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**Office of Inspector General**  
**United States Department of State**

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ISP-I-21-10

Office of Inspections

January 2021

**Inspection of the**  
**Office of Global Women's Issues**

DOMESTIC OPERATIONS

UNCLASSIFIED



# HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General  
United States Department of State

ISP-I-21-10

## What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected the Office of Global Women's Issues' executive direction, policy implementation, foreign assistance, and administrative operations.

## What OIG Recommends

OIG made 7 recommendations to the Office of Global Women's Issues.

In its comments on the draft report, the Office of Global Women's Issues concurred with 6 recommendations and disagreed with 1 recommendation. OIG considers 6 recommendations resolved and 1 recommendation unresolved. The Office of Global Women's Issues' response to each recommendation, and OIG's reply, can be found in the Recommendations section of this report. The office's formal written response is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix B.

January 2021

OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS  
DOMESTIC OPERATIONS

## Inspection of the Office of Global Women's Issues

### What OIG Found

- A new Ambassador-at-Large began leading the Office of Global Women's Issues in January 2020, after the position had been vacant for 3 years.
- Under the office's new leadership, stakeholders from the Department of State and other Federal agencies described the Office of Global Women's Issues as reasserting a lead role on women's issues and greatly increasing its influence in the interagency process.
- The office's organizational structure did not align staff roles, priorities, and responsibilities with operational needs, which could limit the office's effectiveness in its pursuit of foreign policy goals and objectives.
- A lack of clarity on the bureaucratic status of the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Unit generated confusion about the new unit's status and its relationship with the Office of Global Women's Issues.
- The office lacked a public diplomacy strategy for external messaging.
- Oversight of foreign assistance management, including documentation of monitoring and timely close out of grants and cooperative agreements, needed improvement.
- The office did not adhere to requirements regarding unliquidated obligations, resulting in \$300,000 in FY 2019 funds being returned to the U.S. Department of the Treasury and putting an additional \$3.5 million in FY 2020 funds at risk.
- During the inspection, leadership from the Office of Global Women's Issues took action to address an office space ventilation system problem that had generated health concerns among the staff.

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## CONTEXT

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The Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) is the Department of State's (Department) lead office for addressing women's issues in the global context. Originating from Congressional legislation in 1994 that called for the creation of a senior advisor position on international women's human rights, S/GWI is led by an Ambassador-at-Large (Ambassador) who reports directly to the Office of the Secretary. Its mission statement states that S/GWI "seeks to ensure the integration of gender equality and the advancement of women and girls in the formulation and conduct of U.S. foreign policy."

S/GWI's priorities are the Department's implementation of the June 2019 United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)<sup>1</sup> and interagency coordination of the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative.<sup>2</sup> In February 2020, the Secretary announced the creation of a W-GDP Unit to act as the interagency lead on W-GDP operations, under the policy leadership of a White House-led working group.

S/GWI's senior leadership position was vacant from January 2017 until January 2020, when the incumbent assumed the role. While the position was vacant, the Department considered, but never implemented, reorganization proposals that included moving S/GWI out from under the Office of the Secretary. During the same timeframe, S/GWI also experienced frequent staff turnover, at one point losing two-thirds of its staff (see details in the Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct section of this report). At the time of the inspection, the Foreign Affairs Manual did not include S/GWI or its mission, responsibilities, or roles in its official list of Department offices. Instead, S/GWI relied on legislation, strategy documents, and Department guidance to identify its focus and objectives.

S/GWI's 4-year Functional Bureau Strategy, issued in July 2018, identifies three underlying goals:

- Support women's participation and leadership in promoting peace, responding to conflict, and building a more secure future.
- Strengthen conditions for increased stability, security, and prosperity through the economic empowerment of women and girls.
- Enhance the effectiveness of diplomacy through the integration of women and girls in the conduct and formulation of U.S. foreign policy.

Congress appropriated \$98 million in Economic Support Funds for S/GWI programming and grants from FY 2015 through FY 2019. At the time of the inspection, S/GWI administered

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<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security directs the Department, in partnership with the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security and the U.S. Agency for International Development, to ensure women and girls' meaningful participation and safety in efforts to promote stable and lasting peace, as well as enhance U.S. partners' capacity to advance women, peace, and security.

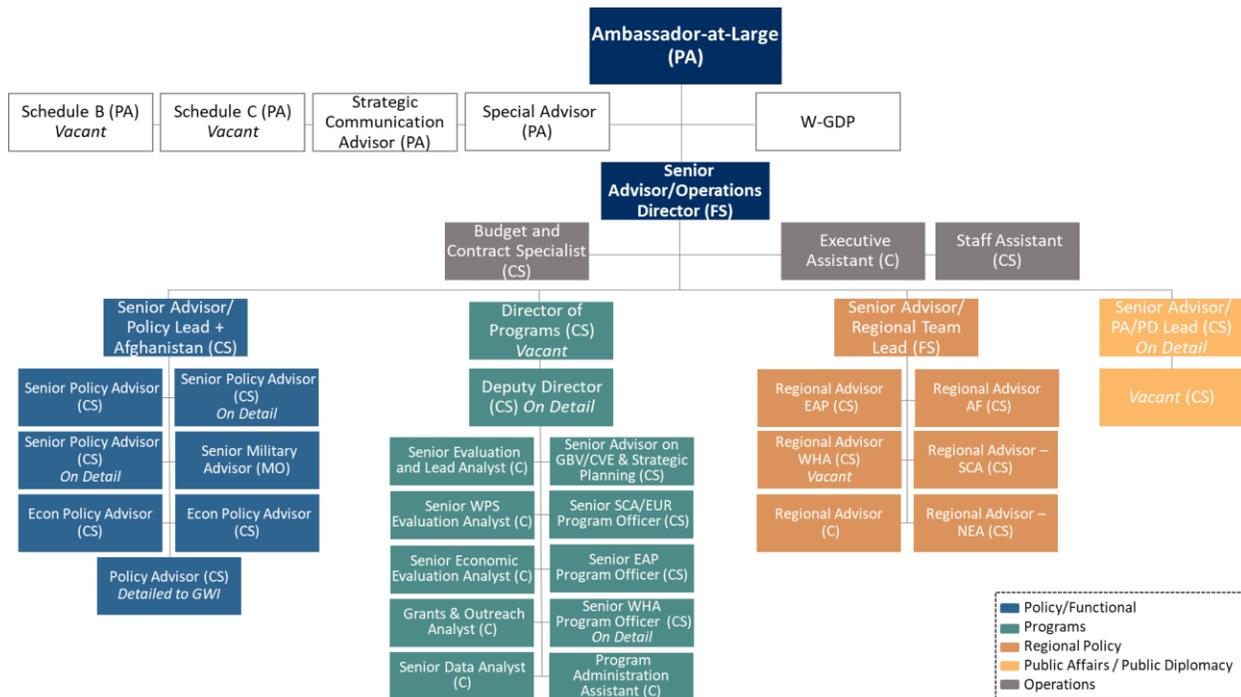
<sup>2</sup> The President established the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative in February 2019. It is a whole-of-government effort to advance global women's economic empowerment.

approximately \$82.5 million<sup>3</sup> in obligated funding for active foreign assistance-related programming.

