



December 4, 2015

Memorandum

To: Members of the Board

From: Ross Simms, Assistant Director

Through: Wendy M. Payne, Executive Director

Subj: Reporting Model – **TAB G**¹

MEETING OBJECTIVE

The objective is to discuss the concepts regarding financial condition of the federal government and its components.

BRIEFING MATERIALS

The briefing materials include this memo which provides background and discusses matters for Board consideration and the following attachments:

Attachment I: How Accounting Supports Federal Financial Reporting, presents Chapter 7 of Statement of Federal Financial Accounting Concepts (SFFAC) 1, *Objectives of Federal Financial Reporting*. The chapter discusses how accounting supports financial reporting and how FASAB standards can influence financial reporting. The chapter also discusses the concepts of financial position and financial condition.

Attachment II: Stewardship: Toward a Federal Balance Sheet is an excerpt from the President's Budget for FY 1996. The excerpt presents an example of financial condition reporting practices about the time the conceptual guidance

¹ The staff prepares Board meeting materials to facilitate discussion of issues at the Board meeting. This material is presented for discussion purposes only; it is not intended to reflect authoritative views of the FASAB or its staff. Official positions of the FASAB are determined only after extensive due process and deliberations

was issued and presents a framework for describing the financial condition of the government and its stewardship performance.

Attachment III: FY2014 Financial Report of the U.S. Government, Management's Discussion and Analysis provides an overview of some current financial condition reporting practices.

BACKGROUND

SFFAC 1 discusses the stewardship objective of federal financial reporting and states that financial reporting should

...assist report users in assessing the impact on the country of the government's operations and investments for the period and how, as a result, the government's and the nation's financial condition has changed and may change in the future. (par. 134)

A key concept raised in the stewardship objective is financial condition. SFFAC 1 describes financial condition as follows:

As more environmental data are added to the core data, a concept that is broader and more forward-looking than "financial position" emerges. That concept is "financial condition." For the U.S. government, the additional data could include financial and nonfinancial information about current conditions and reasonable expectations regarding the national and even the global society. For example, the expected implications of environmental degradation; the relative competitiveness and productivity of the U.S. economy; or expected changes in the population's composition in terms of age, gender, longevity, education, health, and income all might affect judgments about the government's financial condition. (par. 180)

Information about financial condition can be conveyed in a variety of schedules, notes, projections, and narrative disclosures. Among the most important of these is management's "discussion and analysis" of known trends, demands, commitments, events, and uncertainties. For federal reporting entities, management's discussion and analysis might address such topics as

- budgetary compliance;
- internal control systems;
- capital resources and investments;
- service efforts, accomplishments, and results of operations; and
- the reasonably possible future impact of known trends, risks, demands, commitments, events, or uncertainties that may affect future operations.[footnote omitted] (par. 181)

Attachment I: How Accounting Supports Federal Financial Reporting discusses how accounting supports financial reporting and includes this discussion on financial condition.

During the June 2015 meeting, some Board members believed that the definition of financial condition is too broad to help financial report users determine whether the government's financial condition improved or deteriorated. Anecdotal evidence may be observed during government financial management training sessions. Mr. Allen noted that during training sessions, knowledgeable financial report users have been asked to review U.S. government financial statements and determine whether the government's financial condition improved or deteriorated. However, the participants are often unsure how to respond.

Other Board members believed that a general understanding of such factors is needed to assess financial condition. The financial condition of the government cannot be measured simply by analyzing changes in a single number. SFFAC 1 indicates that financial and non-financial information is needed.

MEMBER FEEDBACK

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me by telephone at (202) 512-2512 or by email at simmsr@fasab.gov with a cc to paynew@fasab.gov .

FINANCIAL CONDITION

This discussion of financial condition focuses on “what” information is needed rather than where the information should be reported, such as on the face of financial statements, disclosures, or management’s discussion and analysis.² The discussion begins with an overview of the Stewardship objective of federal financial reporting to provide context for understanding the existing concept. Next, a summary and illustration of the main components of financial condition are provided to introduce points for assessing the concept. Board questions are presented throughout the document to facilitate the assessment.

The Stewardship Objective of Financial Reporting

The Stewardship objective of federal financial reporting provides context for understanding the existing concept of financial condition. FASAB developed SFFAC 1 to discuss the information that Citizens, Congress, executives, and program managers sought in the early 1990’s. The guidance notes that these users need information to “assess the effect of the government’s activities on its financial condition and that of the nation. Information is needed about the financial outlook for both the short and the long term.”³ SFFAC 1, paragraphs 100 to 102, provides the following details on the information needed:

Information is needed on the government’s exposure and risks associated with deposit insurance, pension insurance, and flood insurance. People need to know about likely future expenditures for cleaning up nuclear weapons sites and military bases. They want information that will help them assess the likelihood and amount of future claims that might arise from government-sponsored enterprises. (par.100)

All users need information on earmarked revenues recorded in trust funds. They want to know, for example, whether the Social Security Trust funds are likely, in the foreseeable future, to need infusions of new taxes to pay benefits. Citizens need to know the implications of investing trust fund revenues in government securities. (par. 101)

Users also need trend information on spending on investments in physical and human capital versus spending on consumption. (par. 102)

FASAB recognized that users’ needs are diverse, but determined that these information needs should be considered in the Stewardship objective of financial reporting. The Stewardship reporting objective is based on “the federal government’s responsibility for the general welfare of the nation in perpetuity”⁴ and focuses on the

² Members are reminded that SFFAC 1 establishes broad objectives for financial reporting including information sources other than financial statements. Per SFFAC 1, par. 5, “the FASAB notes that many information sources other than financial statements help to attain these objectives. The objectives relate to the management and financial reporting systems in the federal government in their entirety.”

³ SFFAC 1, par. 99.

⁴ SFFAC 1, par. 135.

requirement that “the government report the broad outcomes of its actions.”⁵ The complete objective states that

Federal financial reporting should assist report users in assessing the impact on the country of the government’s operations and investments for the period and how, as a result, the government’s and the nation’s financial conditions have changed and may change in the future.⁶

Federal financial reporting should provide information that helps the reader to determine whether

- A. the government’s financial position improved or deteriorated over the period,
- B. future budgetary resources will likely be sufficient to sustain public services and to meet obligations as they come due, and
- C. government operations have contributed to the nation’s current and future well-being.⁷

Thus, the Stewardship objective is a part of the framework for determining how accounting standards may contribute⁸ to informing Citizens, Congress, Executives, and Managers. It focuses broadly on informing these users about the government as a whole and its responsibility for: 1) its own assets and liabilities and ongoing operations; and 2) the nation’s current and future well-being. Attachment II: Stewardship: Toward a Federal Balance Sheet is an excerpt from the President’s Budget for FY 1996. The excerpt presents a framework for describing the financial condition of the government and its stewardship performance.

The Existing Concept of Financial Condition

Financial condition appears to be a broad concept with both short and long-term dimensions and requiring multiple indicators. Because of the government’s broad responsibilities for the nation’s welfare and numerous goals, assessing financial condition requires financial and nonfinancial information about the government and the nation. Also, it appears that financial reporting should address each of the three Stewardship sub-objectives to help users assess the government’s financial condition. Consequently, there is no single measure (like “return on investment” or “earnings per share”)⁹ for assessing the government’s financial condition. Figure 1: The Concept of Financial Condition illustrates the information needed for the existing concept.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ SFFAC 1, par. 15.

⁷ SFFAC 1, par. 16.

⁸ SFFAC 2, par. 6.

⁹ SFFAC 1, par. 54.

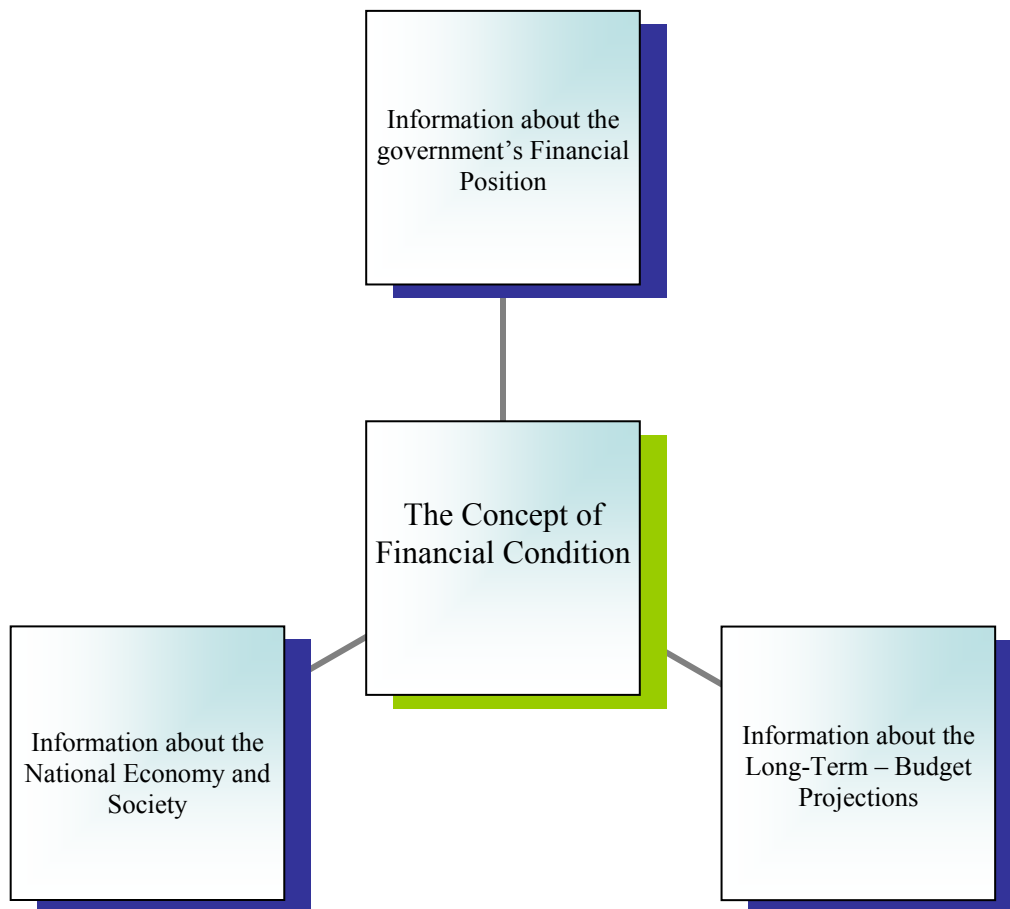


Figure 1: The Concept of Financial Condition

Attachment III: FY2014 Financial Report of the U.S. Government, Management's Discussion and Analysis provides an overview of some current financial condition reporting practices. Information relating to each of these three areas is included (see Table 1: the Federal Government's Financial Position and Condition, Charts F and G relating to budget and debt projections, and Table 6: National Economic Indicators).

The Concept of Financial Position, the Starting Point for Assessing the Government's Financial Condition

Given the current description, financial position appears to be the starting point for assessing the government's financial condition. The Board stated, "Indicators of financial position, measured on an accrual basis, are the starting point for reporting on financial condition but must be supplemented in a variety of ways." SFFAC 1 describes financial position as follows:

The core set of accounting data is expanded with a variety of what may be called "environmental" data to distinguish them from the data that arise from transactions (flows of resources or promises) with other entities. Box 2 in figure 1 depicts this step of the accounting and reporting process. Many events within the environment of a reporting entity may have economic consequences for the entity. Examples of environmental data that may be relevant to financial reporting for some purposes include current market prices, net realizable values, changes in discount (interest) rates, and impairment of assets (either in terms of market value or in terms of service potential). Judgments about what environmental data should be added are made by considering the specific information needed for specific purposes. (par. 177)

At this level of the accounting and financial reporting process, the information reported in the balance sheet transcends bookkeeping. It can now represent more of what is known about future economic benefits and sacrifices. To the extent that this is accomplished, the balance sheet may be said to represent the "financial position" of the reporting entity. The concept of financial position is that of a point-in-time snapshot of an entity's economic resources and the claims on those resources. (par. 178)

However, this description appears to focus on the data derived from a system for processing financial transactions supplemented by recognition of events that have economic consequences for the entity. Some members may believe that this perspective would lead to accounting standards that define "financial position" narrowly or in a traditional manner. Consequently, other items of information such as long-term projections would be not be related to financial position but may be considered supplementary information related to financial condition.

Nonetheless, information is needed about the short term, such as information about the government's own assets and liabilities and operations within the national economy. The Board stated, "Reporting on financial condition requires financial and nonfinancial information about the national economy and society, as well as about the government itself." Also, the first Stewardship sub-objective (3A) concerns the government's financial position and states that

Federal financial reporting should provide information that helps the reader to determine whether the government's financial position improved or deteriorated over the period.

The Board explained that the federal government is responsible for its own assets and liabilities¹⁰ and users need to know whether financial burdens were passed from current period taxpayers to future period taxpayers without related benefits.¹¹ Examples of information to help users understand whether the government's financial position improved or deteriorated include:

- the amount of assets, liabilities, and net assets (or net position);
- an analysis of government debt, its growth, and debt service requirements;
- changes in the amount and service potential of capital assets; and
- the amount of contingent liabilities and unrecognized obligations (such as the probable cost of deposit insurance).¹²

The Board also discussed how the federal government differs from profit-seeking entities and that nonfinancial information is needed to fairly present financial position and results of operations. The Board noted

For nongovernmental entities, competitive markets for goods, services, and capital provide an independent assessment of the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which those entities use resources to meet their customers' needs. There is no similar proof of value for federal output independent of the political process. To report on the results of operations of a governmental entity, nonfinancial information is **essential**, in conjunction with financial information. [emphasis added] (par. 231)

In concept, this fact could imply that a complete financial report of a federal reporting entity should include indicators of economy, efficiency, and cost effectiveness if the report is to fairly present the entity's financial position and results of operations. Paragraph 164 notes that financial or cost information is an important component of both types of measures that attempt to relate efforts to accomplishments. In practice, the extent to which it is feasible and cost effective to present such information can be decided only after careful study of the specific circumstances. (par. 232)

Question 1a: Does the Board believe that information on the government's financial position is important for reporting on the government's financial condition?

Question 1b: Does the Board believe that the "concept of financial position is that of a point-in-time snapshot of an entity's economic resources and the claims on those resources" (SFFAC 1, par. 178) provides helpful guidance for developing standards? If not, what changes might be needed?

¹⁰ SFFAC 1, par. 236.

¹¹ SFFAC 1, par. 137

¹² SFFAC 1, par. 136

Financial Position: Applicable to Components or the Government as a Whole or Both

Whether the same concept of financial position applies to components or the government as a whole or both may need clarification. Existing concepts call for a statement of financial position for both component entities and the government as a whole. SFFAC 2, *Entity and Display*, lists a statement of financial position among the statements that should be included in a component entity financial report¹³ and the financial report of the U.S. government (FR).¹⁴ Conversely, the Stewardship objective in general and sub-objective 3A in particular appear to reflect users' need for information about the government as a whole. Sub-objective 3A states, "Federal financial reporting should provide information that helps the reader to determine whether the "government's" financial position improved or deteriorated over the period [emphasis added]."

Also, the Board noted that the traditional concept of financial position applies to self-financing reporting entities. Specifically, the Board stated,

The traditional concepts of "financial position" and "financial condition" are typically applicable to revolving funds, Government corporations, and other reporting entities that are intended to be self-financing. The concepts may be less relevant, or may require some qualification or modification, for other kinds of Federal reporting entities.¹⁵

The government as a whole can tax, borrow, and create money and its viability and perpetuity are assumed.¹⁶ However, component entity financing is subject to the budget process. Components administer multiple, distinct programs and they are provided with budget authority, such as appropriations, to operate them. Components are expected to use the budget authority rather than maintain it and legislation determines the length of time the budget authority remains available and how the authority can be used. The legislative requirements can vary by program. Thus, users of component financial reports need budget execution information¹⁷ and information about the cost of the programs. The Board stated,

The main sources of financing for the Government as a whole are exchange and nonexchange revenues and borrowing from the public. For component reporting entities, however, the sources of financing are provided through the budget and are largely financing sources other than revenue. Appropriations and other budget authority provide an agency with the authority to incur obligations to acquire goods and services or to provide benefits and grants. These other financing sources are not earned by an entity's operations.

¹³ SFFAC 1, par. 74.

¹⁴ SFFAC 1, par. 79.

¹⁵ SFFAC 3, footnote 5.

¹⁶ SFFAS 8, par. 9.

¹⁷ SFFAS 7, par. 25.

Therefore, as with nonexchange revenue, they should be accounted for in a way that does not obscure the entity's net cost.¹⁸

SFFAC 2, *Entity and Display (as amended)*, explains that:

The ultimate aggregation of organizations is into the Federal Government which, in reality, is the only independent economic entity. The Federal Government encompasses all of the resources and responsibilities existing within the component reporting entities. The aggregation includes organizations for which the Federal Government is accountable as well as other organizations for which the nature and significance of their relationship with the Federal Government are such that their exclusion would cause the Federal Government's financial statements to be misleading or incomplete.

In addition, component reporting entities routinely assert "The statements should be read with the realization that they are for a component of the U.S. Government, a sovereign entity." The concepts do not elaborate on the implications of the Federal Government being the only independent economic entity or the statements being for a component of the U.S. Government, a sovereign entity.

Some components routinely report large negative net positions as a result of their management of liabilities arising from activities of other components. For example, the Department of Energy manages remediation of Defense nuclear waste sites and recognizes environmental liabilities as a result. Thus, bottom-line measures such as financial position and changes in financial position are not useful performance measures for such components.

Question 2: Does the Board believe that the existing concept of financial position applies to component entities as well as the government as a whole?

The Role of the Board With Respect to the Concept of Financial Position

The Board appears to have a direct role with respect to the concept of financial position. Existing conceptual guidance explains the "accounting process" and notes that FASAB is most concerned with the accounts used to report on financial position. The Board explained that proprietary accounts are used to record assets and liabilities and present financial position. Thus, the Board stated,

Accountants working for the federal government, individuals auditing government programs, or students in a governmental accounting course are likely to think first of what are known within the federal government as the "proprietary" accounts and the reports prepared, in part, from information in them. These accounts are used to record assets and liabilities that are not accounted for in the budgetary accounts. These reports are said to present "financial position" and "results of operations" in accordance with some set of accounting standards. The FASAB is most directly concerned with these

¹⁸ SFFAS 7, par. 23.

accounts and with the reports that are prepared, in large part, with information from them.¹⁹

However, the discussion appears to focus on FASAB's role with respect to financial accounting system data rather than the role of the Board with respect to the concept. Some members may believe that this perspective would limit the Board's consideration of standards to the information that might be derived from financial accounting systems.

Question 3: Does the Board believe that the description of its role with respect to the concept of financial position is helpful for developing standards?

Information about the Long-Term

During the Board's early discussions on the concept of financial condition, it was noted that comparing total future receipts and expenses over the long term and under a range of assumptions is the real test for assessing the government's financial condition.²⁰ The federal government has established major social programs to support the nation's welfare and users need to know whether these programs are likely to continue in the future. Also, when providing an example of other information that would be needed for reporting on financial condition, the Board referenced Stewardship sub-objective 3B and stated,

Indicators of financial position, measured on an accrual basis, are the starting point for reporting on financial condition but must be supplemented in a variety of ways. For example, subobjective 3B might imply reporting, among other things, a current law budget projection under a range of alternative assumptions.²¹

Thus, the Board appeared to indicate that achieving sub-objective 3B is important to reporting on financial condition. The Board noted that

Users of financial reports also want help in assessing the likelihood that the government will continue to provide the current level of benefits and services to constituent groups, such as farmers, retirees, and the poor.

The Board discussed the information that would help users determine whether the government will continue to provide the current level of services and stated,

Information relevant to this objective may include disclosures of financial risks that are likely or reasonably possible from sources such as government-sponsored enterprises, deposit insurance, and disaster relief programs. It could also include information such as

- the long-term financial implications of the budgetary process,

¹⁹ SFFAC 1, par. 47.

²⁰ FASAB, April 23-24 2003 Minutes, p. 12.

²¹ SFFAC 1, par. 145.

- the status of trust funds, and
- backlogs of deferred maintenance.

Accordingly, long-term information is needed, in addition to information on the government's financial position.

Question 4: Does the Board believe that long-term information is important for reporting on the government's financial condition?

FASAB's Role with Respect to Long-Term Information

The Board's conceptual guidance appears to indicate that FASAB may require long-term information, but the role may be limited to requiring supplementary information. The Board stated,

Indicators of financial position, measured on an accrual basis, are the starting point for reporting on financial condition but must be **supplemented** in a variety of ways. [emphasis added]²²

Also, the Board discussed the possible development of a means for communicating the information, other than financial statements. The Board stated,

Providing information of this kind may require the use of reporting mechanisms other than traditional financial statements. For example, special reports may have to be developed to demonstrate whether the level of a particular year's maintenance and rehabilitation expenditures resulted in an improvement or a deterioration of capital assets and infrastructure.²³

However, the Board has recently required comprehensive long-term fiscal projections as a basic financial statement in the FR to help users assess the government's financial condition. The statement presents the present value of projected receipts and non-interest spending under current policy without change for all activities of the federal government, including social insurance; how those amounts relate to projected gross domestic product (GDP); and changes in the present value of projected receipts and non-interest spending from the prior year. The Board stated that

While federal financial reporting is not expected by itself to accomplish the stewardship reporting objective, it can contribute to meeting the objective.[footnote omitted] This Statement's contribution relates primarily to the federal government's operations and financial condition; it does not extend to an assessment of the nation's financial condition.²⁴

The Board believes that comprehensive long-term fiscal **projections** [footnote omitted] make an essential contribution to meeting the stewardship objective

²² SFFAC 1, par. 145.

²³ SFFAC 1, par. 142.

²⁴ SFFAS 36, Comprehensive Long-Term Projections for the U.S. Government, par. 4

and especially sub-objective 3B because it is concerned with the future and the resources needed in the future.²⁵

Therefore, the Board may have a direct but broader role than that discussed in conceptual guidance. The Board currently appears to define its role in terms of the reporting objectives rather than the information that can be derived from a traditional financial accounting system.

Question 5: Does the Board believe that its role with respect to long-term information needs to be clarified in the conceptual guidance?

