



WOMEN'S LEGAL RIGHTS INITIATIVE
OF THE WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT IQC

RWANDA ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS REPORT
OCTOBER 11-24, 2004

Contract No. GEW-I-00-02-00016-00

Submitted to:
United States Agency for International Development

Submitted by:
Chemonics International Inc.

In partnership with:
Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), Partners of the Americas, MetaMetrics Inc., Development and Training Services Inc., and Turning Pointe Marketing, Inc.

May 12, 2005



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Women's Legal Rights Initiative (WLR) team wishes to express its gratitude to USAID/Rwanda, and especially to Acting Mission Director Andy Karas and Pierre Munyura, Governance Specialist, for the guidance and support provided during the course of our work in Rwanda. The WLR team greatly appreciated the professional collegiality with which we were received by the Mission. We would also like to thank Sahana Dharmapuri, Gender Advisor at the USAID Women in Development (WID) office, for her gender perspective and contribution to our assessment visit.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USAID Women's Legal Rights Initiative (WLR) is a task order under the Women in Development (WID) Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC), which was signed by Chemonics International, Inc. on September 30, 2002. The WLR project is designed to contribute to the Office of Women in Development (EGAT/WID) Strategic Objective 3 – *Women's Legal Rights Increasingly Protected* – goals and intermediate results, and strengthen USAID Mission strategic objectives (SOs), particularly with regard to promoting democracy, improving the implementation of women's rights in Rwanda, and integrating gender into program activities.

The WLR project team, together with the USAID Africa Regional Bureau, EGAT/WID, and the USAID/Rwanda Mission, selected Rwanda as a focus country for WLR activities in Central and East Africa. The WLR team conferred with the Acting Mission Director and the staff of USAID/Rwanda's Strategic Objective teams to identify obstacles to the full guarantee and enjoyment of women's legal rights in Rwanda. The approach WLR will pursue is a cross-sectoral strategy that involves all the SO Teams, strengthening the women's rights and gender aspects of existing programs and activities, and building relationships and awareness across sectors.

To determine pervasive obstacles to the enforcement and enjoyment of women's legal rights, WLR conducted a two-week assessment and analysis trip to Rwanda from October 12 to 23, 2004, which included visits to Kigali (the capital), Nyanza, and Butare. WLR conducted meetings with USAID/Rwanda, government ministry representatives, judges, a senator, and many civil society groups working on issues of particular importance to women.

The WLR team identified a number of critical barriers to the empowerment of women in Rwanda, including customary practice that denies women and girls basic human rights and defines women by their relationships to and with men. Many traditional practices in Rwanda are not compatible with the constitutional guarantee of the equality between women and men, or international human rights law prohibiting discrimination against women. Practices such as violence by the community and by male partners against women and sexual harassment of women with impunity, as well as a lack of rights to control assets or inherit land, deny women's humanity, increase women's poverty, and hurt the economic and political development of the entire country.

The problems facing Rwanda, eleven years after the genocide, are daunting. The high number of widows and orphans, the many women whose husbands have been in jail for ten years and will soon be released into a very different society than the one they knew, the emotional and psychological fallout from ethnic hatred and mass murder and violence, the evils of rape and the resulting cases of HIV/AIDS, which are leading to other health problems, death, more orphans, and poverty – these are the almost overwhelming ills that plague present-day Rwanda. And yet, there is hope.

There have been many recent improvements in the legal framework of Rwanda to support women's legal rights, perhaps the most important being a new Constitution. The Rwanda Constitution now mandates that a minimum of thirty percent of the decision-making positions in

the government of Rwanda belong to women. Recent elections resulted in forty-nine percent women representatives in the Chamber of Deputies, the highest percentage in the world. The executive branch of the government of Rwanda developed and is implementing a national plan to integrate women into Ministry programs, demonstrating the government's commitment, and ensuring that government networks and structures can be used to promote gender justice. Parliamentarians are interested in learning how to effectively put forward issues of importance to women.

Civil society organizations are active, especially in the cities, working on women's rights and economic empowerment. However, organizations are not engaging in creative collaborations. There needs to be more outreach to areas in the countryside for public awareness programs on women's rights in Kinya-rwanda, so that rural women who are most in need of legal protections will know about them. In spite of Constitutional guarantees, the justice sector (judges, magistrates, intermediate and grassroots level judicial sector workers, law enforcement, and prosecutors) has not been adequately educated about changes in the laws to protect women's rights, or about how to achieve gender equality in practice.

The WLR team identified a number of areas for cooperation and assistance among WLR, USAID/Rwanda, national government Ministries, and the judiciary, to address gaps and constraints on women's rights. These general areas include education and training around women's rights and violence against women, to be implemented through continuing education for judges, magistrates and prosecutors. Gender analysis budget training for Parliamentarians and Ministry personnel, and technical assistance to Parliamentarians to support the drafting of laws relating to violence against women are possible activities WLR could implement. Also, activities to improve and encourage civil society organizations' coordination and collaboration would develop the capacity of this sector to advocate for women's legal rights.

The WLR team will work in coordination with current USAID/Rwanda, government, and NGO programs to avoid duplication of effort and materials, and build on what has already been done. We will use existing networks from all sectors and levels of society to reach people with information on women's empowerment who have previously been overlooked. We will build relationships between organizations and agencies that do not usually collaborate. By working together, people and groups working on different aspects of women's rights will construct networks that will endure beyond this particular project. WLR will identify specific focus activities for the project, and, following discussions with USAID/Rwanda and potential local partners, the WLR team will collaboratively develop a results-oriented action plan with defined activity details and time frames for project implementation.



Damage from the 1994 war is still evident on Rwanda's parliament building.

SECTION I

Introduction

A. Women's Legal Rights Initiative Objectives

The Women's Legal Rights Initiative (WLR) team, in collaboration with the Office of Women in Development (EGAT/WID) and USAID Missions worldwide, is working to strengthen and promote women's legal rights and participation by enhancing opportunities for women to meaningfully participate in the economic, social, and political dimensions of society. To achieve these goals, the project coordinates with international donors and local stakeholders to provide strategies to identify obstacles and discern gaps, to implement programs to promote women's rights, and to document best practices in knowledge and practice related to women's legal rights.

B. Country Selection Process

In collaboration with EGAT/WID, the WLR team met in April 2003 with WLR Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) Ed Lijewski and four representatives chosen from the USAID Africa Regional Bureau, namely Curt Grimm, Carla Komich, Ajit Joshi, and Afia Zakiya. WLR developed six objective criteria for measuring the potential impact a project could have in a given country:

1. The applicability of the Mission's strategic plan to a WLR component (such as a Democracy and Governance (DG) Strategic Objective that could easily incorporate the Women's Legal Rights Initiative)
2. The existence of significant local/indigenous grassroots women's or legal reform organizations, especially among current USAID partners
3. Women's rights work already underway, allowing WLR initiatives to build on and strengthen existing activities
4. The potential for substantive (breadth/depth) impact, given the existing political and economic environment
5. The ability to implement activities given the severity and breadth of systemic problems in the legal and judicial systems and customary law regimes
6. The potential for replication in neighboring countries, e.g., in Francophone or Anglophone regions, allowing best practices to be used productively

To initiate the country selection process, meeting participants sent an Africa-wide cable introducing WLR as a way to identify current Mission interest in the project's services. The Africa cable elicited 11 responses expressing interest in participating in the project. Following extensive consultation with the EGAT/WID office and Washington bureaus, the Republic of Rwanda was selected as the WLR focus country for the Central and East Africa region.

During the selection process, it became increasingly evident that many countries in Africa have comparable problems with regard to women's legal rights. For example, lack of enforcement of

existing laws and general ignorance of women's legal rights are pervasive problems. The WLR team identified three activity themes in the Mission requests:

- Reviewing the legal and judicial frameworks to document the impediments to women's rights and support for the drafting and passage of laws that bring national legislation into compliance with international standards and practices that protect women's rights
- Building capacity of civil society organizations to support women's legal rights through advocacy training, networking, and grassroots mobilizing to promote women's rights legislation and implementation
- Providing gender rights training for lawyers, judges, other decision-makers, and civil society organizations, and using the media to educate the public about the problems facing women and the means for legal redress that do or should exist.

These general types of activities will be implemented in all of the African countries where WLR has projects.

C. Assessment Objectives and Activities

The WLR team worked closely with USAID/Rwanda to identify potential partners and organize meetings for the assessment and analysis phase, conducted in Rwanda from October 13 to 24, 2004. USAID/Rwanda's Democracy and Governance, Health, and Rural and Economic Growth teams provided guidance and assistance to identify ongoing programs, constraints to women's legal rights, gaps in knowledge and practice, and the current legal, social, political, and economic context in Rwanda. Additionally, consultations were conducted with government Ministries and agencies, judges, civil society groups, international organizations, and other stakeholders to identify priority issues, potential partners, and past and current activities. Another visit in 2005 will allow more in-depth assessment and planning.

Results from the assessment and analysis trip will be used to design a country action plan that addresses obstacles to women's empowerment, meets the needs of USAID/Rwanda, and complies with the scope of work of the WLR task order. The action plan will target issues to be addressed using local and international resources to achieve the determined goals and objectives that strengthen women's legal rights, reinforce USAID/Rwanda's objectives, and dovetail with ongoing activities.

