

Fourth, we are leading the way for international volunteer organizations to play an even greater role in the developing world. Earlier this year, we brought together the leaders of 35 international organizations that send volunteers outside of their own countries. Our purpose was to find ways to collaborate in the field and help those countries, such as Mali, Senegal, the Czech Republic and Malaysia, that want to establish their own volunteer organizations.

Finally, we are moving forward with the establishment of the Crisis Corps, one of our newest and most exciting initiatives. We are making it possible for experienced Peace Corps Volunteers and returned Volunteers to contribute their language skills, their cross cultural understanding, and their experience in development to short-term international relief efforts.

These are just a few of the important steps we are taking to ensure that the Peace Corps stays on the cutting edge of development and service. So like any forward-thinking organization, we thought we could learn something from the people who have contributed so much to the Peace Corps' success. We wanted to take advantage of the insights and experience of returned Volunteers who served in the Peace Corps for at least one year.

Let me share with you some of the highlights of what they had to say:

Perhaps the most impressive finding was that 94% of the respondents said that they would make the same decision to join the Peace Corps again, and 93% said they would recommend service in the Peace Corps to others.

One returned Volunteer wrote: "Aside from the births of my two daughters, my Peace Corps experience was the most gratifying experience of my life. I'm so proud and grateful for having been blessed with such a powerful and positive experience."

Ninety-four percent of the respondents believed they made a positive contribution to the development of the country where they served, and most indicated that their greatest contribution as Volunteers was to the individuals with whom they worked.

In addition, most of the respondents said that service in the Peace Corps met their expectations of helping others, experiencing a different culture, and their desire for travel and adventure. And 70% said that their Peace Corps experience had a positive impact on their careers.

The survey also revealed that some returned Volunteers did not leave their sense of humor overseas. In response to the question: "In what state are you currently living?", several Volunteers responded: "confusion, or bliss . . ."

Our survey also confirmed what we already know: Peace Corps Volunteers face some very difficult realities—from petty burglaries and assault, to racial and sexual harassment, to political unrest and natural disasters. Service in the Peace Corps can sometimes be tough, but the Volunteers confront these challenges head on every day with great courage.

Finally, this survey also reveals that, for most returned Volunteers, their commitment to service doesn't end when they come home. They tend to be active members of their communities. Seventy-eight percent said they have volunteered since coming home, and 63% have worked with people with "special needs," such as the elderly, the disabled, and refugees.

These are just some of the results of the 1996 survey of returned Peace Corps Volunteers. But what are we to make of all this? Does it matter? I think it does, and let me tell you why.

First, I believe that in many ways this survey reaffirms and justifies the confidence

that Americans have placed in the Peace Corps over the years, something for which we are grateful and never take for granted.

Second, this survey also demonstrates in a small but important way that many Americans care about what happens in the world and want to help make it a better place. I believe they understand the connection between America's engagement in the world and our prosperity. And they are generous in their willingness to encourage progress and help other people.

But there is also a significant domestic dividend to the Peace Corps. Our country is fortunate to have a large cadre of people with international experience that broadens our understanding of other countries and cultures. This is a tremendous asset for America's participation in the global marketplace.

Moreover, the insights about other peoples and cultures that returned Volunteers bring back with them, I believe, can add to America's thinking and understanding of the many problems that we confront in our own multicultural society.

Finally, let me close by speaking directly to the young people in our country. The Peace Corps is an organization that is often identified with the 1960s. A lot of young people sometimes wish they had been around to witness the sweeping changes that occurred in our society and our culture back then. I believe there is much that we all can learn from that important era in our country's history.

But a nostalgic view of the past need not keep us from looking ahead and moving forward. I believe the times in which we live today are just as exciting and hold even more promise. Fifty years from now, young people will look back to the end of the 20th century and say: "I wish I had been around when the German people took their sledgehammers to the Berlin Wall, when the people of South Africa tasted freedom for the first time, when the Cold War ended and new democracies began to flourish." They will surely wish they had been alive when the information revolution took off and helped shrink the world by an order of magnitude.

But the men and women who are serving as Peace Corps Volunteers today are taking part in the great struggle that still lies ahead—the struggle for human dignity both here at home and around the world. President Kennedy and each of his successors, both Democratic and Republican alike, have summoned us to participate in that struggle, and I am very proud to say that Peace Corps Volunteers are doing their part.