Information about the National Economy and Society

Users need performance information to determine what ‘value’ they are receiving for their tax dollars and, given that the government is responsible for the nation’s welfare, they need information that shows how the government has contributed to the nation’s well-being. The Board explained that the federal government and the nation’s wealth and well-being are intertwined.²⁶ For example, with respect to social insurance, the Board stated

Social insurance involves major programs. They are not only a component of federal operations, but an **essential** part of the national economy. [emphasis added]²⁷

Thus, in addition to information on the government’s own assets and liabilities, and information on the likelihood that major programs will continue in the future, reporting on financial condition requires information on the nation’s wealth and well-being. Information that would be needed for includes:

- investments in (or expenditures for) research and development, military readiness, and education;
- changes in the service potential of infrastructure assets;
- spending for consumption relative to investments;
- opportunities for growth-stimulating activities; and
- the likelihood of future inflation.²⁸

Also, the Board stated

To report on financial condition, a financial report might present a current law budget projection under various alternative assumptions and disclose the

²⁵ SFFAS 36, par. 5.

²⁶ SFFAC 1, par. 236.

²⁷ SFFAS 37, par. 9.

²⁸ SFFAC 1, par. 144.

contribution that the government is making to national wealth by financing assets that are not federally owned, such as research and development, education and training, and state-owned infrastructure. In addition, the report may disclose **information on trends in total national wealth and income** (performance measures). [emphasis added]²⁹

SFFAC 1 discusses financial reporting broadly and indicates that:

Listing the objectives does not imply a judgment about the extent to which they are now being attained. Indeed, it is presumed that the objectives are being met to some degree now. However, the federal government does not have an integrated mechanism for reporting within the context of these objectives. The **FASAB will consider where new accounting standards could make a useful and cost-effective contribution to improving the extent to which these objectives are attained.** (emphasis added) (par. 6)

Thus, a broad definition of “financial condition” would not lead directly to accounting standards addressing the national economy and society.

Question 6: Does the Board believe that information about the national economy and society is important to reporting on the government’s financial condition?

The Role of the Board with Respect to Information about the National Economy and Society

The Board appears to have a role with respect to reporting information about the national economy and society. For example, SFFAS 17, *Accounting for Social Insurance*, requires certain information regarding taxable payroll and gross domestic product. The Board stated

The Board notes that the federal government has two levels of stewardship. One is for its own assets and liabilities and its ongoing ability to operate. The other is its constitutional responsibility for the nation’s wealth and well-being. It is unique in this respect. If the nation’s wealth and well-being are deteriorating, the government’s financial condition is, or soon will be, deteriorating also—and vice versa. The financial condition of a sovereign national government and that of the nation itself are inextricably intertwined. Some information about the overall context must be provided, therefore, when reporting on the government as a whole, and perhaps when reporting on selected programs. As explained in Chapter 1, the FASAB does not recommend standards for economic reporting, but it may consider whether such information should be included in certain financial reports.³⁰

Accordingly, the Board’s role may depend on the member’s perspective regarding the domain of accounting and financial reporting standards. Members that focus on the

²⁹ SFFAC 1, par. 145.

³⁰ SFFAC 1, par. 236.

information that might be derived from a traditional financial accounting system may believe that the Board does not have a role or only a limited role. While members that define the domain in terms of the reporting objectives may believe that the Board has a role and that role could be broad.

Question 7: Does the Board believe that it has a role with respect to specifying information about the national economy and society to be included in financial reports?

Overall

The existing description of the concept of financial condition states

As more environmental data are added to the core data, a concept that is broader and more forward-looking than “financial position” emerges. That concept is “financial condition.” For the U.S. government, the additional data could include financial and nonfinancial information about current conditions and reasonable expectations regarding the national and even the global society. For example, the expected implications of environmental degradation; the relative competitiveness and productivity of the U.S. economy; or expected changes in the population’s composition in terms of age, gender, longevity, education, health, and income all might affect judgments about the government’s financial condition. (par. 180)

Information about financial condition can be conveyed in a variety of schedules, notes, projections, and narrative disclosures. Among the most important of these is management’s “discussion and analysis” of known trends, demands, commitments, events, and uncertainties. For federal reporting entities, management’s discussion and analysis might address such topics as

- budgetary compliance;
- internal control systems;
- capital resources and investments;
- service efforts, accomplishments, and results of operations; and
- the reasonably possible future impact of known trends, risks, demands, commitments, events, or uncertainties that may affect future operations.[footnote omitted] (par. 181)

However, it may not be clear that financial condition is multi-dimensional and why. It also may not be clear that financial position, long-term information, and information on the national economy and society are important for financial condition reporting. The description appears to omit financial statements from the possible ways in which financial condition information can be presented. The reporting objective that reflects users’ needs and the information needed for assessing the government’s financial condition includes these items and states,

Federal financial reporting should provide information that helps the reader to determine whether

- A. the government's financial position improved or deteriorated over the period,
- B. future budgetary resources will likely be sufficient to sustain public services and to meet obligations as they come due, and
- C. government operations have contributed to the nation's current and future well-being.³¹

Question 8a: Does the Board believe that the description of financial condition, SFFAC 1, par. 180 and 181 is helpful for developing standards? If not, what changes might be needed?

Question 8b: Should the conceptual guidance clarify the role of the Board with respect to reporting on the government's financial condition?

³¹ SFFAC 1, par. 16.

Concepts 1

Consistency

163. Financial reports should be consistent over time; that is, once an accounting principle or reporting method is adopted, it should be used for all similar transactions and events unless there is good cause to change. The concept of consistency in financial reporting extends to many areas, such as valuation methods, basis of accounting, and determination of the financial reporting entity. If accounting principles have changed or if the financial reporting entity has changed, the nature and reason for the change, as well as the effect of the change, should be disclosed.

Comparability

164. Financial reporting should help report users make relevant comparisons among similar federal reporting units, such as comparisons of the costs of specific functions or activities. Comparability implies that differences among financial reports should be caused by substantive differences in the underlying transactions or organizations rather than by the mere selection of different alternatives in accounting procedures or practices.

Chapter 7: How Accounting Supports Federal Financial Reporting

165. This Chapter explains the focus of the FASAB's concern by showing how accounting supports financial reporting and thus how accounting standards recommended by the FASAB can influence federal financial reporting. This Chapter shows how the FASAB's recommendations can influence a wide variety of financial reports. Additionally, it lays a foundation for the discussion (in Chapter 8) of how financial reporting in general, and cost information in particular, contribute to performance reporting. In effect, Chapter 7 outlines parts of a conceptual framework for federal accounting but is limited to those ideas, such as "financial position" and "financial condition," that will help readers understand the Board's proposed statement of objectives for federal financial reporting.

Financial Core Data

166. The accounting process begins with recording information about transactions between the government (or one of its component entities) and other entities, that is, inflows and outflows of resources or promises to provide them. These may involve flows of economic goods, cash, or promises. These comprise the "core" data of the accounting discipline. This

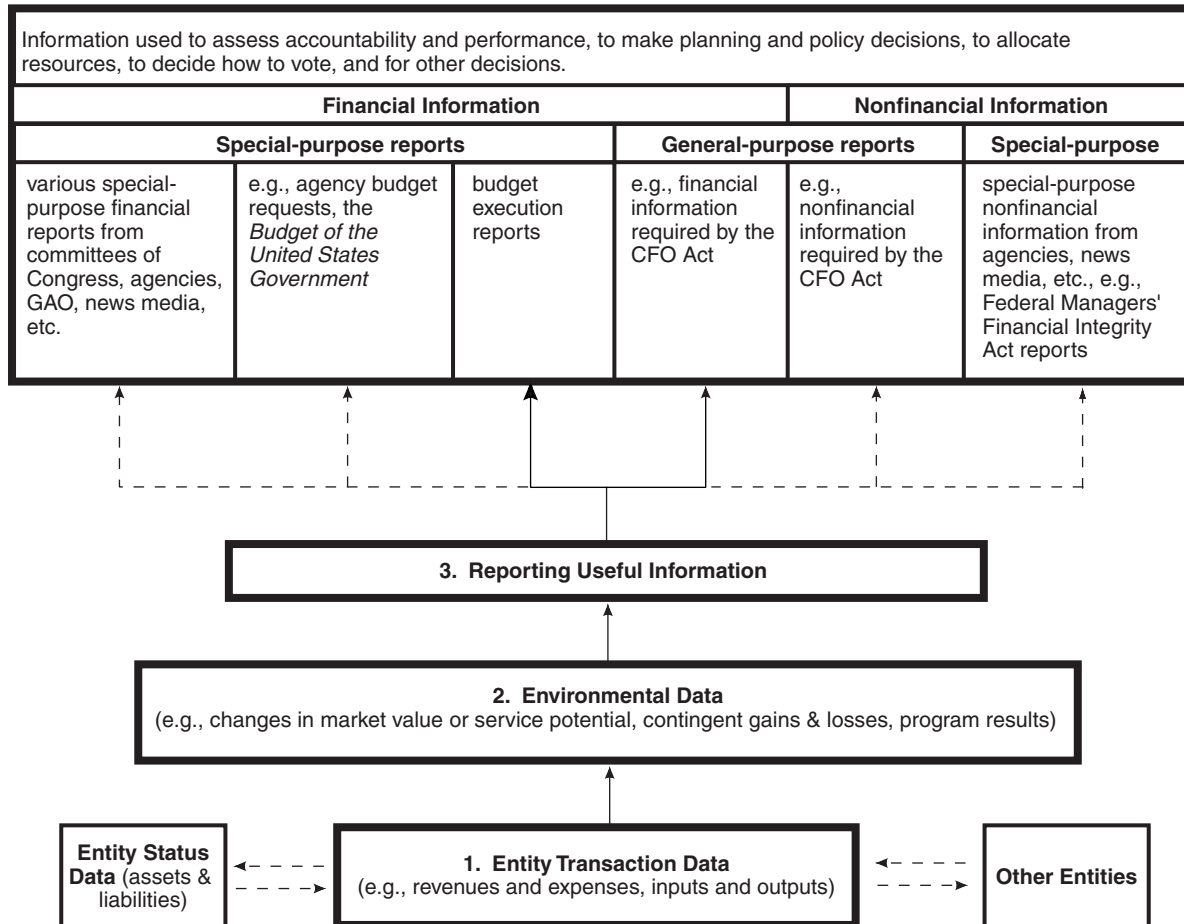
Concepts 1

initial step in the accounting process is depicted at the bottom of figure 1, in the box numbered 1. To enhance the usefulness of this core set of data about transactions with other entities, accountants make various accruals, classifications, interpretations, etc.

167. Many accounting entries recorded in the accountant's general ledger data base are such rearrangements of data about previously recorded transactions with other entities rather than new transactions involving flows of resources or promises between entities.¹³
168. In the branch of accounting called financial accounting, the most noteworthy interpretations or classifications are those about which data pertain to the past and which pertain to the future. In other words, financial accounting is largely concerned with assigning the value of past transactions to appropriate time periods.
169. Transaction data assigned to a period that has elapsed are said to be "recognized" in the statement of operations (or income statement), e.g., as an expense or a revenue of that period. Transaction data pertaining to the future are recognized in the statement of financial position (or balance sheet) as assets and liabilities.

¹³See William J. Schrader, Robert E. Malcom, and John J. Willingham, "A Partitioned Events View of Financial Reporting," *Accounting Horizons* (Dec. 1988), p 10-20. For a more academic exploration of the ideas involved, see Yuji Ijiri, "Theory of Accounting Measurement," *Studies in Accounting Research* #10, American Accounting Association (1975).

Concepts 1

Figure 1: How Accounting Contributes to Information Used by Citizens, Congress, Federal Executives, and Program Managers

Concepts 1

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170. Together with the statement of cash flows, the income statement (or statement of operations or activities) and the balance sheet comprise the three “basic” general purpose financial statements for privately owned entities. Other statements, such as a comparison of actual results with the budget, may be regarded as part of the basic statements for governmental entities.
171. At the initial stage of the accounting process, the information about assets and liabilities is merely the result of assigning all or part of the value of certain transactions to the future. “Assets” and “liabilities” at this stage are *not* statements about future benefits or sacrifices that can be proven or disproven. They are allocations of the cost of past transactions based on assumptions about future benefit and sacrifice.
172. This has been a common source of confusion when accountants communicate with nonaccountants, for whom the word “asset” typically implies something of value that can be sold or used. Much of the evolution of accounting under the FASB and the GASB has been to reduce this confusion, to improve communication, and to make financial reports more faithfully represent economic reality in terms meaningful to report users. This evolution has involved adding increasing amounts of information to the core set of transaction data. That process is discussed later.
173. In other words, the amount of “equity” or “net assets” based on the core data in a bookkeeper’s trial balance is not a direct *measure* of either the market value or the service potential of the entity. In some circumstances, however, net assets can be a meaningful *indicator* of that value or potential. (The word “indicator” is used deliberately to avoid the implication of precision that may be associated with the word “measure.”)¹⁴
174. Accounting data may be further assigned, allocated, or associated with units of activity or production, segments of organizations, etc., *within the same time period*. These kinds of *intrapersonal* allocations are developed most extensively in the branch of accounting called cost or managerial accounting. Neither the FASB nor the GASB has devoted much attention to this branch of accounting, but the FASAB, because of its unique mission, will need to do so. One reason for performing cost accounting is to assist in performance measurement.

¹⁴The term “measure” is commonly used in accounting literature regarding cost and in other literature (including the GASB’s) regarding performance. This document follows that practice. In a conceptual discussion, however, it is important to note that “cost,” “performance,” and “financial condition” are all multidimensional concepts. It may be more precise to think in terms of multiple indicators that provide information about these concepts instead of a single-valued “measure” of any of them.

Concepts 1

Nonfinancial Core Data

175. Traditionally, financial accountants record and describe transactions in terms of money. At the most detailed level, however, their records usually include information about the associated physical inputs and outputs of goods, labor, etc. This nonfinancial information is an important part of the data available for reporting and evaluating the economy and efficiency of the organization's performance.

Budgetary Core Data

176. In government the data on transactions with other entities include information on the budget authority, obligations, outlays, receipts, and offsetting collections for the transactions. This information is maintained in what are called budgetary accounts to distinguish them from the "proprietary" accounts that record other information on transactions. The budgetary and proprietary accounts at this level are said to be "integrated." In effect, they maintain information about different stages of a transaction.

Financial Environmental Data And The Concept Of Financial Position

177. The core set of accounting data is expanded with a variety of what may be called "environmental" data to distinguish them from the data that arise from transactions (flows of resources or promises) with other entities. Box 2 in figure 1 depicts this step of the accounting and reporting process. Many events within the environment of a reporting entity may have economic consequences for the entity. Examples of environmental data that may be relevant to financial reporting for some purposes include current market prices, net realizable values, changes in discount (interest) rates, and impairment of assets (either in terms of market value or in terms of service potential). Judgments about what environmental data should be added are made by considering the specific information needed for specific purposes.
178. At this level of the accounting and financial reporting process, the information reported in the balance sheet transcends bookkeeping. It can now represent more of what is known about future economic benefits and sacrifices. To the extent that this is accomplished, the balance sheet may be said to represent the "financial position" of the reporting entity. The concept of financial position is that of a point-in-time snapshot of an entity's economic resources and the claims on those resources.

Concepts 1

Nonfinancial Environmental Information

179. Nonfinancial information about program efforts, accomplishments, and outcomes may be collected and associated with the financial environmental data. This information is particularly important for governments because there is no direct analogue to “net income” or “earnings” to gauge the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness or net value of governmental activity.

The Concept Of Financial Condition

180. As more environmental data are added to the core data, a concept that is broader and more forward-looking than “financial position” emerges. That concept is “financial condition.” For the U.S. government, the additional data could include financial and nonfinancial information about current conditions and reasonable expectations regarding the national and even the global society. For example, the expected implications of environmental degradation; the relative competitiveness and productivity of the U.S. economy; or expected changes in the population’s composition in terms of age, gender, longevity, education, health, and income all might affect judgments about the government’s financial condition.
181. Information about financial condition can be conveyed in a variety of schedules, notes, projections, and narrative disclosures. Among the most important of these is management’s “discussion and analysis” of known trends, demands, commitments, events, and uncertainties. For federal reporting entities, management’s discussion and analysis might address such topics as
- budgetary compliance;
 - internal control systems;
 - capital resources and investments;
 - service efforts, accomplishments, and results of operations; and
 - the reasonably possible future impact of known trends, risks, demands, commitments, events, or uncertainties that may affect future operations.¹⁵
182. Increasingly, managers and investors in the private sector are attending to other factors that may sometimes be useful indicators of an entity’s financial condition, including such intangible factors as the quality of the entity’s

¹⁵Such a discussion and analysis is required in federal financial reports prepared pursuant to the CFO Act of 1990. In these reports, the discussion and analysis is referred to as the “overview” section. OMB Bulletin 92-03 provides guidance on preparing the overview section.

Concepts 1

-
- information and analysis capabilities,
 - strategic planning,
 - human resource development and management, and
 - constituent satisfaction.

Similar factors may be relevant for many federal reporting entities.

Kinds Of Financial Information Needed And Provided

183. The information produced by these accounting processes supports the overall reporting process. Traditionally, the items of information included in financial statements are classified in various “elements” of financial reporting, such as “assets,” “liabilities,” “revenues,” or “expenses.” In future projects, the FASAB may consider the definition of elements of federal financial reporting. For the purposes of this Statement of Concepts, however, it is not necessary to do so. It is sufficient to note that needed financial information identified by some current and potential users of federal financial reports can be classified under six broad headings:

- information on the sources and uses of budgetary resources,
- information about operations and the related resources,
- information about the government’s assets,
- information about the government’s liabilities and financial responsibilities,
- information that addresses concerns with the future, and
- Information that discloses the levels of financial controls.

184. Examples and further discussion of such information needs are provided in appendix B.

How This Information Flows Into Financial Reports

185. The core and environmental financial information, often supplemented with information from other sources, is the basis for a variety of general purpose and special purpose reports. For this reason, figure 1 culminates with the preparation of useful reports. A direct relationship exists between the accounting and reporting processes both for *general purpose* financial reports and for *budget execution* reports. The dotted line in figure 1 leading to other kinds of reports emphasizes that other kinds of information are often more heavily involved in producing them. Accounting contributes to these reports but has less influence over the nature, scope, and content of them. (Appendix C lists selected federal reports that are regularly prepared.)

Concepts 1

Relationship Of Financial Reporting To Budgeting

186. “The budget” is a broad term that may include, among other things, a projection of spending authorities and means of financing them for a future period and a report of the actual spending and associated financing for a past period. The FASAB’s recommendations may influence the reporting of actual budgetary data.
187. The Budget of the United States Government is the most widely recognized and used financial report of the federal government. The budget process is the government’s principal mechanism for reaching agreement on goals, for allocating resources among competing uses, and for assessing the government’s fiscal effects on economic stability and growth. Most attention is paid to these future-oriented roles of the budget.
188. Budget execution is designed to control and track tax receipts and the use of resources according to the purposes for which budget authority was approved. Actual receipts, obligations, and outlays are recorded by account, as is the status of budgetary resources at the end of each fiscal year.
189. Budgetary measurement is designed to assist in the control and allocation of resources by showing the cash outlays implied by each decision when the decision is made. In some cases, the budget now also includes accruals for costs in advance of the required cash outlay. Budgetary concepts are under continual review. They may be changed by law or, after consultation with the Congress, in the annual revision of OMB Circular A-11, “Preparation and Submission of Budget Estimates.”
190. The Board’s authority does not extend to recommending budgetary standards or budgetary concepts, but the Board is committed to providing reliable accounting information that supports budget planning and formulation. The Board also supports efforts to ensure the accuracy and reliability of reporting on the budget.
191. The Board’s own focus is on developing generally accepted accounting standards for reporting on the financial operations, financial position, and financial condition of the federal government and its component entities and other useful financial information. This implies a variety of measures of costs and other information that complements the information available in the budget. Together with budgetary reports, these reports will provide a more comprehensive and insightful understanding of the government’s financial position, results of operations, and financial condition than either set of reports alone.

2. STEWARDSHIP: TOWARD A FEDERAL BALANCE SHEET

Introduction

This chapter presents a framework for describing the financial condition of the Federal Government and its performance as a steward of publicly owned assets. Although the tables presented below are similar in some ways to a business's balance sheet, they are not the same. The Government's sovereign powers have no counterparts in the business world, and its resources and responsibilities are broader than the assets and liabilities found on a conventional balance sheet. For this reason, it is not possible to judge how well the Government is discharging its stewardship obligations simply from an examination of its own books. A review of the Government's contribution to national welfare and security is also needed.

Differences between Government and business accounting, and the serious limitations in the available data, argue for caution in interpreting the material presented below. Conclusions based on this presentation are necessarily tentative and subject to future revision as the estimating methods are improved and better data become available. The presentation consists of three components:

- The first, summarized in Table 2-1, shows what the Federal Government owns and what it owes. In this table, these assets and liabilities are strictly defined. Assets are limited to the Government's physical and financial possessions. Liabilities are the result of past Government actions that have resulted in binding commitments to make future payments.
- The second component consists of Federal budget projections indicating possible future paths for the balance between Federal resources and responsibilities.¹
- The final component is intended to present ways in which Federal activities contribute to social and economic well-being. Table 2-3 shows how Federal investments have contributed to national wealth. Table 2-4 offers a set of economic and social indicators that are affected to a greater or lesser degree by Government actions. In the future other tables showing Government-wide performance measures could be added.

The Federal Government does not have a single bottom line that would reveal its financial status in a glance, but the tables and charts shown here can contribute to a balanced view of that condition and the Government's stewardship of its resources. Currently, the Government's liabilities arising from its past activities exceed the value of the assets in its possession.

The gap has widened markedly over the last decade or more. While the Federal Government's financial position has declined, the Nation's wealth has continued to rise, and the Government's net liabilities amount to only about 6 percent of total wealth. Furthermore, according to current budget projections, Federal debt, the main contributor to the rise in net liabilities, will expand less rapidly over the next few years than it has over the past decade or more. The real level of Federal debt is projected to rise at a rate of about 2 percent per year compared with an 8 percent rate of increase from 1980 to 1994.

Relationship with FASAB Objectives

The framework presented here meets one of the four objectives² of Federal financial reporting recommended by the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board and adopted for use by the Federal Government in September 1993. This Stewardship objective says:

Federal financial reporting should assist report users in assessing the impact on the country of the Government's operations and investments for the period and how, as a result, the Government's and the Nation's financial conditions have changed and may change in the future. Federal financial reporting should provide information that helps the reader to determine:

- 3a. Whether the Government's financial position improved or deteriorated over the period.
- 3b. Whether future budgetary resources will likely be sufficient to sustain public services and to meet obligations as they come due.
- 3c. Whether Government operations have contributed to the Nation's current and future well-being.