D. Technical Approach and Methodology

The WLR technical approach and methodology to assess the needs, opportunities, and constraints related to women's legal rights in Rwanda include:

- Background research and document review on the economic, political, social, and legal context related to women's legal rights in Rwanda prior to the initial assessment and analysis trip
- Presentation of WLR program to USAID/Rwanda staff and discussion of Mission strategic objectives, constraints to women's legal rights, existing programs, and identification of successful models

- Discussions and consultations with key civil society groups, Ministry representatives, judges, and other stakeholders to identify their program priorities, the most urgent problems, and possible areas for collaboration with WLR
- Collection and review of existing programs, reports, studies, legal texts, training materials, and public awareness campaign materials related to women's legal rights to see how we might build on what has already been done and avoid duplication of efforts

The assessment and analysis team consisted of David Vaughn, WLR Chief of Party, Lyn Beth Neylon, WLR Gender and Legal Specialist, and Sahana Dharmapuri, Gender Advisor to the USAID WID office. In Rwanda, the team met with numerous civil society organizations, representatives of the judiciary, the parliament, government agencies, personnel from USAID-funded projects, and USAID/Rwanda staff. These meetings provided important background information about the current status of women's rights in Rwanda, identified what has been and is being done to address obstacles to women's empowerment, and assisted the team in determining crucial needs and responsive, strategic activities that may be undertaken as part of this project. Ms. Neylon also conducted additional interviews and research after the assessment visit.

Following the assessment and analysis trip, the WLR team will:

- Debrief with USAID/Rwanda, EGAT/WID, and the Africa Regional Bureau on preliminary assessment and analysis findings and recommendations
- Identify local and foreign consultants, staff, and resources required for implementation
- Prepare and submit an assessment and analysis report to USAID/Rwanda, EGAT/WID, and the Africa Regional Bureau, and revise if necessary
- Prepare and submit a draft country action plan to USAID/Rwanda, EGAT/WID, and the Africa Regional Bureau based on the assessment and analysis report and responses to it
- Conduct discussions on the draft country action plan with USAID/Rwanda, EGAT/WID, the Africa Bureau, potential local partners, and interested others

Finalize the Rwanda country action plan incorporating comments and suggestions, hire staff, and begin to implement activities.

SECTION II

Women's Legal Rights Country Overview

Rwanda is located in East Central Africa. It is bound by Uganda to the north, Tanzania to the east, Burundi to the south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, formerly Zaire) across Lake Kivu to the west. The population of Rwanda is approximately eight and a half million people in a country about the size of Maryland, making it the most densely populated country in sub-Saharan Africa. Rwanda is predominantly Christian, and the official languages are Kinyarwanda, French, and English. Rwanda is mountainous, hence its epithet *Mille Collines*: the Land of a Thousand Hills. It is a beautiful country, with a complex and difficult history.



The principal ethnic groups in Rwanda are the Hutu (approximately 90% of the population), the Tutsi (9%), and the original inhabitants of Rwanda, the Twa or Batwa, also known as Pygmies (1%). However, even this simple statement is not completely accurate, because while the Hutu and Tutsi are often considered to be separate ethnic groups, they speak the same language, have a history of intermarriage, and share many cultural characteristics. Traditionally, the differences between the two groups were occupational rather than ethnic: Hutus were farmers, and Tutsi owned and herded cattle, and an individual could identify with either group depending on his/her financial circumstances. The Twa traditionally lived and hunted in the forests. A 1933 requirement by the colonial Belgians that everyone carry an identity card indicating tribal ethnicity as Tutsi, Hutu, or Twa solidified a distinction between the groups, and repeated violence in Rwanda and surrounding countries has increased ethnic differentiation among them.

Rwanda has a long and rich history of kings, queens, and many chiefs. The history of Rwanda after the 1800s is regional (the Great Lakes Region) and colonial. The kingdom of Rwanda never participated in the slave trade; it was isolationist, and closed to foreigners until the late 1800s. In 1885, Rwanda was declared to be a part of German East Africa, although no one in Rwanda was notified for years. After World War I, Rwanda and Burundi together became a Belgian League of Nations mandate, and then a United Nations (UN) Trust Territory. Until 1960, Ruanda-Urundi was administered as part of the Belgian Congo, and Belgium deliberately maintained Tutsi dominance in its administration, angering Hutus. Ethnic tensions led to civil war, forcing many Tutsi into exile.

Any discussion of Rwanda must include the 1994 attempted genocide, what led up to it, and what the country has done to cope with its aftermath. In 1959 the Hutu revolted and abolished the Tutsi monarchy, and thousands of Tutsis were killed; some 150,000 were driven into exile in neighboring countries. In 1961, the people of Rwanda voted to make their country a republic, and Ruanda-Urundi separated into Rwanda and Burundi. In the 1970s Rwanda was ruled by the military, but then returned to a constitutional government. Ten years later, ethnic tensions in Burundi resulted in around 38,000 Hutu refugees into Rwanda, and an additional 300,000 Tutsi emigrated to Uganda.

Another civil war in 1990, along with several political and economic upheavals, exacerbated ethnic tensions, culminating in April 1994 in a brutal, unrelenting and premeditated slaughter by extremist Hutu militias, in which roughly 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were murdered. Despite credible and horrific reports of genocide, no country came to the Tutsi's assistance. UN troops, already stationed in Rwanda at the time, withdrew entirely after ten of its soldiers were killed. Tutsi rebels defeated the Hutu regime and ended the genocide in July 1994, but approximately 2 million Hutu refugees, fearing Tutsi retribution, as well as Hutus who had committed genocide (*genocidaires*) masquerading as refugees, fled to neighboring Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

These Hutu soldiers began waging guerrilla warfare from refugee camps in the DRC, joining forces with Hutu guerrillas who were fighting Tutsi from their own countries. Paul Kagame, a Tutsi rebel leader, became vice president and minister of defense of Rwanda, and in order to foster national unity and defuse ethnic tensions, a Hutu man became president. Rwanda then began to support Hutu rebel forces in DRC headed by Laurent Kabila, but soon supported a rebellion against him.

In April 2000, Vice President Paul Kagame became president of Rwanda, and in 2002, he and Joseph Kabila, now president of the DRC, signed a peace accord. Rwanda promised to withdraw its 35,000 troops from the eastern Congolese border; and DRC would disarm the thousands of Hutu soldiers in its territory who threaten Rwandan security—many of whom supported or participated in the Rwandan genocide, and continue to conduct raids into Rwanda, and then run back across the border into the DRC. This situation persists to the present, and causes problems between Rwanda and the DRC. In 2003, Rwandans overwhelmingly voted to approve a new constitution that institutes a balance of political power between Hutus and Tutsis. The new constitution also outlaws the incitement of ethnic hatred, and guarantees that a minimum of 30% of the decision-making positions in the government of Rwanda be women.

Rwanda is still shattered by the attempted genocide of the Tutsi in 1994 that left nearly a million dead. Tutsi, Hutu, and other conflicting ethnic groups, associated political rebels, armed gangs, and various government forces continue fighting in the Great Lakes region, transcending the boundaries of Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda to gain control over populated areas and natural resources. Many of the refugees in the region have returned to their respective countries, however, periodical eruptions of violence continue to displace many people. At least 100,000 people have been displaced as a result of fighting between military factions in the eastern region of Congo, creating an inherently unstable situation. Despite substantial international assistance and political reforms, Rwanda continues to struggle with poverty and the aftermath of the horrors of ethnic cleansing.

A. USAID Programs and Partners

In the post-crisis period, U.S. assistance to Rwanda has shifted from humanitarian aid to the prevention of renewed regional conflict, the promotion of internal stability, and renewed economic development. USAID programs aim to promote internal stability by pursuing three strategic objectives under an integrated strategic plan: 1) improved governance through increased citizen participation, 2) increased use of community health services including HIV/AIDS, and 3) expanded economic opportunities in rural areas.

USAID/Rwanda's Democracy and Governance (DG) programs focus on Strategic Objective Five: Improved Governance through Increased Citizen Participation

The purpose of this SO is to improve governance through increased citizen participation. USAID/Rwanda supports democratic local government and decentralization, democratic national governance, civil society; and improves community-based reconciliation efforts. USAID will continue to support Rwanda's groundbreaking decentralization program, assist new legislative bodies to carry out their mandates, increase dialogue with citizens, and to help civil society organizations (CSOs) increase citizen participation in local and national governmental decision-making. USAID will continue to promote further reconciliation within Rwanda. Efforts to bring justice through the informal mediation systems (*Gacaca*) or the formal justice system for past crimes will be coupled with civil society efforts to ease the trauma still pervasive in society.

Among the key accomplishments in this SO are: USAID-supported tools and methods have enhanced fiscal decentralization and brought about greater accountability across Rwanda which other donors are expanding on; USAID-supported Kibungo community radio began broadcasting in 2004 and is one of the five new stations serving the country; committees of the parliament's Chamber of Deputies are now open to the public, and they have incorporated citizen input on the proposed land bill; formal executive oversight sessions in the Chamber of Deputies increased by 50% in 2003; training provided for 500 under-qualified secondary school teachers and 3,000 new secondary school teachers at four USAID-supported distance training centers; USAID/Rwanda is providing 1,500 secondary school scholarships to disadvantaged but academically talented girls through the Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program; a national voter database operates connecting the headquarters and provincial offices; three new community internet centers are serving more than 4,500 persons per month providing training and access to the internet; 1,020 schools without electricity now have solar-powered laptops, and parents in many school districts

are contributing money to get electricity for their schools to allow internet access to spread; 551 *Gacaca* (traditional mediation) judges were trained in sexual and gender-based violence issues, and 126,182 more judges have been trained; 2,639 genocide survivors received secondary school scholarships; and 1,655 trainers using a neighbor-to-neighbor approach produced radio programs to promote healing and reconciliation.

USAID/Rwanda's Health and HIV/AIDS programs focus on Strategic Objective Six: Increased Use of Community Health Services including HIV/AIDS

The purpose of this SO is to strengthen the decentralized health system for family planning, reproductive and child health, malaria, HIV/AIDS, and nutrition; improve access, quality and sustainability of basic health services; and maintain Rwandan direction of health improvement at all levels. The program's major components reduce maternal and neonatal mortality; improve the quality and sustained use of family planning; reduce malnutrition among children; prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria; and protect the health of the poor during decentralization. Policy analysis skills and program management for decision-makers who set health priorities are a critical part of service delivery improvement under this SO.