As of mid-May 2020, S/GWI had 22 Civil Service, Foreign Service, and interagency detailee personnel, and five contract staff. Another eight positions were vacant, and three employees were on detail assignments outside of S/GWI and W-GDP. The Ambassador directly supervised four personnel, including the W-GDP director position, which was filled by an interagency detailee. The Senior Advisor/Operations Director, a Senior Foreign Service officer, supervised the remaining S/GWI staff.

The office was divided into four teams in addition to the W-GDP Unit, which focused on Department and interagency coordination of the W-GDP Initiative. The Functional Team covered the WPS strategy, multilateral diplomatic engagement, and other policy issues, such as gender-based violence. The Regional Team focused on bilateral diplomatic engagement, and the Programs Team was responsible for foreign assistance and program management. The Public Affairs Team handled public messaging and outreach. The two organizational charts below detail the S/GWI and W-GDP staffing structure.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1: The Office of Global Women’s Issues Organizational Chart<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> This chart was current as of May 19, 2020. Positions listed as “On Detail” are for personnel either in W-GDP or outside the Department.

**Source:** OIG generated based on information provided by S/GWI.

<sup>3</sup> This includes active Federal assistance awards, interagency agreements, and contracts using foreign assistance funding.

<sup>4</sup> Within S/GWI, the Functional Team is often referred to as the Functional Policy Team, the Regional Team is often referred to as the Regional Policy Team, and the Programs Team is also known as the International Programs Team.

**Figure 2: Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Unit Organizational Chart<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>b</sup> This chart was current as of May 19, 2020. The same Special Advisor who reports to the Ambassador-at-Large is listed in both charts.

**Source:** OIG generated based on information provided by S/GWI.

OIG inspected S/GWI’s executive direction, policy implementation, foreign assistance, and administrative operations consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.<sup>5</sup>

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

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OIG assessed S/GWI’s leadership based on interviews with office leaders and staff, questionnaires completed by S/GWI personnel, and a review of documents and observations of S/GWI events during the inspection. OIG also conducted interviews with Department, interagency, and nongovernmental organization partners on S/GWI’s performance in the interagency policy process.

### Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct

The Ambassador assumed the S/GWI leadership position in January 2020. Before joining S/GWI, she led the Department’s Office of Global Criminal Justice, and served as U.S. Representative to the UN Economic and Social Council and U.S. Alternate Representative to the UN General Assembly from 2017 to 2018. The Director of Operations, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service who functions as the S/GWI deputy director, assumed his position in August 2019 and led the office in an acting capacity until the Ambassador arrived. Prior to his position in S/GWI, he was Deputy Director in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and also served as Deputy Chief of Mission at both Embassy Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and Embassy Bangui, Central African Republic.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix A for OIG’s specific inspection objectives.

***Ambassador Decisively Led Office After Three Years Without a Senior Leader***

The Ambassador inherited an office that had lacked a Senate-confirmed leader since January 2017. In those 3 years, Department reorganization proposals to remove S/GWI's direct linkage to the Secretary of State generated uncertainty among S/GWI staff about the office's future. That uncertainty, combined with the Department hiring freeze,<sup>6</sup> resulted in significant vacancies; at one point, staffing dropped from 30 to 9 personnel. Department and interagency partners told OIG that, as a result, S/GWI's influence on women's issues lessened significantly, both in the Department and in the interagency community.

Although the Ambassador had only been in position for 5 months at the time of the inspection, OIG's review revealed that she had already begun to reverse this trend, drawing on her experience and wide range of Department and interagency contacts. S/GWI employees and leaders of other Department bureaus and Government agencies interviewed by OIG praised the Ambassador for reasserting S/GWI's lead role in the Department on women's issues and greatly increasing its influence in the interagency process. Several Assistant Secretaries noted that the Ambassador convened well-attended conference calls with Assistant Secretaries on WPS and other women's issues, and that she was adept at inserting S/GWI talking points into other bureaus' briefing papers and memoranda. The Ambassador also hosted a W-GDP anniversary event in which the Secretary, White House Presidential Advisors, Cabinet level officials, the National Security Advisor, and multiple Assistant Secretaries all participated. Office staff and other partners told OIG that S/GWI was now recognized in the interagency community for its expertise and timely completion of projects. They described the Ambassador's dedication to women's issues, substantive knowledge, and commitment to making S/GWI a forceful player on U.S. foreign policy issues. They characterized her operating style as decisive, strategic, and action-oriented, traits consistent with the leadership principles in 3 FAM 1214b(2) and (3). The Ambassador demonstrated a command of policy issues in meetings OIG observed.

***Shift to Telework Due to COVID-19 Pandemic Initially Complicated Office Communication***

In March 2020, 2 months into the Ambassador's tenure, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted Department operations and S/GWI staff transitioned to telework status. Email and teleconference calls became the normal practice for internal office communications. The Ambassador, the Director of Operations, and S/GWI staff told OIG the sudden shift to teleworking and resulting lack of face-to-face contact made the leadership transition more difficult and complicated the office's communication. To bolster communication, the Ambassador increased the frequency of staff meetings from bi-weekly to weekly and held virtual one-on-one meetings with employees, which many staff found helpful. OIG reviewed S/GWI email communications during the inspection and found them to be effective in planning and coordinating the office's daily activities and upcoming events. The Ambassador was timely

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<sup>6</sup> The Office of Management and Budget first announced a Government-wide hiring freeze on January 23, 2017. While most positions were frozen and could not be filled if vacant, the Secretary approved specific exemptions to the hiring freeze to ensure the Department was able to meet critical needs. The Secretary lifted the hiring freeze in May 2018. See OIG, *Review of the Effects of the Department of State Hiring Freeze* (ISP-I-19-23, August 2019).

in her responses to staff and the email exchanges generally included necessary details for making timely decisions.

### ***Some Staff Desired Improved Information Sharing***

S/GWI staff told OIG that, upon her arrival, the Ambassador clearly communicated her two top policy priorities—implementation of WPS and W-GDP—through meetings with staff and written memoranda. However, in interviews and in responses to OIG questionnaires, some staff said they were uncertain of the Ambassador’s priorities beyond WPS and W-GDP. Staff also were unclear about how much emphasis should be placed on other programs that had been actively pursued prior to her arrival and that the Ambassador now described as “cross-cutting issues.”<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, some S/GWI personnel said they were not always included in events and meetings involving their portfolios and did not receive readouts afterward, and therefore had difficulty preparing future memoranda on those issues. Taking into account the difficulties in communicating while teleworking during the pandemic shutdown, OIG advised the Ambassador, and she agreed, to improve information sharing, including distributing readouts of her meetings with staff more widely and broadening staff knowledge of her priorities for the office.