The Board is in the process of developing guidance as to the specific displays that would meet this Objective and the accounting standards for use in such statements and schedules. This experimental presentation explores one possible approach for meeting the Objective at the Government-wide level.

What Can Be Learned from a Balance Sheet Approach

The budget is an essential tool for allocating resources within the Federal Government, but the standard budget presentation, with its focus on annual outlays, receipts, and the deficit, does not provide sufficient information for a full analysis of the Government's financial and investment decisions. Additional information about the stocks of Federal assets and liabilities can be useful as well. It is also important to examine the effects of Government financial decisions on the private sector and State and local governments. This is especially true for Federal investments which often

¹ In this section, Table 2-2 also shows the actuarial balances for the major social insurance programs and how they have changed in the past year.

² *Objectives of Federal Financial Reporting*. Statement of Federal Financial Accounting Concepts Number 1, September 2, 1993. The other three objectives relate to budgetary integrity, operating performance, and systems and controls.

Chart 2-1. A BALANCE SHEET PRESENTATION FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

ASSETS / RESOURCES		LIABILITIES / RESPONSIBILITIES
<p style="text-align: center;">Federal Assets</p> <p>Financial Assets Gold and Foreign Exchange Other Monetary Assets Mortgages and Other Loans Less Expected Loan Losses Other Financial Assets</p> <p>Physical Assets Fixed Reproducible Capital Defense Nondefense Inventories Non-reproducible Capital Land Mineral Rights</p>	Federal Governmental Assets and Liabilities (Table 2.1)	<p style="text-align: center;">Federal Liabilities</p> <p>Financial Liabilities Currency and Bank Reserves Debt Held by the Public Miscellaneous Guarantees and Insurance Liabilities Deposit Insurance Pension Benefit Guarantees Loan Guarantees Other Insurance Federal Pension Liabilities</p> <p>Net Balance</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Resources / Receipts</p> <p>Projected Receipts</p> <p>Addendum: Real GDP Projections</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Responsibilities / Outlays</p> <p>Discretionary Outlays Mandatory Outlays Social Security Health Programs Other Programs Net Interest</p> <p>Deficit</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">National Assets / Resources</p> <p>Federally Owned Physical Assets State & Local Physical Assets Federal Contribution Privately Owned Physical Assets Education Capital Federal Contribution R & D Capital Federal Contribution</p>	National Wealth (Table 2.3)	<p style="text-align: center;">National Needs / Conditions</p> <p>Indicators of economic, social, educational, and environmental conditions to be used as a guide to Government investment and management.</p>

generate returns that flow mainly to households, private businesses or other levels of government rather than back to the Federal Treasury. Measurements that correct for inflation are also essential to provide a clear picture of the current value of Government assets and liabilities and to permit meaningful comparisons over time. The framework presented here is a first step toward filling some of these needs.

The Government's sovereign powers to tax, regulate commerce, and set monetary policy give it resources that no private enterprise possesses. Although these resources are not assets in a conventional sense, they need to be considered in any complete review of the Government's financial condition. On the liabilities side, while there are some Government obligations, such as Treasury notes, that have clear counterparts in the business world, other Government obligations have no obvious analogues in business accounting. For example, the Government's obligation to promote the general welfare has led in the twentieth century to the establishment of a broad array of social welfare programs. These programs are in the midst of an intense review with the dual objectives of improving effectiveness and considering the need for realigning Federal, State, and local responsibilities. Even so it is reasonable to expect that they will continue in some form in the future, and that they will require future Federal funding. Such obligations, however, are not legally binding liabilities, and they would not be included on a business balance sheet.

Furthermore, almost all of the broader Federal resources and responsibilities are subject to change through the political process, and future decisions by Congress and the President are likely to alter their value. In a financial sense, the discounted present value of such obligations is much more uncertain than is the current value of the official Government debt, or even the value of Government-owned assets. This is another reason for keeping such political and moral obligations

separate from the Government's liabilities strictly defined.

The best way to see how future resources line up with future responsibilities is to project the Federal budget forward in time. The budget offers a comprehensive picture of Federal receipts and spending, and by projecting it forward one can discover the implications of current and past policy decisions. But the budget does not show whether the public is receiving value for its tax dollars. Knowing that would require performance measures for government programs, and broad statistical information about those conditions in our economy and society for which government is wholly or partly responsible. Some of these data are currently available but much more could be developed.

The presentation that follows consists of a series of tables and charts. No one of these is "the Government balance sheet," but all of them together can serve some of the functions of a balance sheet. The schematic diagram, Figure 2.1, shows how they fit together. The tables and charts should be viewed as an ensemble, the main elements of which can be grouped together in two broad categories—assets/resources and liabilities/responsibilities.

- Reading down the left-hand side of the diagram shows the range of Federal resources, including assets the Government owns, tax receipts it can expect to collect, and national wealth that provides the base for Government revenues.
- Reading down the right-hand side reveals the full range of Federal obligations and responsibilities, beginning with Government's acknowledged liabilities based on past actions, such as the debt held by the public, and going on to include future budget outlays. This column includes a preliminary set of indicators of the Nation's well-being. These might indicate areas where Government activity might require adjustment either through new investment or through reductions or reallocations of existing resources.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Table 2-1 summarizes what the Government owes as a result of its past operations along with the value of what it owns, for a number of years beginning in 1960. The values of assets and liabilities are measured in terms of constant FY 1994 dollars. For all of this period, Government liabilities have exceeded the value of assets, but until the early 1980s the disparity was relatively small, and for many years it deteriorated only gradually.

In the late 1970s, a speculative run-up in the prices of oil, gold, and other real assets temporarily boosted Federal asset values, but since then they have declined.³ Currently, the total value of Federal assets is

estimated to be only 14 percent greater in real terms than it was in 1960. Meanwhile, Federal liabilities have increased by 154 percent in real terms. The sharp decline in the Federal net asset position that began in the 1980s was due to the large Federal budget deficits that began at that time along with the drop in asset values. Currently, the net excess of liabilities over assets is about \$2,900 billion or \$11,000 per capita.

Assets

The assets in Table 2-1 reflect a complete listing of physical resources owned by the Federal Government. They correspond to items that would appear on a normal balance sheet, but they do not constitute an exhaustive catalogue of Federal resources. The Govern-

³This temporary improvement highlights the importance of the other tables in this presentation. What was good for the Federal Government as an asset holder was not necessarily favorable to the economy. The decline in inflation in the early 1980s reversed the speculative runup in gold and other commodity prices. This reduced the balance of Federal net assets,

but it was good for the economy.

TABLE 2-1. GOVERNMENT ASSETS AND LIABILITIES *

(As of the end of the fiscal year, in billions of 1994 dollars)

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1992	1993	1994
ASSETS										
Financial assets:										
Gold and foreign exchange	103	72	60	132	323	156	197	176	175	175
Other monetary assets	39	55	32	15	37	23	30	38	38	30
Mortgages and other loans	128	161	205	203	274	332	267	250	224	203
Less expected loan losses	-1	-3	-4	-9	-16	-16	-17	-21	-23	-25
Other financial assets	61	80	65	65	83	106	161	218	197	185
Subtotal	329	365	358	405	702	603	638	661	611	567
Fixed reproducible capital:										
Defense	867	870	853	685	548	630	708	743	755	744
Nondefense	154	181	192	217	207	234	235	237	238	239
Inventories	264	225	206	181	217	246	213	187	174	163
Nonreproducible capital:										
Land	85	117	147	227	289	310	305	249	234	226
Mineral rights	307	283	234	325	591	665	443	396	379	351
Subtotal	1,677	1,676	1,631	1,636	1,851	2,086	1,904	1,811	1,780	1,723
Total assets	2,006	2,041	1,989	2,041	2,554	2,689	2,541	2,472	2,391	2,290
LIABILITIES										
Financial liabilities:										
Currency and bank reserves	230	249	272	274	275	289	347	367	394	419
Debt held by the public	1,001	972	813	790	1,005	1,764	2,407	2,835	2,994	3,076
Miscellaneous	60	61	58	53	59	67	93	70	69	67
Subtotal	1,292	1,282	1,143	1,117	1,339	2,120	2,847	3,272	3,457	3,562
Insurance liabilities:										
Deposit insurance					2	8	64	3	-29	-8
Pension benefit guarantees				41	29	40	39	47	61	30
Loan guarantees			2	6	12	10	14	25	28	30
Other insurance	31	28	22	19	25	16	18	18	24	26
Subtotal	31	28	24	67	68	74	135	92	84	78
Federal pension liabilities	751	938	1,096	1,226	1,683	1,651	1,575	1,574	1,523	1,532
Total liabilities	2,075	2,249	2,262	2,410	3,091	3,845	4,557	4,939	5,064	5,172
Balance	-68	-208	-273	-369	-537	-1,157	-2,016	-2,467	-2,674	-2,882
Per capita (in 1994 dollars)	-379	-1,070	-1,333	-1,710	-2,352	-4,837	-8,042	-9,628	-10,323	-11,015
Ratio to GDP (in percent)	-2.7	-6.6	-7.5	-9.0	-11.2	-21.1	-32.5	-38.7	-40.7	-42.1

* This table shows assets and liabilities for the Government as a whole, including the Federal Reserve System. Therefore, it does not break out separately the assets held in certain Government accounts, such as social security, that are the obligation of specific Government agencies. Estimates for 1994 are extrapolated in some cases.

ment's most important financial resource, its ability to tax, is not reflected.

Financial Assets: At the end of 1994, the Federal Government's holdings of financial assets amounted to about \$570 billion. Government-held mortgages and other loans (measured in constant dollars) reached a peak in the mid-1980s. Since then, Federal loans have declined. The holdings of mortgages, in particular, have declined sharply as the holdings acquired from failed Savings and Loan institutions have been liquidated.

The face value of mortgages and other loans overstates their economic worth. OMB estimates that the discounted present value of future losses on these loans is about \$25 billion as of 1994. These estimated losses are subtracted from the face value of outstanding loans to obtain a better estimate of their economic worth.

Over time, variations in the price of gold have accounted for major swings in this category. Since 1980, gold prices have fallen by 40 percent and the real value

of U.S. gold and foreign exchange holdings have dropped by 46 percent.

Fixed Reproducible Capital: The Federal Government is a major investor in physical capital. Government-owned stocks of fixed reproducible capital amounted to almost \$1.0 trillion in 1994. About three-quarters of this capital is in the form of military equipment and structures. From 1960 to 1981, the net stock of defense capital fell as a share of GDP, but since 1981 until the last two years, the ratio held steady at around 12 percent. In the last two years, the reduction in defense purchases following the end of the Cold War has caused a decline in the ratio of these stocks to GDP of about 1 percentage point.

Inventories: The effect of the slowdown in defense purchases has been more noticeable for inventories. Data on Federal inventories are maintained by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), Department of Commerce. Since 1990, Federal inventories have declined

by more than 20 percent in real terms, accounted for entirely by a drop in military stocks.

Non-reproducible Capital: The Government owns significant amounts of land and mineral deposits. There are no official estimates of the market value of these holdings. Researchers in the private sector have estimated what they are worth and these estimates are extrapolated in Table 2-1. Since the late 1980s, private land values have fallen, and it is assumed here that federal lands have shared in this decline. Oil prices have fluctuated but are lower now than four years ago. These shifts have pulled down the value of Federal mineral deposits.

Total Assets: The total real value of Government assets has declined somewhat over the last 10 years, principally because of declines in the real prices of gold, land, and minerals. At the end of 1994, the Government's holdings of all assets were worth about \$2.3 trillion.

Liabilities

The liabilities shown in Table 2-1 are analogous to a business corporation's liabilities and include public debt, trade credit, and pension obligations owed to Federal workers. Other potential claims on Federal financial resources are not reflected.

Financial Liabilities: These amounted to about \$3.6 trillion at the end of 1994. The largest component was the Federal debt held by the public, amounting to almost \$3.1 trillion. This measure of Federal debt is net of the holdings of the Federal Reserve System, which exceeded \$350 billion in 1994. Although an independent agency, the Federal Reserve is part of the Federal Government, and its assets and liabilities are included here in the Federal totals.

In addition to debt held by the public, the Government's financial liabilities include \$420 billion in currency and bank reserves, which are mainly obligations of the Federal Reserve System, and about \$70 billion in miscellaneous liabilities.

Guarantees and Insurance Liabilities: The Federal Government has contingent liabilities arising from loan guarantees and insurance programs. When the Government guarantees a loan or offers insurance, the initial outlays may be small or, if a fee is charged, they may even be negative, but the risk of future outlays associated with such commitments can be huge. The deposit insurance programs, for example, have experienced very large losses recently following many years in which these programs had no budgetary cost in excess of premiums.

In the past, the cost of such risks was not recognized until after a loss was realized. In the last few years, however, techniques have been developed which permit estimates to be made of the accruing cost from commitments that risk future outlays. These estimates are reported in Table 2-1. They amounted to about \$78 billion in 1994. The resolution of the many failures in the Savings and Loan and banking industries have helped to reduce the accumulated losses in this category.

Federal Pension Liabilities: The Federal Government owes pension benefits to its retired workers and to current employees who will eventually retire. The amount of these liabilities is large. As of 1994, the discounted present value of the benefits is estimated to have been around \$1.5 trillion.⁴

The Balance of Net Liabilities

The balance between Federal liabilities and Federal assets has deteriorated over the past decade at a rapid rate. In 1980, the negative balance was less than 11 percent of GDP. Currently, it is estimated to be over 40 percent. Although the Government need not maintain a positive balance, because the range of Government resources extends beyond the conventional assets shown in Table 2-1, continuation of this trend would be worrisome.

THE BALANCE OF RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The data summarized in Table 2-1 are useful in showing some of the consequences of the Government's past policies, but the Government's continuing commitments to provide public services are not reflected in this table, nor can the Government's broader resources be displayed in a table limited to assets that it owns. A better way to examine the balance between future Government obligations and resources is by projecting the budget.

The 1993 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act reduced the Federal deficit on a cumulative basis by over \$500 billion. This is a significant improvement. As a result, the deficit preserves a relatively stable ratio to GDP declining from around 2.7 percent in 1995 to 2.1 percent

in 2000, and below 2 percent in the following decade. For the period beyond the year 2000, however, the budget outlook is highly uncertain. Demographic trends that will begin to assert themselves early in the next century promise to raise the Federal cost of social security and other benefits for the elderly.

Some future claims on budgetary resources deserve special emphasis because of their importance in individual retirement planning. These claims are highlighted in Table 2-2. The Social Security Trustees present an annual report on the balance in the Old Age Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance (OASI and DI) Trust Funds based on a 75-year projection of future costs and benefits. Table 2-2 shows how these projec-

⁴These pension liabilities are expressed as the actuarial present value of benefits accrued-to-date based on past and projected salaries. The expected costs of retiree health benefits are not included. The 1994 liability is extrapolated from recent trends.

TABLE 2-2. CHANGE IN 75-YEAR ACTUARIAL BALANCE FOR OASDI AND HI TRUST FUNDS
(INTERMEDIATE ASSUMPTIONS)
 (As a percent of taxable payroll)

	OASI	DI	OASDI	HI
Actuarial balance in 1993 report	-0.97	-0.49	-1.46	-5.11
Changes in balance due to changes in:				
Valuation period	-0.05	-0.00	-0.05	-0.13
Economic and demographic assumptions	-0.17	-0.02	-0.18	-0.02
Disability assumptions	0.00	-0.11	-0.11	0.00
Legislation	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.31
Methods	-0.27	-0.04	-0.31	0.00
Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.19
Total changes	-0.49	-0.17	-0.66	0.97
Actuarial balance in 1993 report	-1.46	-0.66	-2.13	-4.14

tions changed between 1993 and 1994. The table also reports similar projections for Medicare's hospital insurance (HI) trust fund.

It is estimated that the balance in the combined OASDI fund worsened by an estimated 0.66 percent of payroll in 1994. These changes were mainly the result of adjustments to the estimating assumptions and technical corrections. The balance in the HI trust fund improved by 0.97 percent of payroll as the result of legislative changes that increased the expected receipts from the HI portion of the payroll tax. Even with this improvement, the HI trust fund is expected to run out

of resources within the next decade, and the trust fund remains in deficit on a 75-year basis.

Over the past decade, the outlook for both the OASDI and the HI trust funds has deteriorated markedly. At the time of the 1983 social security reforms, the system was temporarily restored to actuarial balance. Since then, downward adjustments in the economic outlook and technical revisions have brought about a deterioration in the projected balances. Currently, the mid-range projections of the actuaries imply that social security will reach a point in the next century after which outgo permanently exceeds income. Medicare reaches a similar point even sooner.

NATIONAL WEALTH AND FEDERAL INVESTMENTS

Unlike a private corporation, the Federal Government routinely invests in ways that do not add directly to its assets. For example, Federal grants are frequently used to fund capital projects that involve investment at the State or local level of government for highways and other purposes. Such investments can be valuable nationally, but they are not owned by the Federal Government.

The Federal Government also invests in education and research and development (R&D). These outlays contribute to future productivity and are in that sense analogous to an investment in physical capital. Indeed, economists have computed stocks of human and knowledge capital to reflect the accumulation of such investments. Nonetheless, these capital stocks are not owned by the Federal Government, nor would they appear on a business balance sheet.

Table 2-3 presents a national balance sheet. It includes estimates of total national wealth classified in three categories: physical assets, education capital, and R&D capital. The Federal Government has made contributions to each of these categories, and these contributions are also shown in the table.

Data in this table are especially uncertain, because of the assumptions needed to prepare the estimates. Overall, the Federal contribution to the current level of national wealth is about 8 percent. Figure 2.3 illus-

trates the relative contribution of different categories of wealth to the national total.

Physical Assets

These include factories machinery, office buildings, residential structures, land, and government's physical assets such as military hardware and highways. Automobiles and consumer appliances are also included in this category. The total amount of such capital is vast, amounting to around \$24 trillion in 1994. By comparison, GDP was less than \$7 trillion.

The Federal Government's contribution to this stock of capital includes its own physical assets plus \$0.5 trillion in accumulated grants to State and local governments for capital projects. The Federal Government has financed about one-fifth of the physical capital held by other levels of government.

Education Capital

Economists have developed the concept of human capital to reflect the notion that individuals and society invest in people as well as in physical assets. Investment in education is a good example of how human capital is accumulated.

For this table an estimate has been made of the stock of capital represented by the Nation's investment in education. The estimate is based on the cost of replacing the years of schooling embodied in the U.S. population aged 16 and over. The idea is to measure

TABLE 2-3. NATIONAL WEALTH
(As of the end of the fiscal year, in trillions of 1994 dollars)

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1992	1993	1994
ASSETS										
Publicly owned physical assets:										
Structures and equipment	2.1	2.4	2.9	3.4	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9
Federally owned or financed	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Federally owned	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0
Grants to state and local governments	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Funded by state and local governments	1.0	1.2	1.6	2.1	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.4
Other Federal assets	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.9	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.9
Subtotal	2.8	3.1	3.5	4.3	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.8
Privately owned physical assets:										
Reproducible assets	5.7	6.4	8.0	10.2	12.8	13.2	14.6	14.6	14.9	15.3
Residential structures	2.0	2.3	2.8	3.6	4.8	4.8	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.7
Nonresidential plant and equipment	2.0	2.3	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.4	5.8	5.8	5.9	6.0
Inventories	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2
Consumer durables	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.8	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5
Land	2.0	2.4	2.7	3.4	5.1	5.7	5.7	4.7	4.4	4.3
Subtotal	7.7	8.8	10.6	13.6	17.9	19.0	20.3	19.3	19.3	19.6
Education capital:										
Federally financed	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8
Financed from other sources	6.4	8.2	10.6	12.0	14.7	17.6	22.4	23.8	24.8	25.5
Subtotal	6.4	8.3	10.9	12.3	15.2	18.1	23.0	24.6	25.6	26.3
Research and development capital:										
Federally financed R&D	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8
R&D Financed from other sources	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0
Subtotal	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.2	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8
Total assets	17.3	20.7	25.8	31.1	39.1	43.2	49.6	50.2	51.4	52.4
LIABILITIES:										
Net claims of foreigners on U.S.	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.5	-0.2	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.8
Balance	17.5	20.9	26.0	31.3	39.5	43.4	49.4	49.7	50.7	51.6
Per capita (thousands of 1994 dollars)	96.6	107.7	127.0	144.8	173.1	181.7	196.9	194.0	195.9	197.2
ADDENDA:										
Total Federally funded capital	2.1	2.4	2.6	3.0	3.6	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Percent of national wealth	12.2	11.2	10.1	9.5	9.0	8.9	8.1	8.0	7.9	7.7

how much it would cost to reeducate the U.S. workforce at today's prices.

This is a crude measure, but it can provide a rough order of magnitude. According to this measure, the stock of education capital amounted to \$26 trillion in 1994, of which about 3 percent was financed by the Federal Government. The total exceeds the Nation's stock of physical capital. The main investors in education capital have been State and local governments, parents, and the students themselves who forego earning opportunities in order to acquire education.

Research and Development Capital

Research and development can also be thought of as an investment, because R&D represents a current expenditure for which there is a prospect of future returns. After adjusting for depreciation, the flow of R&D investment can be added up to provide an estimate of the current R&D stock.⁵ That stock is estimated to have been about \$1.8 trillion in 1994. Although this

is a large amount of research, it is a relatively small portion of total National wealth. About half of this stock was funded by the Federal Government.

Liabilities

When considering the debts of the Nation as a whole, the debts that Americans owe to one another cancel out, and the only debts that remain are those owed to foreigners. This point is often overlooked in discussions of debt. While debt is a burden for the borrower, it is a source of income for the lender. In the case of debt owed to foreigners, there is a net obligation and the interest paid on that debt is a net subtraction from our national income. America's foreign debt has been increasing rapidly in recent years, as a consequence of the U.S. trade deficit, but the size of this debt is small compared with America's total stock of assets. It amounted to about 1½ percent of the total in 1994.

Most of the Federal debt held by the public is owned by Americans, so it does not appear in Table 2-3. Only that portion of the Federal debt held by foreigners is

⁵ R&D depreciates in the sense that the economic value of applied research tends to decline with the passage of time and movement in the technological frontier.

included. Even so, it is of interest to compare the imbalance between Federal assets and liabilities with national wealth. The government will have to service the debt or repay it, and its ability to do so without disrupting the economy will depend in part on the wealth of the private sector. Currently, the Federal net asset imbalance, as estimated in Table 2-1, amounts to about 6 percent of total national wealth.

