensuring a politically institutionalized place for women in local government. But its role sometimes overlaps with that of the WID unit in the public administration system, with both units working on political

and legal awareness issues. In addition, the importance of the Directorate of Women's Affairs within the NRM may mean that the WID agenda will be associated with that party and hence vulnerable to its political fortunes, rather than institutionalized as a fundament of the public administration. The risk of a political blurring of the WID issue became apparent in 1994, when the Ministry of WID, Youth and Culture — as a non-priority administrative unit — was yet again under threat of being dismantled by IMF/World Bank pressures to down-size the civil service further. Though it fought this off, there was talk at one stage of absorbing some of its functions into the NRM's Directorate of Women's Affairs.

In Jamaica the Bureau of Women's Affairs has had an uneasy history on the administrative peripheries of the state, shunted back and forth between the Ministry of Youth and Community Development and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Only once, in response to heightened awareness of the issue provoked by the United Nations Women's Conference in Mexico City, was it located in the office of the Prime Minister, from 1975 to 1978. Since 1989, however, it has been located in the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Sport. This is significant and appropriate, given women's very high participation in the country's formal labour force. However, this latest institutional placement may have owed less to women's strong history of labour force attachment than to the fact that at the time that ministry was headed by the only female cabinet minister, prompting a sex-typed association between her person and her appropriate functions.

The Bureau has had a combined mandate of advocacy and project implementation and has been highly dependent on outside funds to carry out these functions. In the late 1980s these funds were withdrawn in reaction to the government's persistent failure to provide counterpart funding, forcing the Bureau to withdraw from project activities, most of which had an income-generating focus, and to focus on efforts to influence the national planning process. Though this shift in focus is regretted by Bureau members (Mariott, 1994), it is a mixed blessing, as the Bureau was never properly equipped to implement projects. Also, curiously, the majority of these projects were conventional small-scale and informal-sector income-generating ventures. In a country which has one of the highest rates of female participation in formal employment in the world, this conventional WID focus seems unjustifiable. It perhaps best reflects the Bureau's intellectual and financial dependence on outside donors and their externally-derived WID perspectives.

Of all the case countries, Morocco has invested the least in setting up a coherent WID/GAD administrative entity. Instead, women's desks have been set up in an *ad hoc* manner across a range of ministries in response, primarily, to new funding opportunities available through the international community. The women's desk in the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs has had nominal responsibility for responding to international pressures for WID policy statements, but has no policy oversight role, no advocacy role and no policy co-ordination role. Otherwise, there are women's units in the Ministry of Youth and

Sports, of Public Health, of Agriculture, of Planning, of Foreign Affairs and in the National Agricultural Credit Service. It is impossible to speak of a coherent WID strategy emerging from any of these units. Each responds to ministerial priorities and usually each is focused around women-specific and foreign-funded project activities which make few encroachments into broader ministerial activities. This dispersal of WID units through different ministries, far from representing a solidly cross-sectoral approach to institutionalizing the WID/GAD issue, has diminished its potential impact by promoting duplication of efforts and competition for funds.

Overall, then, in no country has the WID/GAD concern found a secure and sustainable institutional expression. When located in advocacy units close to central state decision-making units, they tend to be inadequately resourced to fulfil their functions. When set up as separate ministries they can become isolated as a peripheral enclave and associated with marginal concerns. There are cases where the WID/GAD issue has been seen by the dominant political party as a useful political resource, as a means either of demonstrating national progressive attitudes to the international community, as in Bangladesh, or as a source of political support from a hitherto neglected constituency, as in Uganda. In these cases, however, the WID/GAD issue risks appropriation by and hence association with the ruling political party, which compromises its future in the administrative structure. This kind of politicization of the WID/GAD agenda also undercuts its legitimacy and may cut it off from its natural constituency, where autonomous women's groups may shun association with party-linked WID units. A serious problem the WID/GAD issue faces is its association with an external concern. This means that WID/GAD units may be established in response to international pressures, but a mandate which is seen to have an external origin lacks national credibility and hence fails to generate commitment. The overwhelming degree to which WID/GAD advocacy and project activities in every one of these case countries depends on outside funding underlines the shallowness of national commitment to the issue and fundamentally undermines the sustainability of efforts to institutionalize the WID/GAD mandate.

*Mechanisms for influencing other ministries:  
“Mainstreaming”*

Most of the WID/GAD units in question here have a mandate to pursue their agenda across other government departments — a project sometimes called “mainstreaming”. For this they have devised a range of policy instruments, such as gender monitoring checklists, guidelines, inter-ministerial committees, gender awareness training and WID focal points. Gender-specific national policy statements or plans have also been formulated; these will be reviewed in the next section. These measures are intended to provoke gender-sensitive institutional, policy and operational changes across the public sector in order to make responsiveness to women's interests a routine part of each sector's activities. At the very least, it is hoped, they will also tap the technical and administrative resources of other departments to make up for

resource deficiencies in the WID/GAD sector in research, advocacy and implementation.

Jamaica is the only case country to have elaborated detailed gendered project guidelines and checklists, although Uganda is in the process of elaborating these kinds of tools, as well as gendered indicators to monitor project implementation. Jamaica's Project Profile format for all new projects incorporates a procedural step for assessing potential gender-differential impact issues. Linked to this, methods for assessing gender-differential impact have been incorporated to the training for civil servants at the Administrative Staff College. To ensure adherence to this measure, the Bureau of Women's Affairs has a seat on the Project Pre-Selection Committee of the Planning Institute. For projects in process, a Gender Monitoring Checklist specifies five benchmarks against which development actions are assessed: whether sex disaggregated data is used or collected; whether the project coheres with national policy commitments; whether mechanisms exist to consult with women and men on gender issues; whether the project takes action on equity issues; and whether the context for the project is gender-sensitive, in the sense of incorporating women's specific needs.

These measures are all well-designed, but have failed in practice owing to a lack of commitment and conviction — even, it seems, from the Bureau itself. According to interviews with civil servants, training associated with the gender component in the Project Profile format is “vacuous” and the Bureau has failed to turn up on occasions to represent women's interests on the Project Pre-Selection Committee. The Gender Monitoring Checklist was to have been piloted in two ministries, but no results of this experiment have been circulated (Mariott, 1994:5).

Chile, Bangladesh and Uganda have experimented with designating WID focal point officers in other ministries. In Chile, this has been an informal process. SERNAM lacks institutional measures for communication and co-ordination with other ministries and hence requested that each ministry designate a contact person for SERNAM to communicate with. There are no institutional rewards associated with this position and unsurprisingly it has not been awarded to high-ranking officials. In most cases, the informal focal point position has been occupied by individuals uninterested in the issue and hence unwilling to commit time to it. Without exception, where gender-sensitive changes are occurring in sectoral policy, it is in response to pressure from independently committed individuals, not to SERNAM's influence. The ministries of labour and education are notable in that there has been committed top-level support for the gender issue from male ministers. This, however, is not enough, as the strongest resistance comes from mid-level male staff. Training is only a partial solution, as it reaches only a few individuals and often, as in the case of the highly resistant Ministry of Agriculture, the majority of staff reject training opportunities by failing to attend seminars on gender awareness (Pollack, 1994a:17).

In Bangladesh, a formal focal point system has been introduced recently, where designated contact individuals in 27 ministries constitute an inter-ministerial co-ordination committee which meets every three months. Again, these positions have often been given to lower-ranking individuals who lack commitment to the gender issue. WID planning cells in ministries are understaffed and lack technical skills and hence are unable to arm their focal points with relevant information or policy analyses. Ideally, the Bangladesh Department of WID would provide this technical support, but it is equally under-provided in this area.

In Uganda, each ministry has been responsible for designating a focal point officer since 1991, with the WID Department advising that this should be a high-ranking official, such as a commissioner or assistant commissioner. Considerable energy has been invested in providing gender awareness training to these individuals and to encouraging them to initiate and chair the ministerial policy reviews which are part of WID's cross-governmental effort to generate a national gender policy. However, the strategy has not been very effective and in some ministries staff are unaware of the existence of a focal point (Kwesiga, 1994:32). Outside of particular policy initiatives, or the opportunities afforded by the availability of funds for training, there are no clear mechanisms for routine communication and collaboration between these individuals and the WID Department. The civil service structure militates against this kind of boundary-crossing project. Influential entry-points are needed to ministries, but high-ranking officials lack the time and often the commitment to take on a new and controversial policy agenda. The position is not budgeted for and in a context where civil servants are desperately under-paid and hence devote considerable time to outside income-generating activities, it is unrealistic to expect anyone to take on new responsibilities without reward.

By and large in the cases under review, "mainstreaming" has been interpreted as a project of simply gaining access to other ministries; as a means of inserting staff charged with the WID mandate into the administrative structure and inserting women as a target or client group in every development sector. The difficulties of achieving this alone have postponed a more transformative project of challenging the basic operating assumptions of each sector and their underlying disciplinary biases. The sorts of gendered project guidelines and monitoring checklists developed in Jamaica do indicate means of pursuing this more transformative project. However, the experience there, as elsewhere, shows that tools of that sort can too easily be dismissed, as their use is not policed or supported by effective sanctions on non-compliance, such as vetoes on gender-insensitive project proposals. The experiments with focal point officers show, disappointingly and predictably, that success relies on committed individuals in that position and that commitment cannot be engineered by training alone.

There is a more general problem inherent to projects of seeking cross-ministerial compliance to a new policy mandate. This has to do with the embeddedness of bureaucratic interests and their defence within bureaucratic boundaries. Most public administrations feature a strong

propensity to protect ministerial territory and to resist cross-cutting interests. Especially in contexts of resource scarcity, administrative units tend to guard jealously their own territory, because development resources attached to programmes and projects offer opportunities for patronage and sometimes personal profit. This imposes competition between ministries, who defend privileged access to resources by evolving distinctive mandates and operational processes tied to disciplinary and sectoral concerns. These same kinds of incentives operate on national WID units as well, producing a strong incentive to concentrate on women-specific projects which provide a visible justification for administrative existence.

