

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: PE2

TA NO./NAME : TA 2439: MALAYSIA - Institutional Strengthening of the Women's Affairs Division (HAWA)				TA Amount Approved: \$100,000	
				REVISED AMOUNT: N/A	
EXECUTING AGENCY: Women's Affairs Division, Ministry of National Unity and Social Development, Government of Malaysia				TA AMOUNT UNDISB: \$67,628.17	TA AMOUNT UTILIZED: \$32,371.83 ¹
DATE: 20 Dec 1996	APPROVAL: 9 Nov 1995	SIGNING: Not applicable	FIELD: March 1996	CLOSING: Original : Actual: September 96	

TA Description (Background/Rationale)

The Malaysian government began to promote the advancement of women with the establishment of a Women's Division in 1964 under the Ministry of Labor and Human Resources which was subsequently placed under the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development in 1991. Concern regarding the advancement of women initially focused on equal educational opportunities for women and women's legal rights, expanded to improvement of women's socio-economic conditions through women's projects, and, in 1994, broadened to encompass institutionalization of the integration of women across all sectors under the National Policy on Women. The Women's Affairs Division (HAWA) was mandated to conceptualize, initiate, coordinate, and monitor the Action Plan of the National Policy for Women and to represent the Government in regional and international forums on women. A review of HAWA was indicated to assess how it could best fulfill its increasingly complex and important role.

TA Objectives and Scope

The purpose of the TA was to strengthen the Women's Affairs Division (HAWA) of the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development, as focal point of the women's national government machinery through: (i) a review of HAWA's mandate, functions and roles in mainstreaming women's concerns into national development within the context of recent socio-economic trends of Malaysia and their impacts on women's lives; (ii) a proposal of a modified mandate and re-defined roles and functions of HAWA; (iii) an assessment of HAWA's institutional capacity to perform its modified mandate; and (iv) recommendation of an action plan for HAWA to fulfill the redefined functions.

TA Inputs Evaluation

Seven person-months of international consultancy services were provided under the TA while the local counterpart staff and local costs such as transportation were provided by the Government. Two international consultants, one Gender and Development Specialist and one Institution/Capacity Strengthening Specialist, provided services of 3.25 and 3.75 months respectively. They covered all their terms of reference to achieve the above objectives of the TA, and consulted extensively with concerned governmental, non-governmental and academic agencies in the process of their review and formulation of recommendations. As designed in the TA, the Consultants produced an analytical report and an action-oriented plan for HAWA to use in their request for additional staff and resources to fulfill the complex role expected of them. The TA attracted the interest of key decision makers outside the Ministry and help create an opportunity for a government reappraisal of the status of HAWA.

Prepared by: Lisa Kulp

Designation: Economist (Social Sector)



¹ The total contract amount is \$97,000 of which only \$32,371.83 has been so far claimed by the consultant.

The inputs of the Consultants were broken into two parts and the review of the draft report took longer than envisaged. The break and longer review time were beneficial since this allowed the TA study to benefit from the Malaysia Seventh Plan which was made public in May 1996 and allowed for more thorough and comprehensive consultation and review by concerned agencies.

TA Outputs Evaluation

The TA outputs are of high quality. The TA study provided the kind of analysis, assessment and recommendations needed by HAWA and other relevant government agencies like the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) regarding the mandate of the national government machinery for women within the context of mainstreaming women in the overall socio-economic development of the country. The TA Report provided justification for HAWA to be upgraded from a division to a department—Department for the Advancement of Women—with a Director General and several divisions supporting the functions of the Department as agreed upon by major policy and decision-making bodies. Additional staff will be recruited to fulfill these functions. The TA Report provided an action-oriented plan with time-table, resources requirements, terms of reference of all professional positions and training needs in order to perform these functions. The recommendations of the TA Report were endorsed by the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development, EPU, the Budget Division of the Ministry of Finance and the Public Services Department, and they form the basis for the submission of the proposal of HAWA's upgrading to the Cabinet.

TA Overall Assessment/Rating

Generally successful and achieved TA's objectives. The Government was pleased with the TA study, the work of the Consultants and the Bank's inputs and assistance. Following this TA, a number of areas of further collaboration with the Bank have been identified in the proposed COSS and Country Program being formulated for Malaysia.

Major Lessons Learned

The highly participatory and consultative approach used resulted in both an excellent assessment as well as a high sense of ownership on the part of the government. As a result this TA was able to play a critical role in the anticipated upgrading of HAWA from a division to a department. In this instance the content of the consultant's report was as important as the manner in which it was obtained in determining its ultimate usefulness.

Follow-up Action and Recommendation

Two areas of follow-up actions were agreed upon: (i) assistance in sex-disaggregated statistics to the Statistics Department - this will be done in conjunction with the Bank TA on labor market information systems and (ii) training including gender-responsive planning training and training for HAWA and sectoral ministries on Gender and Development.