Trends in National Wealth

The net stock of wealth in the United States at the end of 1994 was about \$52 trillion. Since 1980 it has increased in real terms at an annual rate of 1.9 percent per year—about half the 4.2 percent rate it averaged from 1960 to 1980. (All comparisons are in terms of constant 1994 dollars.)

Public capital formation slowed down markedly between the two periods. The real value of the net stock of publicly owned physical capital was actually lower in 1994 than in 1980—\$4.8 trillion versus \$5.0 trillion in the earlier year. Since 1980, Federal grants to State and local governments for capital projects have increased at an average rate of 1.5 percent per year compared with 7.0 percent in the 1960s and 1970s.

Private capital formation in physical assets has also grown more slowly since 1980. The net stock of nonresidential plant and equipment grew 1.3 percent per year from 1980 to 1994 compared with 4.6 percent in the 1960s and 1970s, and the stock of business inventories actually declined. Overall, the stock of privately owned physical capital grew at an average rate of just 0.7 percent per year between 1980 and 1994.

The accumulation of education capital, as measured here, also slowed down in the 1980s, but not nearly as much. It grew at an average rate of 4.4 percent per year in the 1960s and 1970s, about the same as the average rate of growth in private physical capital during the same period. Since 1980, education capital has grown at a 4.0 percent annual rate. This reflects the extra resources devoted to schooling in this period, and the fact that such resources were rising in relative value. R&D stocks grew faster than both physical and education capital in the 1980s, but at a slower rate than in earlier decades.

Other Federal Influences on Economic Growth

Many Federal policies contributed to the slowdown in capital formation that occurred after 1980. Federal investment policies obviously were important, but the Federal Government also contributes to wealth indirectly. Monetary and fiscal policies affect the rate and direction of capital formation. Regulatory and tax policies affect how capital is invested, as do the Federal Government's credit assistance policies.

One important channel of influence is the Federal budget deficit, which determines the size of the Federal Government's borrowing requirement. Smaller deficits in the 1980s would have resulted in a smaller gap between Federal liabilities and assets than is shown in Table 2-1. It is also likely that, had the increase

in Federal debt since 1980 been avoided, a significant share of these funds would have gone into private investment. National wealth might have been 2 to 4 percent larger in 1994 had fiscal policy avoided the buildup in the debt.

Government Performance Measures and Indicators of Well-Being

Unlike private business, Government typically lacks a direct measure of the value of its services. As a result, the costs of Government are reported while the benefits often are not. For this reason, it can be difficult to evaluate how well Government agencies are performing their functions. With passage of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, Federal agencies will be selecting performance measures with which to monitor outputs and outcomes of their activities.⁶

Examples of performance measures for agency outputs would include:

- Numbers of loans extended for Federal credit programs.
- The timeliness with which social security checks are issued.
- Number of health inspections by the Public Health Service.

Measures of outcomes show how such outputs affect people's lives. Examples might include:

- The number of households lifted out of poverty by social security.
- Lives saved or losses prevented through inspection and control measures.

As appropriate performance measures are developed, it should be possible to integrate them with reports on the cost of Government activities to create a system of financial reporting that would be more analogous to private sector accounting statements.

Indicators of Well-Being: There are certain broad objectives for which the Government is partly or fully responsible. Especially important are the Government's role in fostering healthy economic conditions, promoting health and social welfare, protecting the environment and maintaining national security. Table 2-4 offers a rough idea of information that would be useful in assessing how well the Federal Government has been doing in promoting some of these general objectives.

The indicators shown here are only a limited subset drawn from the vast array of data available on economic and social conditions in the United States. In choosing indicators for this table, priority was given to measures that were consistently available over an extended period. Such indicators make it easier to draw valid comparisons and evaluate trends. In some cases, this meant, however, choosing indicators with significant limitations. In the case of national security no indicators were chosen. We expect to improve the selection of indicators and to add to it in future years.

⁶ Performance measures for Government agencies were given a strong endorsement in the report of the National Performance Review, *Creating a Government that Works Better & Costs Less*, (September 1993).

TABLE 2-4. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INDICATORS
(Calendar year)

General Categories	Specific Measures	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993
Economic:											
Living Standards	Real GDP per person (1987 dollars)	10,951	12,766	14,089	14,952	16,620	17,988	19,636	19,306	19,521	19,908
	Median Household Income (1993 dollars)										
	All Households	22,698	26,455	30,558	30,340	31,095	31,717	33,105	31,962	31,553	31,241
	Married Couple Households	26,263	30,587	36,663	38,091	40,486	41,617	43,951	43,340	43,170	43,005
	Female Householder, No Husband Present	12,933	14,490	17,302	17,087	17,744	17,812	18,177	17,195	17,222	17,443
	Income Share of Middle Three Quintiles (%)	.....	.....	52.7	52.1	51.6	53.9	49.5	49.7	49.4	48.2
	Poverty Rate (%) ¹	22.2	17.3	12.6	12.3	13.0	14.0	13.5	14.2	14.8	15.1
Economic Security	Misery Index (Inflation + Unemployment)	7.2	6.1	10.6	17.6	20.6	10.8	10.9	10.9	10.4	9.8
	Civilian Unemployment (%)	5.5	4.5	4.9	8.5	7.1	7.2	5.5	6.7	7.4	6.8
	CPI-U (% Change)	1.7	1.6	5.7	9.1	13.5	3.6	5.4	4.2	3.0	3.0
Employment Prospects	Increase in Total Payroll Employment (mil)	-0.5	2.9	-0.5	0.4	0.2	2.5	0.3	-0.9	1.2	2.3
	Managerial or Professional Jobs (% of total)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	24.1	26.0	26.5	26.5	27.1
Wealth Creation	Net National Saving Rate (% of NNP)	8.2	10.4	7.2	5.3	6.3	4.3	2.4	2.4	1.2	2.1
Innovation	Patents Issued to U.S. Residents (thousands)	42.0	53.6	50.1	51.4	40.8	43.4	53.0	57.8	58.7	60.9
	Multifactor Productivity (1987=100)	70.9	83.0	87.4	92.8	96.2	98.9	100.0	98.9	100.8	.....
Social:											
Safe Communities	Violent Crime Rate (per 100,000 population) ²	160	199	364	482	597	557	732	758	758	746
	Murder Rate (per 100,000 population)	5.1	5.1	7.8	9.6	10.2	7.9	9.4	9.8	9.3	9.5
Health and Illness	Infant Mortality (per 1000 Live Births)	26.0	24.7	20.0	16.1	12.6	10.6	9.2	8.9	8.5	.....
	Low Birthweight (less than 2,500 gms) Babies (%)	7.7	8.3	7.9	7.4	6.8	6.8	7.0	7.1	.....	.....
	Life Expectancy at birth (years)	69.7	70.2	70.8	72.6	73.7	74.7	75.4	75.5	75.7	.....
	Cigarette Smokers (% of population 18 and older)	.....	42.4	39.5	36.4	33.2	30.1	25.5	25.6	.....	.....
	Bed Disability Days (average per person)	6.0	6.2	6.1	6.6	7.0	6.1	6.2	6.5	6.3	.....
Learning	High School Graduates (% of population 25 and older)	44.6	49.0	55.2	62.5	68.6	73.9	77.6	78.4	79.4	80.2
	College Graduates (% of population 25 and older)	8.4	9.4	11.0	13.9	17.0	19.4	21.3	21.4	21.4	21.9
	National Assessment of Educational Progress ³										
	Mathematics	.....	.....	.....	304	298	302	305	.....	307	.....
	Science	.....	.....	305	296	283	288	290	.....	294	.....
Participation	Voting for President (% eligible population)	62.8	.....	.....	.....	52.6	.....	.....	.....	55.2	.....
	Individual Charitable Giving per capital (1994 dollars)	194	233	280	296	323	340	414	412	422	.....
Environment:											
Air Quality	Population Living in Counties with Ozone Levels Exceeding the Standard (millions)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	76	63	70	43	.....
Water Quality	Population Served by Secondary Treatment or Better (millions)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	134	154	157	159	161

¹The poverty rate does not reflect noncash government transfers such as Medicaid or food stamps.

²Not all crimes are reported, and the fraction that go unreported may have varied over time.

³Dates shown in table for national educational attainment are approximate.

The individual measures in this table are influenced in varying degrees by many Government policies and programs, as well as by external factors beyond the Government's control. In general, they are not outcome

indicators, because they do not measure the results of Government activities, but they do provide a quantitative measure of the progress or lack of progress

in reaching some of the ultimate values that government policy is intended to promote.

Such a table can serve two functions. First, it highlights areas where the Federal Government might need to modify its current practices or consider new approaches when there are clear signs of deteriorating conditions. Second, the table provides a context for evaluating other data on Government activities. For example, Government actions that weaken its own financial position may be appropriate when they promote a broader social objective.

An example of this occurs during economic recessions when reductions in tax collections lead to increased Government borrowing. This deterioration in the Federal balance sheet provides an automatic stabilizer for the private sector. State government, local government and private budgets are strengthened by allowing the Federal budget to go deeper into deficit. More stringent Federal budgetary controls could be used to hold down Federal borrowing during such periods but at the risk of aggravating the downturn.

The Government cannot avoid making trade-offs because of its size and the broad ranging effects of its actions. Monitoring these effects and incorporating them in the Government's policy making is a major challenge.

An Interactive Analytical Framework

No single framework can encompass all of the factors that affect the financial condition of the Federal Government. Nor can any framework serve as a substitute for actual analysis. Nevertheless, the framework presented above offers a useful way to examine the financial aspects of Federal policies. Increased Federal support for investment, the reduction in Federal absorption of saving through deficit reduction, and other Administration policies to enhance economic growth are expected to promote national wealth and improve the future financial condition of the Federal Government. As that occurs, the efforts will be clearly revealed in these tables.

TECHNICAL NOTE: SOURCES OF DATA AND METHOD OF ESTIMATING

Federally Owned Assets and Liabilities

Assets

Financial Assets: The source of data is the Federal Reserve Board's Flow-of-Funds Accounts. Two adjustments were made to this data. First, U.S. Government holdings of financial assets were consolidated with the holdings of the monetary authority, i.e., the Federal Reserve System. Second, the gold stock, which is valued in the Flow-of-Funds at a constant historical price, is revalued using the market value for gold.

Physical Assets

Fixed Reproducible Capital: Estimates were developed from the OMB historical data base for physical capital outlays. The data base extends back to 1940 and was supplemented by data from other selected sources for 1915–1939. The source data are in current dollars. To estimate investment flows in constant dollars, it is necessary to deflate the nominal investment series. This was done using BEA price deflators for Federal purchases of durables and structures. These price deflators are available going back as far as 1940. For earlier years, deflators were based on Census Bureau historical statistics for constant price public capital formation. The capital stock series were adjusted for depreciation on a straight-line basis, assuming useful lives of 46 years for water and power projects; 40 years for other direct Federal construction; and 16 years for major nondefense equipment and for defense procurement.

Fixed Nonreproducible Capital: Historical estimates for 1960–1985 were based on estimates in Michael J. Boskin, Marc S. Robinson, and Alan M. Huber, "Government Saving, Capital Formation and Wealth in the United States, 1947–1985," published in *The Measurement of Saving, Investment, and Wealth*, edited by Robert E. Lipsey and Helen Stone Tice (The University

of Chicago Press, 1989). Estimates were updated using changes in the value of private land from the Flow-of-Funds Balance Sheets and in the Producer Price Index for Crude Energy Materials. The Bureau of Economic Analysis is in the process of preparing satellite accounts to accompany the National Income and Product Accounts that will report on changes in mineral deposits for the Nation as a whole, but this work is not yet completed.

Liabilities

Financial Liabilities: The principal source of data is the Federal Reserve's Flow-of-Funds Accounts.

Contingent Liabilities: Sources of data are the OMB Deposit Insurance Model and the OMB Pension Guarantee Model. Historical data on contingent liabilities for deposit insurance were also drawn from the Congressional Budget Office's study, *The Economic Effects of the Savings and Loan Crisis*, issued January 1992.

Pension Liabilities: For 1979–1993, the estimates are the actuarial accrued liabilities as reported in the annual reports for the Civil Service Retirement System, the Federal Employees Retirement System, and the Military Retirement System (adjusted for inflation). Estimates for the years before 1979 are not actuarial; they are extrapolations. The estimate for 1994 is a projection.

National Balance Sheet Data

Publicly Owned Physical Assets: Basic sources of data for the federally owned or financed stocks of capital are the investment flows described elsewhere in the budget. Federal grants for State and local government capital were added together with adjustments for inflation and depreciation in the same way as described above for direct Federal investment. Data for total State and local government capital come from the capital stock data prepared by the BEA.

Privately Owned Physical Assets: Data are from the Flow-of-Funds national balance sheet. Preliminary estimates for 1994 were prepared based on net investment from the National Income and Product Accounts.

Education Capital: The stock of education capital is computed by valuing the cost of replacing the total years of education embodied in the U.S. population 16 years of age and older at the current cost of providing schooling. The estimated cost includes both direct expenditures in the private and public sectors and an estimate of students' foregone earnings, i.e., it reflects the opportunity cost of education.

For this presentation, Federal investment in education capital is a portion of the Federal outlays included in the conduct of education and training. This portion includes direct Federal outlays and grants for elementary, secondary, and vocational education and for higher education. The data exclude Federal outlays for physical capital at educational institutions and for research and development conducted at colleges and universities because these outlays are classified elsewhere as investment in physical capital and investment in R&D capital. The data also exclude outlays under the GI Bill; outlays for graduate and post-graduate education spending in HHS, Defense and Agriculture; and most outlays for vocational training.

Data on investment in education financed from other sources come from educational institution reports on the sources of their funds, published in U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics*. Nominal expenditures were deflated by the implicit price deflator for GDP to convert them to constant dollar values. Education capital is assumed not to depreciate, but to be retired when a person dies. An education capital stock computed using this method with different source data can be found in Walter McMahon, "Relative Returns To Human and Physical Capital in the U.S. and Efficient Investment Strategies," *Economics of Education Review*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1991. The method is described in detail in Walter McMahon, *Investment in Higher Education*, 1974.

Research and Development Capital: The stock of R&D capital financed by the Federal Government was developed from a data base that measures the conduct of R&D. The data exclude Federal outlays for physical

capital used in R&D because such outlays are classified elsewhere as investment in federally financed physical capital. Nominal outlays were deflated using the GDP deflator to convert them to constant dollar values.

Federally funded capital stock estimates were prepared using the perpetual inventory method in which annual investment flows are cumulated to arrive at a capital stock. This stock was adjusted for depreciation by assuming an annual rate of depreciation of 10 percent on the outstanding balance for applied research and development. Basic research is assumed not to depreciate. The 1993 Budget contains additional details on the estimates of the total federally financed R&D stock, as well as its national defense and nondefense components (see Budget for Fiscal Year 1993, January 1992, Part Three, pages 39-40).

A similar method was used to estimate the stock of R&D capital financed from sources other than the Federal Government. The component financed by universities, colleges, and other nonprofit organizations is based on data from the National Science Foundation, *Surveys of Science Resources*. The industry-financed R&D stock component is from that source and from the U.S. Department of Labor, *The Impact of Research and Development on Productivity Growth*, Bulletin 2331, September 1989.

Experimental estimates of R&D capital stocks have recently been prepared by BEA. The results are described in "A Satellite Account for Research and Development," *Survey of Current Business*, November 1994. These BEA estimates are lower than those presented here primarily because BEA assumes that the stock of basic research depreciates, while the estimates in Table 2-3 assume that basic research does not depreciate. BEA also assumes a slightly higher rate of depreciation for applied research and development, 11 percent, compared with the 10 percent rate used here.

Social Indicators

The main sources for the data in this table are the Government statistical agencies. The data are publicly available in the President's annual *Economic Report* and the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. Other sources include: *Educational Attainment in the United States March 1993 and 1992*, *Health United States 1993*, and *NAEP 1992 Trends in Academic Progress*.

MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 *Financial Report of the United States Government (Financial Report)* provides the President, Congress, and the American people with a comprehensive view of the federal government's finances, i.e., its financial position and condition, its revenues and costs, assets and liabilities, and other obligations and commitments. The *Financial Report* also discusses important financial issues and significant conditions that may affect future operations, including the need to achieve fiscal sustainability over the medium and long term.

Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 331(e)(1), the Department of the Treasury (Treasury), in cooperation with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), must submit an audited (by the Government Accountability Office or GAO) financial statement for the preceding fiscal year, covering all accounts and associated activities of the executive branch of the United States Government¹ – the central component of the *Financial Report* – to the President and Congress no later than six months after the September 30 fiscal year end. To encourage timely and relevant reporting, OMB accelerated both individual agency and governmentwide reporting deadlines.

The *Financial Report* is prepared from the audited financial statements of specifically designated federal agencies, including the Cabinet departments and many smaller, independent agencies (see organizational chart on the next page). As it has for the past seventeen years, GAO issued a “disclaimer” of opinion on the accrual-based, consolidated financial statements for the fiscal years ended September 30, 2014 and 2013. GAO also issued disclaimers of opinion on the 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011 and 2010 Statements of Social Insurance (SOSI), and disclaimers of opinion on the 2014 and 2013 Statements of Changes in Social Insurance Amounts (SCSIA). A disclaimer of opinion indicates that sufficient information was not available for the auditors to determine whether the reported financial statements were fairly presented in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). In FY 2014, 33² of the 37 most significant agencies earned unmodified opinions on their financial statement audits.³

The FY 2014 *Financial Report* consists of:

- Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A), which provides management's perspectives on and analysis of information presented in the *Financial Report*, such as financial and performance trends;
- Principal financial statements and the related notes to the financial statements;
- Required Supplementary Information (RSI), Required Supplementary Stewardship Information (RSSI), and Other Information; and
- GAO's audit report.

In addition, a Citizen's Guide is included to provide the American taxpayer with a quick reference to the key issues in the *Financial Report* and an overview of the Government's financial position and condition.

Mission & Organization

The Government's fundamental mission is derived from the Constitution: “...to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.” The Congress authorizes and agencies implement programs as missions and initiatives evolve over time in pursuit of key public services and objectives, such as providing for national defense, promoting affordable health care, fostering income security, boosting agricultural

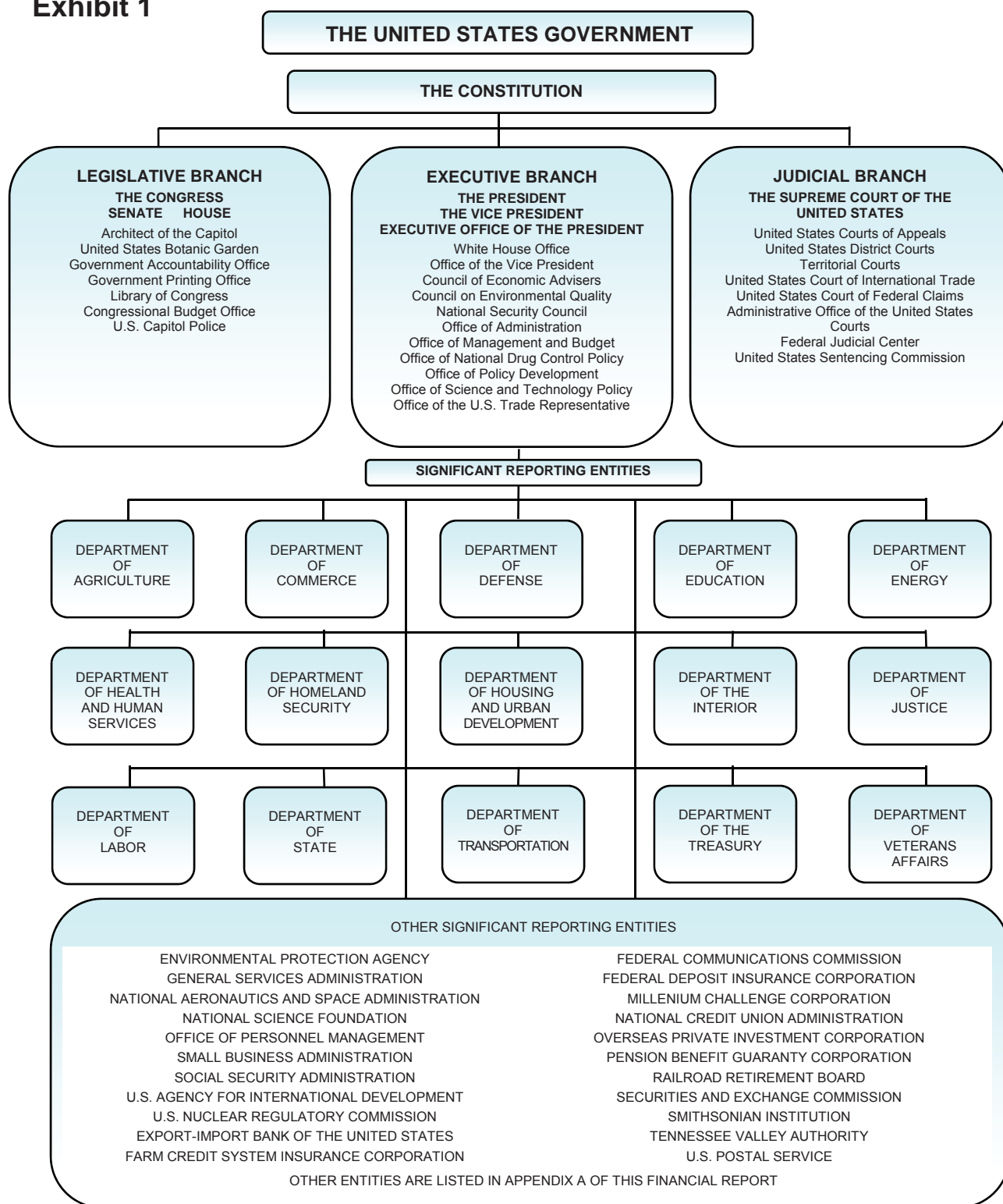
¹ The Government Management Reform Act of 1994 has required such reporting, covering the executive branch of the Government, beginning with financial statements prepared for FY 1997. Treasury and OMB have elected to include certain financial information on the legislative and judicial branches in consolidated financial statements as well.

² The 33 agencies include the Department of Health and Human Services, which received disclaimers of opinion on its 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, and 2010 SOSI and on its 2014 and 2013 SCSIA. The audit opinion for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was not available as of the issuance of this *Financial Report*.