There are very few precedents for efforts to infiltrate bureaucratic territory of other ministries and indeed, boundary-bridging activities are seen as contrary to technocratic norms. WID units have few positive incentives to encourage a positive reception in other bureaucratic units. They lack the technocratic and research capability which might mean that they are providing valuable services to other administrative units. Instead, they are seen as a drain on other ministerial resources, which is not welcomed in contexts of resource scarcity.

*Promoting national ownership of the WID/GAD agenda:  
Integrating gender to national planning processes*

National development plans and budgets are important public statements expressing politically chosen priorities for change and progress and are based on a macro-economic framework designed to create the conditions under which this national vision can be realized. Integrating gender into this process requires both political and economic groundwork by WID/GAD policy advocates. This involves securing a top-level commitment to WID/GAD priorities, agreeing action programmes and earmarked funds for every planning sector, generating gender-disaggregated data, designing gender-specific quantitative and qualitative achievement targets and progress indicators at the macro and sectoral levels. Efforts so far in the countries under review seem rarely to have gone beyond the first stage of this process.

In Chile SERNAM is currently formulating a national Equal Opportunity Plan. This is conceived much more broadly than the conventional association of equal opportunities with employment rights to “promote an equal distribution of resources and social tasks, of civil rights and participation and access to power between men and women and to value women’s contribution to economic development” (Pollack, 1994a:3). This Plan is not yet available and hence cannot be evaluated here. SERNAM has, however, been successful in providing a new impetus for collecting gender-disaggregated data both within the Ministry of Planning, where it is located and in other governmental departments. Within the Ministry of Planning, the annual socio-economic population survey is disaggregated by sex and all new analytical work related to poverty and labour market issues addresses the gender dimension. However, no new indicators of relevance to gender difference — such as might touch on issues of physical security,

reproductive health, political participation, or juridical rights — have been included in statistics or surveys, although as of this year households will be disaggregated by headship in living standards studies. Across other government departments, the National Statistical Institute of the Ministry of Economics has introduced measures to gender-desegregate new data related to economic and employment variables and has created a gender-disaggregated index of wages and salaries which illuminates problems of discrimination against women in the labour market.

In Bangladesh issues related to women have been raised in each successive five-year development plan from the first (1973-1978) to the current Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-1995). All of these plans have put primary emphasis on enhancing the quality of women's domestic role, through, initially, handicraft training and family planning and later, through improved provision of rural credit and better access to education. The Second Five Year Plan (1980-1985) was the first to propose a multi-sectoral approach to women's development. But despite such suggestive rhetoric as: "to ensure a balanced socio-economic development of the country, full participation of women is an absolute necessity" (GOB, Second Five Year Plan, 1980), no strategies were formulated, nor funds made available, for specific sectoral responsibilities. In this and subsequent plans, only the social sectors show significant expenditure allocations for women. The Third Five Year Plan (1985-1990) raised employment issues for women, but these were almost entirely oriented to informal micro-enterprise opportunities which enable women to raise the productivity of their home-based work. No measures were detailed to increase the number of women participating in the formal labour force, save for a 15 per cent quota for women in public sector employment. Neither resources nor institutional mechanisms have been specified in these Plans to enable the Women's Ministry to discharge its co-ordinating, information generation and policy design functions.

Somewhat mitigating this poor history of efforts to integrate women into the national planning process has been a gendered definitional coup in the way labour force statistics are now compiled in Bangladesh. In official statistics, women's labour force participation rate has leaped from 9.9 percent in 1985-1986, to 63.4 percent in 1989 (BBS, 1992:95). This reflects a shift in the definition of the "economically active" population in labour force surveys. The 1989 labour force survey identified a range of women-dominated forms of labour as "economic activities" — such as weeding and hoeing, threshing/cleaning/husking/drying/boiling (of paddy), growing homestead vegetables, processing and preserving food, etc. (BBS, 1992:96). This change does not yet entirely represent a gendering of the concept of labour, however, as women's reproductive labour in the home is still not recognized. Nevertheless, it is an improvement.

An alternative approach to the promotion of women's interests in national planning documents has been the formulation of separate gender-focused national perspective plans by WID/GAD units. In

Jamaica a National Policy Statement on Women was produced by the Bureau of Women's Affairs and adopted by the cabinet in 1987 and a five-year National Development Plan on Women was produced by the Bureau and the Planning Institute of Jamaica in 1990. The 1987 document is a brief but pointed articulation of a set of gender-egalitarian principles intended as a guide to government policy, although, as pointed out by the All-Island Women's Conference in Jamaica in 1992, it omits a statement on the political empowerment of women (Tomlinson, 1992:5). It details implementation responsibilities only at a very general level: permanent secretaries of all ministries are charged with responsibility for monitoring respect for these principles in their ministries, while the permanent secretary of the ministry responsible for the Bureau of Women's Affairs (Labour, Welfare and Sport), was charged with chairing an inter-ministerial committee to monitor implementation, to formulate a detailed action plan and to report annually to the cabinet on progress. None of these measures were taken seriously, with junior civil servants, rather than permanent secretaries, sitting on the inter-ministerial committee (Mariott, 1994:5). In the end, only the Planning Institute of Jamaica contributed significantly to the work of this inter-ministerial committee in formulating the National Plan of Action and the 1990 Five-Year Plan on Women, reflecting previous groundwork by the Bureau of Women's Affairs in gaining representation on the Planning Institute's Project Pre-Selection Committee. This Plan details actions to be taken in each major development sector and identifies main agencies responsible for implementation. But its implementation remains the sole responsibility of the Bureau of Women's Affairs, it has neither a budget nor details of budgetary implications for other government departments and it has not been internalized by other departments since it was elaborated without any effective participation from them. Further, since it was elaborated separately from the Jamaican Five Year Development Plan to 1995, it remains essentially external to the main planning framework

In Morocco, there is no WID presence in the Ministry of Planning or other central government department, which means that there has been no clear point from which gender-sensitive planning guidance should emerge. The Centre of Demographic Studies, part of the Department of Statistics in the Ministry of Planning, does, however, produce valuable gender-disaggregated data, particularly in relation to the formal workforce. But no women or gender-trained researchers are part of this team, nor is it animated by any concern to illuminate significant information on gender for planners. This restricts the potential impact of gender-disaggregated data on the policy-making process and it has also meant that a range of important gender issues are not included in national surveys — for example, legal and political aspects of women's lives (Barkallil, 1994:17). This lack of a national perspective on gender issues was sharply highlighted in the context of the 1985 Nairobi conference and the Division of Aid and Social Protection of the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs was charged with producing a national plan, the National Strategy for the Promotion of Moroccan Women to the Year 2000. The document was not completed until 1989. Unfortunately it is a desultory effort, reflecting the limited perspective



of its urban and formal employment-focused ministerial location. It does not even differentiate between the needs of urban and rural women, in spite of the availability of data. It clings to conventional assumptions about the labour market, disregarding non-waged forms of employment. And as Barkallil points out, it is also absolutely inoperative, failing to detail action plans worked out over time, to quantify targets, or to specify budget implications (1994:12).

Sector-specific planning efforts have featured gender issues according to the relative strength of such women's units as may be present in line ministries. Curiously, in the social sectors, where a WID/GAD perspective might have been expected to take hold because of the association of women with social issues, they have been completely bypassed. A draft strategy statement for social development presented at a seminar at the Ministry of Planning in Rabat in June 1993 completely lacks a WID/GAD perspective, with women and girls only mentioned parenthetically as recipients of health care and education (GOMo, 1993). In contrast, a very strong gender-focused planning statement has been produced this year by the Ministry of Agriculture's extension division. This short draft statement details women's role in agricultural production and their needs from research and extension services, although it lacks specific programme or budgetary details (Bennis, 1994). This reflects the growing legitimacy of the gender issue within this ministry, much encouraged by significant donor-funded programmes within the agricultural extension service which tie family planning, literacy and nutrition education to agricultural extension functions (Barkallil, 1994:14). The growing legitimacy of gender issues in the agricultural sector owes also, importantly, to a data "discovery": a 1986/87 survey of the rural workforce managed through the Statistical Division of the Ministry of Agriculture which revealed for the first time the extent of women's participation in agricultural production. Pressure from donors, in particular the FAO, the UNFPA and the World Bank, meant that the definition of agricultural employment was expanded to include unwaged family labour, revealing that 50 per cent of the rural population active in agriculture are women (ibid.:20).

This problem of cross-government ownership of the WID agenda in development planning is currently being approached in a different way by the Department of WID in Uganda. As in the other case countries, gender issues are insufficiently detailed in the current national planning document, the 1993-1996 Rehabilitation and Development Plan, which is the "single most comprehensive statement of Government's principal social and economic policies" (GOU, 1993:1). This plan is primarily concerned with co-ordinating macro-economic stabilization measures and structural adjustment in agriculture, industry and the social sectors. There is an emphasis on encouraging private initiative and a stronger export-orientation in productive sectors through privatization and market liberalization. The focus in the social sectors is on improving the delivery of primary and rural level services in a cost-effective manner. Three paragraphs under a small sub-heading on WID reiterate the government's commitment to integrating gender in development and acknowledge that women "are the overwhelming majority of the

producers in agriculture which is the mainstay of the economy” (GOU, 1993:58). But in the rest of the document, gender is not integrated into planning assumptions regarding the impact of liberalization on patterns of labour and asset deployment in productive sectors such as agriculture, nor the impacts of higher prices for basic commodities on domestic consumption budgets. Gender-specific issues are not detailed in the social sector chapters, nor are the gender-differential impacts of new measures in the social sectors such as cost recovery for health and education services assessed. Instead, gender issues are relegated to the attention of the Programme to Alleviate Poverty and the Social Costs of Adjustment (PAPSCA). In this marginalized programme, the relatively undifferentiated category of “women” is listed as one of six vulnerable groups (children, the urban poor, the disabled, redeployed civil servants and residents of the twelve poorest districts). In essence, this labels women as a residual group whose poverty, like that of the other groups mentioned, is inadequately mitigated by traditional and other safety nets.