### ***Ambassador and Director of Operations’ Working Relationship Described as Excellent***

OIG determined that the Ambassador properly delegated most management tasks to the Director of Operations, who functioned as the office’s deputy director. Both described their relationship as excellent, and S/GWI staff agreed with that assessment. In interviews and in responses to OIG’s questionnaire, the Director of Operations received widespread praise for his calm demeanor and ability to resolve difficult personnel and administrative issues. S/GWI staff described him as considerate, thorough, approachable, fair, and concerned with the well-being of office personnel, in keeping with the Department’s leadership principles in 3 FAM 1214.

### ***Office Organizational Structure Not Aligned With Operational Needs***

OIG found that S/GWI’s organizational structure, largely in place prior to the Ambassador’s arrival, did not align staff roles, priorities, and responsibilities with operational needs. Furthermore, the extended gap in S/GWI’s senior leadership position from January 2017 to January 2020 resulted in a lack of clarity about the office’s strategic focus. Although, as noted previously, staff told OIG that the Ambassador clearly communicated her top policy priorities—WPS and W-GDP—there was confusion among staff on ownership and implementation of program and other policy priorities. Specifically, OIG found that:

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<sup>7</sup> On its website, S/GWI describes cross-cutting issues as follows: “S/GWI’s work on Women’s Economic Empowerment and Women, Peace and Security is not single-faceted. There are several cross-cutting issues that S/GWI targets through its work in other areas, including Combatting Violent Extremism, Violence against Women, and Women’s Leadership.”

- There was a lack of clarity regarding office priorities and goals. Staff told OIG that prior Ambassadors created different priorities and office configurations, which resulted in a confusing office structure and unclear priorities. Employees also told OIG the office needed to clarify the best procedures for completing its strategic priorities, reassess its cross-cutting issues, and realign the office's work with its identified key priorities.
- The office structure allowed multiple teams to work on the same issue, often without sufficient coordination. Stakeholders in the Department's regional and functional bureaus, as well as nongovernmental organizations, cited difficulty identifying action officers and teams with responsibility for specific issues. For example, stakeholders told OIG they often found themselves working on the same issues with multiple people in S/GWI. Additionally, they described overlapping responsibilities in the various S/GWI teams as burdensome and confusing, and obtaining clearances from multiple staff in different S/GWI units as inefficient. This led to project delays and, in other cases, proposals being canceled or funds being returned for projects not initiated.
- Staff responsibilities were not clearly or accurately defined. Staff members told OIG position descriptions did not accurately reflect the work they performed. OIG found that S/GWI hired staff using existing position descriptions, but then assigned them completely different responsibilities and tasks without updating the position descriptions, adding to staff and stakeholder confusion.
- There was widespread concern about a lack of communication. Staff cited a need for closer coordination among teams and inclusiveness of team members in discussions on common policy issues. Staff told OIG that a lack of synchronization between the program and policy teams and a failure to include program officers in policy meetings also created the perception that the program team was less important than the policy team.

The Government Accountability Office's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* Principle 3.03<sup>8</sup> states that management should develop an organizational structure with an understanding of the overall responsibilities and assign these responsibilities to discrete units to enable the organization to operate in an efficient and effective manner. In addition, 1 FAM 014.1a-b states that organizational structure should strive to achieve a proper balance among mission needs, efficiency of operations, and effective employee utilization. Furthermore, the *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* Principle 3.05 calls on management to evaluate periodically the organizational structure so that it meets the entity's objectives. The Bureau of Global Talent Management's Office of Organization and Talent Analytics performs these reviews within the Department.<sup>9</sup> Without a clear organizational structure, a clear strategy, and clear communication on how to implement priorities, S/GWI cannot properly plan and prioritize its work and processes, which hinders it from executing and achieving its objectives.

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<sup>8</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* (GAO-14-704G, September 2014).

<sup>9</sup> See 3 FAM 2617(4).

**Recommendation 1:** The Office of Global Women’s Issues, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should conduct an organizational assessment to align its organizational structure with operational needs. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with GTM)

## Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

### *Office Successfully Advanced a Broad Range of Policy and Program Priorities*

Despite organizational challenges, OIG found that S/GWI, under the Ambassador’s leadership, advanced a broad range of policies and programs related to global women’s issues. Both S/GWI staff and leaders of Department bureaus and other agencies told OIG they viewed the Ambassador as the Department’s outward face on women’s issues and respected her expertise. She attended regular meetings with the Secretary and other Department principals and coordinated regularly on women’s issues with the National Security Council and the White House. A review of the Ambassador’s calendar showed that, despite significant limitations due to the pandemic, she had regular and varied outside contact (sometimes “virtual”) with nongovernmental organizations, Congress, U.S. agency leaders, foreign diplomats, and other leaders on women’s issues, and found opportunities to participate in diplomatic and foreign policy events. Under the Ambassador’s leadership, the office established the W-GDP Unit, organized a 1-year anniversary event for the W-GDP Initiative with the Secretary and the White House Advisor to the President, and completed a substantive review of a draft WPS implementation plan that was launched in June 2020.

### *The Office of Global Women’s Issues Lacked a Functional Statement Describing the Office and its Role*

At the time of the inspection, S/GWI did not have a functional statement to define its area of responsibility and distinguish its activities from other Department offices.<sup>10</sup> According to 1 FAM 014.8, bureaus and offices are responsible for submitting updated functional statements to keep 1 FAM current.<sup>11</sup> OIG inspected the office in 2005, when it was called the Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women’s Issues and reported to the Bureau of Global Affairs. Based on that inspection, OIG recommended coordinated bureau and office action to draft and submit a functional statement to be included in the FAM.<sup>12</sup> However, during the

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<sup>10</sup> The Foreign Affairs Manual is the single authoritative source for the Department’s organization structures and for the policies and procedures that govern the Department’s operations. According to 1 FAM 011.1, the “functional statements or organizational responsibilities and authorities assigned to each major component of the Department are described in this volume of the Foreign Affairs Manual,” and “comprise the basic organizational directive of the Department of State.” In 1 FAM 014.8a, the Department defines functional statements as providing “the minimum detail to define the area of responsibility of an organizational unit,” in order to “to distinguish its activities from those of related units and to eliminate potential overlap and duplication.”

<sup>11</sup> According to 1 FAM 014.8c, bureaus and offices are responsible for submitting updated functional statements to the Bureau of Administration’s Office of Directives Management.

