

CONFLICT PREVENTION GUIDANCE FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

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PLANNING

Discussions at last November's World-wide Mission Director Conference focused on the importance of paying substantially more attention to the potential for conflict in the societies in which we work and examining ways in which USAID resources can help prevent these conflicts and achieve development and humanitarian assistance goals. In addition to preventing loss of life, we are concerned with safeguarding the sustainable benefits of our longer-term development investments in the countries where we work. It was generally agreed at the conference that USAID could significantly contribute to analysis of vulnerabilities and identification of root causes of disruptive conflicts, crises or chaos that threaten broader U.S. interests. We need to be proactive. We have a responsibility to use the analytic and programmatic tools at our disposal to avoid deadly conflict wherever possible.

The current USAID Policy on Conflict Prevention is stated as follows:

"The Agency remains committed to develop more preventive country, and/or regional strategies that address the root causes of deadly conflict and economic and political crises where these threaten USAID strategic objectives or broader U.S. national interests. Our goal is to improve the use of development assistance to mitigate and to the extent possible prevent potential economic and political crises."

This re-statement reflects previous public statements made by the Administrator, Secretary of State, and President. It is consistent with the February 1999 Revision to the inter-Agency International Affairs Strategic Plan (IASP), which indicates that the USG will seek to reduce regional conflicts in part by finding ways to "address the root causes of conflict both multilaterally and bilaterally, using development assistance and support to democracy." Planned revisions to the Agency Strategic Plan will address conflict prevention as an important cross-cutting issue.

This message provides specific guidance on the topic of conflict prevention to field Missions for the purpose of preparing new country strategic plans (CSPs) and providing inputs to Mission Performance Plans (MPPs) prepared by Country Teams. Operating units developing strategies for regional programs should seek to apply this guidance to their strategic planning process as deemed most appropriate.

Note that this guidance applies specifically to situations where clear potential for conflicts exists. It is not intended for resolving, mitigating or planning the recovery from current or conflicts. You should also be aware that specific supplemental funds are not available for addressing identified potential conflicts. Therefore any response planned by Missions should be in the context of currently available program and staff resources. Particularly compelling conflict prevention proposals would be given special attention in the budgeting process.

As part of preparing a new USAID country strategy, operating units are asked to: 1) prepare an appropriate vulnerability analysis that address the potential for conflict, 2) summarize the findings of such analyses in the strategy document, and 3) specifically indicate when and how these findings affect the proposed strategy.

There is not at this point a standard scope, methodology, or level of effort for the type of analysis to be conducted. In general, you should seek to make maximum use of existing country team assessments of perceived economic, political, civil-military, or social tensions that could lead to violent conflict, including regional implications if they exist. Identified potential conflicts should be placed in one of four categories: deadly conflict, economic crisis, political crisis, and complex emergencies. Areas of concern can be disaggregated for purposes of analyses according to the specific or unique conditions in any particular region or country. The objective of this strengthened vulnerability analysis is to: (1) help safeguard the achievement of USAID strategic objectives and development investments; and (2) make the need for costly post-conflict humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping and reconstruction less likely.

In preparation of amended USAID strategies, Missions are asked to consider conducting an appropriate conflict vulnerability analysis and determine whether the scope of the amendment in question warrants such an analysis. If one is conducted, the results should be identified as part of strategy amendment approval requests.

For the annual MPP process, USAID staff is asked to contribute to appropriate analytical efforts, particularly when these relate to USAID programs.

During Washington reviews of country strategies, Bureaus will examine the extent to which Missions have been able to assess the root causes of conflict, and how directly and effectively strategies are able to address them. As a result of this approach, the Agency anticipates more explicit and complete analysis of potential conflicts as a source of vulnerability for USAID programs, and better knowledge of how and when existing USAID resources can be used to help prevent conflicts.

USAID/W will endeavor to identify appropriate sources of technical assistance when needed. To stimulate thinking and information sharing, a conflict prevention web site has been developed (see USAID intranet - or ask your desk officer to access URL: www.usaid.gov/PPC and click on conflict prevention in the blue line box. NOTE: This URL is case sensitive; "PPC" must be capitalized). It includes illustrative analytic

frameworks and other materials. Additional materials are being prepared and will be posted on this and other bureau web sites.

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