³ The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), and the Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation (FCSIC) are among the 37 significant entities. However, because these entities operate on a calendar year basis (December 31 year end), their 2014 audits are not yet complete. Statistic reflects 2013 audit results for these organizations.

productivity, providing veterans benefits and services, facilitating commerce, supporting housing and the transportation systems, protecting the environment, contributing to the security of energy resources, and helping States provide education. Exhibit 1 provides an overview of how the U.S. Government (Government) is organized.

Exhibit 1



The Government's Financial Position and Condition

A complete assessment of the Government's financial or fiscal condition requires analysis of historical results, projections of future revenues and expenditures, and an assessment of the Government's long-term fiscal sustainability. This *Financial Report* discusses the Government's financial position at the end of the fiscal year, explains how and why the financial position changed during the year, and provides insight into how the Government's financial condition may change in the future.

Table 1				
The Federal Government's Financial Position and Condition				
Dollars in Billions	2014	2013	Increase / (Decrease)	
			\$	%
FINANCIAL MEASURES				
Gross Cost	\$ (4,251.4)	\$ (3,940.9)	\$ 310.5	7.9%
Less: Earned Revenue	\$ 417.9	\$ 415.5	\$ 2.4	0.6%
Gain/(Loss) from Changes in Assumptions	\$ (3.5)	\$ (131.2)	\$ 127.7	97.3%
Net Cost¹	\$ (3,837.0)	\$ (3,656.6)	\$ 180.4	4.9%
Less: Taxes and Other Revenue:	\$ 3,066.1	\$ 2,842.5	\$ 223.6	7.9%
Unmatched Transactions & Balances	\$ (20.4)	\$ 9.0	\$ 29.4	326.7%
Net Operating Cost²	\$ (791.3)	\$ (805.1)	\$ (13.8)	(1.7%)
Assets³:				
Cash & Other Monetary Assets	\$ 264.9	\$ 206.3	\$ 58.6	28.4%
Loans Receivable, Net	\$ 1,123.5	\$ 1,022.3	\$ 101.2	9.9%
Inventories & Related Property, Net	\$ 318.4	\$ 311.1	\$ 7.3	2.3%
Property, Plant & Equipment, Net	\$ 878.3	\$ 896.7	\$ (18.4)	(2.1%)
Other	\$ 480.2	\$ 531.9	\$ (51.7)	(9.7%)
Total Assets	\$ 3,065.3	\$ 2,968.3	\$ 97.0	3.3%
Liabilities³:				
Federal Debt Held by the Public & Accrued Interest	\$ (12,833.6)	\$ (12,028.4)	\$ 805.2	6.7%
Federal Employee & Veterans Benefits	\$ (6,672.6)	\$ (6,538.3)	\$ 134.3	2.1%
Other	\$ (1,259.8)	\$ (1,310.9)	\$ (51.1)	(3.9%)
Total Liabilities	\$ (20,766.0)	\$ (19,877.6)	\$ 888.4	4.5%
Net Position (Assets minus Liabilities)	\$ (17,700.7)	\$ (16,909.3)	\$ (791.4)	(4.7%)
SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES				
Social Insurance Net Expenditures⁴:				
Social Security (OASDI)	\$ (13,330)	\$ (12,294)	\$ 1,036	8.4%
Medicare (Parts A, B, & D)	\$ (28,483)	\$ (27,302)	\$ 1,181	4.3%
Other	\$ (103)	\$ (102)	\$ 1	0.6%
Total Social Insurance Net Expenditures	\$ (41,916)	\$ (39,698)	\$ 2,218	5.6%
Total Federal Government Noninterest Net Expenditures⁵	\$ (4,700)	\$ (4,000)	\$ 700	17.5%
BUDGET DEFICIT				
Unified Budget Deficit⁶	\$ (483.4)	\$ (680.3)	\$ (196.9)	(28.9%)

1 Source: Statements of Net Cost.

2 Source: Statements of Operations and Changes in Net Position.

3 Source: Balance Sheet.

4 Source: Statements of Social Insurance (SOSI). Amounts equal estimated present value of projected revenues and expenditures for scheduled benefits over the next 75 years of certain 'Social Insurance' programs (Social Security, Medicare Parts A, B, & D, Railroad Retirement - Black Lung is projected through 2040). Amounts reflect 'Open Group' totals (all current and projected program participants during the 75-year projection period).

5 Represents the 75-year projection of the Federal Government's receipts less non-interest spending as reported in the Statement of Long-Term Fiscal Projections in the Required Supplementary Information section of the *Financial Report*.

6 Source: Final Monthly Treasury Statement (as of 9/30/2014 and 9/30/2013).

Note: Totals may not equal sum of components due to rounding.

Table 1 on the previous page and the following summarize the federal government's financial position:

- The Government's gross costs increased by \$310.5 billion (7.9 percent) to \$4.3 trillion. Deducting \$417.9 billion in revenues earned for goods and services provided to the public (e.g., Medicare premiums, national park entry fees, and postal service fees) and adding \$3.5 billion in net losses from changes in assumptions (e.g., interest rates, inflation, disability claims rates) results in the Government's net cost of \$3.8 trillion in FY 2014, an increase of \$180.4 billion (4.9 percent) as compared to FY 2013.
- Taxes and other revenues increased \$223.6 billion (7.9 percent) to \$3.1 trillion, which, when offset against the Government's net cost, with some adjustment for unmatched transactions and balances, results in a "bottom line" net operating cost of \$791.3 billion for FY 2014, as compared to \$805.1 billion for FY 2013.
- Comparing total 2014 Government assets of \$3.1 trillion to total liabilities of \$20.8 trillion (comprised mostly of \$12.8 trillion in federal debt held by the public and accrued interest payable⁴, and \$6.7 trillion of federal employee and veterans benefits payable) yields a negative net position of \$17.7 trillion.
- The sum of debt held by the public (\$12.8 trillion) and intragovernmental debt (\$5.1 trillion) equals gross federal debt, which, with some adjustments is subject to the statutory debt limit. As of September 30, 2014, the Government's total debt subject to the debt limit was \$17.8 trillion. Congress suspended the debt limit twice during FY 2014: first, from October 17, 2013 through February 7, 2014; and again from February 15, 2014 through March 15, 2015.

This *Financial Report* also contains information about potential impacts on the Government's future financial condition. Under federal accounting rules, social insurance expenditures, as reported in the Statement of Social Insurance (SOSI) and the Statement of Long-Term Fiscal Projections (included in the RSI section of the *Financial Report*) are not considered liabilities of the Government. They can, however, provide a valuable perspective on the sustainability of the Government's fiscal path:

- The SOSI compares the actuarial present value⁵ of the Government's projected expenditures for scheduled benefits for Social Security, Medicare Parts A, B and D, and other social insurance programs over 75 years⁶ to a subset of the revenues⁷ supporting these programs. For 2014, these projected expenditures exceeded projected revenues by about \$41.9 trillion, a \$2.2 trillion increase over 2013 social insurance projections.
- Total projected expenditures, including other major programs (e.g., defense, Medicaid, and education) and tax revenues provide another perspective of the Government's projected fiscal condition. Over the next 75 years, under current policy, the present value (PV) of the Government's total non-interest expenditures (including its social insurance programs) is projected to exceed the PV of total receipts by \$4.7 trillion.

The Government's current financial position and long-term financial condition can be evaluated both in dollar terms and in relation to the economy as a whole. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measures the size of the nation's economy in terms of the total value of all final goods and services that are produced in a year. Considering financial results relative to GDP is a useful indicator of the economy's capacity to sustain the Government's many programs. For example:

- The unified budget deficit (i.e., including the consolidated receipts and outlays from federal funds and the Social Security Trust Fund) decreased from \$680.3 billion or 4.1 percent of GDP in FY 2013 to \$483.4 billion or 2.8 percent of GDP in FY 2014, the lowest deficit-to-GDP level since 2007 and less than the average of the last 40 years.⁸
- The budget deficit is primarily financed through borrowing from the public. As of September 30, 2014, debt held by the public, excluding interest payable, was \$12.8 trillion (74 percent of GDP).

⁴ On the Government's balance sheet, debt held by the public and accrued interest payable consists of Treasury securities, net of unamortized discounts and premiums, and accrued interest payable. The "public" consists of individuals, corporations, state and local governments, Federal Reserve Banks, foreign governments, and other entities outside the federal government.

⁵ Present values recognize that a dollar paid or collected in the future is worth less than a dollar today because a dollar today could be invested and earn interest. To calculate a present value, future amounts are thus reduced using an assumed interest rate, and those reduced amounts are summed.

⁶ The Black Lung Program is projected through September 30, 2040.

⁷ Social Security is funded by the payroll taxes and revenue from taxation of benefits. Medicare Part A is funded by the payroll taxes, revenue from taxation of benefits, and premiums that support those programs. Medicare Parts B and D are primarily financed by general revenues and premiums. By accounting convention, general revenues transferred to Medicare Parts B and D are eliminated in consolidation at the governmentwide level and, as such, are not included in the SOSI.

⁸ [Final Monthly Treasury Statement \(as of September 30, 2014 and 2013\)](#), [10/15/14 press release – Joint Statement of Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew and OMB Director Shaun Donovan on Budget Results for Fiscal Year 2014](#).

- The projected \$41.9 trillion net present value excess of expenditures over receipts over 75 years for the programs reported in the 2014 SOSI represents about 4.0 percent of the present value of GDP over 75 years. The excess of total projected non-interest spending over receipts of \$4.7 trillion discussed in the 'Statement of Long Term Fiscal Projections' in the RSI section of the *Financial Report* represents 0.4 percent of GDP. As discussed in this *Financial Report*, these projections can, in turn, have a significant impact on projected debt as a percent of GDP.

Fiscal Year 2014 Financial Statement Audit Results

For FY 2014, GAO issued an eighteenth consecutive disclaimer of audit opinion on the accrual-based, governmentwide financial statements. In addition, GAO issued disclaimers of opinion on the 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011 and 2010 SOSI, and disclaimers of opinion on the 2014 and 2013 Statement of Changes in Social Insurance Amounts (SCSIA). The SOSI and SCSIA disclaimers stem from significant uncertainties (discussed in Note 24, Social Insurance), primarily related to the achievement of projected reductions in Medicare cost growth as reflected in the SOSI.

Twenty-one of the 24 agencies required to issue audited financial statements under the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act received unmodified audit opinions (the audit opinion for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was not available as of the release of this *Financial Report*), as did 12 of 13 additional significant reporting agencies (see Table 2 and Appendix A).⁹

The Governmentwide Reporting Entity

These financial statements cover the three branches of the Government (legislative, executive, and judicial). Legislative and judicial branch reporting focuses primarily on budgetary activity. Most executive branch entities, as well as certain legislative branch agencies are required, by law, to prepare audited financial statements. Some other legislative branch entities voluntarily produce audited financial reports.

A number of entities and organizations are excluded due to the nature of their operations, including the Federal Reserve System (considered to be an independent central bank under the general oversight of Congress), all fiduciary funds, and Government-Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs), including the Federal Home Loan Banks, the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae), and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac). The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act (EESA) of 2008 gave the Secretary of the Treasury temporary authority to purchase and

Table 2: FY 2014 Agency Financial Statement Audit Results

Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act Agency	Audit Opinion
Department of Agriculture (USDA)	Unmodified
Department of Commerce (DOC)	Unmodified
Department of Defense (DOD)	Disclaimer
Department of Education (Education)	Unmodified
Department of Energy (DOE)	Unmodified
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)	Unmodified ¹
Department of Homeland Security (DHS)	Unmodified
Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	Pending
Department of the Interior (DOI)	Unmodified
Department of Labor (DOL)	Unmodified
Department of Justice (DOJ)	Unmodified
Department of State (State)	Unmodified
Department of Transportation (DOT)	Unmodified
Department of the Treasury (Treasury)	Unmodified
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	Unmodified
Agency for International Development (USAID)	Disclaimer
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Unmodified
General Services Administration (GSA)	Unmodified
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)	Unmodified
National Science Foundation (NSF)	Unmodified
Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)	Unmodified
Office of Personnel Management (OPM)	Unmodified
Small Business Administration (SBA)	Unmodified
Social Security Administration (SSA)	Unmodified
Other Significant Reporting Entities	
Export-Import Bank of the United States	Unmodified
Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation (FCSIC)	Unmodified ²
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	Unmodified
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)	Unmodified ²
Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)	Unmodified
National Credit Union Administration (NCUA)	Unmodified ²
Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)	Unmodified
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC)	Unmodified
Railroad Retirement Board (RRB)	Disclaimer
Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)	Unmodified
Smithsonian Institution	Unmodified ³
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)	Unmodified
U.S. Postal Service (USPS)	Unmodified

¹ Received disclaimer of opinion on Statement of Social Insurance and Statement of Changes in Social Insurance Amounts.

² Entities operate under calendar year (CY)-end. Opinions reflect CY 2013 audit results.

³ Opinion on the most recent annual report, covering FY 2013.

⁹ The 21 agencies include the Department of Health and Human Services, which received disclaimers of opinions on its 2014, 2013, 2012 2011, and 2010 SOSI and its 2014 and 2013 SCSIA.

guarantee assets from a wide range of financial institutions through the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). Following U.S. GAAP for federal entities, the Government has not consolidated into its financial statements the assets, liabilities, or results of operations of any financial organization or commercial entity in which Treasury holds either a direct, indirect, or beneficial majority equity investment. Under Statement of Federal Financial Accounting Concepts (SFFAC) No. 2, these entities meet the criteria of paragraph 50 and do not appear in the Federal Budget section "Federal Programs by Agency and Account." As such, these entities are not consolidated into the financial reports of the Government. However, the values of the investments in and any related liabilities to such entities are presented on the balance sheet. Appendix A includes a list of the agencies and entities contributing to this *Financial Report*.¹⁰

The following pages contain a more detailed discussion of the Government's financial results for FY 2014, the budget, the economy, the debt, and a long-term perspective about fiscal sustainability, including the Government's ability to meet its social insurance benefits obligations. The information in this *Financial Report*, when combined with the Budget of the U.S. Government, collectively presents information on the Government's financial position and condition.

Accounting Differences Between The Budget and the Financial Report

Each year, the Administration issues two reports that detail the Government's financial results: the *Budget of the U.S. Government (Budget)*, prepared primarily on a "cash basis", and which provides a plan for future initiatives and the resources needed to support them, as well as prior year fiscal and performance results; and this *Financial Report*, which provides the President, Congress, and the American people a broad, comprehensive overview of the cost on an "accrual basis" of the Government's operations, the sources used to finance them, its balance sheet, and the overall financial outlook.

Treasury generally prepares the financial statements in this *Financial Report* on an accrual basis of accounting as prescribed by U.S. GAAP for federal entities.¹¹ These principles are tailored to the Government's unique characteristics and circumstances. For example, agencies prepare a uniquely structured "Statement of Net Cost," which is intended to present net Government resources used in its operations. Also, unique to Government is the preparation of separate statements to reconcile differences and articulate the relationship between the budget and financial accounting results.

Budget of the U.S. Government	Financial Report of the U.S. Government
<p><u>Prepared primarily on a "cash basis"</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiative-based and prospective: focus on current and future initiatives planned and how resources will be used to fund them. Receipts ("cash in"), taxes and other collections recorded when received. Outlays ("cash out"), largely recorded when payment is made. 	<p><u>Prepared on an "accrual and modified cash basis"</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency-based and retrospective – prior and present resources used to implement initiatives. Revenue: Tax revenue (more than 90 percent of total revenue) recognized on modified cash basis (see Financial Statement Note 1.B). Remainder recognized when earned, but not necessarily received. Costs: recognized when incurred, but not necessarily paid.

¹⁰ Since programs are not administered at the governmentwide level, performance goals and measures for the federal government, as a whole, are not reported here. The outcomes and results of those programs are addressed at the individual agency level and can be found in each agency's financial report. Go to www.performance.gov for more information about Government performance.

¹¹ Under U.S. GAAP, most U.S. Government revenues are recognized on a 'modified cash' basis, or when they become measurable. The Statement of Social Insurance presents the present value of the estimated future revenues and expenditures for scheduled benefits over the next 75 years for the Social Security, Medicare, Railroad Retirement programs; and through September 30, 2040 for the Black Lung program.

Budget Deficit vs. Net Operating Cost

The Government's primarily cash-based¹² budget deficit decreased nearly 29 percent (\$197 billion) from approximately \$680.3 billion in FY 2013 to about \$483.4 billion in FY 2014 (the lowest since 2008) due to a combination of higher receipts and stable outlays in FY 2014. The \$246.9 billion (8.9 percent) increase in receipts can be attributed to a stronger economy and the expiration of certain tax provisions. Growth in wages and salaries made collections of individual and payroll taxes strong throughout the year. Another contributor to the increase was the expiration of the temporary cut in payroll taxes and the increase in tax rates on income above certain thresholds, which went into effect in January 2013. Outlays increased 1 percent (\$50 billion). The comparatively small increase was due to the net effect of: (1) spending decreases across many agencies and programs, including the Department of Defense, the unemployment insurance program, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; and (2) spending increases for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and student loans, along with lower dividend receipts from the GSEs, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac which are recorded as offsets to spending.¹³ The Government's largely accrual-based net operating cost also decreased, but only slightly by \$13.8 billion (1.7 percent) from \$805.1 billion to \$791.3 billion during FY 2014. As explained below, net operating costs are affected by both changes in revenues and costs.

The budget deficit is measured as the excess of outlays, or payments made by the Government, over receipts, or cash received by the Government. Net operating cost, on an accrual basis, is the excess of costs (what the Government has incurred, but has not necessarily paid) over revenues (what the Government has collected and expects to collect, but has not necessarily received). Net operating cost typically exceeds the budget deficit due largely to the inclusion of cost accruals associated with increases in estimated liabilities for the Government's postemployment benefit programs for its military and civilian employees and veterans. Similarly, the difference between the budget deficit and net operating cost can also be affected by changes in certain asset valuations, such as investments, and in other liabilities, such as estimated insurance and guarantee program liabilities. The longer-term estimated costs of these programs are included in the Government's net operating cost, calculated on an accrual basis as described above, but are not included in the largely cash-based budget deficit. In addition, the costs of certain assets, such as property plant and equipment, are recorded in the budget as outlays when purchased but are capitalized as assets and included in net operating cost as depreciation expense (an accrual cost) as they are used over the useful life of the asset. Significant changes in the Government's net operating cost, including those related to the aforementioned longer-term estimated costs, are discussed in the next section.

The Reconciliation of Net Operating Cost and Unified Budget Deficit

Statement, as summarized in Table 3, shows how the Government's net operating cost from the primarily accrual-based financial statements relates to the more widely-known and primarily cash-based budget deficit. Table 3 shows how many of the elements described above contribute to the \$307.9 billion net difference between the Government's budget deficit and net

operating cost for FY 2014, more than half of which is attributable to: (1) a \$134.3 billion increase in liabilities for Federal employee and veteran benefits payable, and (2) a \$44.4 billion decrease in the value of Treasury's

Table 3: Net Operating Cost vs. Budget Deficit

Dollars in Billions	2014	2013
Net Operating Cost	\$ (791.3)	\$ (805.1)
Change in:		
Federal Employee and Veteran Benefits Payable	\$ 134.3	\$ 264.3
Environmental and Disposal Liabilities	\$ 20.0	\$ 10.1
Property, Plant, and Equipment, Net ¹	\$ 18.4	\$ (41.7)
Investments in Government-Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs)	\$ 44.4	\$ (30.9)
Insurance and Guarantee Program Liabilities	\$ 28.3	\$ (26.4)
Yearend Upward/(Downward) Credit Reform Subsidy Reestimates, Net ²	\$ 22.9	\$ (23.1)
Other, Net	\$ 39.6	\$ (27.5)
Subtotal - Net Difference:	\$ 307.9	\$ 124.8
Budget Deficit	\$ (483.4)	\$ (680.3)

1 Net effect of: capitalized fixed assets, depreciation expense, and asset disposals and revaluations

2 Net effect of: yearend upward/(downward) credit reform subsidy reestimates and effect of prior year (upward)/downward credit reform subsidy reestimates.

¹² Interest outlays on Treasury debt held by the public are recorded in the budget when interest accrues, not when the interest payment is made. For federal credit programs, outlays are recorded when loans are disbursed, in an amount representing the present value cost to the Government (excluding administrative costs), or the credit subsidy cost. Credit programs record cash payments to and from the public in nonbudgetary financing accounts.

¹³ 10/15/14 press release -- [Joint Statement of Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew and OMB Director Shaun Donovan on Budget Results for Fiscal Year 2014](#).

investments in two GSEs – Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.¹⁴ These and most of the other “Change in” amounts summarized in Table 3 affect net operating cost, but not the budget deficit.

The Government's Net Position: “Where We Are”

The Government's financial position and condition have traditionally been expressed through the *Budget*, focusing on surpluses, deficits, and debt. However, this primarily cash-based discussion of the Government's net outlays (deficit) or net receipts (surplus) tells only part of the story. The Government's accrual-based net position, (the difference between its assets and liabilities), and its “bottom line” net operating cost (the difference between its revenues and costs) are also key financial indicators.

Costs and Revenues: "What Went Out & What Came In"

The Government's *Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Position*, much like a corporation's income statement, shows the Government's “bottom line” and its impact on net position (i.e., assets net of liabilities). To derive the Government's “bottom line” net operating cost, the *Statement of Net Cost* first shows how much it costs to operate the federal government, recognizing expenses when incurred, regardless of when payment is made (accrual basis). It shows the derivation of the Government's *net cost* or the net of: (1) gross costs, or the costs of goods produced and services rendered by the Government, (2) the earned revenues generated by those goods and services during the fiscal year, and (3) gains or losses from changes in actuarial assumptions used to estimate certain liabilities. This amount, in turn, is offset against the Government's taxes and other revenue reported in the *Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Position* to calculate the “bottom line” or *net operating cost*.¹⁵

Table 4: Gross Cost, Revenues, Net Cost, and Net Operating Cost					
Dollars in Billions	2014	2013	Increase / (Decrease)		
			\$	%	
Gross Cost	\$ (4,251.4)	\$ (3,940.9)	\$ 310.5	7.9%	
Less: Earned Revenue	\$ 417.9	\$ 415.5	\$ 2.4	0.6%	
Gain/(Loss) from Changes in Assumptions	\$ (3.5)	\$ (131.2)	\$ 127.7	97.3%	
Net Cost	\$ (3,837.0)	\$ (3,656.6)	\$ 180.4	4.9%	
Less: Taxes and Other Revenue	\$ 3,066.1	\$ 2,842.5	\$ 223.6	7.9%	
Unmatched Transactions and Balances	\$ (20.4)	\$ 9.0	\$ 29.4	326.7%	
Net Operating Cost	\$ (791.3)	\$ (805.1)	\$ (13.8)	(1.7%)	

Table 4 shows that the Government's “bottom line” net operating cost decreased slightly from \$805.1 billion in FY 2013 to \$791.3 billion in FY 2014. This \$13.8 billion (1.7 percent) decrease is attributable to a number of offsetting revenue and cost changes over the past fiscal year as summarized in the following.