The Department of WID has launched a major cross-ministerial planning exercise in response to this. In an important alliance with the central economic planning unit, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MFEP), it has elaborated a National Policy Statement on Gender Issues (still in draft form awaiting cabinet discussion) and set up procedures for “gender oriented policy development” in every ministry. For each ministry, a team of officers from the Department of WID works out an initial policy paper which is presented to cabinet by the relevant minister. Once approved, the ministry in question forms a top-level committee, mainly of department heads, to elaborate policy details. The team of WID officers works with this committee, often providing gender awareness training as a first step and a draft statement consisting of a gender analysis of the ministry’s existing work and recommendations for changes, is formulated. The draft is submitted to a ministerial workshop and then presented at a national two-day policy workshop which finalizes a set of policy guidelines. Drafts are under discussion in the Ministries of Education and Health. Once all sectoral ministries have completed this process, these policy statements will inform the watchdog role the MFEP will perform in using budgetary measures to monitor implementation progress in each ministry.

As this policy exercise is still in process, it is difficult to assess its impact. It has moved slowly so far, primarily owing to the fact that the team of WID officers trained in gender, planning and development economics carrying out this exercise for each ministry is small and over-stretched. A gender training project for senior civil servants supported by the UNDP has been helpful in raising gender awareness within the bureaucracy and in supporting the planning exercise. A review of two of the available draft gender-oriented policy statements show policy analysis work of excellent quality. The statements for the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Co-operatives and the Ministry of Education and Sports show strong conceptual clarity in identifying gender differences in labour deployment and resource control, access to markets and social services and socio-cultural power in public and private institutions. Interestingly, they are also attentive to issues of sexuality

and identify sexual harassment in the workplace and gender differences in personal physical security in the schoolroom as factors requiring policy responses.

On the other hand, neither the sectoral gender policy statements, nor the draft national policy statement detail budget implications of any of the proposed policies. As suggested in the reviews of national planning experiences in Morocco, Jamaica and Bangladesh, this failure to follow through recommendations with clear calculations of public expenditure implications has been an important reason why WID/GAD policy commitments tend to stay trapped on paper. In the Ugandan case, the proposal is to charge the MFEP with responsibility to use the budget management process to both earmark resources for planned measures and to monitor their implementation. A MFEP steering committee has been proposed for this function, with the Department of WID acting as the secretariat.<sup>6</sup>

One potential problem can be foreseen at this stage. No move has been made to ensure that gender considerations are incorporated into the MFEP's system for classifying development projects into "core" and "non-core" categories. This system was introduced through the World Bank-led Public Expenditure Review process in 1993. It is designed to rationalize government spending by restricting its local cost counterpart spending obligations on development projects to priority investment areas. The system lists seven criteria for prioritizing projects:

- economic viability;
- availability of donor funding;
- the necessity for direct government participation;
- project status, i.e., new or on-going;
- macro estimates of available resources over the period;
- recurrent cost implications;
- Government of Uganda counterpart funding requirements.

Project priorities are not assessed on gender or distributional and social equity grounds. These issues cannot be directly captured by an analysis of economic viability and need to be included if gender is indeed to be integrated into development planning decisions. However, as is indicated by these existing criteria, government planning at the macro and sectoral levels is overwhelmingly dominated by stabilization and adjustment concerns. This can act as a damper on efforts to internalize equity concerns, to the degree that they are expected to be iterated strictly to economic growth objectives (Goetz et al., 1994).

In sum, WID/GAD institutions in many of the case studies have developed a capacity for strategic planning, but what they still lack is a capacity to ensure that national policy commitments to the integration of gender in development are clearly tied to budget allocations. This is a problem shared by national women's affairs machinery the world over. A method pioneered in Australia is worthy of consideration for adaptation to other national contexts. Since the mid-1980s, all government departments there have been obliged to produce an annual women's budget statement which calculates the economic impact on

women of departmental policies and programmes. This provides a unique mechanism for auditing the impact of public policies on women and for sensitizing even the “hardest” economic planning departments to women’s differential experience of public policy measures. This system has been adapted in Canada in a modified form, where a general national women’s budget statement is brought out in response to the annual budget and the same approach is being considered for the United Kingdom. Of course, the effectiveness of this approach requires financial analysis skills on the part of WID/GAD units and also requires a fairly established and reliable budgetary process. In many of the case countries, the latter condition does not hold, because of slippages in the budget management process which leave wide gaps between public expenditure planning and actual sectoral allocations and spending.

There have been some examples of noteworthy successes in challenging definitional biases in some data bases used for planning purposes — most particularly, in labour force statistics. Less success has been achieved with data on expenditure and consumption such as living standards measurement surveys or integrated household surveys which continue to regard the household as the main unit of analysis — this is a problem of particular importance in the context of research on poverty in Africa. It has also proven difficult to introduce indicators relating to gendered asymmetries of power — such as participation in local and national politics, sexual violence, juridical rights — to official data used in planning. With regard to the latter, the strategy of WID/GAD units has been to focus on raising public awareness of these issues, as a preliminary step in legitimating them as matters for policy and planning. These efforts, many of which involve liaising with constituencies and amplifying women’s “voice” within the administration, are the focus of the next section.

### **Developing WID/GAD constituencies in and outside the state**

#### *Making space for women in the state*

Themes which emerge powerfully from the interview data on which this report is based are the chronic short-staffing of WID/GAD administrative units; the general paucity of women in the higher levels of the civil service and in government; the lack of awareness of and commitment to gender issues generally among state personnel; and the critical importance of allies, male or female, in government and in the administration. Some WID/GAD units have been staffed and headed by men who are often not gender-sensitive. As career civil servants, they consider placement in a marginal administrative unit to be a demotion (which indeed it may often be). Women civil servants in the same positions may share these characteristics and attitudes. As a range of studies of women bureaucrats in other contexts show, women bureaucrats and politicians cannot by any means be assumed automatically to be predisposed to work in women’s interests (Hirshman, 1991; Hale and Kelly, 1989; Dahlerup, 1988). Their class status for a start distances them from the concerns of poorer women. But

more importantly, the few women who do gain access to administrative or political positions tend to be isolated from other women and are under powerful pressures to conform to the dominant orientations of their institutions and the work patterns and concerns of their male colleagues. These pressures limit possibilities for developing sensitivity to and acting in women's interests.

Association with an under-prioritized agenda like WID/GAD can exacerbate problems of individual marginalization and ironically, problems of personal disaffection with the issue. High-flying careers in the civil service are not often made on its "softest" peripheries and certainly not in stigmatized "women's" sectors. All of the interview reports detail the great frustration WID/GAD bureaucrats feel at their lack of resources and limited impact, their uncertain mandate and worst of all, at the lack of legitimacy the issue appears to have. It is worth quoting Barkallil on the perspectives of Moroccan civil servants in WID units:

They (WID bureaucrats) find themselves engaged on an issue for which they often do not feel prepared, all the more so because their mission is in no way defined by written directives coming from higher levels of the administration like the ministries concerned or the prime minister. One has the impression that they are assigned to a delicate question which they have been left to manage as best they can, not with a view to satisfying objectives of effectiveness but in a manner such as to appear to be doing something, from the perspective of national and international opinion, but above all, from the perspective of foreign donors (1994:22).

Where interviewees cited instances of a positive reception of WID/GAD policy goals in line ministries, these almost invariably relied upon the presence of a gender-sensitive civil servant — often, but not always, a woman. This speaks not just to the importance of gender training for state agents and strategies to make allies, but to the importance of building up what Dahlerup terms a "critical mass" of women in public administration (Dahlerup, 1988).

The impact of gender training efforts has been mixed. In Jamaica, gender training is given to all new bureaucrats in the administrative staff college to equip them with gender-sensitive project assessment skills, but the training itself is considered "vacuous" by gender policy advocates. In Chile, gender training opportunities for staff in the Ministry of Agriculture were largely ignored. The evidence from the Chilean interviews suggests that the gender-sensitivity of a bureaucratic unit depends on the number of women at mid- and senior levels and, in particular, on support from the top. Two consecutive male Ministers of Education, for example, have had a strong commitment to gender equity, as does the new Minister of Labour appointed after the March 1994 elections. The new President, Eduardo Frei, has also supported the gender issue, having included equal opportunities on his political

platform (Pollack, 1994a: 4-6). Even this strong top-level support, however, has been insufficient to combat the resistance of mid-level career bureaucrats (ibid.). The UNDP-funded gender training project in Uganda appears to have been fairly successful, especially as it is tied to an on-going sectoral planning effort. There, several male permanent secretaries have given the issue strong support (Kwesiga, 1994:21).

Obstacles to the increased representation of women at senior levels in the bureaucracy are considerable the world over. Quite aside from structural problems stemming from sex-typing of women in the education system and labour markets and from the competing demands of women's private lives, women who do gain access to the bureaucracy eventually bump into glass ceilings maintained by the bureaucratic fraternity. In Morocco, this process is personally managed by the representative of traditional patriarchy — the king — who makes appointments to high administrative office and has not once conceded this honour to women civil servants.

In Bangladesh, there is a recruitment quota system in the civil service. Since 1972, 10 per cent of gazetted and 15 per cent of non-gazetted posts have been reserved for women. No other special training is provided to enhance their performance in the civil service, let alone their gender-sensitivity. The system has evolved into a maximum ceiling for women recruits, rather than a minimum threshold. Quotas have had the effect of stigmatizing women's presence in the civil service, where they are regarded as having gained access by virtue of their sex, rather than merit. On the other hand, they have without question allowed for a greater presence of women in public service than would have occurred without special measures.