<sup>12</sup> OIG, *Inspection of the Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women’s Issues* (ISP-I-06-05, November 2005). The Bureau of Global Affairs reported to OIG in 2006 that it had completed the functional statement to be included in the FAM, prompting OIG to close the recommendation.

current inspection, OIG found neither a functional statement nor descriptions for S/GWI, the former office, or the office's functions in the FAM. A lack of information on the office and the Ambassador's roles and responsibilities may have contributed to uncertainty about the office's location in the Department's reporting structure and its roles and responsibilities. Such circumstances can affect S/GWI's ability to execute foreign policy goals and objectives. On September 4, 2020, S/GWI and the Bureau of Administration issued 1 FAM 026, which outlines the office's authorities and responsibilities. As a result, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

## **Adherence to Internal Controls**

Office staff told OIG the Ambassador and the Director of Operations emphasized adherence to internal controls and encouraged and emphasized ethical behavior. The Ambassador and the Director of Operations discussed internal controls at meetings and encouraged personnel to comply with standards. In accordance with 2 FAM 021.1b, 4 FAH-3 H-424.1, and 4 FAH-3 H-423.10(2), the Ambassador's executive staff reviewed requests for representational allowances for accuracy and to ensure the funds were used as intended before sending them to the Office of the Secretary's Executive Secretariat's Executive Office (S/ES-EX) for final processing.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity Program**

OIG found the Ambassador and Director of Operations set the example for Equal Employment Opportunity standards in their daily conduct. Both expressed to S/GWI personnel their expectation that staff members must adhere to these principles. They also encouraged staff to participate in diversity training in accordance with Department guidance at the time of the inspection.

## **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

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OIG reviewed S/GWI's regional and functional policy coordination, public diplomacy, and policy implementation, including the implementation of the White House-led WPS strategy and the W-GDP Initiative. In interviews with OIG, stakeholders in other agencies and Department bureaus described S/GWI's staff as effective in implementing these and other strategies and policies. OIG concluded that S/GWI generally met requirements for policy implementation, with the exceptions noted below.

### ***Women, Peace, and Security Strategy Implementation Responsibilities Raised Questions About Office's Capacity***

S/GWI is responsible for coordinating the Department's implementation plan for the WPS strategy.<sup>13</sup> Stakeholders told OIG they believed S/GWI effectively carried out its WPS

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<sup>13</sup> The United States Strategy for Women, Peace, and Security was issued by the White House in June 2019 in compliance with the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017. It mandates that the Department, along with the

responsibilities in the period leading up to the June 2020 publication of the 49-page implementation plan. However, some stakeholders expressed concern that the office was not adequately staffed to coordinate the plan's implementation. At the time of the inspection, a detailee from another bureau, who managed the WPS portfolio, was scheduled to leave before the incumbent returned from a congressional detail. In addition, although other S/GWI personnel worked on WPS, they did so as part of larger portfolios. S/GWI agreed to monitor staff members' workloads and to adjust responsibilities, if necessary. The Ambassador said she and her leadership team would seek to address such issues.

***Bureaucratic Status of Women's Global Development and Prosperity Unit Unclear***

OIG found S/GWI did not follow Department guidelines when it created the W-GDP Unit in February 2020, leaving stakeholders confused about the unit's structure and its relationship with S/GWI. Specifically, S/GWI did not follow some of the procedures mandated in 1 FAM 014.6 and outlined in 1 FAM Exhibit 014.6 prior to creating the W-GDP Unit.<sup>14</sup> In addition, 1 FAM 014.7a states, "if an organization does establish a substructure, that substructure must comprise at least two subcomponents." However, the W-GDP Unit was the only subcomponent within S/GWI with a separate symbol and organization code. Furthermore, the W-GDP Unit Director reported directly to the Ambassador, rather than to S/GWI's Director of Operations, as the office's team leads did. These factors led to stakeholder uncertainty about whether the W-GDP Unit was a sub-entity of S/GWI or a separate office. At the time of the inspection, all of the W-GDP Unit's staff members were on detail from within or outside S/GWI, and the W-GDP Unit Director, as a detailee, was unable to formally supervise the unit's staff. Despite these organizational issues, stakeholders in the Department and other agencies told OIG that the W-GDP Unit was effectively carrying out its role as the interagency policy lead on the initiative. The W-GDP Unit's ambiguous organizational status, staff comprised solely of detailees, and potentially overlapping responsibilities with other parts of S/GWI called into question S/GWI's future ability to carry out its responsibilities as the policy lead for the W-GDP initiative within the interagency community.

**Recommendation 2:** The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Office of the Secretary's Executive Secretariat's Executive Office, should follow Department guidelines outlined in the Foreign Affairs Manual to establish the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Unit as a subordinate bureaucratic entity. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with S/ES-EX)

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Departments of Defense and Homeland Security and the U.S. Agency for International Development, publish a plan to implement the strategy within 2 years. The Department issued its plan on June 11, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> 1 FAM 014.6 identifies actions required for organizational changes in the Department. Such actions include procedures for approval at the bureau level, or by the Under Secretary for Management through the Director General of Global Talent Management, as applicable. The planning process for such approvals involves a detailed review of position classifications, organizational design, funding and fiscal actions, and related steps as outlined in 1 FAM Exhibit 014.6.

***Regional Team Supported Policy Implementation but Was Hampered by Office's Cumbersome Organization***

Most Department and other agency stakeholders commented positively to OIG about their interactions with S/GWI's Regional Team<sup>15</sup> on policy coordination and communication. Several Department regional bureaus described S/GWI's expertise in combatting gender-based violence, promoting women's economic empowerment, developing gender issues training with the Department's Foreign Service Institute for personnel heading to overseas assignments, and addressing the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable women. The Regional Team also received praise for managing the 2020 International Women of Courage Award process and ceremony. However, some stakeholders cited S/GWI's complicated office structure, frequent staff turnover due to vacancies, and the use of temporary duty staff as sometimes limiting the Regional Team's effectiveness. OIG also heard from members of the Regional Team that internal organizational and communication issues impeded efficiency and workflows. S/GWI leadership acknowledged these internal challenges and was working to address them. Due to actions underway and the separate recommendation for an organizational assessment, OIG made no additional recommendation in this area.

***Office Lacked a Public Diplomacy Action Plan***

OIG reviewed S/GWI's public diplomacy operations for strategic planning, media outreach, and public engagement, and found the office had no strategic messaging or public diplomacy action plan, including for S/GWI's two top priorities: the WPS strategy and the W-GDP initiative. OIG observed that S/GWI largely limited its public diplomacy activities to social media postings and clearing press releases and similar documents from other Department bureaus and offices. Pursuant to 1 FAM 118.1 and 1 FAM 114.2-1, public diplomacy and public affairs units are tasked with identifying priorities in terms of messaging goals, audiences, timelines, and content. OIG determined that during the 3-year gap in senior leadership, S/GWI did not pursue strategic messaging, had little or no active media engagement, and did not maintain its website. The Ambassador acknowledged to OIG that public diplomacy was one of S/GWI's biggest challenges in need of improvement.

