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DISSEMINATION & TRAINING FILE
Publications - General

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The World Bank/IFC/MIGA
O F F I C E M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: June 3, 1993 03:53pm

TO: Minhchau Nguyen (MINHCHAU NGUYEN)

FROM: George Psacharopoulos, HROVP (GEORGE PSACHAROPOULOS)

EXT.: 39243

SUBJECT: RE: Approach Paper

It was good to have this early exchange. You will be proud of having the first, and most rigorous, approach paper on the most difficult subject!

Let me recapitulate, for information of the CCs, how I see the memorable message of the eventual policy paper.

"Identification and removal of barriers preventing women to reach their productive potential". Full stop.

There is a lot of meat and variations within the above grand message. First, we accept that women have equal potential as men. Hence by imposing a barrier (e.g., "women cannot a certain job"), translates to a deadweight loss. The paper should argue mainly in terms of an efficiency loss by not treating women equally, rather than in terms of "carrying firewood". The social welfare loss will be understood by our hard core economists, and they will be motivated to voluntarily address women's issues. The firewood argument will appeal only to a minority of staff, and I am afraid it might backfire on us.

"Productive potential" in the above message does not only relate to income generation in the formal labor market. It also includes "household production" (better sanitation conditions, voluntary contraception and the like).

"Barriers" could refer to schooling access, labor market access, and/or labor market performance (discrimination). Barriers could also be classified into legal and cultural. Since there is little we could do on the latter, we should concentrate our guns on the former. Of course legal and cultural barriers interact (cf. women not driving in South Arabia) -- the best long term solution to that is the increase of the level of women's education.

I feel the paper should have only the following sections. Please do not overload it with extraneous material that might dilute its impact.

I. Introduction

II. The Evidence

Identification of the barriers
Evidence on their welfare loss as % of GDP

III. Policy Options

Mapping of the evidence presented in chapter II, above,
into specific actions

IV. Conclusion

Of course chapter III will be the most difficult to write. You may ask your people to have a crack at the policies in bullet form, then fire the bullets on us.

I will be on home leave the weeks before the approach paper goes to the Board. So please draw your gun the soonest.

CC: Institutional ISC Files
CC: K. Y. Amoako
CC: Armeane Choksi

(INSTITUTIONAL ISC FILES)
(K. Y. AMOAKO)
(ARMEANE CHOKSI)

THE WORLDBANK/IFC/MIGA

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 16, 1993

TO: Distribution

FROM: Armeane M. Choksi, Vice-President, HRO *Amc*

EXTENSION: 31811

SUBJECT: Dissemination and Follow-up to Poverty Progress Report

This memorandum is to inform you about the plans for dissemination and follow-up to the progress report "Implementing the World Bank's Strategy to Reduce Poverty: Progress and Challenges". As you know, the progress report was discussed by the Board in January, 1993. At the request of the Executive Directors, it has been revised for external circulation. The Board has also requested Annual Progress Reports on Poverty. The Annual Reports will include a basic stocktaking of progress in completing poverty assessments, improvements in country assistance strategies, the Program of Targeted Interventions, and the poverty focus of adjustment operations. A special theme, such as the effectiveness of safety nets, might be included in each annual report. Every three years the Annual Report will be more comprehensive. We are now initiating the dissemination and follow-up to the progress report and are establishing the process for poverty monitoring and reporting.

With respect to dissemination, the report will be released on April 28, 1993 and is being launched with a press conference by Mr. Preston and myself. EXT will be distributing the report widely. HRO is planning to discuss the report and ways to improve aid coordination with other donors. There will also be a letter from Mr. Preston to all staff at the time the report is released emphasizing the importance of continuing the Bank's poverty reduction efforts.

The Poverty Progress Report has set out a number of directions for the Bank to strengthen its analytical and operational work on poverty. Overall, the challenge for the Bank is to continue and strengthen the work that is already underway. This will entail completing poverty assessments for all active countries, ensuring that their findings are reflected in the country assistance strategies, and intensifying analytical and country work on several issues, including the distributional impact of public expenditures and the effects of labor markets and other policies.

An important element of the Bank's work on poverty is the collaboration between the Regions and the Central Vice-Presidencies. HRO intends to work closely with the Regions to provide support in helping borrowing countries to reduce poverty more effectively. The Education and Social Policy Department (ESP) in HRO is now the Bank's focal point on poverty issues. ESP's work program is designed to support the Regions in achieving this goal and it is addressing several of the issues identified in the progress report, including analyses of the effects of country policies on poverty and the effectiveness of safety nets. As you know, ESP will be providing extensive operational support for the preparation of poverty assessments and for the analysis of safety nets.

As part of this effort, Mr. K.Y. Amoako and his staff are planning to meet with the Regional Poverty Coordinators to discuss how we can best cooperate to strengthen the Bank's analytical and operational work on poverty. They will also be discussing how to set up a routine poverty monitoring system for the Annual Progress Reports on Poverty and how to strengthen the network of poverty coordinators.

Distribution: Messrs.: Karaosmanoglu, Sandstrom (EXC); Husain (LAC), Jaycox (AFR), Kaji (EAP), Koch-Weser (MNA), Thalwitz (ECA), Wood (SOA).

cc: Messrs./Mmes.: Adams (OPR), de Merode (PHN), Edwards (LAC), Husain (AFR), Nankani (SOA), Psacharopoulos (HRO), Selowsky (ECA), Squire (MNA), Thomas (EAP).