At independence, Bangladesh also institutionalized a system to compensate for women's political invisibility by reserving parliamentary seats for them — 15 out of 300 seats in the early 1970s, raised to 30 in 1978. Three seats are also reserved for women — to be filled by nomination — at every level of local government. This system of reservations, far from providing an effective channel for the expression of women's interests at policy-making levels, effectively cuts them off from political processes. At the parliamentary level, reservations for women effectively excuse political parties from nominating women candidates to contest seats and cuts women off from a popular base (Chowdhury, 1985: 269-70). Since these seats are filled by nomination by the government, they serve merely as a means of providing the ruling party with an extra block of votes. This erodes the credibility of these members of Parliament, as is suggested by their derisory popular epithet: *songshoder orlongkor* (ornaments of parliament). They have not, however, been entirely inactive as advocates of women's formal rights, occasionally putting pressure on the government for reform of personal and family law, while their concern to prioritize social development and poverty problems contrasts with their male colleagues' concerns with national security (Jahan, 1982). At the local government level, nominated women tend to have the same class interests as their male counterparts and the women who have successfully run for leadership

positions on these councils have tended to be wives or relatives of male politicians, elected as proxies (Alam, 1987).

In Uganda no formal mechanisms exist to enhance women's representation in the administration, although there are a range of measures to enhance women's political participation from the village to parliament. Within the administration, nevertheless, women have been appointed to important positions, including a number of commissions reviewing government policy in education, human rights and public service. A woman university professor, the head of the Department of Women's Studies at Makerere University, was appointed Deputy Chairman (sic) of the Constitutional Commission, a very important post, given the need to incorporate women's views into the country's basic legal framework. In comparison with many other countries, women have achieved a respectable level of representation at the highest position in line ministries accessible through promotion, where they make up 26 per cent of the under-secretaries.

At the village level and upwards, a unique process of improving channels for women's political access to the state is underway. In April 1993, National Resistance Council (NRC) — in effect the country's Parliament — approved the setting up of a decentralized network of National Women's Councils. These parallel a decentralized system of "Resistance Councils" (RCs) which were first set up during the civil war by Museveni's National Resistance Army and were retained after the war by the National Resistance Movement government as a mechanism to institutionalize democratic grassroots participation in national decision-making. Each of the country's 32 districts is divided into five administrative zones, with Resistance Councils at each level. Women's participation is already institutionalized as a part of these structures, where there is a mandatory place for at least one woman (usually the Secretary for Women) in the nine elected seats at each of the five RC levels. Each district elects a woman representative to sit in the NRC, which means that since the first nationwide elections took place in 1989, the number of women parliamentarians has increased.

The new National Women's Councils system is designed to enhance women's political participation beyond that provided through the RC system. A parallel elected hierarchy of women's councils at all administrative levels will culminate in a National Women's Council made up of delegates from each district and will elect five representatives to parliament. A similar Youth Council system has also been set up. The impact of these new measures is hard to assess for the moment, as the NWC system is still very new. Ideally, it should produce an institutional base for the political expression of women's interests, debated in a democratic manner from the bottom to top levels of government. In the RC system, the Ministry of WID, Youth and Culture has been involved in providing training in civics, legal rights and gender awareness to elected representatives in the RC system, in particular to local Secretaries for Women's Affairs, RC V (district level) councillors and NRC Women's Representatives. Women's electoral and political participation appears to have increased, with women standing for

positions other than Secretary for Women's Affairs in the second RC elections which took place in 1992. But the RC system alone was seen as insufficient to promote women's political participation; predictably, lone women representatives on RCs have tended to be dominated by their male counterparts. The NWC system may provide a privileged space for women to develop political voice.

Alternatively, the NWC system may come to provide an excuse for the neglect of women's interests in the RC system. The existence of parallel systems may become strongly gender typed, with the "female" NWC system contrasted to a "male" RC system and undervalued or marginalized as less legitimate in consequence. The parallel development of Youth Councils might reinforce this process, where women and youth come to be associated with a lesser degree of political citizenship than adult men, by virtue of these special measures. In other words, the system may end up reinforcing the conventions which exclude women from electoral processes and define the political world as male.

Another problem regards ruling party control. The NWC system is managed out of the Directorate of Women's Affairs in the NRM Secretariat. The NRM has been extraordinarily inclusive of oppositional interests as part of Museveni's desire to build a national government of democratic reconciliation without returning to the sectarian multi-party system which proved so destructive in the past. But it is still effectively a one-party system, pending the decisions of the constituent assembly which is currently revising the constitution. This means that the system of National Women's Councils risks becoming in effect a women's wing for the party. To the degree that it does so, it will be completely unsustainable when there is a change of government.

Several general observations can be made about efforts to gain allies and to increase women's representation in politics and the administration in the case countries. First, most often women who are already in the administration, even if gender-sensitive, are too isolated to risk association with the GAD issue. However, efforts to network among them, as in Uganda and Chile, sometimes through the "focal points" mechanism, can strengthen their resolve and effectiveness. Second, quota systems for increasing women's representation in the administration may be effective from an employment perspective, but probably not from the perspective of building up an internal GAD constituency. This should not, however, be taken as an argument against minimum quotas for women, as the possibility remains that they may eventually constitute a "critical mass" with enough mutual support to venture allegiance to the GAD agenda. Third, efforts to gain allies through gender training, unless supported by positive incentives for changed behaviour and concrete measures to change institutional rules and structures, will inevitably be limited in impact. Attitudinal barriers among the balance of civil servants also constrain the effectiveness of gender training. As Barkallil notes for Morocco, "the problem is not linked to an absence of professional qualifications, but, rather, to the absence of engagement in favour of the question" (1994:25).



A final point regards the history of efforts to improve women's representation in political decision-making forums. However laudable in theory, many of these efforts appear in practice to have treated women as a captive or at least "capturable" constituency for the ruling political party. In patrimonial political systems where power revolves closely around a ruler and his or her family, women have often been brought into politics on extremely paternalistic terms, as a constituency in need of nurturing, directly under the arm of the ruler's party. The not infrequent association of a national leader's wife or female relative with women in politics or national women's associations reinforces this connection. Inescapably, this seriously compromises the relative autonomy of women in politics from "men's" politics and undermines their capacity to raise oppositional perspectives on political decision-making. Active and oppositional constituency pressure — the subject of the next section — can mitigate this.

*Cultivating a constituency:  
Mechanisms for public advocacy, co-ordination  
with NGOs and linkages to women's organizations*

In the politics of policy-making a critical point of leverage on decision-makers is popular pressure and public opinion — an active constituency. Ideally the best source of constituency pressure in the context of efforts to integrate gender in development planning and to institutionalize gender-sensitive governance is WID/GAD's natural constituency: the organized expression of women's interests from outside of the government administration, with support from male allies. The WID/GAD agenda faces particular obstacles when it comes to finding or cultivating an effective political base among its constituency. Women are almost by definition excluded from public political space the world over and lack histories of organizing on a corporate basis in defence of their own interests, although there are plenty of examples of women organizing along with men to pursue social, economic and political agendas, though often not necessarily on their own terms. Even where women's interests do converge and find organizational expression, women often lack the financial and social resources and political experience to make an effective impact on public decision-making. It is true that in some cases their non-conventional forms of protest, as evinced by women's human rights groups in Chile, or protests by market women in certain African countries in response to price rises, have had an undeniable impact on politics. However, as Jaquette argues, these "new social movements", in their preference for relatively weak organizational forms, have not been able to sustain a role in politics, as they lack the structures to aggregate interests, represent constituencies and produce workable outcomes (1994:338-339).

Important strategies for official WID/GAD units in the context of uncertain constituencies have included raising public awareness of gender issues to challenge the acceptability of gendered asymmetries in resource access and social values, promoting the development of women's organizations and establishing links with sympathetic NGOs.

National umbrella organizations for women's groups have been one means for this. Ideally, these are mechanisms for a two-way flow between the bureaucracy and women's groups. In practice, these have been highly vulnerable to political co-optation and become instead the means for a one-way flow — of government control over women's organizations. This has been the case with the Uganda National Council of Women (formed in 1978 by Amin's government). This institution still exists within the new Ministry of WID, Youth and Culture and though its functions have been entirely superseded by the autonomous National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda (registered as a NGO in 1992), its statutory powers have not yet been repealed by parliament. This situation makes for conflicts of interest and status between bureaucratic WID/GAD units. Other strategies for cultivating constituencies and co-ordinating with NGOs are reviewed below.

In Uganda the explosion of women's activism in associational life in the context of peace after decades of insecurity has been an important resource for the Department of WID. The National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda has registered 60 NGOs and over 2,000 community-based organizations since its inception in 1989. Some of these organizations have collaborated with the Department of WID to conduct research, to promote legal change and to implement pilot projects. For example, the Department of WID has worked with the Uganda Women's Finance and Credit Trust (UWFCT) and the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U) to implement a credit and legal education pilot project in rural areas. Action for Development (ACFODE), a feminist advocacy group set up in 1985, and FIDA-U collaborated with WID to propose legal reform of family law to the Ministry of Justice. The Women's Studies Department at Makerere University has been involved in gender training of civil servants.