OIG found that S/GWI's lack of public engagement lowered its profile both internally and externally, inhibiting its ability to fulfill its mission goals. One Department official told OIG that S/GWI lacked visibility in international fora like the United Nations and its work often went unrecognized because the office was not effectively publicizing its successes. Other officials told OIG that S/GWI did not have an intranet platform where overseas posts could access S/GWI's work and expertise, and S/GWI missed opportunities to leverage visits to the United States by female parliamentarians from other countries to raise visibility on gender issues. In another example, S/GWI failed to prepare public remarks and social media posts for a public 2019 Asia-

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<sup>15</sup> S/GWI's Regional Team consists of a Senior Advisor/Regional Team Lead, an East Asia/Pacific Regional Advisor, an Africa Regional Advisor, a South and Central Asia Regional Advisor, a Near East Regional Advisor, and a Western Hemisphere Regional Advisor (vacant at the time of the inspection). The Public Affairs Officer also serves as the Europe Regional Advisor, reporting to the Director of Operations.

Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit preparatory event in Chile on women's issues.<sup>16</sup> In April 2020, S/GWI hired a Senior Executive Service-level advisor to develop a strategic communications strategy, but OIG found the advisor worked largely in her de facto role as the Ambassador's chief of staff. Without a public diplomacy action plan, S/GWI is unable to coordinate and plan the full range of public diplomacy work to advance its priorities.

**Recommendation 3:** The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Public Affairs, should develop a public diplomacy action plan consistent with its Functional Bureau Strategy and that supports the Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security and the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with GPA)

### ***Staffing Challenges Limited Office's Public Diplomacy Efforts***

OIG found that S/GWI had only one contractor to handle public diplomacy on a part-time basis, making it difficult for the office to conduct public diplomacy work.<sup>17</sup> For example, the S/GWI website had not been updated in 3 years, there was no record of extensive media outreach aside from social media postings, and there was no current strategic messaging or public diplomacy action plan, as described previously. Guidance in 1 FAM 114.2-1 describes the components necessary for effective public outreach, while 1 FAM 014.1a-b identifies effective employee utilization as an important aspect for effective use of government resources. The 3-year lack of senior level leadership, minimal staff, and the failure to follow Department guidance on public diplomacy operations limited S/GWI's ability to proactively advance Department priorities.

**Recommendation 4:** The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Office of the Secretary's Executive Secretariat's Executive Office, should review and staff its public diplomacy operation to comply with Department guidelines. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with S/ES-EX)

## **FOREIGN ASSISTANCE**

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S/GWI received \$10 million in FY 2019 foreign assistance funding to support programs and initiatives that empower women and girls to participate in governance, peacebuilding, and the economy. The office also provided overall direction for foreign assistance funds supporting the

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<sup>16</sup> The APEC leaders' summit in Chile was ultimately canceled due to domestic Chilean protests.

<sup>17</sup> Prior to the arrival of the contractor and for the roughly 3 years prior to the inspection, a foreign affairs officer without public diplomacy training or experience covered public diplomacy in a part-time capacity.

WPS initiative. As of May 2020, the office managed nine active Federal assistance awards and interagency agreements<sup>18</sup> with a total value of \$80.8 million.<sup>19</sup>

OIG reviewed S/GWI's management of foreign assistance, including its administration of Federal assistance awards and interagency agreements. OIG determined that S/GWI complied with the Department's policy on program and project design and evaluation<sup>20</sup> and led development of a Department-wide gender analysis process to inform foreign assistance planning and evaluation. However, OIG identified issues in award management, award closeout, and funds management, as described below. These issues, many of which began while the Ambassador position was vacant, led to the office returning \$300,000 in foreign assistance funds to the U.S. Treasury in FY 2019. In addition, another \$3.5 million was at risk of being returned at the end of FY 2020. At the time of the inspection, the S/GWI Programs Team had developed a strategy to rectify some of the foreign assistance management issues identified by OIG.

### ***Office Did Not Manage Federal Assistance Awards in Accordance With Department Requirements***

OIG found that S/GWI did not manage its Federal assistance awards in accordance with the Department's Federal Assistance Directive.<sup>21</sup> OIG reviewed 18 active and expired grants and cooperative agreements with a total value of approximately \$85.8 million and found the office did not comply with applicable Department administrative requirements.<sup>22</sup> Specifically, OIG determined that 14 of the 18 award files did not include risk assessments or monitoring plans and 16 of 18 award files showed insufficient documentation of the grants officer representative (GOR) conducting required reviews of the performance and financial reports submitted by the award recipients. However, OIG found no evidence that the work called for in the awards was not completed.

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<sup>18</sup> Federal assistance issued by the Department includes grants, cooperative agreements, awards to individuals, and property grants, as well as grants or other funding agreements with foreign public entities. Interagency agreements, made between two Federal agencies, define the support (goods or services) the serving agency provides to the requesting agency (in this case, S/GWI). See Bureau of Administration, *Federal Assistance Directive* 23, 90-91, 102, 113 (October 2019), and 5 FAM 153, "Definitions."

<sup>19</sup> This total includes an interagency agreement funded by the Bureau of African Affairs and administered by S/GWI.

<sup>20</sup> In 2018, the Department issued 18 FAM 301.4, which incorporates major program identification, design, monitoring, evaluation, and data analysis best practices to improve its ability to more fully characterize and account for the various ways bureaus and offices use their resources to achieve goals and objectives. The policy applies to new and ongoing bureau and office efforts across diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance.

<sup>21</sup> The Department's Federal Assistance Directive establishes internal guidance, policies, and procedures for all domestic and overseas grant-making bureaus, offices, and posts within the Department when administering Federal financial assistance. See 1 FAM 212.2.

<sup>22</sup> OIG reviewed a selection of 18 of 29 Federal assistance awards with activity from FY 2015 to FY 2020. These awards were subject to the Department's Federal Assistance Directive (issued May 2017, revised October 2019) and the Federal Assistance Policy Directive (issued March 2015, revised January 2016).