Rwanda is one of 15 PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Program) focus countries. The US Government PEPFAR team (including CDC, US Embassy, DOD and USAID) sustained a very rapid scale-up and implementation of prevention, care and treatment goals.

Important health-related progress of Mission programs includes: improvements in reproductive health, child survival, HIV/AIDS and health systems improvements; increases in contraceptive prevalence, assisted deliveries, access to health care through insurance schemes, increases in immunization rates, access to insecticide treated nets for malaria prevention, and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. Specifically, 48 health facilities are providing a combination of voluntary counseling and testing for HIV/AIDS, prevention of mother to child transmission, and anti-retroviral treatment services. The ART sites provided treatment to 4,386 patients, as compared to fewer than 100 patients in 2003. USAID/Rwanda provided care and support for more than 10,000 people, and more than 23,000 pregnant women received services to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS.

USAID/Rwanda's Rural Economic Growth programs focus on Strategic Objective Seven Expanded Economic Opportunities in Rural Areas

The purpose of this SO is to expand opportunities in rural areas and increase the diversity of off-farm productive enterprises, agricultural productivity, household level incomes, employment, and corresponding rural financial services for targeted communities. Rural infrastructure improvements contribute to increased productivity and diversification of income.

Significant Mission program results in this area have been: increased incomes, improved nutrition and increased integration and reconciliation among in communities from the dissemination of 170 improved cows to 170 households. Integrated food assistance activities improved farm-to-market infrastructure, provided a safety net for 7,000 orphans, elderly and street children, improved nutrition and income generating activities for 4,400 HIV/AIDS-impacted households and monetization proceeds continued to diversify support for agribusiness

enterprises including fifty-nine businesses focusing on specialty coffee, handicrafts and horticulture, which expanded their markets with USAID support for technical assistance for marketing, improved business practices, investment, and trade promotion strategies. Critical public-private partnerships linked Rwandan producers directly with US specialty buyers through joint trade visits in Rwanda and the US led to a more dependable market and doubled the income for Rwandan producers. USAID/Rwanda efforts enhanced the technical and institutional capacity of Rwanda's leading credit union and its 18 pilot local banks through computerization and training on credit and recovery; 1,209 microfinance institution members completed their training in community-based HIV/AIDS outreach, with over 7,000 clients were undergoing training in HIV/AIDS awareness and sensitization at the end of FY 2004; and a Development Credit Authority (DCA) of a \$2 million loan portfolio with a 40% loan guarantee with the leading commercial bank in Rwanda will provide loans to agricultural enterprises producing, processing and marketing value-added agricultural products in strategic, export-oriented sectors.

USAID/Rwanda offers a coordinated approach to solving problems, identifying cross-cutting themes and strategies in its programs. For example, because of the lack of skilled staff to implement programs, human resource and institutional capacity development (especially training) are woven through all the SOs. The Mission has determined that civil society organizations (CSOs) are important agents for strengthening democratic processes, delivering social services, and fostering economic growth, and so works with local organizations in all its programs. Opportunities to incorporate HIV/AIDS messages and interventions are also incorporated into all of the SOs.

WLR is enthusiastic about using this integrated methodology to develop and implement activities to promote women's rights and gender equity. Just as the Mission has linked democracy and governance, economic growth, and health activities, so does the WLR team hope to work with all the Rwanda Mission teams to incorporate women's legal rights activities into its SOs.

B. International Donors and Organizations

Rwanda has received a great deal of international attention since the war and genocide of 1994. At the height of the emergency, more than 200 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were carrying out humanitarian operations. In the immediate postwar period (mid-1994 through 1995) emergency humanitarian assistance of more than \$307.4 million was largely directed to relief efforts in Rwanda and to the refugee camps in neighboring countries where Rwandans fled during the war. In 1996, humanitarian relief aid began to shift to reconstruction and development assistance. Most of the United Nations development and humanitarian agencies have had a large presence in Rwanda, but their efforts do not appear to be coordinated.

Examples of donors giving direct country support are the UK government through DFID, which supports the Rwandese government directly, through the Ministry of Education, for a project in schools; the French government provides assistance to the province of Ruhengeri by supplying a doctor, a pharmacist and a lab-technician; and the World Bank, which provides funds for the National AIDS Control Programs. Examples of organizations receiving institutional support are UN agencies that receive an annual contribution from their member states, for example 30% of

all Dutch development assistance is distributed among various UN agencies. UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF all have a presence in Rwanda.

Many international NGOs receive contributions from their governments which are not related to specific projects; for example, in the Netherlands, Cordaid, Hivos, Novib (OXFAM), Icco, and Foster Parents Plan receive a fixed annual contribution. Examples of states' funds given to international organizations earmarked for program support are USAID funds to NGOs in Rwanda; DFID funds to Actionaid to support the national AIDS program; the Danish government's funding of the Legal Aid Clinic at the University of Butare (through December 2004); and the Italian government financial support of WHO to provide technical assistance to the national AIDS program in Rwanda. Large NGOs such as the International Rescue Committee have also collaborated with the government of Rwanda and local NGOs.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank recently announced the cancellations of a \$1.4-billion debt owed by Rwanda, under their Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, designed to ease excessive debt burdens stifling growth in the developing world. The IMF also announced it would disburse an \$860,000-loan to Rwanda after completing a review of its recent economic performance.

C. Government of Rwanda

C1. The Legal Systems

There are several legal systems operating simultaneously in Rwanda. There is the "pre-court" informal system of *abunzi*, the formal court system, customary practice, the *Gacaca* system for crimes related to the genocide committed between October 1, 1990 and December 31, 1994, and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which makes judgments on international crimes against humanity, genocide crimes, and war crimes related to the genocide in Rwanda. WLR will most likely work with the formal legal system, as there have been other programs specifically to support *Gacaca*, the ICTR has its own funding mechanisms, and *abunzi* is relatively new. Although WLR will not work with all of these legal systems, they interact with each other and all impact on women's rights in Rwandan society.

Abunzi:

The *abunzi* was started in July 2004. *Abunzi*, a type of mandatory alternative dispute resolution, should resolve many disputes at the local level, reducing the number of people using the formal court system and eliminating the backlog of cases and strain on the formal court system's resources. In *abunzi*, local people who are respected in their communities are elected at the sector level (12 per sector, and there are approximately 1,500 sectors) to hear cases. Three *abunzi* of those 12 in each sector will hear a case to identify issues and determine if parties can settle matters such as petty crimes and small civil matters without going to court. The *abunzi* decision-makers are not judges so much as mediators; they are minimally trained on communication techniques, such as how to counsel people and how to manage group interaction. There is no requirement that they have any formal education. The percentage of the first group of *abunzi* decision-makers who are women is not known at this time.

Formal Court System:

The Rwandan legal system is loosely based on the German and Belgian civil law systems and local customary “law,” although the latter is not codified, but is local traditional practice that is supposed to be used only when there is no official law on point. The adoption of a new constitution and a very recent overhaul of the entire judicial system have significantly changed the Rwandan judicial infrastructure, which is currently in a state of transition.

WLR was told that historically, the law and the legal profession has had “a very low standing” in Rwanda, partly because until recently, judges and prosecutors were not required to have any professional training. In 1982, recognizing the severity of the problem (generally, judges were good friends of the President, and even the president of the Supreme Court was not a law school graduate), the government proposed judicial reform, including the creation of a Ministry of Justice, a legal education requirement for judges and magistrates, and protocols to discourage nepotism and favoritism in choosing judges. The changes were supposed to have been phased in over 10 years, but in 1992, only 34 of approximately 800 judges and 18 of 89 prosecutors were law school graduates, and there were only four women in the whole justice sector.

During the genocide, almost all the judges, magistrates, prosecutors, and lawyers in Rwanda were killed. When the new government took over in 1994, it mandated legal and judicial sector reforms to be made over a 10-year period, but the changes made during that time were not completely implemented or adequate to solve the long-standing, institutionalized problems. Ambitious changes are currently being carried out, including a separation of judicial and prosecutorial functions, a constitutional requirement that all organs of the government must abide by court decisions, the existence of *habeas corpus* (a court order to bring a person before a court, usually to ensure that the person’s imprisonment is not illegal or unconstitutional), the inclusion of more women judges, changes in the structure and jurisdiction of district and provincial courts, the elimination of the Court of Cassation, the professionalization of the judiciary, and a streamlined Supreme Court. Thirteen pieces of legislation containing improvements that were drafted by the Law Commission were combined into a single piece of legislation that is making sweeping changes to the legal infrastructure. The National Judicial Training Center for judges in Nyanza has always been run by the government, which raised questions about the independence of the judiciary; it will soon be called the National Judicial School, and will be autonomous.



From left to right: WLR Chief of Party David Vaughn; President of the High Court Tharcisse Karugarama; WLR Legal Specialist Lyn Beth Neylon; and Sahana Dharmapuri, USAID IWID Fellow and Gender Specialist, in Justice Karugarama's office

Gacaca:

In June 2002, Rwanda launched a system of state-run “informal” local courts called *Gacaca* to deal with the approximately 120,000 genocide suspects who have spent years in pretrial detention. *Gacaca*, meaning “grass courts,” was a traditional method of resolving disputes at the village level: an accused person would speak to and be judged by traditional and/or respected leaders of the community, in the presence of the entire village. Usually *Gacaca* was used for minor offenses, and after a confession and an apology, the offender was required to do some service to right the wrong done to the community. During the genocide of 1994, most of the lawyers and judges were murdered, and subsequently it was deemed impossible to try all of the detainees accused of genocide-related crimes in the formal court system. Traditional *Gacaca* was modified to handle the many thousands of accused for acts related to the genocide, for all but the most heinous crimes. Crimes were classified by their gravity (originally there were four categories or levels, now there are three), and a pilot program to test the modified *Gacaca* system was begun. Changes were made based on the results of the pilot, and the *Gacaca* process has moved forward as an indigenous alternative to a formal, western-style court, and toward social reconciliation. Women are allowed and encouraged to be *Gacaca* judges. (See <http://www.inkiko-gacaca.gov.rw/En/EnIntroduction.htm> for the official *Gacaca* web page in English.)

