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Advancement of women

Critical situation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Report of the Secretary-General**

I. Introduction

1. In the preamble of its resolution 55/219 of 23 December 2000, the General Assembly reiterated paragraph 85 (c) of the outcome document of its twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”, which called for support for national efforts, particularly in developing countries, for enlarged access to new information technology as part of the efforts to develop collaborative research, training and information dissemination, including through the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS) developed by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), while at the same time supporting traditional methods of information dissemination, research and training.

2. The General Assembly expressed grave concern that, inter alia, despite the revitalization and fund-raising efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and the Institute, contributions had not reached the level required to enable INSTRAW to operate beyond 31 December 2000.

3. In view of this, the General Assembly, by decision 55/457 of 23 December 2000, decided to advance the Institute up to US\$ 800,000 for 2001 pending receipt of voluntary contributions on a one-time, exceptional and emergency basis. By the same decision, the Assembly also decided that, if voluntary contributions were insufficient to meet the Institute’s requirements for 2001, this advance, less voluntary contributions received, would be considered a one-time only subvention

* A/56/150.

** The late submission of the report is owing to the recent conclusion of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, at which the Council, on 26 July 2001, adopted a resolution on the revitalization and strengthening of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.



and that the resources utilized under the terms of this subvention would be reported in the context of the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

4. The present report is submitted in response to Assembly resolution 55/219, in which it requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the resolution and to include in his report on the activities of the Institute detailed information on the financial flows of the Trust Fund and the utilization of the resources of the Institute. The report is structured as follows:

- (a) Status of implementation of the activities of INSTRAW during 2001;
- (b) Report on the utilization of the financial resources provided from the regular budget of the United Nations for 2001;
- (c) Detailed information of the financial flows of the Trust Fund of the Institute;
- (d) Prospects for the Institute beyond 31 December 2001.

The information requested by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001 will form part of the addendum to the present report.

II. Status of implementation of the activities of the Institute during 2001

5. The work plan and budgetary requirements of INSTRAW for 2001 were approved by the INSTRAW Board of Trustees at its twenty-first session, held for the first time in a virtual meeting, utilizing the GAINS system. During that session, the Board approved the proposed strategic focus, work plan and budgetary requirements for 2001, formulated on the basis of the following approach and specific objectives: (a) development and implementation of a fund-raising strategy; (b) continuation of expansion of the functionality of GAINS through the implementation of phases III and IV; (c) identification of critical, strategic areas of concern; and (d) promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality through the provision of training and capacity-building to women's organizations in information and communication technologies (ICT) and the GAINS system.

6. In order to implement the planned strategic focus and programme activities for 2001, it was necessary to complement the INSTRAW staffing structure with consultancy services providing special skills in the new technologies required for the further development of GAINS and full implementation of its services. At present, this consultancy-based expertise includes a systems administrator, a GAINS manager, a research coordinator, a network coordinator and an ICT specialist, as well as four other consultants assisting in the various activities related to GAINS.

7. During 2001, GAINS activities were undertaken in line with the envisaged implementation schedule: phase II (November 2000-April 2001) and phases III and IV (April 2001-April 2002). Activities in phase II comprised the expansion of the database capacity in both English and Spanish; the setting up of collaborative research projects and the development and piloting of methodologies for training in ICT and GAINS; and strengthening of the institutional and networking capacity of INSTRAW.

8. During 2001, special efforts were made to expand and consolidate the INSTRAW-GAINS platform of networks. Further, INSTRAW conducted a needs assessments survey among the members of its networks to identify their needs and expectations and to help shape the scope and focus of the services to be provided through GAINS.

9. In response to the needs assessment, INSTRAW launched GainsNet, a listserv, which currently comprises 208 subscribers (individuals and organizations) from 92 countries. The listserv is a tool for the exchange of information about ongoing events and activities of INSTRAW and of members of the GAINS network, which will facilitate the active participation of INSTRAW stakeholders in defining the Institute's future activities in the areas of research, training and information dissemination.