As outlined in the Federal Assistance Directive, Federal assistance awards must be consistently monitored, including annual reviews of any changes in the scope, schedule, or costs, as well as annual updates to the established risk assessment and monitoring plan.<sup>23</sup> The Directive also requires GORs to complete a written assessment of the recipient's quarterly reports and include it in the award file.<sup>24</sup> These issues occurred, in part, because S/GWI did not have procedures with updated requirements to ensure its GORs properly managed Federal assistance awards and to ensure there was sufficient oversight of the GORs' work. Department staff also told OIG that S/GWI's previous practice of designating GORs at overseas posts made it difficult to maintain complete records. S/GWI now relies on its own staff to perform GOR duties. Failure to adhere to Department standards for managing Federal assistance, along with a lack of oversight and standard operating procedures, can lead to the misuse or misappropriation of Department funds or an inability to achieve program objectives.

**Recommendation 5:** The Office of Global Women's Issues should develop and implement standard operating procedures to provide oversight and accountability for maintaining records of its foreign assistance awards, in accordance with the Federal Assistance Directive. (Action: S/GWI)

#### ***Office Did Not Close Out Federal Assistance Awards on Time***

OIG found that S/GWI did not close out 36 Federal assistance awards dating back to FY 2012,<sup>25</sup> as required by applicable Department and Federal standards. As outlined in the Federal Assistance Directive, Federal assistance awards must be closed out no later than 1 year after receipt and acceptance of all required final reports.<sup>26</sup> S/GWI staff told OIG that heavy workloads and staff turnover contributed to their inability to close older awards. The lack of timely award closeout increases the risk that future awards may repeat performance problems that would otherwise be detected during the closeout process. It also prevents the reclassification of any unliquidated funds remaining on the awards, as described more fully below.

**Recommendation 6:** The Office of Global Women's Issues should close out Federal assistance awards as required by Department and Federal standards. (Action: S/GWI)

#### ***Office Lacked Procedures to Minimize Foreign Assistance Funds Returned to U.S. Treasury***

OIG found that S/GWI returned more than \$300,000 in canceled<sup>27</sup> foreign assistance funds to the Department of the Treasury in FY 2019. The office returned these funds despite having

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<sup>23</sup> Chapter 2, Sections K and O (May 20, 2017, and later revisions).

<sup>24</sup> Chapter 4, Section D (May 20, 2017, and later revisions).

<sup>25</sup> OIG was unable to determine the total number of grants issued in this time period due to problems with data reliability.

<sup>26</sup> Chapter 5, Section A (May 20, 2017, and later revisions). See also 2 CFR §200.343.

<sup>27</sup> Appropriations expire if unobligated at the end of their period of availability, but if obligated, the appropriations are still available for program disbursement. Consistent with 31 U.S.C. § 1552, the appropriations are canceled on

statutory reclassification authority to extend the period of availability for most foreign assistance appropriations. In addition, at the time of the inspection, the office had unliquidated balances exceeding \$3.5 million that were at risk of being returned to the Treasury if not expended by the end of FY 2020. As outlined in 4 FAM 084.2, allotments should be managed to provide for effective and efficient funds management in carrying out the intent of Congress. S/GWI was unable to use its reclassification authority, in part because it had not closed out the Federal assistance awards described above. In addition, OIG found that staff in S/GWI and the S/ES-EX budget office lacked understanding of the roles and responsibilities for monitoring and reclassifying foreign assistance funds, and the budget office did not give S/GWI the opportunity to reclassify the unliquidated obligations before they were returned to Treasury. In the absence of a systematic process to reclassify canceling funds, S/GWI may be unable to make full use of its foreign assistance resources.

**Recommendation 7:** The Office of Global Women’s Issues, in coordination with the Office of the Secretary’s Executive Secretariat’s Executive Office, should develop and implement a process to identify and reclassify foreign assistance funds before they cancel, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with S/ES-EX)

***Office Completed Required Program Evaluations, Led Department Efforts to Integrate Gender into Foreign Assistance Planning and Evaluation***

As mentioned earlier, OIG found that S/GWI complied with the Department’s policy on program and project design and evaluation, as outlined in 18 FAM 301.4. Since 2015, S/GWI had completed two program evaluations; another four evaluations were ongoing at the time of the inspection. OIG also found that S/GWI, in coordination with the Department’s Office of Foreign Assistance, developed tools and practices promoting an inclusive approach to gender in support of U.S. foreign policy goals and new requirements.<sup>28</sup> These actions included the creation and identification of foreign assistance indicators that address specific outcome goals for WPS, W-GDP, and gender-based violence-related programming throughout the Department. S/GWI then crafted an analysis template and training components to assist program planners in identifying local patterns and norms of what men, women, boys, and girls experience in relation to the underlying issue or problem addressed by a proposed Federal assistance award. During the inspection, S/GWI also organized three virtual roundtable discussions for nearly 300 Department and other U.S. Government personnel on gender programming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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September 30 of the fifth fiscal year after the period of availability for obligation ends. At that time, any unexpended balances are returned to the U.S. Treasury general fund.

<sup>28</sup> The Department is subject to several new requirements to integrate gender considerations and empowerment of women in Federal assistance programs, including: WPS, the WPS Implementation Plan, W-GDP, the Global Fragility Act of 2019, and the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally. In addition, at the time of the inspection, the Department was preparing 18 FAM 003.1, Promoting Gender Equality and Advancing the Status of Women and Girls to Achieve National Security and U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives.

## ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

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S/GWI relies on S/ES-EX to provide human resources, budget, general services, security, and related administrative and logistical support for its operations. While S/ES-EX was outside the scope of this inspection, OIG identified one issue in office space management (discussed below), in addition to the canceled funds issue identified above.

### ***Department Was Taking Action to Correct Office Air Quality Concerns***

In early 2020, S/GWI employees in a newly occupied fifth floor office suite of the Harry S. Truman Building complained about the office's air quality. Staff reported strong chemical odors for several weeks, and some staff members reported health issues they attributed to the odors. These issues raised broader concerns about health risks to staff. Guidance in 15 FAM 954 requires Department office buildings to adhere to industry standards for acceptable indoor air quality.<sup>29</sup> S/GWI leadership contacted S/ES-EX, which, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration's Office of Operations, Office of Facilities Management Services, identified incorrect air flow settings in the suite. During OIG's inspection, the Department took corrective actions, and the Office of Operations informed OIG it intended to run final testing to ensure air quality standards are met. Because of the Department's actions, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

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<sup>29</sup> The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers Standard 62.1-2019 outlines minimum ventilation rates and other measures intended to provide indoor air quality that is acceptable to human occupants and that minimize adverse health effects.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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OIG provided a draft of this report to Department stakeholders for their review and comment on the findings and recommendations. OIG issued the following recommendations to the Office of Global Women's Issues. The Office of Global Women's Issues' complete response can be found in Appendix B.<sup>1</sup> The office also provided technical comments that were incorporated into this report, as appropriate.

**Recommendation 1:** The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should conduct an organizational assessment to align its organizational structure with operational needs. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with GTM)

**Management Response:** In its January 11, 2021, response, the Office of Global Women's Issues concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Office of Global Women's Issues conducted an organizational assessment to align its structure with operational needs.