There have been some problems with the *Gacaca* program. *Gacaca* was supposed to reduce the prison population, but persons confessing to guilt as part of the process have named tens of

thousands of new suspects. Authorities estimate that 250,000 or more people involved in the genocide may yet be accused, a development that would completely overwhelm the judicial and *Gacaca* systems. *Gacaca* was meant to involve everyone in the community, and the government has made great efforts to educate the public about it. However, WLR received reports that it has failed to attract widespread participation, although this contradicts statements made by the *Gacaca* Secretariat. In traditional Rwandan culture, women were not allowed to speak in public, so it is difficult for women to speak for themselves.

There are many difficulties if someone makes an accusation or confession of rape in *Gacaca* hearings. For example, a confession of rape by the perpetrator is almost as shameful to the victim as to the rapist, so it harms the victim doubly, in public. There is a lengthy and supposedly confidential special process if someone in the *Gacaca* system wants to confess to rape or if a victim wants to accuse someone of rape, but because that rape charges are the only thing the process is used for, everyone knows why if someone tries to access this procedure. There are also special prosecutors' offices that deal with rape as part of the formal court system, but there are very few of these offices, and the personnel are not well-trained to deal sensitively with rape victims. Because both of these processes are difficult and traumatizing, and the stigma of rape is so great, most victims of sexual violence do not bring charges of rape in *Gacaca* (or in the formal court system), which means the many rapes that occurred go unacknowledged and unpunished.

Some people complained that *Gacaca* cannot bring justice, because *Gacaca* courts only hear cases against members of the "losing" side, and have not been allowed by authorities to consider cases where members of President Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) coalition party are accused of genocide-related crimes. Witnesses are afraid to come forward, because an unknown number of them have been threatened, harassed, and murdered to keep them from giving evidence in *Gacaca* hearings. Fourteen genocide suspects have been sentenced to death and three to life imprisonment for killing potential witnesses. Also, some people are afraid of being identified (rightly or wrongly) as participating in the genocide, or it is perceived as something for "other people" and not for everyone.

A serious human rights issue with *Gacaca* is the long pre-trial detention times (up to a decade) of some of the detainees, without trials or hearings. While this is understandable, given the circumstances of the genocide, it has imposed a hardship not only on the prisoners, many of whom have confessed, but also on their families. Women have had a double burden, because wives and female relatives of detainees are considered responsible for bringing them food and other daily necessities, as well as providing for their own families and children without financial help from these men.

In early 2003, the president granted conditional release to some 24,000 detainees who had confessed their guilt in genocidal crimes. Although those released are supposed to face trial at some point, few Rwandans believe it will ever happen. Local Burundian officials have reported hundreds of Rwandans have arrived recently in Burundi to escape the *Gacaca* courts. People are afraid of the released prisoners, and angry at them. The possibility that thousands of confessed criminals will never be brought to justice for their crimes undermines the legitimacy of *Gacaca*. Even worse, the government estimates that up to one million participants in the genocide, people

who murdered, tortured and raped, have not confessed and are not in custody. They are freely living and working in Rwandan society, thwarting not just *Gacaca*, but the promise and hope of justice for the many surviving victims of the genocide.

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR):

A separate legal process, but one that interacts with and affects the Rwanda court system, is the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The UN Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, by resolution 955 of November 8, 1994, to try the organizers of the 1994 genocide. The Tribunal opened in Arusha, Tanzania in 1996, and trials began in early 1997. Most local people in Rwanda have heard of the ICTR, but have no faith in it, and think it should sit in Rwanda. The ICTR has been criticized by many organizations and others for mismanagement, poor organization, and the slow pace of the trials. As of December 20, 2004, there have been only 23 completed cases, with other cases on appeal (see <http://www.ictor.org/ENGLISH/factsheets/detainee.htm> for the current status of detainees). The Tribunal aims to complete its mandate by 2008, and is contemplating transferring some outstanding cases to states that are prepared to try them. (See <http://www.ictor.org/>, the ICTR's official web site).

C2. The Executive

The Executive branch of the Republic of Rwanda consists of a very strong president, currently Paul Kagame, who is the head of state, elected by universal adult suffrage to a seven-year term. The president appoints a cabinet to implement national policy, and a prime minister to oversee the cabinet. The president may serve only two terms. Out of the many factions fighting before and during the civil war in Rwanda, a broad-based government of national unity was formed. The ruling party, Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), leads a coalition that includes the Centrist Democratic Party (PDC), the Rwandan Labor [formerly Socialist] Party (PSR), the Ideal [formerly Islamic] Democratic Party (PDI), and the Democratic Popular Union (UPDR). Other parties in the government include the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the Liberal Party (PL), and the Concord Progressive Party (PPC). In elections held in 2003, voters reelected Paul Kagame as president with 95% of the vote, although there were "irregularities," reported by two envoys of the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights, which spent roughly a month observing the two elections, as well as by the European Union election observation mission, and the Programme for Observing the Elections in Rwanda (*Programme d'observatoire des élections au Rwanda*), which is made up of local Rwandan civil society groups for electoral observation. The main opposition party, the Democratic Republican Movement (MDR), was dissolved by order of the government before the election.

In Rwanda, there is an organized system of administrative governmental units. Twelve prefectures are broken down into 106 districts, which are further broken down into 1,545 sectors, which are divided into 9,165 cells. The prefectures are Butare, Byumba, Cyangugu, Gikongoro, Gisenyi, Gitarama, Kibungo, Kibuye, Kigali Rurale, Kigali-ville, Umutara, and Ruhengeri. Women's councils have been formed at all administrative levels to increase women's

representation and voice in the government. There are also Youth Councils. However, information and citizen skills seem to be lacking at lowest levels of government.

There are many national-level Ministries to implement national policy, including the Ministry of Health; Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Environmental Protection; Ministry for Public Works, Transport and Communications; Ministry of Local Government and Social Affairs; Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion; Ministry of Energy, Water and Natural Resources; Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Resources and Forestry, and others. Most legislation originates from the Ministries, in part because they have the resources to research and draft bills, which they then send to Parliament for consideration. Article 185 of the Rwandan Constitution also states that a Gender Monitoring Office will be established as an independent institution to monitor compliance of government agencies with the gender-based reforms to realize the guarantee of gender equality enshrined in the Constitution. However, WLR was not able to verify that the Gender Monitoring Office has been created.

C3. The Legislature

Rwanda's Parliament has two houses: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The Rwandan Constitution requires that at least 30 percent of the each house must be women. Of the 80 members of the Chamber of Deputies, 53 are elected by proportional representation (in which voters vote for parties, and seats are awarded based on the parties' share of the vote), 24 are women elected by provincial councils, two are selected by the National Youth Council, and one by the Federation of the Associations of the Disabled. All deputies serve five-year terms. Women currently make up 49 percent of the Chamber of Deputies. The Senate consists of 26 members elected or appointed for an eight-year term: 12 are elected by local councils, eight are appointed by the president with the intent of ensuring "the representation of historically marginalized communities," and six are selected by various other groups. The Parliament is controlled by members of the president's RPF party.

Women are strongly represented in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate; however, compared to the executive branch, Parliament is weak. The Parliament generally reviews and approves legislation and budgets from Executive branch; very little legislation, if any, originates here. Many of the new Parliamentarians are women who lack the political background, training, and experience of their male colleagues. This will presumably change as women gain experience and expertise in government service.

D. Civil Society

Rwanda's civil society was devastated by the 1994 genocide and war, with the death or flight from the country of many leading figures, the looting of offices, and the social, political, and economic instability of the time. Major advances have been made since then, though civil society groups continue to face serious limitations in financial capacity and sustainability.

Civil society organizations are most visible in the capital. There are relatively few local-level organizations outside of the churches. Many organizations have a presence in Kigali, but little to none outside the city, and they reflect the interests of the intellectual, wealthier, and elite Rwandans more than those of the general (poor, rural) population. Coordination among the

numerous organizations of civil society organizations remains a major concern. A number of groups mentioned the need for a permanent, broad-based structure for coordination among civil society groups and across sectors.

In July 2004, the RPF-dominated parliament recommended the dissolution of the League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (*Ligue Rwandaise pour la promotion et la défense des droits de l'homme*, or “Liprodhor”) and four other civil society organizations because they allegedly supported “genocidal ideas.” A parliamentary commission made broad accusations against Liprodhor and other CSOs.

The commission’s debate was extremely political and some outside observers feel that Liprodhor and the other CSOs had no opportunity to respond to allegations. The commission called for the arrest of leaders of the organizations, and also called for action against the Dutch government and several international NGOs active in Rwanda, including Care International and Norwegian People’s Aid. The commission charged the groups with “genocidal ideas,” prohibited by law in Rwanda, interpreting “genocidal ideas” to include dissent from government plans for consolidating land holdings. As a result, Liprodhor, Rwanda’s largest human rights organization was destroyed, which has had an obvious chilling effect on the remaining CSOs.