Gross Cost and Net Cost

The *Statement of Net Cost*, starts with the Government's total gross costs of \$4.3 trillion dollars, subtracts revenues earned for goods and services provided (e.g., Medicare premiums, national park entry fees, and postal service fees), and adjusts the balance for gains or losses from changes in actuarial assumptions used to estimate certain liabilities, including federal employee and veterans benefits to derive its net cost of \$3.8 trillion, a \$180.4 billion increase (4.9 percent) over FY 2013.

Typically, the Government's net cost is impacted by a variety of offsetting increases and decreases. The more significant drivers affecting the change in net cost during FY 2014 were:

- The loss on changes in assumptions associated with the Government's civilian and military benefits programs amounted to \$3.5 billion in FY 2014 as compared to \$131.2 billion in FY 2013, representing a \$127.7 billion decrease in net cost. Agencies administering these types of programs employ a complex series of assumptions, including but not limited to interest rates, beneficiary eligibility, life expectancy, medical cost levels, compensation levels, disability claims rates, and cost of living to make annual actuarial

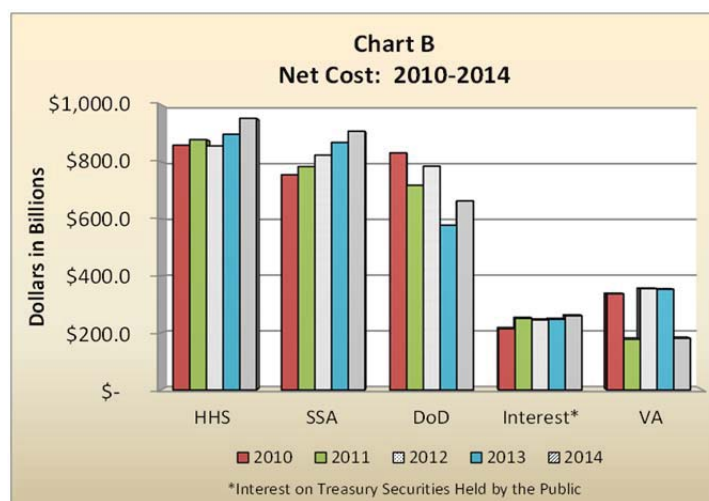
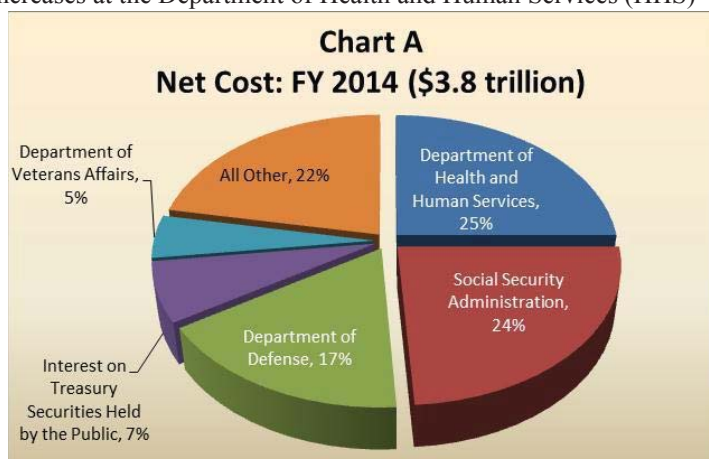
¹⁴ Department of the Treasury FY 2014 Agency Financial Report, p. 27

¹⁵ As shown in Table 4, net operating cost includes an adjustment for unmatched transactions and balances, which represent unreconciled differences in intragovernmental activity and balances between Federal agencies. These amounts are described in greater detail in the Other Information section of this *Financial Report*.

projections of their long-term benefits liabilities. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reported significant decreases in losses from changes in these assumptions for FY 2014;

- Most of the Department of the Treasury's (Treasury's) \$131.2 billion net cost increase is attributable to the effect of changes in the fair value of Treasury's investments in two GSEs – Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac – and to the decrease in dividend receipts from the GSEs¹⁶;
- \$55.8 billion and \$39.4 billion net cost increases at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA), respectively, primarily due to cost increases of the benefits programs that these agencies administer (HHS – Medicare and Medicaid programs, SSA – Old Age Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) programs);
- a \$46.4 billion cost increase at the Department of Education, largely associated with increases in the projected long-term costs of its direct student loan programs due to changes in the types and availability of repayment plans and increases in default rates¹⁷; and
- a \$26.5 billion decrease at the Department of Labor, primarily due to decreases in unemployment benefits provided under existing legislation and lower levels of unemployment as compared to FY 2013.¹⁸

Chart A shows the composition of the Government's net cost. In FY 2014, two-thirds of total net cost came from DOD, the Social Security Administration (SSA), and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). These three agencies have consistently incurred the largest agency shares of the Government's total net cost in recent years (Chart B). As indicated above, HHS and SSA net costs for FY 2014 (\$951.5 billion and \$906.4 billion, respectively) are attributable to major social insurance programs administered by these agencies. The *Statement of Social Insurance* (SOSI) and the related information in this *Financial Report*, including the broader discussion of the Government's long-term fiscal projections, discuss the projected future revenues, expenditures, and sustainability of these programs in greater detail. DOD's net costs of \$662.3 billion relate primarily to operations, readiness, and support; personnel; research; procurement; and retirement and health benefits. Chart A shows that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as well as interest on debt held by the public contributed an additional combined 12 percent, and the other agencies included in the Government's FY 2014 Statement of Net Cost accounted for a combined 22 percent of the Government's total net cost for FY 2014.



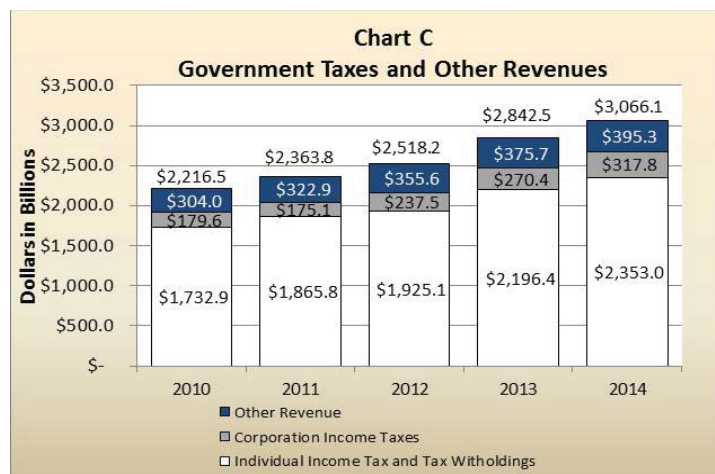
¹⁶ [Department of the Treasury FY 2014 Agency Financial Report](#), p. 22-23. See also Note 9 – Investments in GSEs – of this *Financial Report*.

¹⁷ [Department of Education FY 2014 Agency Financial Report](#), p. 30

¹⁸ [Department of Labor FY 2014 Agency Financial Report](#), p. 27

Taxes and Other Revenues - Getting to the "Bottom Line"

As noted earlier, taxes and other revenues from the *Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Position* are deducted from total net cost to derive the Government's "bottom line" net operating cost. Chart C shows that increases in each of the three taxes and other revenue categories shown - individual income tax and withholdings, corporation income taxes, and other revenue - combined to increase total Government taxes and other revenues by \$223.6 billion (7.9 percent) to nearly \$3.1 trillion for FY 2014. This change is primarily attributed to an overall increase in individual and corporation income tax collections.¹⁹ As noted in the earlier discussion of budget receipts, these increases largely stem from a stronger economy and growth in wages and salaries, as well as and the expiration of certain tax provisions. Earned revenues from Table 4 are not considered "taxes and other revenue" and, thus, are not shown in Chart C. Individual income tax and tax withholdings and corporation income taxes accounted for about 77 percent and 10 percent of total revenue, respectively in FY 2014; other revenues from Chart C include excise taxes, unemployment taxes, and customs duties.



As previously shown in Table 4, the increase in taxes and other revenues more than offset the increase in net costs, resulting in a slight total net decrease of \$13.8 billion (1.7 percent) in the Government's net operating cost from \$805.1 billion for FY 2013 to \$791.3 billion for FY 2014.

Assets and Liabilities: "What We Own and What We Owe"

The Government's net position at the end of the year is derived by netting the Government's assets against its liabilities, as presented in the *Balance Sheet* (summarized in Table 5). It is important to note that the balance sheet does not include the financial value of the Government's sovereign powers to tax, regulate commerce, and set monetary policy. It also excludes its control over nonoperational resources, including national and natural resources, for which the Government is a steward. In addition, as is the case with the *Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Position*, the *Balance Sheet* includes a separate presentation of the portion of net position related to funds from dedicated collections. Moreover, the Government's exposures are broader than the liabilities presented on the balance sheet, when such items as the Government's future social insurance exposures (namely, Medicare and Social Security), as well as other fiscal projections, commitments and contingencies, are taken into account. These exposures are discussed later in this Management Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) section as well as in the required supplementary disclosures of this *Financial Report*.

Table 5: Assets and Liabilities					
Net Position	2014		2013		Increase (Decrease)
Dollars in Billions					\$ %
Assets					
Cash & Other Monetary Assets	\$	264.9	\$	206.3	\$ 58.6 28.4%
Loans Receivable, Net	\$	1,123.5	\$	1,022.3	\$ 101.2 9.9%
Inventories & Related Property, Net	\$	318.4	\$	311.1	\$ 7.3 2.3%
Property, Plant & Equipment, Net	\$	878.3	\$	896.7	\$ (18.4) (2.1%)
Other	\$	480.2	\$	531.9	\$ (51.7) (9.7%)
Total Assets	\$	3,065.3	\$	2,968.3	\$ 97.0 3.3%
Less: Liabilities, comprised of:					
Federal Debt Held by the Public & Accrued Interest	\$	(12,833.6)	\$	(12,028.4)	\$ 805.2 6.7%
Federal Employee & Veteran Benefits	\$	(6,672.6)	\$	(6,538.3)	\$ 134.3 2.1%
Other	\$	(1,259.8)	\$	(1,310.9)	\$ (51.1) (3.9%)
Total Liabilities	\$	(20,766.0)	\$	(19,877.6)	\$ 888.4 4.5%
Net Position (Assets Minus Liabilities)	\$	(17,700.7)	\$	(16,909.3)	\$ (791.4) (4.7%)

¹⁹ Department of the Treasury FY 2014 Agency Financial Report, p. 28

Assets – “What We Own”

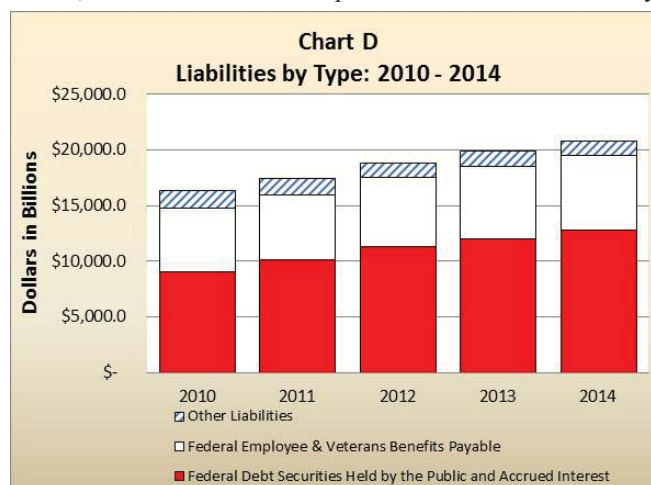
As of September 30, 2014, the Government held about \$3.1 trillion in assets, an increase of \$97.0 billion (3.3 percent). The Government's assets are comprised mostly of net loans receivable (\$1,123.5 billion) and net property, plant, and equipment (\$878.3 billion).²⁰ From Note 4, the Department of Education's (Education's) Federal Direct Student Loan Program accounted for \$778.6 billion (69.3 percent) of total net loans receivable. Education's credit program receivables balances increased by more than a third over the past two fiscal years largely due to increased direct loan disbursements, attributable to the continued effect of 2011 legislation requiring a transition for new loans from guaranteed student loans to full direct lending by Education.²¹

Beyond the assets reported on the Government's balance sheet, other significant resources are available to the Government, including stewardship assets, natural resources, and the Government's power to tax and set monetary policy.

Liabilities – “What We Owe”

As indicated in Table 5 and Chart D, of the Government's \$20.8 trillion in total liabilities, the largest liability is federal debt securities held by the public and accrued interest, the balance of which increased \$805.2 billion (6.7 percent) to \$12.8 trillion as of September 30, 2014.

The other major component of the Government's liabilities is federal employee and veteran benefits payable (i.e., the Government's pension and other benefit plans for its military and civilian employees), which increased \$134.3 billion (2.1 percent) during FY 2014, to \$6,672.6 billion. OPM administers the largest civilian pension plan, covering nearly 2.7 million current employees and 2.5 million annuitants and survivors. The military pension plan covers about 2.1 million current military personnel (including active service, reserve, and National Guard) and approximately 2.7 million retirees and annuitants.



Federal Debt

The unified budget surplus or deficit is the difference between total federal spending and receipts (e.g., taxes) in a given year. The Government borrows from the public (increases federal debt levels) to finance deficits. During a budget surplus (i.e., when receipts exceed spending), the Government typically uses those excess funds to reduce the debt held by the public. *The Statement of Changes in Cash Balance from Unified Budget and Other Activities* reports how the annual unified budget surplus or deficit relates to the federal government's borrowing and changes in cash and other monetary assets. It also explains how a budget surplus or deficit normally affects changes in debt balances.

The Government's publicly-held debt, or federal debt held by the public, and accrued interest, which is reported on the Government's balance sheet as a liability, is comprised of Treasury securities, such as bills, notes, and bonds, net of unamortized discounts and premiums; and accrued interest payable. The "public" consists of individuals, corporations, state and local governments, Federal Reserve Banks, foreign governments, and other entities outside the federal government. Federal debt held by the public and accrued interest totaled \$12.8 trillion as of September 30, 2014. As indicated above, budget surpluses have typically resulted in borrowing reductions, and budget deficits have conversely yielded borrowing increases. However, the Government's debt operations are generally much more complex than this would imply. Each year, trillions of dollars of debt mature and new debt is issued to take its place. In FY 2014, new borrowings were \$7.5 trillion and repayments of maturing debt held by the public were \$6.7 trillion. Both represented decreases over new borrowings and debt repayments as compared to FY 2013.

²⁰ For financial reporting purposes, other than multi-use heritage assets, stewardship assets are not recorded as part of Property, Plant, and Equipment. Stewardship assets are comprised of stewardship land and heritage assets. Stewardship land consists of public domain land (e.g., national parks, wildlife refuges). Heritage assets include national monuments and historical sites that among other characteristics are of historical, natural, cultural, educational, or artistic significance. See Note 25 – Stewardship Land and Heritage Assets.

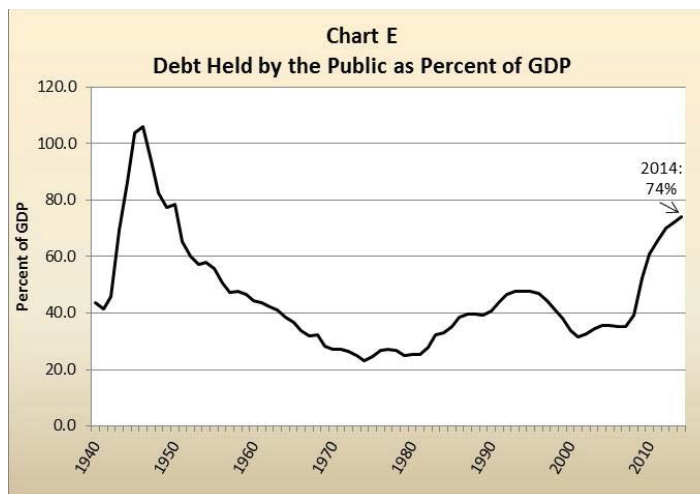
²¹ With the enactment of the SAFRA Act, formerly known as the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, which was included as part of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (HCERA) (Pub. L. 111-152), beginning in July 2010, no new loans were originated under the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program ([FY 2014 Federal Student Aid Financial Report](#)). See also: [U.S. Department of Education FY 2014 Agency Financial Report](#) p. 25.

In addition to debt held by the public, the Government has about \$5.1 trillion in intragovernmental debt outstanding, which arises when one part of the Government borrows from another. It represents debt issued by the Treasury and held by Government accounts, including the Social Security (\$2.8 trillion) and Medicare (\$270.6 billion) trust funds. Intragovernmental debt is primarily held in Government trust funds in the form of special nonmarketable securities by various parts of the Government. Laws establishing Government trust funds generally require excess trust fund receipts (including interest earnings) over disbursements to be invested in these special securities. Because these amounts are both liabilities of the Treasury and assets of the Government trust funds, they are eliminated as part of the consolidation process for the governmentwide financial statements (see Note 12). When those securities are redeemed, e.g., to pay future Social Security benefits, the Government will need to obtain the resources necessary to reimburse the trust funds. The sum of debt held by the public and intragovernmental debt equals gross federal debt, which (with some adjustments), is subject to a statutory ceiling (i.e., the debt limit). At the end of FY 2014, debt subject to the statutory limit (DSL) was \$17.8 trillion.

Prior to 1917, the Congress approved each debt issuance. In 1917, to facilitate planning in World War I, Congress established a dollar ceiling for federal borrowing. With the Public Debt Act of 1941 (Public Law 77-7), Congress and the President set an overall limit of \$65 billion on Treasury debt obligations that could be outstanding at any one time. Since then, Congress and the President have enacted a number of measures affecting the debt limit. In February 2013, with the enactment of the No Budget, No Pay Act of 2013 (Public Law 113-3), Congress suspended the debt limit, enabling the debt to increase as needed through May 18, 2013. In accordance with provisions of the Act, the debt limit was reinstated on May 19, 2013 at a level of \$16.699 trillion. Because the new debt limit was set at the level of then outstanding debt, Treasury began

implementing “extraordinary measures”, on a temporary basis, which were still in effect on September 30, 2013, to keep the DSL under the statutory limit.²² On October 17, 2013, P.L. 113-46 again suspended the debt limit, this time through February 7, 2014, after which the limit was re-instated at a level of \$17.212 trillion. P.L. 113-83 again suspended the debt limit, this time from February 15, 2014 through March 15, 2015. It is important to note that increasing or suspending the debt limit does not increase spending or authorize new spending; rather, it permits the United States to continue to honor pre-existing commitments to its citizens, businesses, and investors domestically and around the world.

The federal debt held by the public measured as a percent of GDP (debt-to-GDP ratio) (Chart E) compares the country's debt to the size of its economy, making this measure sensitive to changes in both. Over time, the debt-to-GDP ratio has varied widely. For most of the nation's history, the debt-to-GDP ratio has tended to increase during wartime and decline during peacetime. That pattern continued to hold following World War II until the 1970s. As shown in Chart E, wartime spending and borrowing had pushed the debt-to-GDP ratio to an all-time high of 106 percent in 1946, but it decreased rapidly in the post-war years, falling to 79 percent by 1950, 44 percent in 1960, and the postwar low point of 23 percent in 1974. Since then, the ratio has increased, growing rapidly from the mid-1970s until the early 1990s. In the 1990s, strong economic growth and fundamental fiscal decisions, including measures to reduce the federal deficit and implementation of binding “Pay As You Go” (PAYGO) rules, generated a significant decline in the debt-to-GDP ratio over the course of the 1990s, from a peak of 48 percent in 1993-1995, to 31 percent in 2001. During the last decade, much of this progress was undone as PAYGO rules were allowed to



²²A delay in raising the statutory debt limit existed as of September 30, 2013. When delays in raising the statutory debt limit occur, Treasury often must deviate from its normal debt management operations and take a number of extraordinary measures to meet the Government's obligations as they come due without exceeding the debt limit. Extraordinary measures taken by Treasury during the period of May 20, 2013, through October 16, 2013 resulted in federal debt securities not being issued to certain federal government accounts. As a result of Treasury securities not being issued to the Government Securities Investment Fund (G Fund) of the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB), Treasury reported miscellaneous liabilities in the amount of \$120.4 billion that represent uninvested principal of and related interest for the G Fund that would have been reported as Federal Debt Securities Held by the Public and Accrued Interest had there not been a delay in raising the statutory debt limit as of September 30, 2013, and had the securities been issued. Treasury fully repaid its obligation to the G Fund by restoring them with accumulated uninvested principal and related interest through October 16, 2013. See Note 17, Other Liabilities for more information.

lapse, significant tax cuts were implemented, entitlements were expanded, and spending related to defense and homeland security increased. By September 2008, the debt-to-GDP ratio was 39 percent of GDP. The extraordinary demands of the last economic and fiscal crisis and the consequent actions taken by the federal government, combined with slower economic growth in the wake of the crisis, pushed the debt-to-GDP ratio up to about 74 percent as of September 30, 2014.

The Economy in Fiscal Year 2014

A review of the nation's key macroeconomic indicators can help place the discussion of the Government's financial results in a broader context. As summarized in Table 6, the economy continued to expand at a moderate pace during FY 2014. Job growth picked up. The unemployment rate declined during FY 2014 to its lowest level in six years, but remained a bit above the 5.5 percent average that prevailed in the 1990s and 2000s.

Real (i.e., inflation-adjusted) GDP expanded 2.7 percent during FY 2014, accelerating from the increase recorded over the four quarters of FY 2013. Consumer spending also rose 2.7 percent during FY 2014, faster than the increase during the previous fiscal year. The recovery in the housing sector slowed in FY 2014 and residential fixed investment declined by 0.7 percent, compared with a surge of 14.4 percent during FY 2013. Growth of nonresidential fixed investment strengthened, accelerating to 7.6 percent during FY 2014 from 3.0 percent during the previous fiscal year.