By far the most exciting of the Department of WID's efforts to build connections to its constituency have been related to the political reform processes underway in the country. It has embarked on a series of efforts to provide political education to women and to solicit their views on national policy-making. In 1990 the Department of WID launched an unprecedented process: it consulted women all over the country to collect their views on the country's basic legal framework — the constitution — for submission to the constitutional commission. This was probably the first time in history that a nation's female citizenry was so closely involved in framing a constitution. Supported by DANIDA, the Department of WID launched a major training programme and produced a simple illustrated manual outlining the main elements of the constitution (GOU, 1990). Seminars were held all over the country with a range of women participants — from illiterate farmers to RC officials, lower-level civil servants like teachers and nurses, and members of women's groups and local NGOs. The resulting recommendations report faithfully on women's views, registering conflicting opinions between different ethnic groups and regions. These recommendations touch on every aspect of the constitution, including the electoral system, the powers of the executive, judiciary and the legislature and detail women's views on marriage, divorce, inheritance, child custody,

property rights, employment regulations and children's rights (GOU, 1991). One outcome of this process was the greater politicization of women on constitutional issues, with 30 women contesting for seats in the constituent assembly elections of 1994 (nine succeeded). The Department of WID's involvement in exercises such as these gives it a much stronger orientation to the concerns of its rural constituency than is common in many national WID/GAD units.

The Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) in Bangladesh has not lived up to its mandate to "create an atmosphere of social psychology that would make women's participation in development activities increasingly possible" (GOB, Second Five Year Plan, 1985). Although some of its programmes are oriented to raising public awareness of gender issues — for example, the UNICEF-funded "Advocacy Awareness and Strengthening of the Information Base for Women in Development" project — it has no institutional mechanisms for communicating with and co-ordinating efforts among women's organizations and NGOs. It does maintain an impressive register of women-friendly NGOs. But women's organizations prefer to maintain distance from the DWA, most probably because it is largely staffed by members of the BJMS (National Women's Association), whose links to the Bangladesh National Party, currently in power again after over a decade of opposition, have been renewed. This connection is particularly strong given that the current prime minister, Khaleda Zia, had been involved in founding the BJMS in the 1970s, as the wife of the then President Zia. Finally, the DWA's capacity for influencing development processes in rural areas is extremely limited; it has offices in just 22 of the 64 districts and has staff in just 100 of the 460 sub-districts. By and large, in consequence, it is relatively isolated from the women's movement.

In Jamaica, processes of constituency outreach on the part of the Bureau of Women's Affairs are well institutionalized, but its relationships with NGOs and women's organizations have been uneven, very much dependent on the economic situation — both of the Bureau itself and the country. Parish Advisory Committees have acted as liaisons between women's organizations in parishes and the Bureau of Women's Affairs since 1985. They also act as a lobbying force locally to ensure that changes are effected in rural women's lives. Over the years, the Bureau has come to work more closely with NGOs as its own capacity to initiate research and implement projects withered with the withdrawal of donor funds consequent on the government's failure to provide counterpart funding (Mariott, 1994:5). Disappointingly, however, its relationship with women's organizations has not been strong since the 1980s. Observers suggest that the women's movement has been decimated by the economic hardships brought by austerity measures in the 1980s, detracting efforts from advocacy to economic survival (*ibid.*:6). One of the consequences of this is that women's organizations are forced into competition with each other for donor funds, to the degree that the Association of Women's Organisations in Jamaica — rather than acting as an umbrella organization to concentrate women's perspectives on policy — actually competes for funding for its own projects.

In Mali, the new Commission for the Promotion of Women is one of the few WID units in the case countries to dispose of clear institutional means for collaborating with NGOs and women's organizations. One of its main responsibilities is to chair a representative government/NGO co-ordinating body, composed of ten government officials, ten representatives of NGOs and ten representatives of women's organizations. Among women's organizations, a loose form of co-ordination exists already, but has faced several problems likely to affect the Commission as well. These owe to the character of many women's organizations, which are very new, primarily urban and have been formed primarily with reference to the political situation and as such are more focused on current political debates than on issues of development planning (Ben Barka, 1994:26). No coherent perspective on gender and development has yet developed from this group.

In Morocco, reflecting the uneven institutionalization of WID units across the administration, there is a notable absence of a point of communication or co-ordination with indigenous women's groups or NGOs. Instead, consultation between the government and associations concerned with gender issues appears to occur on an *ad hoc* basis. Some degree of consultation with women's organizations has occurred in women's units in certain ministries and government units (particularly the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Agricultural Credit Service), but these are isolated instances such as seminars which tend to be sponsored by external donors and focused on particular projects. In the face of the absence of a government unit for co-ordinating the WID agenda, an external agency, UNIFEM, supported the establishment of a WID cell in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Technical Co-operation in 1991. The primary function of this cell is to serve as an intermediary between the United Nations system and international NGOs on the one hand and the government and women's organizations and NGOs on the other. This is not an organic structure and is not recognized by women's organizations as a legitimate or representative national unit through which to channel their concerns, especially as its primary orientation is to the international community.

With regard to more cross-sectoral and legal issues of critical relevance to gender relations and matters of equity and redistribution, consultation with women's organizations has been almost insultingly cursory, showing an astonishing degree of condescension and disregard for women's perspectives on public policy. For example, in the recent process of reforming the country's Islamic family law code, the *Moudouana*, managed by the king, women's organizations were only peripherally consulted. They were contacted in writing; public debate and the possibility of conflict was avoided. Not a single woman from the women's movement or women within the legal system sat on the commission charged with revising this critical piece of legislation. The resulting legislation reproduced a patriarchal family model with no reflection of changes in women's social and economic roles in Morocco.

An even more extraordinary example of the rejection of women's perspectives on public policy emerged from the process of formulating planning responses to the Nairobi requirements for action plans. Representatives of women's organizations sat on the national commission for drafting the action plan in the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. Three drafts were written. The first was rejected by women's organizations because it failed to integrate the concept of equality, as was the second because equality was mentioned merely in the preamble to the text. The third draft was written without consultation with women's organizations and once again excluded the notion of equality.

Chile differs from the above cases in that its National Service for Women (SERNAM) has had no formal mandate to work with women's organizations or NGOs. This may to some degree reflect a desire on the part of the main coalition of feminist organizations (CNMD) to preserve its autonomy. It has continued to pursue a more radical agenda outside government. SERNAM has pursued a project of putting gender issues on the public agenda primarily through the creation of centres of information on women's rights, concentrating on democracy, poverty and human rights. It has collaborated with NGOs for the purpose of research into employment and domestic violence issues and only when funded by international agencies. According to some observers, this relative detachment may owe to a reluctance to become embroiled in political differences within the NGO and women's communities (Pollack, 1994b:4). In a context of highly politicized forms of associational life in civil society this reticence is perfectly understandable and probably healthy. In any case, the dynamism of CNMD and its autonomy from the administration are probably the best guarantors of the continued development of a feminist constituency in the country.

SERNAM's primary mechanism for communication with its grassroots constituency is through representatives in the newly decentralized units of government. This has not been a very well-supported process, however. Members of its personnel in regional offices have not themselves necessarily been GAD advocates; in spite of gender training programmes, a basic lack of commitment on the part of some, isolation and a lack of clear mechanisms for insinuating gender concerns to line services limit their impact (Pollack, 1994b:11).

Overall, the relationship between national WID/GAD units and the national female constituency as expressed in women's organizations and NGOs has tended to be somewhat uneasy, with Uganda offering a more positive recent experience of collaboration and Morocco illustrating the problems which arise when there is an absence of a legitimate institutional location for collaboration within the administration.<sup>7</sup> One serious obstacle to effective collaboration stems from bureaucratic norms. Too much interaction with outside constituencies can be seen as a violation of professionalism to the extent that it is regarded as politicizing the administration and eroding its integrity. For example, in a relatively open and transparent administration, a WID/GAD unit might

rightly illuminate deficiencies in the government's accountability to women, thereby providing outside constituencies with "ammunition" with which to lobby for change. This means divided loyalties for many WID/GAD bureaucrats and while often a reality, it can undermine their credibility in the bureaucracy. Similar constraints operate in the opposite direction. Women's organizations in particular may resist association with an administration linked to a government which is not seen as responsive to their concerns. This appears to be the case in Bangladesh. The transformative potential inherent to an iterative relationship between an active women's constituency and WID/GAD agents in the administration is perhaps best exploited where each retains a degree of autonomy from the other, yet both attempt to ensure that their activities on either side of the state/civil society divide are mutually supportive. It is too early to say for certain, but this appears to be the pattern developing in Chile.

### **Conceptualization of WID and GAD: Changes over time in approaches**

The great variety in the interpretations of WID and GAD depends on the institutional contexts and political circumstances in which these concepts are employed. Significant actors influencing the meaning of these concepts include state bureaucracies, political parties, religious institutions, women's organizations and NGOs. All of these, in addition, negotiate shifting understandings of WID/GAD with an international development community in which these concepts are likewise subject to a spectrum of interpretation by donors and the international feminist community. Important contemporary processes with implications for conceptualizations of WID and GAD include the growing importance of backlash anti-feminist politics such as is represented by religious fundamentalism and the effects of neo-liberal economic policies and increasing poverty which push women into the labour market as male incomes shrink, undermining the productive basis for family cohesion and diminishing the capacity of women's organizations to sustain organization and resistance. The following analysis considers ways in which the WID/GAD agenda has been interpreted and finishes by considering, in particular, difficulties experienced in conceptualizing gender.

In the official rhetoric and, to some degree, actual policies of most of the case countries, WID discourses have shifted from an initial primary association with social and family welfare issues, to a growing association with labour market and productivity issues. Often this shift has been in response to the increased visibility of women in formal and informal labour markets, especially in contexts where economic crises have undermined the male productive base in the formal economy and the public sector. It is important to make a definitional distinction here where the term "welfare" is used to describe WID policies. "Welfare" has taken on a pejorative meaning in the discourses of gender policy advocates. Gender-transformative welfare policies, however, are socially and economically critical to the effective transformation of the terms of gender inequality and it is crucial that these policies are reformed in

women's interests. In practice, however, they have often been the most visible vehicle for paternalistic interpretations of women's identities and needs as subsumed to traditional forms of the family and the community. In what follows, "social welfare" is not used pejoratively, but is qualified by adjectives such as "paternalistic" or "traditional" where it refers to policies which do not challenge conventional interpretations of women and men's reproductive or productive roles.