10. On the occasion of International Women's Day on 8 March 2001, INSTRAW organized a digital art contest focusing on the topic of women and peace. Focal points and other GAINS network members submitted artworks and the winning piece was featured on the electronic card sent out by INSTRAW for International Women's Day. The card was subsequently printed and distributed during the forty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. In addition, a number of the art submissions were exhibited on the INSTRAW digital art gallery at the Institute's web site.

11. One of the important objectives of the INSTRAW work plan for 2001 was the further refinement and development of the database of gender-based resources. The database focuses specifically on the INSTRAW areas of strategic interest, including gender-based violence, conflict and its prevention, men and masculinities in relation to gender-based violence, gender and ICT, and trade and macroeconomics. Apart from substantively increasing the number of resources in the database during 2001, INSTRAW improved the functionality of the database by designing its search capacity to become more user-friendly. Currently, the Institute is focusing on enhancing the training content of the database to include training handbooks, training materials and manuals, and good practice. With the generous support of the Government of Spain, INSTRAW continues its efforts to expand the Spanish language resources in the database.

12. In the first quarter of 2001, INSTRAW launched its first research project through GAINS, aimed at piloting its new web-based, collaborative research methodology through a programme on men's roles and responsibilities in ending gender-based violence. This GAINS-based research programme includes facilities for participants to share resources and conduct online discussion forums and seminars. As part of this programme, INSTRAW convened, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund, a panel on the theme "Racism, class and masculinities: the global dimensions of gender-based violence" during the forty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

13. Moreover, a virtual seminar series was initiated consisting of an online series of seminars focused on the role of men in ending gender-based violence. The seminar series uses an online discussion list (EMVNet) which sustains targeted discussions among over 530 members from 45 countries. A working paper series was also launched through GAINS to facilitate the dialogue and discussion among network members, thereby enhancing the existing body of knowledge on this important theme.

14. Another project initiative undertaken by INSTRAW was its collaboration with the Mediterranean Women's Studies Centre in connection with the project on Balkan women's dialogue for the promotion of stability, human rights and peace in south east Europe, funded by the European Union. As a collaborating agency, INSTRAW contributed to the planning of the training workshop on gender integration into conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building. Through its GAINS system, INSTRAW was able to provide a parallel international online forum with The Network University and the Mediterranean Women's Studies Centre on the same theme, with the participation of the INSTRAW platform of networks.

15. INSTRAW is currently engaged in piloting other research projects, including one on theorizing gender-based violence, in collaboration with its network partner, Sisterhood is Global International. This project will, through networking and online discussions and forums, provide a state-of-the-art review of different theories with regard to gender-based violence, including a stakeholder analysis relevant to policy making and practice, a list of experts and a comprehensive bibliography on the subject.

16. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 55/219, the programme of activities carried out by the Director of INSTRAW during 2001 included, as an urgent priority, the development of a new fund-raising initiative, and the development of related publicity materials to be used for promotion and fund-raising. To assist in efforts to identify new funding sources and related entry points, the Institute contracted a United States-based fund-raising and communication firm to develop its fund-raising strategy. The publicity materials have been used by INSTRAW in its efforts to promote the Institute's new working modality among potential donors and collaborating organizations.

17. During 2001, the Director undertook an intensive fund-raising mission in the European region, which included contacts with governmental and non-governmental entities as a means of (a) reinstating the financial support of various European countries that had supported INSTRAW in the past and (b) of exploring new funding sources. In addition, the Institute prepared a portfolio of proposed projects for seeking extrabudgetary funding from such sources as: the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships and the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

III. Report on the utilization of the financial resources provided from the regular budget of the United Nations for the year 2001

18. As indicated in the statement submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session (A/C.5/55/26), the Institute's financial requirements for 2001 were established at a level of US\$ 1.3 million. At the twenty-first session of the INSTRAW Board of Trustees, held from 22 to 24 May 2001, the Director submitted a proposed operational budget for 2001 at that same level, which was unanimously approved by the Board.