Labor market conditions improved further during FY 2014, with the pace of job growth picking up and the unemployment rate declining as the fiscal year progressed. The economy added 2.8 million nonfarm payroll jobs during FY 2014, exceeding the 2.4 million jobs created during the previous fiscal year. On a monthly basis, nonfarm payroll employment advanced at an average rate of 233,000 jobs, faster than the average monthly increase of 201,000 in FY 2013. The number of unemployed persons fell from 11.3 million in September 2013 to 9.2 million in September 2014. The unemployment rate declined 1.3 percentage points, from 7.2 percent in September 2013 to 5.9 percent in September 2014. At the end of FY 2014, the unemployment rate was 4.1 percentage points lower than the peak of 10.0 percent, reached in October 2009.

Inflation trended higher in the latest fiscal year, largely reflecting higher food price inflation, but remained at a moderate level. The headline consumer price index (CPI) rose 1.7 percent during FY 2014, up from 1.2 percent in FY 2013. Underlying core inflation (the CPI excluding food and energy) was stable at 1.7 percent during FY 2014, the same as during the previous fiscal year. Both headline and core inflation in FY 2014 remained low by historical standards.

Growth of real disposable personal income accelerated during FY 2014, to more than double the rate seen in the previous fiscal year as stronger growth in nominal disposable personal income slightly offset a pickup in inflation. The level of corporate profits rose 1.4 percent during FY 2014, compared with a gain of 4.9 percent during the previous fiscal year.

The solid performance of the U.S. economy in FY 2014 occurred against a backdrop of generally stable conditions in financial markets. Yields on corporate bonds of moderate risk were about 275 basis points above the rate on 10-year Treasury securities at the end of FY 2013. This spread decreased early in the fiscal year and remained below that level throughout the year, ending FY 2014 at 229 basis points. The difference between the 3-month London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) and the 3-month Treasury rate stood at 23 basis points at the end of FY 2013. This spread generally narrowed over the course of the latest fiscal year, before edging back up more recently, ending FY 2014 at 22 basis points.

Table 6: National Economic Indicators*

	FY 2014	FY 2013
Real GDP Growth	2.7%	2.3%
Residential Investment Growth	-0.7%	14.4%
Average monthly payroll job change (thousands)	233	201
Unemployment rate (percent, end of period)	5.9%	7.2%
Consumer Price Index (CPI)	1.7%	1.2%
CPI, excluding food and energy	1.7%	1.7%
Treasury constant maturity 10-year rate (end of period)	2.52%	2.64%
Moody's Baa bond rate (end of period)	4.81%	5.39%

* Some FY2013 data may differ from the FY2013 *Financial Report* due to updates and revisions.

The Long-Term Fiscal Outlook: “Where We Are Headed”

While the Government's immediate priority is to continue to foster economic recovery, there are longer-term fiscal challenges that must ultimately be addressed. Persistent growth of health care costs and the aging of the population due to the retirement of the “baby boom” generation²³, increasing longevity, and lower birth rates will make it increasingly difficult to fund critical social programs, including Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Fiscal Sustainability

An important purpose of the *Financial Report* is to help citizens understand current fiscal policy and the importance and magnitude of policy reforms necessary to make it sustainable. A sustainable policy is one where the debt-to-GDP ratio is stable or declining over the long term.

To determine if current fiscal policies are sustainable, the projections discussed here assume current policy will continue indefinitely and draw out the implications for the growth of debt held by the public as a share of GDP.²⁴ The projections are therefore neither forecasts nor predictions. As policy changes are enacted, actual financial outcomes will be different than those projected.

The projections in this *Financial Report* indicate that current policy is not sustainable. The debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to reach 321 percent in 2089 and to rise continuously thereafter. Preventing the debt-to-GDP ratio from rising over the next 75 years is estimated to require some combination of spending reductions and revenue increases that amount to 2.1 percent of GDP over the period. While this estimate of the “75-year fiscal gap” is highly uncertain, it is nevertheless nearly certain that current fiscal policies cannot be sustained indefinitely.

It is important to address the Government's fiscal imbalances soon. Delaying action increases the magnitude of spending reductions and/or revenue increases necessary to stabilize the debt-to-GDP ratio. For example, it is estimated that the magnitude of reforms necessary to close the 75-year fiscal gap is more than 20 percent larger if reforms are delayed by just ten years, and more than 50 percent larger if reform is delayed 20 years.

The estimates of the cost of policy delay in this *Financial Report* assume policy does not affect GDP or other economic variables. Reducing deficits too abruptly would be counterproductive if it slows the economy's recovery. Conversely, delaying fiscal adjustments for too long raises the risk that growing federal debt would increase interest rates and slow economic growth. In the near term, it is crucial to strike the proper balance between deficit reduction and economic growth.

The Primary Deficit, Interest, and Debt

The primary deficit – the difference between non-interest spending and receipts – is the only determinant of the debt-to-GDP ratio that the Government controls directly. (The other determinants are interest rates and growth in GDP). Chart F shows receipts, non-interest spending, and the difference – the primary deficit – expressed as a share of GDP (primary deficit-to-GDP ratio). The primary deficit-to-GDP ratio grew rapidly in 2009 due to the financial crisis and the recession and the policies pursued to combat both. The ratio remained high from 2010 to 2012 despite shrinking in each successive year, and fell significantly in 2013 and 2014. The primary deficit is projected to shrink in the next few years as spending reductions called for in the Budget Control Act (BCA) continue and the economy continues to recover, becoming a primary surplus in 2017 that peaks at 1.2 percent of GDP in 2021. Between 2022 and 2037, however, increased spending for Social Security and health programs due to the continued retirement of the baby boom generation and increases in the price of health care services is expected to cause the primary surplus to steadily deteriorate and become a primary deficit starting in 2030 that reaches 0.7 percent of GDP by 2039. After 2039, increasing longevity and slowing in the pace of health care price increases cause the primary deficit to GDP ratio to rise slowly to 1.1 percent in 2071, before falling back to 0.9 percent by 2089.

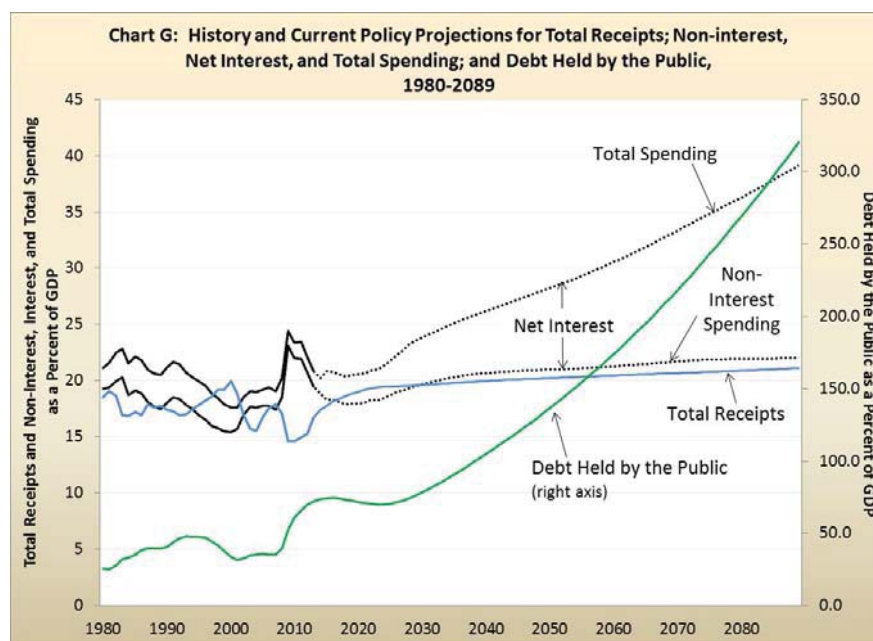
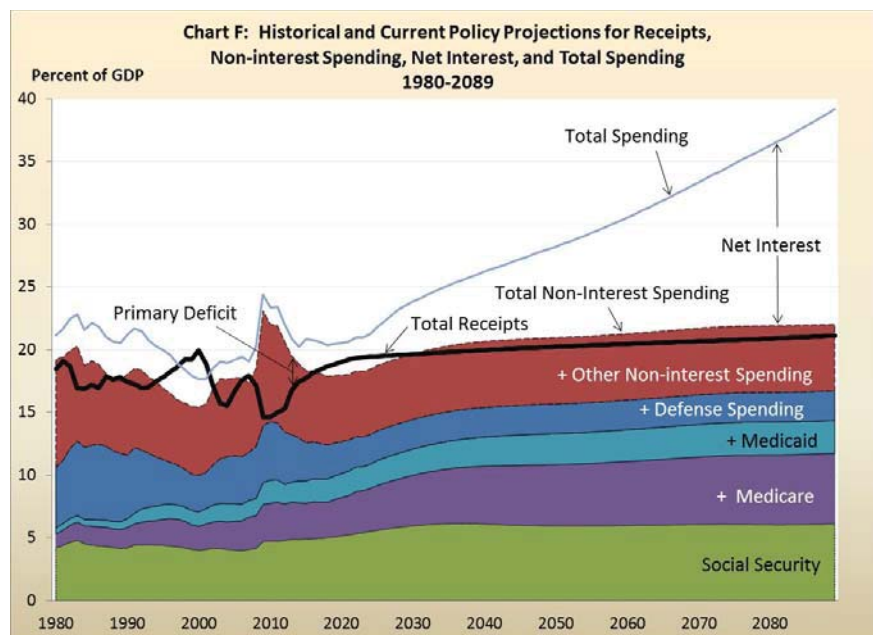
²³ Refers to the segment of the population born during the post-World War II era during which time birth rates in the U.S. were higher than normal.

²⁴ Current policy in the projections is based on current law, but includes extension of certain policies that expire under current law but are routinely extended or otherwise expected to continue, such as reauthorization of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The receipt share of GDP fell substantially in 2009 and 2010 and remained low in 2011 and 2012 because of the recession and tax reductions enacted as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010. The share rose to 17.4 percent in 2014 and is projected to return to near its long-run average as the economy fully recovers and as a result of the higher tax rates enacted under the American Taxpayer Relief Act (ATRA). After 2020, receipts are projected to grow slightly more rapidly than GDP as increases in real incomes cause more taxpayers and a larger share of income to fall into the higher individual income tax brackets.

The non-interest spending share of GDP is projected to stay at or below its current level of about 19 percent until 2028, and to then rise gradually to 20.8 percent of GDP in 2042 and 22.0 percent of GDP in 2089. The reductions in the non-interest spending share of GDP over the next few years are mostly due to the expected reductions in spending for overseas contingency operations, caps on discretionary spending, and the automatic spending cuts mandated by the BCA; the subsequent increases are principally due to growth in Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security spending (see Chart F). The aging of the baby boom generation over the next 25 years is projected to increase the Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid spending shares of GDP by about 1.2 percentage points, 1.7 percentage points, and 0.6 percentage points, respectively. After 2039, the Social Security spending share of GDP gradually declines and then returns to 2039 levels, while the Medicare and Medicaid

spending share of GDP continues to increase, albeit at a slower rate, due to projected increases in health care costs. The Affordable Care Act (ACA)²⁵ provision of health insurance subsidies and expanded Medicaid coverage boost federal spending and other ACA provisions significantly reduce per-beneficiary Medicare cost growth. On net, the ACA is projected to substantially reduce the cost growth rate of federal expenditures for Medicare over the next 75 years. However, as discussed in Note 24, there is uncertainty about whether the projected cost savings, productivity improvements, and reductions in physician payment rates will be sustained in a manner consistent with the projected cost growth over time.



²⁵ P.L. 111-148, as amended by P.L. 111-152. The ACA expands health insurance coverage, provides health insurance subsidies for low-income individuals and families, includes many measures designed to reduce health care cost growth, and reduces the annual increases in Medicare payment rates.

The primary deficit-to-GDP projections in Chart F, along with projections for interest rates, determine the debt-to-GDP ratio projections shown in Chart G (right axis) on the previous page. That ratio was 74 percent at the end of FY 2014 and under current policy is projected to be 70 percent in 2024, 117 percent in 2044, and 321 percent in 2089. The debt-to-GDP ratio rises at an accelerating rate despite primary deficits that flatten out because higher levels of debt lead to higher net interest expenditures, and higher net interest expenditures lead to higher debt. The continuous rise of the debt-to-GDP ratio after 2024 indicates that current policy is unsustainable.

These debt projections are generally higher than the corresponding projections in the FY 2013 *Financial Report*, but still lower than those made in the FY 2012 *Financial Report*. For example, the debt-to-GDP projection for 2087 (the final projection year for the 2012 report) is 309 percent in this year's *Financial Report*, 272 percent in the FY 2013 *Financial Report*, and 395 percent in the FY 2012 *Financial Report*.²⁶

The Fiscal Gap and the Cost of Delaying Policy Reform

The 75-year fiscal gap is one measure of the degree to which current fiscal policy is unsustainable. It is the amount by which primary surpluses over the next 75 years must rise above current-policy levels in order to prevent the debt-to-GDP ratio from rising. It is estimated that running primary surpluses that average 1.6 percent of GDP over the next 75 years would result in the 2089 debt-to-GDP ratio equaling its level in fiscal year 2014, which compares with primary deficits that average 0.4 percent of GDP under current policies. The 75-year fiscal gap is therefore 2.1 percent of GDP, which is 10.3 percent of the 75-year present value of projected receipts and 10.0 percent of the 75-year present value of non-interest spending.

It is noteworthy that preventing the debt-to-GDP ratio from rising over the next 75 years requires that primary surpluses be substantially positive on average. This is true because projected GDP growth rates are, on average, smaller than the projected government borrowing rate over the next 75 years. The implication is that debt would grow faster than GDP if primary surpluses were zero on average. For example, if the primary surplus was precisely zero in every year, then debt would grow at the rate of interest in every year, which would be faster than GDP growth.

Table 7 illustrates the cost of delaying policy to close the fiscal gap by comparing three policies that begin on different dates. The first policy begins immediately and calls for increasing primary surpluses by 2.1 percent of GDP in every year between 2015 and 2089. This is accomplished

by invoking some combination of spending reductions and revenue increases that amount to 2.1 percent of GDP in every year over the 75-year projection period. The second policy in Table 7 begins in 2025. Because the same fiscal consolidation must be compressed into ten fewer years, this policy change is more abrupt, calling for primary surplus increases amounting to 2.5 percent of GDP in every year between 2025 and 2089. Similarly, if debt is allowed to accumulate unabated for 20 years, then closing the 75-year fiscal gap would require even more abrupt primary surplus increases amounting to 3.1 percent of GDP in every year between 2035 and 2089. The differences between the primary surplus boost starting in 2025 and 2035 (2.5 and 3.1 percent of GDP, respectively) and the primary surplus boost starting in 2015 (2.1 percent of GDP) is a measure of the additional burden policy delay would impose on future generations. Future generations are harmed by a policy delay of this sort because the higher the primary surplus is during their lifetimes the greater the difference is between the taxes they pay and the programmatic spending from which they benefit.

Conclusion

The Government took significant steps towards a sustainable fiscal policy by enacting the ACA in 2010, the BCA in 2011, and ATRA in 2013. The ACA holds the prospect of lowering long-term per-beneficiary spending growth for Medicare and Medicaid, the BCA significantly curtails discretionary spending, and ATRA increases revenues. Together, these three laws substantially reduce the estimated long-term fiscal gap. But even with these laws, the debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to remain relatively flat over the next ten years and then commence a continuous rise over the remaining projection period and beyond if current policies are kept in place. This trend implies that current policies are not sustainable. Subject to the important caveat that changes in policy are not so

Table 7	
Costs of Delaying Fiscal Reform	
Period of Delay	Change in Average Primary Surplus
No Delay: Reform in 2015.....	2.1 percent of GDP between 2015 and 2089
Ten Years: Reform in 2025.....	2.5 percent of GDP between 2025 and 2089
Twenty Years: Reform in 2035..	3.1 percent of GDP between 2035 and 2089

Note: Reforms taking place in 2014, 2024, and 2034 from the 2013 Financial Report were 1.7, 2.1, and 2.6 percent of GDP.

²⁶ See the Required Supplementary Information section of the [FY 2013 Financial Report of the U.S. Government](#) for more information about changes from the long term fiscal projections for FY 2012.

abrupt that they slow the economy's recovery, the sooner policies are put in place to avert these trends, the smaller the revenue increases and/or spending decreases will need to be to return the Government to a sustainable fiscal path over the long term.

While this *Financial Report's* projections of expenditures and receipts under current policy are highly uncertain, it is nevertheless nearly certain that current policy cannot be sustained indefinitely.

These and other issues concerning fiscal sustainability are discussed in further detail in the Required Supplementary Information section of this *Financial Report*.

Social Insurance

The preceding analysis of the Government's long-term fiscal projections considered Government receipts and spending as a whole. The Statement of Social Insurance (SOSI) provides a more focused perspective of the Government's "social insurance" programs: Social Security, Medicare, Railroad Retirement, and Black Lung.²⁷ For these programs, the SOSI reports: (1) the actuarial present value of all future program revenue (mainly taxes and premiums) - excluding interest - to be received from or on behalf of current and future participants; (2) the estimated future scheduled expenditures to be paid to or on behalf of current and future participants; and (3) the difference between (1) and (2). Amounts reported in the SOSI and in the RSI section in this *Financial Report* are based on each program's official actuarial calculations. By accounting convention, the transfers of general revenues are eliminated in the consolidation of the SOSI at the governmentwide level and as such, the general revenues that are used to finance Medicare Parts B and D are not included in these calculations even though the expenditures on these programs are included. For the FY 2014 and 2013 SOSI, the amounts eliminated totaled \$24.7 trillion and \$22.5 trillion, respectively. SOSI programs and amounts are included in the broader fiscal sustainability analysis in the previous section, although on a slightly different basis (as described in the RSI section of this *Financial Report*).

The SOSI provides perspective on the Government's long-term estimated exposures and costs for social insurance programs. While these expenditures are not considered Government liabilities, they do have the potential to become expenses and liabilities in the future, based on the continuation of the social insurance programs' provisions contained in current law. The social insurance trust funds account for all related program income and expenses. Medicare and Social Security taxes, premiums, and other income are credited to the funds; fund disbursements may only be made for benefit payments and program administrative costs. Any excess revenues are invested in special non-marketable U.S. Government securities at a market rate of interest. The trust funds represent

Table 8: Social Insurance Future Expenditures in Excess of Future Revenues

Dollars in Billions	2014	2013	Increase / (Decrease)	
			\$	%
Open Group (Net):				
Social Security (OASDI)	\$ (13,330)	\$ (12,294)	\$ 1,036	8.4%
Medicare (Parts A, B, & D)	\$ (28,483)	\$ (27,302)	\$ 1,181	4.3%
Other	\$ (103)	\$ (102)	\$ 1	0.6%
Total Social Insurance Expenditures, Net (Open Group)	\$ (41,916)	\$ (39,698)	\$ 2,218	5.6%
Total Social Insurance Expenditures, Net (Closed Group)	\$ (56,680)	\$ (53,974)	\$ 2,706	5.0%
Social Insurance Net Expenditures as a % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)*				
Open Group				
Social Security (OASDI)	(1.2%)	(1.2%)		
Medicare (Parts A, B, & D)	(2.9%)	(3.0%)		
Other	0.0%	0.0%		
Total (Open Group)	(4.0%)	(4.0%)		
Total (Closed Group)	(5.4%)	(5.5%)		

Source: Statement of Social Insurance (SOSI). Amounts equal estimated present value of projected revenues and expenditures for scheduled benefits over the next 75 years of certain 'Social Insurance' programs (e.g., Social Security, Medicare). 'Open Group' totals reflect all current and projected program participants during the 75-year projection period. 'Closed Group' totals reflect only current participants.

* GDP values used are from the 2014 & 2013 Social Security and Medicare Trustees Reports and represent the present value of GDP over the 75-year projection period. As the GDP used for Social Security and Medicare differ slightly in the Trust Fund Reports, the two values are averaged to estimate the 'Other' and Total Net Social Insurance Expenditures as % of GDP.

Note - some totals may not equal sum of components due to rounding.

²⁷ The Black Lung Benefits Act (BLBA) provides for monthly payments and medical benefits to coal miners totally disabled from pneumoconiosis (black lung disease) arising from their employment in or around the nation's coal mines. See <http://www.dol.gov/compliance/topics/benefits-comp-blacklung.htm>

the accumulated value, including interest, of all prior program surpluses, and provide automatic funding authority to pay for future benefits.

Table 8 on the previous page summarizes amounts reported in the SOSI, showing that net social insurance expenditures are projected to be \$41.9 trillion as of January 1, 2014 for the "Open Group," an increase of \$2.2 trillion over net expenditures of \$39.7 trillion projected in the 2013 *Financial Report*.²⁸ The 2014 amounts reported for Medicare reflect the "projected baseline scenario" for Part B.²⁹

Table 9 summarizes the principal reasons for the changes in projected social insurance amounts during 2014 and 2013. The following briefly summarizes the significant changes for the current valuation (as of January 1, 2014) as disclosed in Note 24, Social Insurance. See Note 24 for additional information.

- Change in valuation period: This change replaces a small negative net cash flow for 2013 and replaces it with a much larger negative net cash flow for 2088. As a result, the present value of the estimated future net cash flows decreased (became more negative) by \$1.8 trillion.
- Changes in economic data and assumptions: for both Social Security and Medicare, the ultimate annual rate of change in the CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) is assumed to be 2.7 percent per year, compared to 2.8 percent per year in the prior period, making the ultimate average increase in the CPI-W more comparable to recent historical annual increases. Otherwise, the ultimate economic assumptions for the current valuation are the same as those for the prior valuation. However, starting economic values and the way these values transition to the ultimate assumptions were changed.
 - The ratio of average taxable earnings to the average wage index is lower by 1.9 percent in 2012 and 1.5 percent in 2013, compared to the previous valuation period.

In addition, there were two main changes in economic methodology:

 - Projected labor force participation rates for the older population are slightly lower for the current valuation in order to better reflect the participation rates between never-married and married populations and the improvement in life expectancy.
 - Different earnings levels are assigned to three distinct groups of the other immigrant population supplied by demography.

These changes decreased (made more negative) the present value of the estimated future cash flows by \$605 billion.
- Changes in economic and other healthcare assumptions: The assumption changes, specific to the Medicare projections, included, but were not limited to:
 - The projections emphasized in the 2014 Medicare Trustees Report were changed to reflect the projected baseline scenario. This scenario assumes that the physician payment updates required under the current-law sustainable growth rate formula will be permanently overridden by lawmakers. The use of these projections increases the present value of estimated future expenditures, compared to the current law projections, for Part B by roughly 11 percent and for Total Medicare by about 5 percent.