In most of the case countries WID has long been associated with the traditional social sector programmes managed by the administrative units within which the WID mandate first found a home. Thus in Chile and Mali, it was associated with a strongly masculine interpretation of women's mothering and wifely roles, as promulgated by military governments, and in Bangladesh it was associated initially with the social "rehabilitation" of women who had fallen out of the traditional family safety net. Many of the WID programmes of the 1970s in both social and productive sectors continued in this vein, but often with more blatantly instrumental intentions. Thus in Bangladesh, investment in women's education was justified because:

"[t]he level of schooling of women determines the efficiency of household management. Educated mothers pay greater attention to nutrition, health and childcare than the uneducated one (sic)" (GOB, First Five Year Plan, 1973:479)

In the productive sectors, new development inputs such as credit or technology were made available to women for the purpose of improving on their traditional roles, while at the same time servicing national concerns with issues such as population control, improved family nutrition, or improved primary health care. None of these programmes targeted men for the purpose of challenging gender-ascriptive reproductive or productive roles, nor opened women's access to non-traditional and sustainable employment opportunities.

Fundamental forms of social and economic restructuring over the last twenty years, the appearance of new social movements organized on gender, democratization and human rights grounds and the (slowly) growing conviction shown in the gender discourses of the international donor community, have all contributed to changes in the view of gender roles in social sectors and increasingly, in productive sectors. Chile, Jamaica and Morocco have seen an enormous increase in women's participation in the formal labour force. Poverty in Bangladesh, Mali and Uganda has prompted a focus on women's contribution to family survival. In all of these countries, these economic changes have had an impact on the economic viability of traditional family forms. On the one hand, this has prompted changes in social sector discourses towards a consideration of women's — as opposed to the family's or men's — social and welfare needs. To some extent, these changes have been forced by an awareness that some policy failures have stemmed from insufficient attention to the salience of gender power relations in inhibiting women's policy responses — where, for example,

contraceptive inundation programmes have failed, or new educational opportunities have not been taken up. On the other hand, changes in the family form are prompting a simultaneous policy backlash aimed at reinforcing its crumbling boundaries.

Examples of a reorientation of social policy discourses to include women's interests as whole subjects include new health and education programmes in Jamaica. The maternal and child health programme there now looks beyond women's physical reproductive functions to the full gamut of their well-being, where the concept of the "well woman" includes not just her good health but the viability and acceptability of her social circumstances. A new programme in the Ministry of Education is reviewing gender biases in the curriculum of young adolescents. These kinds of programmes indicate ways forward for a radical and gender-sensitive interpretation of social welfare. In Morocco, vocational training programmes have shifted their target clients from married to unmarried women and from training in homecraft skills to skills needed in modern formal-sector employment, such as computer literacy, carpentry and metalwork, although more sex-typed training persists — such as skills for nursery school teaching or food preservation. In most of the case countries, however, social sector policies targeting women do so from an increasingly instrumental perspective. The view is to reap benefits from the social externalities expected to flow from women's better education or health, with less attention paid to gendered issues of power or control upon which improved social welfare is contingent.

In all the case countries, the productive sectors have remained the most highly resistant to the gender issue. In Chile, in recognition of women's employment needs, new women-targeted productive programmes have been launched in the agricultural, financial and industrial sectors. However, these have remained relatively small and isolated, while "mainstream" programmes still fail to integrate women — only 9.25 per cent of beneficiaries of the Ministry of Agriculture's rural credit programme, for instance, are women. In Morocco, women have been "discovered" as new sources of productivity, particularly in agriculture and rural credit systems. However, the legacy of separate policy approaches for women is very deeply embedded, such that the credit and agricultural extension resources which do reach them remain negligible compared to those targeted to men.

In Uganda, policy imperatives of promoting economic growth through structural adjustment and of reducing poverty, have prompted official attention to women's productivity, in a context where women produce 80 per cent of the country's food and provide 70 per cent of agricultural labour. The core of the leadership's support for women centres on a project of improving their agricultural productivity. Thus, according to President Museveni:

Our policy aims at strengthening the position of women in the economy by raising the value and productivity of



their labour and giving them access and control over productive resources (cited in Mugenyi, 1994:1).

In spite of this, the agricultural sector has been slow to address women's production needs. The lack of gender-sensitive agricultural policies is particularly striking given the critical importance of efforts to generate a supply response in agriculture to new production incentives. If, as is the case, women are effectively excluded from membership in existing agricultural co-operatives and lack access to market information, they will be unlikely to respond to, or benefit from, market liberalization measures. That this obvious and important opportunity to integrate a gender perspective on agricultural policies has not been taken up again demonstrates the intensity of resistance to notions of women as key producers.

This resistance, or indifference, to women's needs as producers is even greater in the private sector, which, in the context of adjustment policies in Mali and Uganda in particular, is slated to take on a central role as the state withdraws from the productive sector through policies of "public choice for private initiative" (GOU, 1993:75). Very little is being done to guarantee gender equity in the private sector in any of the case countries, with the possible exception of Chile's draft equal opportunities policy. Here, however, resistance is expressed by private employers to the "higher costs of the female workforce" (Pollack, 1994a:25). This resistance reveals one of the greatest obstacles to the development of a gender-transformative conceptualization of the WID/GAD issue, namely, the profound taboos surrounding policy efforts which in any way appear to cause or worsen male unemployment. This problem is no less salient in Western industrialized countries, where concern with rising male unemployment consistently leads to under-implementation of strategies for gender equity in equal opportunities or re-skilling programmes. That concerns over male unemployment are permitted to overshadow measures to enhance women's productivity reveal the deeply gendered sub-text of economic planning. Its continued orientation to men's productive needs has the effect of stigmatizing women's employment support programmes — such as labour-saving domestic technologies, child care, vocational training and equal opportunities — as traditional welfare measures, rather than productive sector policies.

The phenomenon of rising male unemployment in urban areas consequent on adjustment and public sector reform policies (particularly salient in Uganda and Mali), or sudden terms of trade shocks in primary commodity exports (Chile, Morocco, Jamaica) and increasing poverty in rural areas consequent on a range of factors such as landlessness (Bangladesh), or drought (Mali and Morocco), has undermined the viability of the traditional male bread-winner model of the family. At the same time, community survival strategies and traditional social safety nets have been worn thin by civil conflict (Uganda) or growing population pressure on scant resources (Bangladesh). The result has been the break-up, to some extent, of traditional familial and social coping mechanisms. This has spawned new forms of social organization

in some contexts, with women playing more visible community roles as in Chile; in other contexts — such as Bangladesh, Uganda, Jamaica and Morocco — there are higher divorce rates and more female-headed households. These threats to the traditional family form have prompted policy reactions with implications for the conceptualization of WID/GAD.

One expression of state concern over changing family structures is the recent appearance in official rhetoric of cautionary polemics regarding conflict between the sexes. Thus in a recent gender policy statement emanating from the agricultural extension service in Morocco, the foundation of society in the future is described as “the self-fulfilment of the family as an entity and the avoidance of all risk of conflict between its members” (Bennis, 1994:5). Details of the ideal form of this family are left open, but this otherwise progressive document does not address the problem of the gender conflict likely to be provoked by its proposals to orient more agricultural resources to women. In Bangladesh, concern over gender conflict and family disintegration is addressed through an official discourse of gender complementarity and a view of family relations as essentially consensual, rather than based on power and latent conflict. A clear exposition of this view is made in the introduction to the Fourth Five Year Plan:

... there are two main ways of increasing the contribution of women in development process and for improving their condition. One process tends to highlight the gender differences and brings men and women into greater competition for existing job opportunities. The second process emphasizes more the complementary relationship between men and women and tends to develop them as a whole with focus on the integrative aspects of the family. The first approach can improve the economic position of the women but may also increase the incidence of disharmony in the family. (...) Because the majority of the people are poor, therefore, it is necessary that both the husband and the wife should complement each others' income for the benefit of education and maintenance of the children (GOB, Fourth Five Year Plan, 1990:1-8).

The barely veiled reproach to women's organizations, the evocation of emotive anti-feminist bogeys regarding the destruction of the family and the hijacking of men's jobs, hardly need pointing out.

Backlash politics targeting women and equity policies have emerged from Islamic fundamentalist interests in Bangladesh and, to some degree, in Morocco. In both countries, Islam is the state religion, but both have prided themselves on their secular national character. However, domestic and international Islamic interests have gained increasing political prominence. These have been embraced by the state in Bangladesh, but they have had much less political success in Morocco. In Bangladesh, Islam has served as a means of backing the

right-wing interests of military leaders and of the current army-supported government. Since the mid-1970s Bangladesh has benefited from substantial aid from Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia and has permitted the spread of Islamic NGOs in rural areas. These NGOs have been recruited to state development programmes to provide education through religious schools and to provide agricultural extension services and basic health care — activities in which women are involved, but in which their participation is generally framed in paternalistic terms (Kabeer, 1991).

Recently there has been a great intensification of fundamentalist agitation, in which women who are vocal and visible in the public sphere have been singled out for attack. The well-publicized case of the *fatwa* on Taslima Nasreen, the feminist journalist and novelist, is one example of this. There have also been attacks by rural men — with the connivance of local religious leaders — on projects associated with women's emancipation. Women development workers have been assaulted and raped, BRAC informal schools which tend to have a majority of girl students have been burned down and programmes targeting credit to rural women have been denounced as un-Islamic. The damage these attacks are doing to the WID issue in the country is enormous and the government's tacit connivance with the sentiment behind this process undermines the credibility of its simultaneous commitment to women's integration in development.

