Methodology
In the 1999 assessment, the detailed questionnaire, printed in English, French, Spanish and Russian, was sent as in previous cycles to four types of expert respondents:

- government officials directly involved in the implementation of the program;
- donor personnel close to the program in agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and various nongovernmental organizations, including some International Planned Parenthood Federation affiliates;
- citizens in the various countries who were familiar with the program but were not involved in policy or management; and
- foreigners who were closely familiar with the program.

The respondents did not know what items produced which of the 30 scores, nor did they know the weights involved in converting items to scores.

All questionnaire responses were entered into a computer, and a complex set of programming statements automatically converted the items to the 30 scores. Within each country, scores were averaged across all respondents after highly improbable outliers had been eliminated. The total program effort score is simply the sum of the 30 individual scores, as in the previous cycles. Subscores were also computed for the four program components mentioned earlier (policy, services, evaluation and fertility control method availability). The appendix gives a brief description of each score and groups them under the four component categories.

Each of the 30 scores ranges from zero to four, giving a maximum of 120 for the total effort index. The four components vary in the number of scores they encompass: eight for policy, 13 for services, four for evaluation and six for method availability; the maximum scores for these components are therefore 32, 52, 12 and 24, respectively. For ease of comparison, we give most results as a percentage of the maximum possible score (for example, a policy score of 25 becomes 25/32, or 78%).

A variable for level of social setting (i.e., social and economic development) is also included. As in earlier analyses, the social setting categories are based on an index composed of seven items: the proportion of adults who are literate; the primary and secondary school enrollment ratio as a percentage of those aged 5–19; life expectancy at birth; the infant mortality rate; the proportion of the male labor force that is doing nonagricultural work; the gross national product per capita; and the proportion of the population living in an urban setting.

We ranked countries on each item and calculated the index as the sum of the item ranks divided by seven; each country was then assigned to the high, upper middle, lower middle or low social setting category, according to quartiles. We also assigned countries to high, upper middle, lower middle or low program effort quartiles, using the average of their total program effort scores for 1994 and 1999.

Results

Survey Responses
Eight months after the mailing of the questionnaire, 374 replies had been received from respondents regarding 89 countries, with a range of one to 12 per country and an average of 4.2 per country. The overall response rate was 49% from 758 names (more than were sought in the previous cycles). The final number of replies for the 1999 cycle was similar to that for previous years (359–433 respondents in about 95 countries).

Regional Patterns
Scores for all 89 countries in 1999 are presented in Table 1, which shows the program effort index (i.e., the total score) as well as the four component scores. Each score is cited as a percentage of the maximum; a score of zero signifies no effort and a score of 100 represents full effort. The total scores range from a low of 29 (for Venezuela) to a high of 86 (for China); the average program effort score for all countries in 1999 is 54. China, Indonesia, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand and Mexico, all of which are recognized for the strength of their family planning programs, have...