**Recommendation 2:** The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Office of the Secretary's Executive Secretariat's Executive Office, should follow Department guidelines outlined in the Foreign Affairs Manual to establish the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Unit as a subordinate bureaucratic entity. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with S/ES-EX)

**Management Response:** In its January 11, 2021, response, the Office of Global Women's Issues concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Office of Global Women's Issues followed Department guidelines outlined in the Foreign Affairs Manual to establish the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Unit as a subordinate bureaucratic entity.

**Recommendation 3:** The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Public Affairs, should develop a public diplomacy action plan consistent with its Functional Bureau Strategy and that supports the Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security and the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with GPA)

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<sup>1</sup> OIG faced delays in completing this work because of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting operational challenges. These challenges included the inability to conduct most in-person meetings, limitations on our presence at the workplace, difficulty accessing certain information, prohibitions on travel, and related difficulties within the agencies we oversee, which also affected their ability to respond to our requests.

**Management Response:** In its January 11, 2021, response, the Office of Global Women’s Issues disagreed with this recommendation. The office noted it is not a functional or regional bureau. As an office reporting directly to the Office of the Secretary, the Office of Global Women’s Issues receives public diplomacy support from the Bureau of Global Public Affairs, and, therefore, a public diplomacy action plan is not required. According to the office, it initiated several internal and external public diplomacy activities to ensure better coordination and outreach to elevate its programs and engagements. For example, the office wrote, updated, and distributed fact sheets for the Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Initiative and the United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security; updated its public website with the assistance of the Bureau of Global Public Affairs; worked to launch a new streamlined intranet site for Department employees; and developed office-specific press lists and guidance.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation unresolved. OIG acknowledges that the activities the Office of Global Women’s Issues initiated are a positive step towards increasing its internal and external public engagement. However, these actions do not represent a plan to establish and maintain the office’s public diplomacy footprint. Department standards in 1 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 114.2-1 cites the responsibility of “other public diplomacy units,” including—but not exclusive to—functional bureaus, for identifying public diplomacy priorities regarding goals, audiences, timelines, and messages. The office also has a Functional Bureau Strategy that includes a variety of public diplomacy activities. Additionally, according to 18 FAM 301.2-4(B)b(1), strategies must include a plan to assess progress towards achieving goals and objectives. This can be in the form of follow-on documents that are regularly reviewed. A public diplomacy action plan would help address such needs. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Office of Global Women’s Issues developed a public diplomacy action plan consistent with its Functional Bureau Strategy and that supports the Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security and the Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Initiative.

**Recommendation 4:** The Office of Global Women’s Issues, in coordination with the Office of the Secretary’s Executive Secretariat’s Executive Office, should review and staff its public diplomacy operation to comply with Department guidelines. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with S/ES-EX)

**Management Response:** In its January 11, 2021, response, the Office of Global Women’s Issues concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Office of Global Women’s Issues reviewed and staffed its public diplomacy operation to comply with Department guidelines.

**Recommendation 5:** The Office of Global Women’s Issues should develop and implement standard operating procedures to provide oversight and accountability for maintaining records of its foreign assistance awards, in accordance with the Federal Assistance Directive. (Action: S/GWI)

**Management Response:** In its January 11, 2021, response, the Office of Global Women's Issues concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Office of Global Women's Issues provided oversight and accountability for maintaining records of its foreign assistance awards, in accordance with the Federal Assistance Directive.

**Recommendation 6:** The Office of Global Women's Issues should close out Federal assistance awards as required by Department and Federal standards. (Action: S/GWI)

**Management Response:** In its January 11, 2021, response, the Office of Global Women's Issues concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Office of Global Women's Issues closed out Federal assistance awards as required by Department and Federal standards.

**Recommendation 7:** The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Office of the Secretary's Executive Secretariat's Executive Office, should develop and implement a process to identify and reclassify foreign assistance funds before they cancel, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with S/ES-EX)

**Management Response:** In its January 11, 2021, response, the Office of Global Women's Issues concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the Office of Global Women's Issues developed and implemented a process to identify and reclassify foreign assistance funds before they cancel, in accordance with Department guidance.

## PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

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<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Arrival Date</b>
<b>Ambassador-at-Large</b>		
	Kelley Eckels Currie	1/2020
<b>Director of Operations</b>		
	Joel Maybury	8/2019

**Source:** Generated by OIG from data provided by S/GWI.

## APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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This inspection was conducted from April 7 to September 16, 2020, in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2012 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspections Handbook, as issued by OIG for the Department and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

### Objectives and Scope

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chief Executive Officer of USAGM, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and USAGM. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved, and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; and whether instance of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

The specific objectives for this inspection included determining whether:

- The Ambassador at Large cultivates the leadership and management principles outlined in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214, particularly regarding communication between leadership and staff.
- Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) leadership applies the leadership and management principles outlined in 3 FAM 1214 with respect to resource management, internal collaboration, and staff development, and also follows 1 FAM 014 guidance regarding the effective use of resources to meet S/GWI and broader Department needs and goals.
- The role and responsibilities of S/GWI and its leadership have been established to provide for the pursuit of foreign policy objectives, and whether those responsibilities have been clearly articulated to S/GWI staff and other offices that work with S/GWI.
- S/GWI leadership has a plan to ensure the effectiveness of operations and clarify lines of authority with respect not only to the Women's Global Development and Prosperity unit within S/GWI, but also how other units within S/GWI coordinate their workflows, in accordance with leadership, management, and organizational guidance provided by 3 FAM 1214, 1 FAM 014, and other relevant criteria.

- S/GWI, as the Department's lead on formulating a Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) implementation plan, complies with the legal requirement for a WPS plan in accordance with Public Law 115-68.
- S/GWI has taken steps to ensure that occupational safety and health standards are being implemented to address health concerns and remediation treatments in S/GWI office space pursuant to 15 FAM 950 and related requirements.
- Public diplomacy functions and activities are effectively coordinated and receive sufficient consideration during the formulation and execution of S/GWI's policies, pursuant to 1 FAM 114.2, 1 FAM 118.1, and 10 FAM 111.
- S/GWI manages federal assistance awards in compliance with the Federal Assistance Directive through the review of a sample of active and expired awards.
- S/GWI ensures that contractors assisting in program management are not performing inherently governmental functions as required by Office of Management and Budget Circular A-76.
- S/GWI has a process in place to monitor unliquidated obligations and appropriately close out federal assistance awards in compliance with the Federal Assistance Directive and 2 CFR §200.
- S/GWI has complied with applicable 18 FAM 300 requirements regarding program and project planning, design, and evaluation.
- S/GWI has created a process to ensure continued compliance with all evaluation and reporting requirements, including 18 FAM 300 and all Congressional mandates.