I believe this is the best time to be part of the Peace Corps. We are grateful for the service of more than 145,000 Americans. We are excited about our future—from the new countries where Volunteers will be serving, to our new initiatives, including the Crisis Corps. The Peace Corps is moving into the next century, proud of the legacy that precedes us and confident that Peace Corps Volunteers are making a real difference in lives of people around the world.

IMPLEMENTATION OF MANAGEMENT REFORMS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. President, I would like to use the opportunity, following Senate confirmation of Andrew Cuomo as the next Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, to address some vital management issues at the Department. The Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD],

like many other federal agencies, is confronted by serious management problems that impede its ability to carry out its mission.

HUD, which Secretary-designate Cuomo will head, has a diverse group of activities under its purview. HUD manages an \$885 billion loan portfolio and provides \$25 billion in rental subsidies and over \$5 billion annually in community development grants. As the principal agency concerned with the Nation's housing needs and redeveloping our decaying cities, HUD has a monumental task on its hands and should be run as efficiently and effectively as a Fortune 500 company. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in the past.

Historically, HUD has had a rocky track record. Departmentwide management deficiencies were a major factor leading to the 1989 HUD scandals. In 1994, the General Accounting Office placed the entire department on its high risk list, designating HUD as "especially vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement." I understand that this year GAO will continue to keep HUD on its high risk list, believing that the deficiencies hampering HUD's leadership in effectively managing the agency have yet to be resolved.

Congress has given agencies like HUD the tools to improve their management operations, most notably by passing legislation developed by the Governmental Affairs Committee such as the Chief Financial Officers [CFO] Act of 1990, the Government Performance and Results Act [GPRA] of 1993, and the procurement and information technology reforms of last Congress. These laws are designed to get the Federal Government to operate in a sound, businesslike manner and implementing these management reforms is a major responsibility for each department head. I urge Mr. Cuomo to devote as much of his time as necessary to use these laws to focus on getting results for the taxpayers who fund HUD and the many who depend on its programs.

The Government Performance and Results Act, for example, can be an effective tool to make government work better by measuring the success or failure of government programs and using this information to support budget decisions. I am encouraged by Secretary-designate Cuomo's enthusiastic support of GPRA in his responses to my questions submitted during his confirmation process. This is because effective GPRA implementation is especially needed at HUD. HUD's programs and missions often overlap or are linked only tangentially to HUD's primary missions. The National Academy of Public Administration and HUD's inspector general [IG] have recommended eliminating, consolidating, or restructuring many of HUD's 240 programs and activities, 91 of which, the IG said, were questionably related to the department's primary mission. GPRA, by focusing on agency missions and results, will give HUD, the Office of Management and Budget and the Congress

the information necessary to consolidate and eliminate these wasteful and redundant programs.

Unfortunately, HUD has a long way to go toward effectively implementing GPRA. The HUD IG recently found that the department is just beginning to develop an agencywide strategic plan, the key underpinning and starting point for the process of goal-setting and performance measurements under GPRA. The IG report also indicated that HUD staff felt that the initial plans were developed only by a few of the Department's staff and did not involve input from a broad range of HUD offices. Given the need for broad acceptance of performance measures and established deadlines for implementing GPRA, I hope the new Secretary will take steps to ensure the integrity and successful implementation of GPRA at HUD.

GPRA is dependent on sound financial management—something that HUD is lacking. One of the reasons for GAO's designation of HUD as a high-risk area is its poorly integrated, ineffective, and generally unreliable information and financial management systems. These systems do not meet program managers' needs and provide inadequate control over HUD's housing and community development programs. HUD must get better control over its finances and prepare timely financial statements as required by the CFO Act.

Good financial data relies upon the development of effective computer systems and these systems are crucial to HUD's ability to meet its housing mission and business needs. In recent years, the Department has obligated over \$170 million annually to activities related to information management. Yet HUD has had a poor history of managing its information resources, and as a result, is struggling with aging systems that do not adequately meet the agency's needs and are contributing causes of managerial inadequacies.

In response to its problems, HUD has undergone dramatic structural changes. In September 1995, HUD completed a major field reorganization which was intended to eliminate previously confused lines of authority, enhance communications, reduce levels of review and approval, and improve customer service. In January 1996, HUD announced additional plans to reduce headquarters staff and further streamline its field organization by, among other things, closing up to 10 of HUD's 81 field offices by the end of fiscal year 1997. However, it is questionable whether these changes have turned the tide as GAO has found that the Department still has an ineffective organizational structure.