Despite this incident, women’s groups are an active and growing sector of civil society in Rwanda. Although women’s roles have changed dramatically in the past ten years, Rwandan women were organizing for their rights before the war. During the third Global Conference of Women, held in Nairobi in 1985, Rwandan women mobilized to establish their first non-governmental women’s organization, *Reseau des Femmes*, which identified rural women as its priority. The Union of Rwandese Women for Development (URAMA) was founded in 1988, and gained women the right to participate in cooperatives and profit-making businesses. *Haguruka*, an NGO created in 1991, still defends the social, economic and legal rights of women and children. These organizations continue to work on influencing Rwandan policy towards women.

Many new civil society organizations have been created in recent years, doing advocacy and education on economic development for women, health and psychosocial issues, youth issues, and women’s empowerment. A number of the newly created organizations address conditions caused by the genocide, such as widowhood, HIV/AIDS, and problems arising for women who have husbands in prison. *Pro-Femmes* is a state-sponsored network of 40 women’s groups which has taken a public advocacy role to help shape governmental policies of particular interest to women. Some individuals the WLR team interviewed outside of Rwanda expressed concerns about the independence of some local CSOs from the Rwandan government, which keeps a close eye on local and international groups and their activities.

The University of Butare runs a legal aid clinic whose mission is to provide legal help to populations whose rights are being violated, particularly women and children. The clinic trains law students to interact with clients and give legal advice under the supervision of lecturers and staff. They also do trainings throughout Rwanda for government personnel and local leaders, using more experienced students, and conduct research on the root causes of what have become common legal problems. The legal aid clinic has found that there is a profound lack of knowledge on such subjects as the rights of children, succession, and family law.

SECTION III

Assessment Findings and Recommendations

After a careful review of the information obtained in the assessment process, the WLR team makes the following findings and recommendations for assistance related to legislative framework, judicial enforcement, civil society advocacy, and public awareness.

A. Legislative Framework

A1. Findings

One cannot address the legislative framework in Rwanda without first discussing the new Constitution. Rwanda adopted a constitution by referendum on May 26, 2003, with nearly 90% turnout and 93% “yes” votes cast. This new, “modern” constitution is based on two years of deliberation and is a compromise between trying to achieve democracy while avoiding the risks of another genocide. The Preamble reaffirms Rwanda’s adherence to the principles of various human rights conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and also declares Rwanda’s commitment to ensure equal rights between women and men without prejudice to the principles of gender equality and “complementarity” in national development.

The Rwandan Constitution guarantees many human rights, but also subjects these freedoms to ordinary legislation, making it possible for the government to limit these rights, and impossible for courts and human rights advocates to defend them on constitutional grounds (Article 34). Efforts to prohibit ethnic discrimination have resulted in a vague constitutional prohibition of “divisionism” (Article 33). When the Rwandan government was criticized by international groups for controlling the media and preventing NGOs from conducting civic education programs before the last elections, officials responded by accusing NGO officials of divisionism. The Constitution sets up a party and government structure that does not allow either of the two main ethnic groups (Hutus and Tutsis) to dominate the other, but the Twa are not part of the equation. Women fare better, with unprecedented provisions of the Constitution guaranteeing women leadership positions. Article 9 mandates that women be granted at least thirty percent of the posts in decision-making organs, and Article 76 mandates that twenty-four of the eighty seats in the Chamber of Deputies (the legislature), roughly thirty percent of the total, be reserved for women. Further, Article 82 specifies that at least thirty percent of the Senate will be women. The recent elections resulted in over forty-seven percent of the parliament slots in the Chamber of Deputies being filled by women, thirty percent of senate seats being filled by women, and thirty-two percent of cabinet ministries being held by women.

The legal framework to protect and promote women’s rights has gradually improved in the past ten years, but there are gaps, especially in the area of violence against women. Violence against women in Rwanda is all too common. The topic of violence against women is a sensitive subject, both within the government of Rwanda and in Rwandan society at large. Because of the social

stigma of violence against women, particularly sexual violence, women are often discouraged from talking about their experiences and the injustice of the existing system.

Sadly, the tens of thousands of women who were victims of sexual violence during the genocide remain without justice. There is difficulty in collecting accurate data, resulting in a discrepancy in the literature regarding the number of women who suffered some form of sexual violence during the genocide. The U.S. Committee for Refugees states that thousands of women and girls were raped during the genocide. According to the USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, an estimated 200,000 Rwandan women suffered some form of sexual violence during the genocide. Figures from UNICEF are in the hundreds of thousands, and the Director of the Clinic of Hope, a Rwandan NGO that works with survivors of sexual violence, puts the number of women who were raped or mutilated sexually during the genocide between 250,000 and 500,000. During the genocide, sexual violence was used as a tool to subjugate Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu. Women were raped in public or in front of their families, and used for prolonged periods as sex slaves. Sexual violence against women during the genocide included rape, gang-rape, rape by objects such as sharpened sticks or gun barrels, sexual slavery, and sexual mutilation. Over five thousand children were born of rape that occurred during the genocide, and sometimes these children are referred to as “devil’s children.” Many women who were raped during the genocide have contracted HIV and are now dying from AIDS.

Today, Rwanda continues to suffer from an environment permeated with violence against women and girl children. A recent survey by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion on Violence Against Women shows that one out of three women suffered from community violence (violence inflicted on them in their local communities) in the past five years, and that one out of two women suffered from domestic violence in the preceding year. The formal legal framework for protection of women and girls who face violence is weak. There is no law against domestic violence. Provisions in the law to punish general sexual violence in the criminal and other codes only apply to violence against minors. The 1988 rape law does not adequately define the legal elements of the crime, including delineating what is meant by force or coercion in regards to the act of rape. Therefore, there are virtually no prosecutions for the crime. Also, there are few doctors with the experience necessary to provide medical evidence necessary to substantiate a rape charge, and even fewer female doctors. Victims living in rural areas are unlikely to have access to a doctor, nor are they informed about the legal procedures and evidence, so they often destroy the proof of rape by taking a bath before they are examined.

The Code of Criminal Procedure requires that courts include the name, location and other identifying information of the victim of sexual violence in an indictment, rather than protecting women’s privacy. There are no rapid alert or follow-up mechanisms in cases of violence against women. There are no centers or shelters to house victims of domestic violence that provide them with the necessary protection in order to prevent further abuse. Sexual violence against women is a significant problem in Rwanda and is exacerbated by the cultural expectation that women be submissive to their husbands and fathers. There is also no law against sexual harassment, which is strongly linked to low school enrollment and retention rates for girls, and lowered productivity of women in the workplace.

A recent survey initiated by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion shows that over thirty-two percent of women were verbally or physically abused by the communities in their communities on at least one occasion between 1998-2003 by a person other than their spouse or sexual partner, and that fifty-nine percent of women were victims of violence during that same time period at the hands of their spouse or sexual partner. That is a shocking number of women in Rwanda who admit to being verbally or physically abused. According to the female respondents in the study, seventy-five percent say it would be “acceptable” for a man to beat his wife if she committed adultery, fifty percent say the same applies if a wife refuses to have sexual intercourse with her husband, and thirty-two percent say a husband may beat his wife for poor housekeeping. The same study showed that forty-three percent of women considered accessing legal aid to address the violence against them to be a difficult process.

The WLR team learned that the Ministry of Gender and Family Protection is currently making a list of all laws that discriminate against women. Their stated goal is to amend all existing discriminatory laws, and to pass new laws protecting women’s rights as soon as possible. The Ministry said it will share the report that will accompany the list with WLR (however, it will have to be translated from its original Kinya-rwanda). The Ministry also said that there is a problem with implementation of the laws, because there are not enough resources, public awareness, or local people trained on gender issues and analysis. The Ministry is currently focusing on coordination of activities and resources rather than implementation of the law.

Many Parliamentarians don’t have experience analyzing budgets or drafting legislation, although international donors have funded some training. WLR heard complaints from NGOs that the new women parliamentarians are not responsive to the problems of rural women, and seldom meet with grassroots organizations to hear their concerns and suggestions. There is the expectation that women parliamentarians should understand and work on women’s issues better than their male counterparts, or else why would the Constitution require more women in decision-making positions? Of course, female representatives are not meant solely to represent women, but they are being held to a different standard than men in Parliament. Women on the ground appear disappointed by the lack of communication with and access to these women representatives. For instance, a member of an NGO in Butare said, “The women we sent to parliament haven’t come back to consult us or to meet ordinary women and the structures set up by women.” Another woman said, “MPs elected by women have yet to put forward proposals relevant to their mandate. They’ve forgotten their duty to consult women at the grassroots. Otherwise how can they intervene on their behalf?” This perceived lack of accountability may be partly a result of “at large” elections, which are structured so that elected officials don’t have a particular geographic or other constituency that they must answer to. Also, we were told that Parliamentarians do not have a budget to travel to meet with their constituents, so that any travel expenses they incur to meet with NGOs would come out of their own finances.

Women in politics also face intense cultural challenges and bias in a society that has traditionally not accepted women in positions of leadership. The experiences of Speciose Mukandutiye, a female parliamentarian in Rwanda, is revealing, “To be a woman in politics, you must have a very strong personality. Women are key allies, but sometimes they can discourage you and marginalize you because you’ve transgressed the norms that society has established for women. A woman who imposes herself, and who has a certain authority over men is not looked upon

kindly: she's regarded as denying her femininity. As for men, they simply will not accept the authority of a woman, and they even despise her. A woman in a position of authority must therefore have enormous confidence in herself, not be afraid of taking up complicated assignments, heed advice but be able to make a clear choice because there are so many traps to disqualify her."

A2. Recommendations

WLR recommends cooperation with government ministries (especially the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion) and Parliament to provide technical assistance to make available legislative and budget gender analysis training and materials for Parliamentarians and Ministry personnel, especially those working on women and gender issues. Training to analyze budgets with a gender perspective will help lawmakers understand the different effects of budget appropriations on women and men. Gender analysis training will help lawmakers consider how laws affect women in all sectors of society, and will show legislators how to incorporate gender concerns into legislative drafting and lawmaking decisions. This will strengthen the legislative process by giving government policy and budget analyses a gender dimension, addressing the needs of a majority of the population. This technical assistance would also build on legislative training provided in earlier projects.