In Morocco, over the 1980s, militant Islamic groups were associated with efforts to overthrow the monarchy and were the targets of official persecution. Since 1991 Islamist groups have raised their public profile and with a view to averting the development of the kind of conflict now raging in neighbouring Algeria, the monarchy and the government have permitted the limited expression of Islamic political interests and the emergence of an identifiable Islamic movement. This movement has attracted support from the urban working class, disaffected by the inability of other political parties to respond to the long-term deterioration in living standards. Despite the moderate stance of the palace and the government, an Islamic interpretation has often figured in legal and policy positions in relation to women. Thus, as noted earlier, the recent amendments to the country's personal law retain a conservative Islamic interpretation. Statements are made in the National Strategy for the Promotion of Moroccan Women to the Year 2000 which imply that a "liberated" expression of female identity is anti-Islamic. One policy objective in the education sector, for instance, is to "[c]hange the foreign and imported image of women and treat this image according to a modernist Islamic vision..."; another is to "...reinforce awareness that it is not necessary to adopt ways of life and comportment known in other societies where the values and aspirations differ from those of an Arab-Muslim society like Morocco..." (GOMo, 1989:50, 56). These statements suggest that the women's issue provides useful territory on which the state can give ground to placate Islamic interests which it otherwise does not wish to entertain. Concessions on the women's issue neither impinge significantly on "mainstream" national

policy, nor is the women's constituency powerful enough to register an effective protest.

### **Conceptualizations of gender**

In official rhetoric, Chile, Bangladesh, Jamaica and Uganda have shifted to the use of the term "gender in development" (GAD). Mali still focuses on "the promotion of women" and in Morocco, attention to gender relations as opposed to women alone has appeared in the NGO sector and among women's organizations, but largely not in official documents. All too often, unfortunately, the term has been interpreted as a synonym for "women", or simply as a reinforcement of earlier concerns to shift the WID issue out of welfare and into economic sectors and non-traditional public roles.

In all of the interview reports upon which this paper is based, respondents either expressed confusion over the meaning of GAD, or charged that it has been misinterpreted by state institutions as, in effect, a means of side-stepping the more radical emancipatory implications of responding to women-specific disprivilege. In some countries, it is taken as an invitation to direct public attention to men's social problems. In Jamaica, for example, "men at risk" are the most notable new policy target to appear consequent on the shift to "gender" (Mariott, 1994:8). Naila Kabeer provides a good example from Bangladesh of the way the new GAD discourse can be mis-translated across cultural and institutional contexts. In a workshop on gender-aware planning one woman participant asked: "Do you think we are ready for gender and development in Bangladesh, when we have not yet addressed the problems of women in development?" (cited in Kabeer, 1994:xii). Kabeer goes on to explain: "it transpired that the new vocabulary of gender was being used in her organization to deny the existence of women-specific disadvantage and hence the need for specific measures which might address this disadvantage" (ibid.). The politics of local interpretations of new policy discourses is critical to their actual impact. This is an issue to which GAD advocates at the international level must be attentive.

Policy makers interviewed for this study felt that GAD has lost credibility as a policy concept, given policy makers' difficulties in understanding the significance of the discursive shift in the WID/GAD field. The problems signalled in all the interview documents with the policy conceptualization of gender centre on the fact that the shift from "women" to "gender" by gender policy advocates is a political, feminist one, implying a transformative vision for gender relations in which men are directly implicated. Bureaucrats charged with the GAD agenda are often themselves unconvinced or even hostile to gender-transformative goals. Where they are convinced and committed, the politics of personal bureaucratic survival dictate that the political project of the GAD agenda be underplayed, as this is seen as an unprofessional, non-technical personal bias.

In bureaucratic contexts, a political goal like this translates badly into technocratic planning languages. In development bureaucracies, these languages are almost always iterated to a primary concern with growth, rather than justice or equity, and hence have little space for gender-transformative concerns. The natural temptation, experienced by many gender policy advocates, to achieve policy legitimacy by re-framing the gender equity concern as a matter which will produce social and economic efficiency gains has the effect of de-politicizing the issue. It results in the well-documented “instrumental” perspective on investing in women for the positive social externalities their well-being is expected to produce and runs the risk that women will simply become more perfectly exploitable for development. A genuine commitment to gender equity in development requires a re-conceptualization of the meaning and measurement of growth and of equality. But this remains rather distant from current economic planning agendas.

## **PART IV**

### **Conclusions: Constraints, Opportunities, Missed Opportunities**

This review of efforts to integrate gender to the development process demonstrates above all the deep obstacles to what Staudt calls “de-institutionalizing male preference” (1995). These obstacles are embedded in the everyday functioning and the overall structure of government bureaucracies, which give little space and no legitimacy to a political project of gender equity. This final section reviews the constraints faced by WID/GAD units and looks at the opportunities for change.

#### **Institutional and environmental constraints**

Staudt makes an insightful analysis of bureaucratic structures and operating imperatives which represent a primordial constraint on the WID/GAD agenda. Hierarchical and undemocratic, bureaucracies are hostile to agendas which challenge accustomed thematic organizational patterns. In national public administrations, this hostility is deeply compounded by the high boundaries erected between different sectoral ministries and by the patronage politics preserved by Ministerial boundaries. The most important constraint, however, inheres in the deeply embedded gendered conventions in public bureaucracies — where women’s needs are largely seen as a matter for private provision — not public administration. Challenging these conventions, which the WID/GAD agenda does, arouses profound resistance and fairly efficient subversion.

In effect, subversion abides in the under-resourcing and stigmatization of which members of WID/GAD units interviewed for this study universally complained. The structural location and the nature of the operational powers assigned to WID/GAD units have exacerbated these problems. WID/GAD units tend to have had unstable histories as

organizational entities. Shifted between different administrative units, they have been unable to establish themselves institutionally as part of the basic structure of the administration. Their roles and mandate vary from “advisory” to “oversight”, “monitoring” and “implementation”, but what remains a constant is that they lack sufficient personnel and financial and technical resources to fulfil any combination of these functions effectively.

There is no clearly preferable combination of roles for WID/GAD. The Ugandan, Chilean and Bangladeshi women’s units in government combine policy oversight, monitoring and advocacy roles, as does Chile’s SERNAM, but the Ugandan and Chilean cases appear more successful. The significant difference is a more positive institutional environment for the WID/GAD issue, reflecting the current support it has from the national leadership in Uganda and Chile. It also seems clear that responsibility for actually implementing WID/GAD programmes is best left to line ministries, given the lack of resources in WID/GAD units to implement programmes which might have a national-level impact and the tendency by other government units to assume that gender issues are spoken for when programmes are implemented by WID/GAD units.

In this, ideally, WID/GAD units ought to perform a policy advisory role and provide technical inputs. A strong theme emerging from the interviews regards the lack of technical skills of WID/GAD personnel — in terms of skills in policy and project analysis, design, implementation and evaluation and in terms of skills in gender analysis. With regard to the former set of skills, the most serious shortcoming has been a failure to trace implications of new synoptic policy and planning proposals through to budgetary implications. This means that many national gender planning statements produced by WID/GAD units have a curiously detached and abstract nature. They gain top-level endorsement yet are inoperable, lacking clear instructions for line ministries to implement.

With regard to skills in gender analysis, an important constraint has been the lack of conceptual clarity in the use of the term “gender” and the tendency to assume it refers to “women” alone. This has sometimes had the effect of narrowing the focus of policy scrutiny to “women-only” policies and programmes, diverting attention from the broader sweep of development policies. One result is that the analyses of new policy agendas — such as poverty reduction initiatives or the introduction of environmental sustainability concerns — may not be “tracked” through to their implications for women and men in all sectors. Instead, “gender” issues will be “noticed” only where these policies impinge on sectors traditionally associated with women, on social development and welfare matters, for example, or in fuel-gathering and domestic sanitation. To improve the quality of gender analyses there has been a notable increase in the amount of gender training now available, usually through outside funding, to WID/GAD personnel and to other members of the development administration. Gender training is ultimately constrained by an attitudinal barrier; the interview reports suggest predictable

differences between the receptivity of women and men bureaucrats to this training. Another fundamental constraint on the effectiveness of gender training, as with efforts to promote gender-sensitive policy and planning, is the absence of rewards attached to re-orienting individual and institutional approaches towards gender-sensitivity. WID/GAD units are still not equipped to alter the incentive structures governing individual bureaucrats and bureaucratic units; they usually cannot offer material or status rewards, nor can they provide useful technical support, and they lack powers of ultimate sanction over policy and programme proposals that fail to incorporate gender-sensitive perspectives.

The critical role that outside constituencies might play in supporting institutional change is muted for political reasons: divisions within the women's movement, the weak organizational forms often adopted by women's organizations and the distrust with which they may regard the national administration, especially given the tendency for patrimonial states to exploit women's presence in the state for political support purposes. On the civil service side, WID/GAD units, when staffed with personnel with a clear commitment to gender equity, will have divided loyalties, undermining their credibility within the rest of the bureaucracy. Advocates for gender equity working in the public administration have to manage a complex form of politics, identified by a feminist collective in the United Kingdom as working both "in and against the state" (London-Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, 1979).

