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THE CHRONICLE OF PHILANTHROPY

Gates Foundation to Support New Causes

By Ian Wilhelm

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The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in Seattle, announced last week that it is changing how it operates and expanding the number of causes it supports with its \$29-billion endowment.

The foundation plans to provide more money to agricultural projects and to efforts that expand financial services for the poor in Africa and other developing countries, said Patty Stonesifer, the foundation's president.

"We have a pretty strong conviction that we can do more in the developing world by continuing our very strong focus on improving health but complementing that with a focus on ensuring that people who live in extreme poverty have the economic resources or other resources necessary to assist in improving their lives," she said.

While the foundation is still deciding exactly which types of projects to support, it is likely to give more money to microcredit organizations — charities that provide small loans to poor people for business endeavors — and organizations that help farmers apply new technology to growing crops.

The changes come after the group's founders, Bill and Melinda Gates, reflected on their philanthropic plans and how the foundation, which is the largest in the United States, could increase its ability to solve social and scientific problems.

The Gateses asked themselves: "What should we do today to prepare ourselves for the decade ahead?" said Ms. Stonesifer.

Global Development

The expansion of the Gates grant making will be the centerpiece of its new "global development program."

Ms. Stonesifer said the fund will allocate about 25 percent of its annual giving, which amounted to \$1.35-billion last year, to the new program. With the foundation's growing assets — the Gateses gave \$320-million to it last year — she said the focus on global development will not reduce its support for other charitable efforts.

Since 2001, the foundation has awarded grants to charities dealing with four causes: improving global health, overhauling education in the United States, supporting libraries, and alleviating poverty in Seattle and surrounding areas. The foundation will continue to support such efforts, but they will be reorganized under new titles and leadership. (The fund will also continue to make

awards to other types of causes when members of the Gates family want to support areas outside those grant-making programs.)

Sylvia Mathews, the grant maker's chief operating officer, will become president of the global-development program, which will also oversee grants to expand Internet access at libraries outside the United States and awards to water and sanitation projects.

Allan C. Golston, Gates's chief financial officer, will become president of its U.S. programs. The foundation is searching for a new chief operating officer to take over some duties currently assumed by Ms. Mathews and Mr. Golston.

As for its global-health program, the foundation appointed Tadataka Yamada, a scientist, as its president. Mr. Yamada is the chairman of research and development at GlaxoSmithKline, in Research Triangle Park, N.C.