WLR recommends that we provide technical assistance to parliamentarians to draft laws against domestic violence, and perhaps also laws against sexual harassment and revisions to the family code to add a guarantee of a woman's rights regardless of marital status, as well as revising the current law against rape. New and revised laws are needed for the protection of women and girls without which they cannot enjoy their other legal rights. The Government of Rwanda has enshrined CEDAW in its Constitution and has committed itself to full implementation. The CEDAW Committee has identified concrete steps that state parties should take to combat violence against women, including: "(a) effective legal measures, including penal sanction, civil remedies and compensatory provisions, to protect women against all kinds of violence, included *inter alia* violence and abuse in the family, sexual assault and sexual harassment in the workplace; (b) preventative measures, including public information and education programs to change attitudes concerning the roles and status of men and women..." Ministry officials and members of Parliament have indicated that they know violence against women is a problem they need address.

USAID/Rwanda has expressed an interest in including gender analysis and awareness training in capacity-building activities for leaders at all levels. Technical assistance to explore the gender dimensions of budgets and legislation will put this plan into practice at the Ministry and Parliamentary levels of the government of Rwanda. Additional technical assistance, for the drafting and revising of laws relating to the protection of women and girls, will have a large impact on women's empowerment in Rwanda. Training and assistance in drafting and revising laws to prevent and punish violence against women will integrate WLR activities into the Mission's health programming, because women's physical and mental health is tied to her ability be a functioning and productive member of society by working and/or attending school. Addressing violence against women will add value to USAID/Rwanda's economic development programs. Since the majority of the agricultural labor in Rwanda is provided by women, women's absence from the fields due to violence and harassment impedes agricultural

production. Thus, addressing violence against women has an impact in the health, agricultural and economic sectors, all of which are priority areas at USAID/Rwanda.

B. Judicial Enforcement

B1. Findings

One problem for women in Rwanda who are attempting to access justice is that there are many different legal systems that they are faced with. Each of these legal systems has its own rules, procedures, and costs, and frequently neglects the needs and concerns of women trying to obtain justice. The legal barriers to women in the context of the ICTR and *Gacaca* courts, while significant problems are not addressed in this proposal. Due to time and budgetary constraints, the assistance of many donors in past projects in these areas, as well as the considerable collaboration that would be required with the many Ministries and the international community, WLR had chosen to limit its scope to activities to increase the protections available to women in the formal legal system. WLR's work will address customary law issues in the context of the formal legal system by addressing the gap between the *de jure* legal commitments of increased women's rights and the *de facto* implementation within the country.

WLR's work will center around improving the ability of the formal legal system to respond to the needs of women and enforcement of women's rights. WLR was told by the president of the High Court that it should be a priority to introduce gender and the law into the legal curriculum, and that judges and prosecutors need training on gender issues. Judges come with traditional values and ideas about women's place and rights. Some judges are not taking gender issues seriously, and women's issues are not priorities even among the most progressive judges, who seem to consider women a special interest group rather than fifty-four percent of the population of the country. Since the judiciary has been in a transition, we were told they would appreciate continuing education. The NGO *Haguruka* compiled the judicial decisions of their clients, mostly poor women, to see if those judgments complied with the law. *Haguruka's* analysis showed that only 60% of the judges followed the law. If accurate, these results clearly demonstrate the need for judicial training.

In addition, courts are unable to deal with violence against women in a concrete way. Most prosecutors and judges are not gender sensitized towards violence against women or the serious stigma attached to victims of sexual violence. Weaknesses in the legal system include gaps in the laws protecting women's and girl's rights, insufficient protection for victims and witnesses, lack of training for authorities on sexually violent crimes, and poor representation of women in the ranks of police, prosecutors, judges, and lawyers. There is also no coordinated, systemic effort to fight violence against women in Rwandan society, which would include the health system, the media, the education system and the judicial apparatus. There are no shelters or centers to house victims of domestic violence that provide them with the necessary protection in order to prevent further abuse. The Code of Criminal Procedure does not protect a victim's privacy; it requires that courts include on all official court filings the name, location and other identifying information of the victim of sexual violence. There are no rapid alert or follow-up mechanisms in the cases of violence against women.

B2. Recommendations

WLR recommends cooperation with the judges training center *Centre National de Formation et Développement Judiciaires* (CNFDJ), and the University of Butare Law School, to offer continuing education and training courses to judges, magistrates, and prosecutors on how to incorporate an understanding of gender into all judicial decisions, particularly those dealing with violence against women. Judges need specific training on cases applying the Constitutional guarantee of equality between women and men, and on the differences that will result between applying customary or old civil law and the new Constitution and laws granting women equal rights. Additional training to raise gender awareness and sensitize legal professionals on how and why laws affect men and women differently should also be included in this training.

This gender sensitivity training will focus specifically on the harm done and the stigma attached to victims of sexual violence. The training will specifically address areas of witness protection and investigations in relation to sexual violence, focus on the need for female prosecutors and female investigators in criminal proceedings relating to violence against women. In addition the training will focus on the medical and legal evidence and standards needed in an investigation, prosecution and adjudication of a sexual assault case. WLR will support training materials, which will be produced for these trainings, to be distributed to judges, magistrates and prosecutors throughout the country. Possibly this training can be linked and/or collaborate with USAID's current National Center for State Courts (NCSC) administrative and financial training for court administrators.

C. Civil Society Capacity-Building

C1. Findings

The problems of limited capacity, duplication of efforts, and lack of coordination reduce the influence of Rwandan civil society and affect its relationship with the government. Generally, although international aid has been available to CSOs for a variety of programs, there is little or no coordination or institutionalized way to share information among organizations. Almost all the groups WLR interviewed in both the NGO sector and the government felt that women's organizations could be more effective if there were more collaboration among them.

Though the government has used decentralization as a mechanism to access local populations in pursuit of its political and policy goals, an important ongoing challenge to the decentralization efforts is the minimal level of civil society involvement at the lowest levels of government (district, sector and cell). Some women in Rwanda's civil society have initiated a series of consultations with their grassroots membership, local populations, and prominent women serving in the government. They have developed a mechanism for loosely coordinating their advocacy among civil society (via the group *Pro-Femmes*), the executive branch (via the Ministry of Gender), and the legislative branch (via the Forum of Women Parliamentarians). This system was used to good effect during the ratification of the new constitution, which includes significant gender provisions. However, now that there is not one particular issue to rally around, this informal structure has broken down. The links between national-level groups and local grassroots organizations seem insufficient in most sectors.

Citizens' groups are generally not aware of how to engage the administration, consequently, they tend to be mobilized by the administrative structures, rather than pressuring the state to respond to their participation and concerns. In fact, CSOs often take the role of implementing government initiatives. They are highly dependent on the government for authorization, funding, access to space, and other resources.

The number of qualified workers, especially those with legal training, remains limited. Many of the most outstanding civil society leaders have moved into government positions. Nevertheless, many women's groups appear to be well-organized, with excellent staff, and they are eager to build their capacity to meet the challenges facing women in Rwandan society. The lack of CSO collaborative efforts seems to be the result of groups trying to do too much with too few resources, and a dearth of organizing experience, rather than an unwillingness to work together. To some extent, it may also have to do with the fear of being associated with a group that the government perceives as being critical of its policies, which could lead not only to the dissolution of the organization, but to personal disgrace and even danger, as was the case with Liprodhor. Also, the law that requires that all NGOs give written reports on an organization's plans and activities to local government administrators for authorization makes it difficult for groups to begin collaborations as projects evolve, and makes it difficult for them to anticipate cooperative activities in the planning stages.

C2. Recommendations

WLR recommends support for a series of workshops to help CSOs become familiar with each other's work, to build capacity, and to share information. These workshops should rotate geographically throughout Rwanda, to reduce the financial burden on groups based in rural areas. Each conference will have a different skills focus, based on input we will solicit about the specific needs of the NGO sector. However, the meetings will have the general, over-arching theme of violence against women, a topic that groups working on many issues in various sectors can collaborate on. The issue of violence against women is fundamental to many areas of interest to women, and is intimately connected to HIV/AIDS, sexual transmitted diseases, education, legal rights and protection, economic empowerment, and poverty issues. Violence against women affects the entire society of Rwanda. Organizations will use the workshops to explore ways they can work together to show the connections between violence against women and these issues for better protection against gender-based violence, and for increased rights for women when they are victims of violence.

At the end of the series of workshops, all organizations will have developed a plan to collaborate with at least one other group, and institutionalize the exchange of information with other CSOs. Organizations will improve their ability to analyze policy, engage in policy debate, and influence the direction of policy choices. Perhaps a common communication and/or advocacy strategy for working with the government and/or the media can also be developed.

The last workshop of the series will be a forum for the branches of government of Rwanda and NGOs to share perspectives and information. This is in response to comments that were made during WLR interviews with government officials, judges, and NGO representatives, all of whom believe the others do not understand what they do, or how they might benefit from trading

ideas and information. At this meeting, Parliamentarians, Ministry officials, and judges (after they have had their gender training – see earlier recommendations) will be invited to take part in a structured discussion with participating NGOs to explain what their jobs are and how they do them, how they perceive each other, and how they can work together and improve communication in the future. In working with CSOs, WLR will explore the possibility of coordinating efforts and leveraging resources with a new USAID/Rwanda SO5 DG five-year Civil Society, Governance and Reconciliation (CSGR) project. The CSGR project aims to strengthen civil society socio-economic activities through increasing government responsiveness to citizen groups at the national level. Building the capacity of NGOs to effectively interact with the government of Rwanda could be incorporated into the Mission’s new CSGR activity

D. Public Awareness

D1. Findings

Virtually every person, organization, and Ministry official that WLR talked to brought up the lack of public awareness about women’s rights. The University of Butare Law School did research which showed a profound lack of knowledge by local leaders, “implementers,” and the public on the rights of children, succession rights of women, the Family Code, and other issues around the rights of women and children in Rwanda. WLR saw examples of brochures, manuals, and posters on women’s rights. There is a popular weekly radio program, a few documents with simplified text in Kinyarwanda, plays, and picture books, all on women’s rights. International donors have given millions of dollars in financial and technical assistance, and local NGOs have spent many thousands of hours of effort, on public awareness activities on women’s rights. Yet, the public seems oblivious.