According to all the interview reports, the support which international aid donors give the WID/GAD issue has been an important temporary substitute for the lack of concerted domestic pressure and the lack of national resources to pursue the WID/GAD agenda in development planning. But many of the interviewees were ambivalent about its long-term impact. The availability of foreign funds releases states from mobilizing their own resources for gender-sensitive development practice. It also sharply undermines the sustainability of WID/GAD policy efforts, which can evaporate once funds are spent. Where projects and institutions are set up primarily in response to an external initiative, there is little incentive to actively internalize and "own" a policy initiative. Instead, its legitimacy is suspect and even though the funds are welcomed, the imposition of "alien" cultural notions regarding gender is deeply resented. The reports from Mali and Morocco were most explicit about this problem. Cultural imperialism in the projection of Western notions of gender equity to other contexts is an undeniable problem and the resentment this arouses can have the unfortunate effect of stigmatizing existing indigenous feminisms as Western derivatives, thereby undermining their local legitimacy. Further, national level bureaucrats are hardly impervious to the ambivalences in the support which the WID/GAD issue receives within multilateral and bilateral institutions. This too can inhibit the degree to which the issue is internalized locally. It can also contribute to a cynical exploitation of the issue for the purpose of accessing new development funds and burnishing the nation's image in external eyes. This cynical tendency is exacerbated by the typical donor preoccupation with the rapid disbursement

of funds on projects, to the detriment of investing in costly and slow processes of attitudinal change.

A final and important constraint on the WID/GAD agenda has been the depressed economic environments in which most of the countries examined here currently find themselves. Governments have been less willing and indeed less able to accommodate demands for distributional equity in periods of severe economic crisis. When the accent in economic planning is on stabilization and growth, equity-focused concerns which imply new resource commitments tend to be postponed. In more urbanized countries, the problem of male unemployment during economic downturns is seen as a serious political problem. This will mean under-implementation of WID/GAD policies to the extent that they are seen to challenge men's employment privileges.

### **Political and policy opportunities**

Opportunities for furthering the WID/GAD agenda have come from strategic allies, from moments of political systems change and from changes in the international development policy environment. In Chile and Uganda, the WID/GAD agenda has recently benefited from strong support from the top state executive and across the other case countries, there are many examples of individual ministers or top-level civil servants who have given the issue support at critical moments, enabling, for example, gender-sensitive personnel and policy tools to be introduced into a particular department. Though welcome, it is nevertheless a disturbing signal of the fragility of the institutional status of WID/GAD efforts that successes are so often contingent on the support of individual powerful men. The incidence of this form of support is entirely arbitrary and unpredictable and it speaks to the need to develop stronger support bases across the administration.

Similarly, there are cases where the WID/GAD agenda has been furthered in moments of political systems change, as in the transitions from military dictatorships to democracies in Uganda and Chile. Two dynamics are at work. One represents a strategic gain for women, where they seek to represent their interests among a new configuration of political interests and may be less obstructed than at other times because some traditional power-holders have been unseated. The other is less of a direct strategic gain. It involves the concerns of new leaders to demonstrate legitimacy both at home and abroad. Extending opportunities for political participation to women is an effective symbol of progressive national attitudes. It can also be, as seen earlier, a mechanism for co-opting women as a valuable supportive political constituency. The challenge for women is to exploit these kinds of opportunities by seeking effective forms of institutional presence in the state. The process of soliciting women's views on the new Constitution in Uganda is a striking example of an effort to exploit this kind of opportunity.

These sorts of efforts essentially involve holding the state accountable for policy promises. Seeking to enforce state accountability to women



requires an understanding of state policies and an assessment of their implications for gender relations. It is also contingent on the degree of effective democracy in a country and the shift to democratic governments in the case countries in recent years has provided an important opportunity for women to demand legitimacy and representation for their needs and interests.

New international development policy agendas also provide special opportunities for furthering the WID/GAD agenda, if the individual country in question has subscribed to these policies. The most important of these of course is the WID/GAD agenda itself as promoted through the international feminist movement and the conferences of the United Nations Decade for Women. Each of these has provided important opportunities for coalition-building between women's organizations and for establishing constructive linkages with national WID/GAD machinery. The forthcoming 1995 conference in Beijing should do the same.

Other recent international policy agendas have included support for human rights observance and for good government, a renewed commitment to poverty reduction, a concern with environmental sustainability and a focus on human and social development. Each of these represents important new opportunities for furthering gender equity agendas, though they are rarely presented as such. To avoid them becoming missed opportunities, WID/GAD advocates need to take active ownership of these agendas, assessing them for any obstacles they may impose for women and exploiting them as points of leverage on the state and international donors. For example, the governance agenda, as currently put into practice by multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, largely centres on concerns with civil service reform and with improving the efficiency of public sector management with a view to enhancing the security of private sector investments. But the actual content of the governance agenda as expressed in policy documents is much broader, embracing notions of enhancing the participation of excluded groups in policy-making, strengthening civil society and improving respect for human rights (World Bank, 1992; 1993a; ADB 1993). In this broader reading, there is important space for inserting concerns to enhance public accountability to women. Although this involves a degree and form of institutional change not foreseen in these documents, commitment to good government provides a point of leverage to demand it.

By and large, WID/GAD units have failed to exhibit this kind of strategic analysis and planning to exploit new policy agendas. They tend instead to be reactive, missing opportunities for challenging and changing new policy initiatives so as to engineer a gender-equitable impact. An important current example of a missed opportunity is the failure to make a proactive gender analysis of the World Bank's New Poverty Agenda, which is intended as a guide to the Bank's lending programme, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The central focus of this new agenda, promoted since the publication of the 1990 **World Development Report**, is on labour-intensive growth strategies in

agriculture to build on the poor's most abundant asset — their labour (see also World Bank, 1993b). This strategy makes a strongly gender-biased assumption — that a poor producer has a surplus of labour and has control over it. Neither condition may hold when the producer in question is a woman. An African woman farmer's labour is already over-extended between productive and reproductive activities with little time for leisure, limiting her capacity to extend her labour even further. In any case, gender relations within the household are often such as to constrain women farmers' independent choices over their labour deployment patterns. This example is simplified, but this basic gendered bias in the assumptions informing this major new policy initiative has not yet been illuminated by the development administrations in sub-Saharan Africa charged with implementing this policy. Ideally, WID/GAD personnel ought to be able to provide this kind of analysis of new policy initiatives to prevent them from becoming constraints for women.

The phenomenon of “globalization” or of the greater permeability of international boundaries can also work as an opportunity for local WID/GAD efforts. The participation of individual countries in international development conferences and agreements means that nations expose themselves for comparison with other nations. Many of the new international policy agendas make this comparison explicit — an example is the way the UNDP's human development initiative uses the Human Development Index for country rankings. Transparency at the international level means that abuses at the national level are more visible and more embarrassing to governments. Again, this can be exploited by women's organizations to expose injustices and provoke responses.

It is worth asking why so many governments the world over have appeared willing to make commitments to women's rights and to gender equity in the development process and to set up institutions to promote this. Similar support is rarely given to other issues — such as class inequality — which also represent deep social cleavages and which envisage profound structural change. The reason has to do with politics. No government or bureaucracy feels it has anything to fear from women. In civil society they rarely represent a tightly mobilized constituency, at the domestic level their interests are often closely bound in with those of men in the family and in politics and public administration they are under-represented and have rarely acted in distinctively feminist ways. As such, even if governments and bureaucratic units were fully cognizant of the fundamental transformations intended in WID/GAD agendas, which they may often not be, the threat of these changes actually being realized is negligible, given the relative absence of forceful and demanding constituencies within and outside of the state. As a result, far from having anything to fear from women, many governments can make important political gains at the international and domestic levels by espousing gender equity, without serious risk of being held accountable — of having to operationalize the promises made in top-level rhetoric.

The point is that the constraints faced by national WID/GAD units studied in this paper are at root political; this is what is meant by the repeated lament in the interview documents about a “lack of will” or a “lack of commitment”. Opportunities for furthering the WID/GAD agenda have also been political — where polities are in transition for example, as in Chile and Uganda, making space for new political interests or where more democratic and humanitarian interests are making an impact on development agendas, as in the new governance and human development concerns of the international development establishment. Effective strategies for institutionalizing women’s interests in the state must therefore be attuned to political opportunities and oriented to political strategies based on building coalitions for change.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This paper draws on interviews conducted in-country with state officials, members of women's organizations and NGOs and academics. These interviews were conducted by Nadira Barkallil in Morocco, Lalla Ben Barka in Mali, Mohsena Islam in Bangladesh, Joy Kwesiga in Uganda, Christine Mariott in Jamaica and Molly Pollack in Chile. Ingrid Palmer designed the interview questionnaire and interview guidelines and Shahrashoub Razavi at UNRISD managed the challenging work of ensuring that the draft interview reports maintained a degree of comparability. I am grateful to Shahrashoub in particular for the excellent and consistent guidance she provided me in working through drafts of this paper and for her encouragement. I also thank Carol Miller, Yusuf Bangura and Kathleen Staudt for their helpful comments.

<sup>2</sup> Important recent contributions include Franzway et al., (1989) and Connell (1990). Texts developing feminist perspectives on non-Western states include Kandiyoti (1991), Agarwal (1988), Charlton et al. (1989) and the essays in Parts 2 and 3 of Mohanty et al. (1991).

<sup>3</sup> For a good discussion and a review of the literature on the effect of structural adjustment on women's labour deployment patterns and on household nutrition, see Blackden and Morris-Huges, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> It is not known exactly how many women were raped in the war; estimates vary from 30,000 (Kabeer, 1989), to 200,000 (Jahan, 1982), to 400,000 (Brownmiller, 1975). Even the higher figure may be an underestimate, given that immediate rejection by family and community discouraged reporting of the crime.

<sup>5</sup> It must be noted, nevertheless, that women's organizations in the 1960s were active in pressuring the government to reform family law. These efforts included, famously, a campaign by one Christian women's association to press the government into providing social security to disinherited widows, which resulted in the Kalema Report of 1965 recommending modifications in traditional laws of marriage, divorce and inheritance to extend secular civil rights to women (Kwesiga, 1994:37).

<sup>6</sup> It is not clear from the available draft **National Policy Statement on Gender Issues** who will sit on this steering committee.

<sup>7</sup> This is not to deny, of course, that fruitful collaboration has occurred on an *ad hoc* basis between women's organizations, NGOs and various distinct government departments in Morocco.

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