The situation is not hopeless. HUD has made some progress in recent years addressing these Departmentwide management deficiencies, but success will require top-down management support. I hope Secretary-designate Cuomo will

articulate a management vision that can improve operations at HUD and take measures required to take the agency off GAO's and Congress' high-risk list. I look forward to working with him to achieve those objectives in this Congress and to effectively implement the bipartisan management reforms passed by Congress in recent years.

THE PRESIDENT'S CERTIFICATION ON INTERNATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, on Friday, January 31, the President submitted to the Congress a certification that merits the support of all Members of Congress who wish to see improvements in the quality of life of women and families around the world.

The President has certified that the restrictions imposed by Congress in the fiscal year 1997 appropriations legislation are "having a negative impact on the functioning of the population planning program." Congress's approval of that certification would allow fiscal year 1997 family planning funds to be released at a rate of 8 percent per month beginning March 1 rather than July 1. Population programs around the world have not received any U.S. fiscal year 1997 funding even though the fiscal year began October 1, 1996, so approval of this resolution would simply reduce the delay of the funds' release from 9 months to 5.

U.S. contributions to family planning programs have immeasurably improved the lives of women in developing countries. The ability to plan the size of one's family is essential if women and children are to live longer and healthier lives and if women are to make the educational and economic gains they and we wish to see.

The Rockefeller Foundation released a report last week documenting the effectiveness of the family planning programs the United States supports. The report noted that the percentage of women in developing countries using contraception in the past three decades has grown from 10 to 50 percent, and the average number of children they have borne has dropped from 6 to 3.

Mr. President, there is a growing clamor that Congress is about to cast its first abortion vote of the 105th Congress when it votes on the President's certification. Nothing could be further from the truth. The truth is that Congress voted to cut U.S. contributions to population planning programs by 35 percent from fiscal year 1995 to fiscal year 1997 and then imposed a series of harsh metering requirements on the rate at which the money could be spent. This vote would simply remove one of the harshest requirements—that the funding be delayed by an additional 4 months.

It is tragic that the impact of these cutbacks and restrictions has been to increase the number of abortions. At a time when the number of women of

childbearing age is increasing by 2.3 percent, or 24 million, per year, the United States is reducing its commitment to programs that reduce the incidence of abortion.

The close relationship between family planning and abortion is clear. In Russia, for example, the Russian Department of Health reports that the use of contraceptives grew from 19 to 24 percent between 1990 and 1994 with the establishment of 50 International Planned Parenthood Federation affiliates across Russia. During that time period, the number of abortions performed dropped from 3.6 to 2.8 million. In Colombia and Mexico, USAID has long been a major donor to their family planning programs. In Bogota, a one-third increase in use of all forms of contraception between 1976 and 1986 accompanied a 45-percent drop in the abortion rate. In Mexico City and the surrounding region, the use of all forms of contraception increased 24 percent between 1987 and 1992, while the abortion rate fell 39 percent.

Helping to provide women with the means to prevent pregnancy is a far better alternative than contributing to a situation in which they must choose between bringing a child into the world for whom they too often have neither the physical nor financial means to care, and obtaining an abortion that is often illegal and unsafe. No woman wants to face that choice.

The statistics clearly document this problem. UNICEF's 1996 "The Progress of Nations" reported that each year, 600,000 women die of pregnancy-related causes, 75,000 of them associated with self-induced, unsafe abortions. These women leave behind at least 1 million motherless children. In addition, an estimated 34,000 children under age 5 in developing countries die every day—a number that would surely decline if mothers were able to space the births of their children to improve the health and nutrition they can provide them.

I urge my colleagues to support this Presidential certification to reduce the most onerous restrictions on U.S. contributions to international family planning programs when it comes up for a vote this month.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE CLEAR CREEK COMPOSITE BRIDGE

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, today, I wish to extend my congratulations to the University of Kentucky, the Kentucky Transportation Center, the Great Lakes Composite Consortium, the U.S. Forest Service, and other composites manufacturers on the completion of the Clear Creek Composite Bridge in Bath County, KY, located in the Daniel Boone National Forest. This pedestrian bridge is the first of its kind in the world, and the successful creation of this bridge stems from a creative design, and a great deal of research.

The Clear Creek Bridge is a 60-foot composite bridge, which is lightweight,