## **Methodology**

In conducting inspections, OIG uses a risk-based approach to prepare for each inspection. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and taking into consideration relevant guidance, at this time, OIG largely conducts its inspections remotely and relies on audio- and video-conferencing tools in lieu of in-person interviews with Department and other appropriate personnel. OIG also reviews pertinent records; circulates surveys and compiles the results, as appropriate; and reviews the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, and organizations affected by the review. OIG uses professional judgment, along with physical, documentary, testimonial, and analytical evidence collected or generated, to develop findings, conclusions, and actionable recommendations.

## APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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United States Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

January 11, 2021

UNCLASSIFIED

TO: OIG – Sandra Lewis, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

FROM: S/GWI – Kelley Currie, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelley", written over the printed name of Kelley Currie.

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – Inspection of the Office of Global Women's Issues

The Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) underwent an Office of the Inspector General (OIG) office inspection April 7 to September 16, 2020. Per 1 FAM 053, OIG is required to inspect all U.S. Department of State offices every five years. The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues has not been inspected since 2005. This inspection occurred at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which S/GWI, with the rest of main State, were in Phase I Operations.

S/GWI has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report in full. A total of seven (7) recommendations were made, and per issued guidance, S/GWI respectfully submits the following responses to address each of the seven (7) to close this inspection.

**OIG Recommendation 1:**

The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM), should conduct an organizational assessment to align its organizational structure with operational needs. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with GTM)

**Management Response:**

S/GWI concurs with this recommendation and took steps before, during, and after the inspection time period to remedy this concern, as well as ensured OIG inspectors were informed of progress throughout and after the inspection. The Ambassador-at-Large remained consistent in her vision to prioritize Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative as the Office's main focus and as stated in her testimony to Congress in October 2019. Measures and implementation to address this specific issue included

consultations led by the Ambassador-at-Large with S/GWI staff and relevant bureaus and offices including S/ES-EX and GTM; prioritizing the Office's work to more fully integrate WPS and W-GDP with the Department's foreign policy objectives; the issuance of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and guidelines; an updated Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Course, PP226; and a fully cleared Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) entry, 1 FAM.026, to include an organizational chart, for the first time since the inception of the Office in 1995.

**OIG Recommendation 2:**

The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Office of the Secretary's Executive Secretariat's Executive Office (S/ES-EX), should follow Department guidelines outlined in the Foreign Affairs Manual to establish the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Unit as a subordinate bureaucratic entity. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with S/ES-EX)

**Management Response:**

S/GWI concurs with the recommendation, noting that progress was made on this recommendation before, during, and after the period in which the inspection was conducted. S/GWI has determined, in consultation with S/ES-EX and GTM, that all actions to meet this recommendation were complete by December 2020. From when W-GDP was launched in 2019 through to the present, the establishment of the W-GDP Unit, as part of S/GWI, correctly followed all Department guidance and additionally included an interagency policy process, to ensure the steps taken would serve as a model for future initiatives and organizational changes. S/GWI has again confirmed with both S/ES-EX and GTM that the process and coordination for the establishment of W-GDP are complete.

**OIG Recommendation 3:**

The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Public Affairs (GPA), should develop a public diplomacy action plan consistent with its Functional Bureau Strategy and that supports the Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security and the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with GPA)

**Management Response:**

S/GWI does not concur with this recommendation. As S/GWI is not a Functional or Regional Bureau, GPA is S/GWI's main Public Diplomacy (PD) support as part of the S Bureau and therefore an action plan is not required. S/GWI, however, initiated before, during, and after the inspection period the following to ensure better coordination and outreach to elevate S/GWI's programs and engagements: wrote, updated, and distributed S/GWI factsheets for WPS and WGDP; worked with the Regional Bureaus to ensure inclusion of S/GWI topline in GPA's evergreen documents; updated the public website with GPA's assistance; archived outdated internal platforms and worked with ExecTech to launch a new streamlined Intranet site for

Department employees; developed S/GWI specific press lists and guidance; coordinated with GPA to provide S/GWI with Departmental branding guides and templates to maintain consistency in S/GWI materials; and increased S/GWI's social media presence by more than 10 percent over the past year.

**OIG Recommendation 4:**

The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Office of the Secretary's Executive Secretariat's Executive Office (S/ES-EX), should review and staff its public diplomacy operation to comply with Department guidelines. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with S/ES-EX)

**Management Response:**

S/GWI concurs with the recommendation. As detailed in Management Response to Recommendation 1, S/GWI undertook a full organizational review in early 2020. This review included the need for dedicated PD staff. S/GWI has initiated the process for filling a public diplomacy vacancy in the Women, Peace, and Security unit and a public diplomacy vacancy in the Women's Global Development and Prosperity unit. Both positions will support S/GWI on a full-time basis.

**OIG Recommendation 5:**

The Office of Global Women's Issues should develop and implement standard operating procedures to provide oversight and accountability for maintaining records of its foreign assistance awards in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Directive. (Action: S/GWI)

**Management Response:**

S/GWI concurs with the recommendation to develop and implement standard operating procedures for foreign assistance award records management. S/GWI has updated its standard operating procedures for assistance management to outline the required documentation for award files. The new procedures include a quarterly file review to ensure that file management responsibilities have been fulfilled.

**OIG Recommendation 6:**

The Office of Global Women's Issues should close out Federal assistance awards as required by Department and Federal standards. (Action: S/GWI)

**Management Response:**

S/GWI not only concurs with the recommendation, but informed OIG inspectors of the problem at the beginning of the inspection. The Ambassador-at-Large took immediate steps upon her appointment to the Office to close out outstanding awards, which included awards dating back to 2012. As of January 11, 2021, S/GWI has closed out 26 of 38 awards. Additionally, S/GWI has

updated its standard operating procedures for assistance management to require timely close out of assistance awards in a manner consistent with the Federal Assistance Directive (FAD).

**OIG Recommendation 7:**

The Office of Global Women's Issues, in coordination with the Office of the Secretary's Executive Secretariat's Executive Office (S/ES-EX), should develop and implement a process to identify and reclassify foreign assistance funds before they cancel, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: S/GWI, in coordination with S/ES-EX)

**Management Response:**

S/GWI concurs with this recommendation. In coordination with S/ES-EX, S/GWI has developed a process to identify and reclassify foreign assistance funds before they cancel. The process is now part of S/GWI's standard operating procedures for foreign assistance as noted in Recommendation Responses 5 and 6.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Joel Maybury.

## ABBREVIATIONS

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FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
S/ES-EX	Office of the Secretary's Executive Secretariat's Executive Office
S/GWI	Office of Global Women's Issues
W-GDP	Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative
WPS	United States Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security

## OIG INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS

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