D2. Recommendations

Initial research indicates that one of the problems with the past public awareness campaigns is that they have not focused enough on men, particularly in rural areas, with the goal of achieving male “buy-in.” Further research has shown that when focusing on men with the targeted goal of achieving their support for women’s rights, it is most effective to focus specifically on the economic value and benefits of women’s empowerment. Perhaps another problem with the public awareness campaigns has been a disconnection between the people providing the information and “the public.” Or, perhaps the various public awareness campaigns were not designed in conjunction with associated activities, so that the information did not naturally lead to action.

However, WLR spoke with several knowledgeable international NGO and USAID staff who said that all people in Rwanda have heard about women’s rights from numerous sources. They simply do not believe it applies to them; the laws keep changing but are not implemented, so people continue to follow the traditional ways of doing things.

WLR recommends that we continue to gather and analyze information on previous and existing public education programs before we consider doing additional public awareness activities. We must discover, more concretely, why previous efforts promoting public education on women’s rights have seemingly not resulted in an increase in knowledge about the subject, so that we do

not get those same results. If it is not public awareness, but implementation of women's rights that is the problem, continuing education for judges, gender analysis training for government officials, and training to improve the capacity of local NGOs to address grassroots problems will do more for women's rights in Rwanda than another public awareness campaign.

SECTION IV

Implementation and Next Steps

A. Implementation Strategy

Promoting the legal rights of women in Rwanda requires an integrated, cross-sectoral approach. Since the possibilities for activities are endless, the WLR team has considered the strategic advantage of the many suggestions from civil society organizations, representatives of the judiciary, government personnel, and USAID/Rwanda staff. In this section, the WLR team proposes activities that WLR might support, including technical assistance in the form of gender analysis training, expert legal assistance on legislative drafting, training for the judicial sector, and building the capacity of NGOs to effectively interact with each other and the government Ministries.

WLR will link program activities to EGAT/WID's strategic objective (SO3) and to USAID/Rwanda's strategic objectives and intermediate results. The Intermediate Results toward WLR's project goals, as specified in the WLR task order under the WID IQC, are:

- IR 1 Improved legislation to protect women's legal rights
- IR 2 Enhanced justice sector capacity to interpret and enforce legislation that protects women's legal rights
- IR 3 Strengthened civil society organizations' ability to advocate for women's legal rights
- IR 4 Increased public awareness of women's legal rights

A1. Technical Assistance — Gender Analysis Training for Parliament and Ministries

Women's groups were crucial to the passage of the new constitutional provisions guaranteeing women's equality in Rwanda. With its adoption, and the affirmation of the Rwandan government's international obligation to promote women's rights, many changes in the rights of women and children have been and will be introduced throughout Rwanda. However, while the government has provided much of the impetus to codify women's rights in Rwanda, it does not have the resources to do the systematic trainings and education necessary for their personnel and representatives to become educated about women's rights and gender equity.

Some interested government officials have received some theoretical "gender training" offered through international conferences and locally sponsored workshops. However, several Ministry employees and Parliamentarians brought up the need for practical implementation of gender strategies in the Rwanda context. They want information on relevant evaluation tools that include indicators to measure changes the impact of government programs on gender relations, women's rights, and access or participation.

The new Constitution provides an excellent and timely opportunity for WLR to promote women's legal rights through the training of Parliamentarians and Ministry personnel. By

supporting the education of government leaders, we will improve their substantive knowledge and their professionalism. WLR will support training to analyze new legislation through a “gender lens,” so that new laws do not conflict with, but instead enhance, the significant gender reforms achieved in the Rwanda Constitution.

A2. Legislative Drafting Technical Assistance

The average person in Rwanda, particularly in rural areas, is unaware of women’s rights, or believes they do not apply to them and their families. Women were traditionally not to be seen or heard in public, and have been isolated and illiterate in communities that have followed customary practices that oppress women for generations. The issues surrounding violence against women have been, until recently, considered family and customary matters, and therefore not easily susceptible to scrutiny or change. However, the executive and legislative branches of the government of Rwanda seem to be receptive to making the legal changes needed to guarantee women’s equal rights and protect them from violence in their homes and communities.

The WLR team recommends providing technical assistance to legislators to draft new laws relating to violence against women. Currently, there are no laws against domestic violence and sexual harassment in Rwanda, despite the fact that many female parliamentarians and Ministry officials recognize the seriousness of these problems. The 1988 rape law is inadequate and needs to be revised to include elements of the crime, address the issue of consent, and incorporate both acquaintance and marital rape.

A3. Continuing Education and Training for Judges and Magistrates

It is essential that judges and magistrates be properly trained to effectively implement the Constitution, laws, regulations, and international standards, to ensure that women’s rights are protected. Proper interpretation and enforcement of laws can lead to empowerment of women and improve their economic and social status. How judges interpret the new Constitution and laws passed under it in early decisions will have an influential and lasting impact on the course of women’s legal rights in Rwanda. Empowering women is a valuable goal in itself, but is also central to the more specific goals of women’s participation in and benefiting from development and economic growth.

Proposed activities would include cooperation with the relevant Ministries, the judges’ training center, and CSOs with judicial education experience to provide continuing education and training for magistrates and judges on women’s legal rights and the new Constitution, and how to use a gender analysis in judicial decision-making. Particular focus would be given to issues related to violence against women so that judges and magistrates will learn to better protect women’s rights and a more gender-sensitive approach to the adjudication of gender-based violence cases.

A4. Capacity Building Workshop Series for NGOs

A functioning civil society is one where organizations are not isolated from each other or the larger community, and where they have autonomy but also the capacity to collaborate. By

offering a structured forum where groups can learn about each other, gain skills, and work on different aspects of an issue of importance to all of them, WLR will encourage collaborations and cooperative activities among civil society organizations, and will generate interest and advocacy on the issue of violence against women.

Linkages among civil society organizations working on issues of importance to women will result in less duplication of effort, a better chance of sustainability, the increased capacity to manage their own development, improved citizen involvement, and more efficient use of scarce resources to this sector. A stronger and more effective civil society will contribute to promotion and enforcement of women's legal rights and to the development of Rwanda as a whole.

B. Development of Country Action Plan

After comment and review of the assessment and analysis report by EGAT/WID, the Africa Regional Bureau, and USAID/Rwanda, WLR will develop an action plan based on the activities selected for implementation. The action plan will set out specific activities, the methods for completing those activities, who will do what, and a time frame for completion. These activities will reinforce USAID/Rwanda's relevant strategic objectives and coordinate with other Mission activities.

C. Next Steps

Following the initial visits to Rwanda, the design of an action plan, and USAID/Rwanda and EGAT/WID approval, the WLR team will hire local staff and begin to implement the WLR Rwanda project. WLR anticipates starting to develop an action plan by the summer of 2005. The WLR team and local Rwanda staff, once hired, will collaborate and coordinate activities with USAID programs and partners. The local staff will be supported by the WLR Legal Specialist and short-term experts as needed, and act under the supervision of the WLR Chief of Party while implementing the action plan. WLR's core home office team members will travel to Rwanda to provide supervision and technical assistance as required. In addition, the local staff and home office will communicate regularly by daily emails, weekly teleconferences, phone calls, and fax. WLR may identify local or expatriate technical experts on specific topics to provide short-term field assistance or training for Rwandan staff or partners.

ANNEX A: MEETINGS HELD OCTOBER 13-22, 2004

Note: All meetings below were attended by the WLR team David Vaughn, WLR Chief of Party; Lyn Beth Neylon, WLR Legal and Gender Specialist; and Sahana Dharmapuri, IWID Fellow, WLR Advisor/Gender Specialist. Some meetings also included Pierre Munyura, Governance Specialist with USAID/Rwanda, and/or our interpreter for French and Kinyarwanda, Aretha Mutumwinka.

10/13/04 USAID/Rwanda senior staff, at the Mission, 55 Avenue Paul VI, P.O. Box 2848, Kigali; Tel: (250) 57-09-40

The team presented an overview of the WLR Initiative to Mission staff, including Andy Karas, Acting Mission Director; Pierre Munyura, Governance Specialist; Kamitatu Kayobotsi, Financial Analyst; Michelle Cachaper, Deputy Program Officer; Angèle Uwinganji, DG Program Assistant; John Yaramba, MSC team member; Caroline Connolly, Health Team Leader; and Venant Safali, Food Aid Manager.