19. As at July 2001, it was estimated that, if no further contributions are received, by 31 December 2001 the resource level of the Institute's Trust Fund during 2001 would be approximately US\$ 1,032,090. However, the overall resource requirements

of INSTRAW during 2001, including programme support costs payable to the United Nations Secretariat, amount to US\$ 1,400,800. Therefore, it is projected that the Institute would require an amount of approximately US\$ 368,701 from the financial assistance provided by the regular budget of the United Nations in accordance with Assembly decision 55/457. This amount, representing a 26 per cent subvention to the overall requirements of INSTRAW for 2001, would be utilized to complete the level of resources required for the implementation of its core activities, including the implementation of GAINS.

IV. Detailed information on the financial flows of the Trust Fund of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

A. Flow of income of the Institute as at 31 July 2001

(United States dollars)

<i>Year</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001 (as at 30 June)</i>	<i>2001 (unpaid pledges as at 30 June)</i>
Contributions	810 234	544 130	523 980	99 800	128 418

B. Anticipated financial situation of the Institute as at 31 July 2001

(United States dollars)

Fund balance as at 1 January 2001	702 303
Contributions received at the INSTRAW Trust Fund during the period from 1 January to 30 June 2001	99 800
Administrative adjustments made by the United Nations Secretariat	48 777
Miscellaneous income	52 801
Amounts to be received in respect of contributions pledged for 2001, for which payment is still outstanding	128 418
Projected resource availability for 2001	1 032 099
Amount required for INSTRAW operations during 2001	(1 348 800)
Programme support costs payable to the United Nations	(52 000)
Total projected expenditure for 2001	(1 400 800)
Anticipated deficit as at 31 December 2001	(368 701)
To be covered from the United Nations subvention of \$800,000	368 701

V. Prospects for the Institute beyond 31 December 2001

20. With the subvention of US\$ 800,000 provided from the regular budget of the United Nations, the Institute has been able to secure its operations through the current year, including the further implementation of GAINS and the development of a fund-raising strategy. Despite these achievements, however, and the efforts deployed by the Secretary-General, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and the Director of INSTRAW to secure adequate financial support for the Institute, the level of resources required to ensure the institutional sustainability of INSTRAW has not been forthcoming.

21. As reported in section IV above, by 31 December 2001 it is anticipated that the Institute will have used approximately US\$ 369,000 of the approved subvention, resulting in an unspent balance of US\$ 431,000. In this regard, the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW recommended that any unspent amounts be carried forward to 2002 in order to facilitate the Institute's initial operations for that year (see E/2001/88).

22. In addition to the above-mentioned option, the Board also recommended that if sufficient funds were not available, the core operations of INSTRAW for 2002 should be adjusted to the level of funds available, thereby implying a downsizing of INSTRAW operations.

23. At its substantive session of 2001, the Economic and Social Council recommended that the General Assembly consider transferring the unspent balance remaining from the US\$ 800,000 subvention, which it had approved for 2001, as a reserve for 2002. This recommendation, if approved by the Assembly, would allow the Institute to make use of the remaining balance to initiate its 2002 operations. The Council also requested that the Assembly consider asking the Joint Inspection Unit to conduct a review of the INSTRAW Trust Fund and an urgent evaluation of the activities of the Institute, including options for its future.

24. It is anticipated that, by the end of 2001, the unspent amount of the subvention would be approximately US\$ 431,000. Taking into account the flow of contributions received during 2000 and 2001, it is estimated that, during 2002, the Institute's core operations may need to be adjusted to a minimal budget level of US\$ 600,000. This measure would entail a considerable downsizing of the core staff of INSTRAW and a significant reduction of its operational activities. It should also be pointed out that the utilization of GAINS for collaborative research, training, networking and dissemination of information on the research and training projects of the Institute would require additional funding.

25. Despite the persistent difficulties and uncertainties that INSTRAW has confronted during the past two years, it has managed to secure minimal resources with which to respond to the mandates given by the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Given that the Institute has begun to achieve tangible results through GAINS, the Assembly may wish to decide on the scope within which INSTRAW could operate beyond 2001 in a productive and cost-effective manner.