10/13/04 Maurice Wiener, Chief of Party, and Dr. Anne Turner, Horticultural and Commodity Development Specialist, Assistance à la Dynamisation de l'Agribusiness au Rwanda (ADAR) Project, at their office; Rue du Lac Mpanga, B.P. 3582, Kigali; Tel: (250) 57-04-33 or 51-74-03, Fax : (250) 51-74-67, mwiener@chemonics.net, aturner@chemonics.net

10/14/04 Justine UVUZA, Legal Officer, Legal Affairs Division, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, at her office; B.P. 969, Kigali; Tel: 08-75-90-94, juvuza@yahoo.com

10/15/04 Alice NDEGEYA, Executive Secretary, and Oswald SAMYURA, Chargé de Programmes, Association pour la Promotion de la Contribution Active de la Femme Rwandaise au Développement (SERUKA asbl); B.P. 1117, Kigali; Tel & fax: (250) 57-80-93, ndegeyalice@yahoo.fr, seruka@rwanda1.com, oswaldsamvu@yahoo.fr, oswasamvura@yahoo.fr

10/15/04 Berra KABARUNGI, Country Director, and Julie Taylor, Women for Women International; B.P. 2951, Kigali; Tel: (250) 08-86-04-44, berraWFWI@hotmail.com, Kaberra2003@yahoo.com

10/18/04 Domitille MUKANTAGANZWA, Executive Secretary, and Innocent MUSAFIRI, Public Relations and Communications Director, Service National des Juridictions Gacaca; B.P. 1874, Kigali; Tel & fax: (250) 58-66-47, Cell : (250) 08-30-58-67, gacaca@rwandatell.rwanda1.com, www.linkiko-gacaca.gov.rw

10/19/04 Odette MUKAZI MUTANGUHA, Coordinator, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Rwanda Chapter; 1st floor Mineduc Building, P.O. Box

6703, Kigali; Tel & fax: (250) 58-25-14, Cell: (250) 08-30-68-62,
fawerwa@rwanda1.com

- 10/19/04 Justice Tharcisse KARUGARAMA, President of the High Court**, at his office; Tel. (250) 08-30-11-67
- 10/20/04 Janvier NDARUHUTSE, Director of Education and Training/Chargé des Études et Formations, National Judicial Training Center/Centre National de Formation et Développement Judiciaires (CNFDJ)**, at their training center; B.P. 49, Nyanza; Tel: (250) 53-32-38, Cell: (250) 08-30-22-71, Fax: (250) 53-33-25,
- 10/20/04 Usta KAITESI, Assistant Clinic Director and Faculty Liaison, Felicité KAROMBA, Clinic Director, and Aimable HAVUGIYAREMYE, Legal Assistant, National University of Rwanda at Butare Legal Clinic/Clinique Juridique**, at clinic office and later at legal aid clinic site, Butare; Tel: (250) 08-48-90-03 (Usta), 08-65-10-91 (Aimable), ncusta@yahoo.com, havuma@yahoo.fr
- 10/21/04 Odette KABAYA, National Executive Secretary, and Suzanne RUBONEKA, Chargée du Programme Campagne Action Pour la Paix, Collectif des Organisations Rwandaises de Promotion de la Femme, de la Paix et du Développement (Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe)**; Avenue de la Justice, Immeuble SEFA 2ème étage, B.P. 2758, Kigali ; Tel : (250) 51-11-80, Fax : (250) 57-84-32, profemme@rwanda1.com
- 10/21/04 Mary BALIKUNGERI. Director, and Peter TURYAHIKAYO, Program Manager, Rwanda Women Community Development Network**, at her office; KICUKIRO next to WFP/PAM; P.O. Box 3157, Kigali; Tel & fax: (250) 58-36-62, Cell: (250) 08-30-09-84, rwawnet@rwanda1.com, balikungeri@yahoo.com, www.rwandawomennetwork.org, pturyahikayo@yahoo.com
- 10/21/04 Christine TUYISENGE, Legal Department Officer, the Association for the Defense of Women and Children's Rights (HAGURUKA)**; B.P. 3030, Kigali; Tel.: (250) 514669, Cell (250) 08-30-08-34, Haguruka@rawanda1.com, gashayija2000@yahoo.fr
- 10/22/04 Mary BALIKUNGERI. Director, Rwanda Women Community Development Network, and many staff**, at Village of Hope; P.O. Box 3157, Kigali; Tel & fax: (250) 58-36-62, Cell: (250) 08-30-09-84, rwawnet@rwanda1.com, balikungeri@yahoo.com, www.rwandawomennetwork.org
- 10/22/04 Senator Agnès MUKABARANGA, former Parliamentarian and president of the Forum des Femmes Rwandaise Parlementaires (FFRP)**, at her office; P.O. Box 352, Kigali; Tel: (250) 57-40-87, Cell: (250) 08-30-01-91, Home phone & fax: (250) 58-33-59, agnes_muka@yahoo.com , for FFRP ffrp_femmes@yahoo.fr

ANNEX B: ADDITIONAL MEETINGS ON RWANDA

Note: All meetings below were attended in person by **Lyn Beth Neylon, WLR Legal and Gender Specialist**; and/or **Shelly Dill, WLR Legal Intern**, or interviews were conducted on the telephone or by email.

- 1/11/05** **Geoffrey Livingston, Former Chief of Party, ADAR Project, Chemonics**
(202) 955-7484; glivingston@chemonics.com
- 1/11/05** **Dr. Anne Turner, Horticultural Specialist, ADAR Project, Chemonics**
cell: (229) 08 30 27 38; ATurner@chemonics.com
- 1/21/05** **Leigh Ann Evanson, HIV/AIDS Specialist, International Health Group, Chemonics**; (202) 775-6912; LEvanson@chemonics.com
- 1/21/05** **Jyoti Schlesinger, Consultant, International Health Group, Chemonics**
JMSchlesinger@chemonics.com
- 1/31/05** **Chavonne Percy, Management Advisor to TRAC, Tulane University**
PeercyC@TRACRWANDA.ORG
- 2/1/05** **Olu L. Cole, Country Desk Officer, Office of East Africa Affairs, Africa Bureau, USAID**; (202) 712-5453; ocole@usaid.gov
- 2/1/05** **Tye Ferrell, Democracy & Governance Advisor, Bureau for Africa, USAID**,
(202) 712-4161; tferrell@usaid.gov
- 2/1/05** **Ryan McCannell, Democracy & Governance (DG) Specialist, Bureau for Africa, USAID & USDA**; (202) 712-1192; rmccannell@usaid.gov

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Women for Women International. *Women Taking a Lead: Progress Towards Empowerment and Gender Equity in Rwanda*. Washington, D.C.: 2004.

Websites:

Collectif Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe

<http://www.profemme.org.rw/home.htm>

Information related to Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe, women's associations affiliated with them, partner organizations and general women's issues in Rwanda

Gender Action

<http://www.genderaction.org/country.html>

Site provides information on Gender Action and its work in Rwanda relating to women's issues

Gender Initiative-Rwanda

http://gender.ciscolearning.org/Strategies/Strategies_by_Region/Africa/Rwa/Index.html

Website provides information on Rwanda's gender policy framework and non-governmental gender activities

PeaceWomen; Women's International League for Peace & Freedom

<http://www.peacewomen.org/WPS/Rwanda.html>;

http://www.peacewomen.org/contacts/africa/rwanda/rwa_index.html

Provides contact information for a number of local women's groups in Rwanda as well as a variety of articles relating to women and Rwanda

Women's Commission for Refugee Women & Children

<http://www.womenscommission.org/reports/rw/rwandareport.html>

General information relating to women and children refugees including several reports on Rwanda and the assessment and protection needs of women and children

WomenWarPeace.org

<http://www.womenwarpeace.org/rwanda/rwanda.htm>

Webpage designed to provide detailed country information on Rwanda including a gender profile and the impact of violence on women. Also has links to a number of international agencies country reports and fact sheets on Rwanda

Women for Women International-Rwanda

<http://www.womenforwomen.org/owrwan.html>

Information about projects in Rwanda as well as historical snapshots of the Rwandan experience and how it has affected women

Human Rights Watch

<http://www.hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=rwanda>

Information about Human Rights Watch, alerts for Rwanda as well as a human rights overview on the country specifically the human rights of women

International Committee of the Red Cross

<http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/rwanda?OpenDocument>

Website includes maps, news, information on the genocide, multimedia productions, photos, and key ICRC documents for the region

United Nations Development Programme

<http://www.unrwanda.org/undp/>

Information on current issues and news in Rwanda as well as background on UNDP projects

United States Institute of Peace

<http://www.usip.org/library/regions/rwanda.html>

Information on Rwanda, the genocide, gender issues, legal structures and related web links

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/country/rwanda.htm>

Provides information on the human rights situation in Rwanda

Washington College of Law, Center for Humanitarian Law & Human Rights

<http://www.wcl.american.edu/humright/center/rwanda/>

Rwanda genocide commemoration program including a resource list, background information, lesson plan and teaching suggestions

World Bank- Rwanda

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/RWANDAEXTN/0,,menuPK:368660~pagePK:141159~piPK:141110~theSitePK:368651,00.html>

Information on the World Bank's programs in Rwanda, CAS, PRSP and Rwanda and the Millennium Development Goals

EINnews.com

<http://www.einnews.com/rwanda/newsfeed-RwandaLaw>

Site that provides information on the laws in Rwanda as well as articles relating to current legal cases

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

<http://www.icttr.org/>

Information about the ICTR, its cases and legal process

Jurist

<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/world/rwanda.htm>

Provides legal information about cases, news, laws and the legal system in Rwanda

Law Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/law/guide/rwanda.html>

Provides information on local laws in Rwanda, the government structure, legal publications, legal guides and general information sources for Rwanda

National Unity & Reconciliation Commission

<http://www.nurc.org.rw/>

Information on the National Unity & Reconciliation Commission program in Rwanda

Afrol News

http://www.afrol.com/regions/central_africa;

<http://www.afrol.com/Index/countries/rwandaindex.htm>

Provides a number of up to date articles relating to Rwanda including issues of safety, the genocide, women, and government actions

Rwanda Information Exchange

<http://www.rwanda.net/english/News/news112003/news11212003b.htm>

Website with information about Rwanda including commentary on leading issues such as the genocide, education, politics, the economy and civil society organizations

United Nations Integrated News Organization

http://www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=Great_Lakes&SelectCountry=Rwanda

News articles and information about Rwanda on a variety of topics including legal and women's issues.