Table 9: Changes in Social Insurance Projections		
Dollars in Billions	2014	2013
Net Present Value (NPV) - Open Group		
(Beginning of the Year)	\$ (39,698)	(38,554)
Changes In:		
Valuation Period	\$ (1,769)	\$ (1,813)
Demographic data and assumptions	\$ (54)	\$ (285)
Economic data and assumptions ¹	\$ (605)	\$ (273)
Law or policy	\$ 29	\$ (520)
Methodology and programmatic data ¹	\$ (90)	\$ 1,034
Economic and other healthcare assumptions ²	\$ (318)	\$ (94)
Change in projection base ²	\$ 589	\$ 807
Net Change in Open Group measure	\$ (2,218)	\$ (1,144)
NPV - Open Group (End of the Year)	\$ (41,916)	\$ (39,698)

¹ Relates to SSA.

² Relates to HHS.

Note - totals may not equal sum of components due to rounding.

²⁸ 'Closed' Group and 'Open' Group differ by the population included in each calculation. From the SOSI, the 'Closed' Group includes: (1) participants who have attained eligibility and (2) participants who have not attained eligibility. The 'Open' Group adds future participants to the 'Closed' Group. See 'Social Insurance' in the Required Supplementary Information section in this *Financial Report* for more information.

²⁹ The projected baseline scenario includes the assumption that the current-law physician updates will be legislatively overridden and that physician updates will be 0.6 percent each year starting with 2016. (2014 Medicare Trustees Report, p. 8/footnote 5)

- Utilization rate assumptions for inpatient hospital services were decreased and case mix increase assumptions for skilled nursing facilities and home health agencies were decreased.

These and other related changes decreased (made more negative) the present value of the estimated future cash flows by \$318 billion.

Projected net expenditures for Medicare Parts A and B declined significantly between FY 2009 and FY 2010 reflecting provisions of the ACA. As reported in Note 24, there continues to be uncertainty about whether the projected cost savings and productivity improvements will be sustained in a manner consistent with the projected cost growth over time. Note 24 includes an alternative projection to illustrate the uncertainty of projected Medicare costs. As indicated earlier, GAO disclaimed opinions on the 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011 and 2010 SOSI because of these significant uncertainties.

Costs as a percent of GDP of both Medicare and Social Security, which are analyzed annually in the Medicare and Social Security Trustees' Reports, are projected to increase substantially through 2035 because: (1) the number of beneficiaries rises rapidly as the baby-boom generation retires and (2) the lower birth rates that have persisted since the baby boom cause slower growth in the labor force and GDP.³⁰ According to the Medicare Trustees' Report, spending on Medicare is projected to rise from approximately 3.5 percent of GDP in 2013 to 6.9 percent in 2088 (based on the projected baseline under the Trustees intermediate set of assumptions, as noted earlier). The Hospital Insurance (HI) Trust Fund is now expected to remain solvent until 2030, (four years later than projected in last year's report). Under the projected baseline, scheduled HI tax revenue would be sufficient to pay 85 percent of HI costs in 2030 and 77 percent by 2088.

As for Social Security, combined spending is projected to increase gradually from its current level of 4.9 percent of GDP to about 6.2 percent by 2035, declining to 6.0 percent by 2050 and remaining between 6.0 and 6.1 percent through 2088. The Social Security Trustees' Report indicates that annual OASDI income, considered on a theoretical basis, including interest on trust fund assets, will exceed annual cost and trust fund assets will increase every year until 2020, at which time it will be necessary to begin drawing down on trust fund assets to cover part of expenditures until asset reserves become depleted in 2033 (unchanged from last year's Report). Continuing tax income would be sufficient to pay 77 percent of scheduled benefits in 2033 and 72 percent of scheduled benefits in 2088. However, the DI Trust Fund alone is expected to deplete much sooner, by the end of 2016, at which time 81 percent of scheduled benefits would be payable.³¹ The projections assume that full Social Security and Medicare benefits are paid after the corresponding trust fund assets are depleted.

As noted earlier, it is apparent that these programs are on a fiscally unsustainable path (as was previously discussed and as noted in the Trustees' Reports). Additional information from the Trustees Reports may be found in the RSI section of this *Financial Report*.

Systems, Controls, and Legal Compliance

Systems

As federal agencies demonstrate success in obtaining opinions on their audited financial statements, the federal government continues to face challenges in implementing financial systems that meet federal requirements. The number of CFO Act agencies reporting lack of substantial compliance with one or more of the three Section 803(a) requirements of the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act (FFMIA) was 10 in FY 2014 and 9 in FY 2013, and the number of auditors reporting lack of substantial compliance with one or more of the three Section 803(a) FFMIA requirements was 11 in both FY 2014 and FY 2013. These results underscore the importance of current initiatives to standardize the financial management practices across the federal government.

Controls

Federal managers have a fundamental responsibility to develop and maintain effective internal controls. Effective internal controls help to ensure that programs are managed with integrity and resources are used efficiently and effectively through three objectives: effective and efficient operations, reliable financial reporting, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The safeguarding of assets is a subcomponent of each objective.

³⁰ [2014 Annual Trustees Reports on Social Security and Medicare \(Summary\)](#), pp. 3, 11.

³¹ [2014 Annual Trustees Reports on Social Security and Medicare \(Summary\)](#), pp. 3, 10.

OMB Circular No. A-123, *Management's Responsibility for Internal Control*, is the policy document that implements the requirements of 31 U.S.C. 3512 (c), (d) (commonly known as the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act or FMFIA). Circular No. A-123 primarily focuses on providing agencies with a framework for assessing and managing risks more strategically and effectively. The Circular is currently being revised to reflect changes incorporated in GAO's recently updated Standards for Internal Control in the federal government. The revised Circular will be available to the Agencies in the near future. The Circular contains multiple appendices that address, at a more detailed level, one or more of the objectives of effective internal control. Appendix A provides a methodology for agency management to assess, document, test, and report on internal controls over financial reporting. Appendix B requires agencies to maintain internal controls that reduce the risk of fraud, waste, and error in Government charge card programs. Appendix C implements the Requirements for Effective Estimation and Remediation of Improper Payments. Appendix D defines new requirements for determining compliance with the FFMIA and will contribute to efforts to reduce the cost, risk, and complexity of financial system modernizations.

The total number of reported material weaknesses for the CFO Act agencies was 27 and 29 for FYs 2014 and 2013, respectively.³² Effective internal controls are a challenge not only at the agency level, but also at the governmentwide level. GAO reported that at the governmentwide level, material weaknesses resulted in ineffective internal control over financial reporting. While progress is being made at many agencies and across the Government in identifying and resolving internal control deficiencies, continued diligence and commitment are needed.

In FY 2015, HHS and Treasury will begin to perform comprehensive risk assessments to determine areas that might affect payment accuracy in the Marketplaces and related programs created under the Affordable Care Act. The status of these risk assessments will be reported in the agencies' FY 2015 Agency Financial Reports (AFR). In the interim, both agencies have established internal controls to provide for effective program operations, reliable financial reporting, and compliance with laws and regulations.

Legal Compliance

Federal agencies are required to comply with a wide range of laws and regulations, including appropriations, employment, health and safety, and others. Responsibility for compliance primarily rests with agency management. Compliance is addressed as part of agency financial statement audits. Agency auditors test for compliance with selected laws and regulations related to financial reporting. Certain individual agency audit reports contain instances of noncompliance. None of these instances were material to the governmentwide financial statements. However, GAO reported that its work on compliance with laws and regulations was limited by the material weaknesses and scope limitations discussed in its report.

Financial Management Progress and Priorities

Since the passage of the CFO Act of 1990, the federal financial community has made important strides in instilling strong accounting and financial reporting practices. This year, 21 of the 24 CFO Act agencies obtained an opinion from the independent auditors on their financial statements as of the issuance of this *Financial Report*. Out of the 24 major CFO Act agencies, there were 21 clean opinions and two disclaimers in FY 2014³³. In addition, 25 auditor-identified material weaknesses were reported in FY 2014, an approximately 59 percent decline from the 61 material weaknesses that were identified at the start of this past decade. An increasing number of federal agencies have initiated and sustained disciplined and consistent financial reporting operations, implemented effective internal controls around financial reporting, and have successfully integrated transaction processing and accounting records. These efforts have resulted in improved results on financial statement audits. However, weaknesses in basic financial management practices and other limitations continue to prevent two of the CFO Act agencies, and the Government as a whole, from achieving an audit opinion.

Today, accountability means providing transparent information to the public about where and how federal dollars are being spent. It means protecting against fraud. It means avoiding wasteful or excessive use of taxpayer funds. It means ensuring that the federal government is not only responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars, but frugal stewards as well, looking for every opportunity to save money and create greater efficiencies.

³² FY 2014 material weaknesses do not include audit results for HUD. HUD's audit results were not available as of the date of this report. The audit results are expected to be reported in March 2015. HUD's FY 2013 four material weaknesses are included in the governmentwide FY 2013 audit results.

³³ The 21 agencies include HHS, which received a clean opinion on all statements except the Statement of Social Insurance and the Statement of Changes in Social Insurance, both of which received a disclaimer of opinion. The audit opinion for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was not available as of the release of this *Financial Report*.

The federal government has come a long way since the passage of the CFO Act in 1990. Today, the federal financial management community is focused on three important improvement initiatives:

- Improving the quality, utility, and transparency of financial information;
- Protecting against waste, fraud, and abuse; and
- Helping agencies maximize the impact of their limited financial resources.

Improve the Quality, Utility, and Transparency of Federal Financial Information

DATA Act

The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act), signed on May 9, 2014, sets forth a clear vision for the future of Federal spending transparency. The Act primarily amends the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) by requiring that all federal spending be displayed on a website in a searchable, downloadable, and machine-readable format. This includes information on obligations, outlays, budgetary authority, unobligated balances, and other budgetary resources for each appropriations account. It also expands award reporting to include all award spending and requires that OMB and Treasury issue data definition and exchange standards by May 2015. By 2017, all agencies must report this data to a centralized website and adhere to the data standards and guidance issued by OMB and Treasury. This will expand Federal spending transparency and unlock spending data for use by the public and agencies. Posting this financial information will allow spending comparisons across and within agencies that have never been possible before.

Since the DATA Act was signed into law, OMB and Treasury have been partnering to lead governmentwide implementation. They have established a robust governance structure with representatives from agencies and functional communities fostering collaboration on data standards, policy changes, USAspending.gov improvements, and agency implementation. The implementation project plan was developed to be collaborative, iterative, incremental, and agile, with a data centric focus. This approach sets the foundation for future success with shorter term and intermediate deliverables.

USAspending.gov

USAspending.gov was established to provide clear information on federal award spending. Continuing to improve the quality, utility and transparency of this federal spending information is a foundational Administration commitment to open government, as identified in the U.S. Government's National Action Plan for Open Government. To continue its efforts to improve the quality of spending data, OMB will issue additional policy guidance to adjust USAspending.gov reporting requirements and procedures pursuant to the DATA Act. To align our federal spending and financial management transparency efforts, the Administration has transferred responsibility for USAspending.gov from GSA to Treasury. Treasury's leadership in executing a governmentwide federal spending transparency vision enables the federal government to move forward in achieving the objective of making spending data more useful, accurate, and timely – consistent with the agency's other work through financial reporting, work on improper payments, among other priority areas. Over the next year, USAspending.gov will reflect improvements in both website usability and functionality, leveraging the lessons and successes learned from Recovery Act reporting and data display.

Moving forward, in concert with Treasury, OMB will continue to collaborate with the Government Accountability & Transparency Board and both federal and non-federal stakeholders to evolve the Administration's governmentwide spending transparency framework to effectively provide the public with transparent information about how federal dollars are being spent.

Protect Against Waste, Fraud, and Abuse

Improper Payments

Addressing improper payments is a central component of the Administration's overall efforts to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse. When the President took office in 2009, the improper payment error rate was 5.42%, an all-time high. Since then, the Administration, working together with Congress, has made progress by strengthening accountability and transparency through annual reviews by agency inspectors general, and expanded requirements for high-priority programs. As a result of this concerted effort, in FY 2013 the Administration reported an improper payment rate of 3.53%. Over FY 2014, the federal government experienced improper payment rate increases in major programs including Medicare Fee for Service, Earned Income Tax Credit, Medicaid, Unemployment Insurance, and Supplemental Security Income. Other major programs experienced a decrease in improper payment

rates, including Medicare Part C, Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance, and Public Housing/Rental Assistance. On net, these changes resulted in a governmentwide improper payment rate of 4.02%³⁴. Additionally, DOD has taken steps to improve its improper payment sampling and estimation plan for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service's (DFAS) Commercial Payments to implement recommendations made by the Government Accountability Office (GAO)³⁵. Furthermore, agencies recovered roughly \$20 billion in overpayments through the payment recapture audits and other methods in FY 2014.

The Administration continues to use the Budget to build on congressional and Administration action to reduce improper payments. For example, the President's FY 2016 Budget includes a number of program integrity proposals aimed at reducing improper payments and improving government efficiency. In addition, the Administration recently provided agencies with new tools in a revised OMB Circular No. A-123, Appendix C to tackle improper payments. OMB A-123, Appendix C provides guidance to agencies and Inspectors General on key improper payment activities, including risk assessments, estimating and reporting, recoveries, and compliance reviews. The enactment of the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act (IPERIA) of 2012 provided an opportunity for OMB to re-examine Appendix C to ensure agencies are able to more efficiently reduce their improper payment rates, while also complying with multiple legislative and administrative requirements. The goal of this overhauled version of Appendix C is to transform the improper payment compliance framework to create a more unified, comprehensive, and less burdensome set of requirements. Appendix C accomplishes the following, among other things:

- Consolidates and streamlines reporting requirements so agencies can spend less time producing compliance reports and more time focusing on game-changing solutions for achieving payment accuracy;
- Establishes new reporting categories to provide more granularity on improper payment estimates to inform more effective corrective actions and more focused strategies for reducing improper payments;
- Introduces a new internal control framework to ensure that payments are made in the right amount, to the right entity, and for the right purpose; and
- Provides guidance to help strengthen the statistical validity of agency improper payment estimates and includes payments to Federal employees in the definition of improper payments.

The Government is also advancing data analytics and improved technologies to prevent improper payments before they happen. In doing so, as part of the President's Do Not Pay Initiative, the Administration established a Do Not Pay System of Records at the Department of the Treasury and the Administration looks forward to continuing the Administration's work with the new Congress on the Improper Payments Agency Cooperation Enhancement Act (IPACE Act), which includes many of the Administration priorities on sharing death data to prevent improper payments. Another significant improper payment data analytics effort includes the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Fraud Prevention System (FPS), a state-of-the-art predictive analytics technology to identify and prevent fraud in the program. Finally, the Department of Labor continued a Federal-State partnership with state governments through the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Integrity Center for Excellence to facilitate the development and implementation of UI integrity tools by the States and to share best practices in the detection and reduction of improper payments.

Combating improper payments within the federal government is a top priority for the Administration and it will continue to explore new and innovative ways to address the problem. Every dollar paid in error represents an unacceptable waste of public resources, and this Administration is committed to keeping up the fight to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse and continuing to attack this challenge with every tool at its disposal.

Improving Grants Management

On December 26, 2013, OMB published final guidance to better target risk and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse (2 CFR Part 200—Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, And Audit Requirements for Federal Awards). This final guidance was developed by the interagency Council on Financial Assistance Reform (COFAR) to improve effectiveness for the approximately \$600 billion awarded annually in federal financial assistance. Representing a two-year collaborative effort across the federal government and its partners -- State and local governments, Indian tribes, research and higher education institutions, nonprofit organizations, and the audit community -- the guidance rethinks and reforms the rules that govern our stewardship of federal dollars. It streamlines eight existing OMB Circulars on financial management into one consolidated set of guidance in the

³⁴ The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) received an Annual Financial Reporting extension to March 1, 2015. When HUD payments are excluded from the governmentwide figures, the improper payment rate is 4.03 percent. DOD's Commercial Payments were first included in the governmentwide rate in FY 2013. When the DOD commercial payments are excluded from the governmentwide figures, the FY 2013 rate is 4.00 percent and the FY 2014 rate is 4.46 percent.

³⁵ [Significant Improvements Needed in Efforts to Address Improper Payment Requirements, GAO-13-227.](#)

CFR. Specifically, the revised policies emphasize risk-based decision making to reduce administrative burden and waste, fraud, and abuse by:

- Eliminating duplicative and conflicting guidance;
- Focusing on performance over compliance for accountability;
- Encouraging efficient use of information technology and shared services;
- Providing for consistent and transparent treatment of costs;
- Limiting allowable costs to make the best use of federal resources;
- Setting standard business processes using data definitions;
- Encouraging non-federal entities to have family-friendly policies;
- Strengthening oversight; and
- Targeting audit requirements on risk of waste, fraud, and abuse.

The COFAR worked closely with federal agencies to develop, issue, and implement regulations for the new guidance in the Code of Federal Regulations by the effective date of December 26, 2014. The COFAR has established metrics that will measure the effectiveness of the new policies and is working with federal and non-federal stakeholders to develop additional training and outreach resources. In addition, OMB and its partners are continuing complementary work to strengthen program outcomes through innovative and effective use of grant-making models, performance metrics, and evaluation, as described in OMB Memorandum M-13-17 on *Next Steps in the Evidence and Innovation Agenda*. In September 2014, OMB issued Memorandum M-14-17, *Metrics for Uniform Guidance (2 C.F.R. 200)*, which required agencies to report required baseline data for administrative metrics to OMB.

Help Agencies Maximize the Impact of their Limited Financial Resources

Benchmarking

Federal agencies lack a complete set of tools and reliable data to measure their performance in key administrative areas. This discourages agency executives from taking necessary steps to reduce costs, efficiently deploy resources, and improve quality of service. In addition, agencies are often hesitant to adopt shared services for mission-support functions without “apples-to-apples” data that allows them to compare options, quantify potential savings, and ensure equal (or better) service quality. Finally, the absence of governmentwide benchmarks can hamper the identification and sharing of effective management practices, because OMB and agencies lack full visibility into which agencies or shared service providers are the top performers in a given function.

The federal government’s efforts to improve the efficiency of the Government aim to increase the quality and value of core administrative operations and enhance productivity to achieve cost savings. Establishing cost and quality benchmarks for these operations will create the tools the federal government needs to measure its performance in key mission-support areas, including human resources, finance, acquisition, IT and real property. OMB met with agencies and then issued customized memos to each of the 24 CFO Act Agencies, summarizing takeaways from the meetings and agreed-upon follow-up actions based on noteworthy benchmark results. The federal government is currently working with agencies on preparing for the next round of collection by (1) Improving the data quality, consistency and relevance of the Efficiency metrics collected earlier in 2014; and (2) Developing a set of Effectiveness metrics to capture operational quality and customer satisfaction with mission-support services.

Improving Effectiveness and Efficiency in Financial Operations and Systems

The Administration continues to make significant progress in the effort to minimize the costs and risks associated with agency financial systems modernization. In 2013, OMB issued M-13-08: *Improving Financial Systems Through Shared Services*. This new guidance directs all executive agencies to use, with limited exceptions, a shared service solution for future modernizations of core accounting or mixed systems and names the Office of Financial Innovation and Transformation (FIT) at the Department of the Treasury as OMB’s partner in evaluating shared service providers and agency modernization plans. In 2014, two cabinet level Departments began working with Federal Shared Service Providers (FSSPs) to plan migration to shared services.

In addition, OMB and FIT built on these efforts by:

- Identifying and formally designating four FSSPs at the Treasury Department, USDA, DOI, and DOT;
- Developing performance and cost information for all FSSPs through a product services catalog;

- Developing meaningful benchmarks and metrics in support of the President's Management Agenda to measure the cost, quality, and performance of financial operations throughout the Government; and
- Developing a sound governance model to support greater use of shared services by agencies while ensuring adequate input on major decisions by customer agencies.

Driving Real Property Efficiencies through Better Data and Data Analytics

The federal domestic building inventory is diverse and contains 300,000 buildings requiring approximately \$21 billion of annual operation and maintenance expenditures, including approximately \$6.8 billion of annual lease costs. Within the inventory, there are opportunities to realize cost savings by utilizing space more efficiently and reducing the portfolio. In 2013, the "Freeze the Footprint" Policy (OMB Management Procedures Memorandum 2013-02) was issued, requiring agencies to freeze their real property footprint. As a result, agencies reduced their federal domestic office and warehouse space by 10.2 million square feet in FY 2013. To improve the quality of federal real property data in FY 2014 Performance and Accountability Reports (PARs)/AFRs, agencies were required to validate and report "Freeze the Footprint" square footage and associated operations and maintenance costs in their 2014 financial statements.

In FY 2015, the Government will issue a real property framework that provides operational guidelines for agencies to manage its real property to improve efficiency. Over time, the framework will improve utilization of government-owned buildings to reduce reliance on leasing, lower the number of excess and underutilized properties, and improve the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the federal real property portfolio.

Conclusion

The federal government has seen significant progress in financial management since the passage of the CFO Act more than 20 years ago. Yet significant challenges remain. The issues that the federal government faces in the Government today require our financial managers to move beyond the status quo and to generate a higher return on investment for our financial management activities. The steps outlined above leverage the tools and capacities in place today, and refocus energies on critical and emerging priorities – cutting wasteful spending, improving the efficiency of our operations and information technology, and laying a foundation for data quality and collaboration as the federal government enters a new era of transparency and open Government.

Additional Information

This *Financial Report's* Appendix contains the names and websites of the significant Government entities included in the *Financial Report's* financial statements. Details about the information in this *Financial Report* can be found in these entities' financial statements included in their Performance and Accountability and Agency Financial Reports. This *Financial Report*, as well as those from previous years, is also available at the Treasury, OMB, and GAO websites at: http://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/fsreports/fs_reports_publications.htm; <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/financial/index.html>; and <http://www.gao.gov/financial.html>, respectively. Other related Government publications include, but are not limited to the:

- *Budget of the United States Government*,
- *Treasury Bulletin*,
- *Monthly Treasury Statement of Receipts and Outlays of the United States Government*,
- *Monthly Statement of the Public Debt of the United States*,
- *Economic Report of the President*, and
- *Trustees' Reports* for the Social Security and Medicare Programs.

Limitations of the Financial Statements

The principal financial statements have been prepared to report the financial position and results of operations of the federal government, and the financial condition and changes in financial condition of its social insurance programs, pursuant to the requirements of 31 U.S.C. § 331(e)(1). These statements are in addition to the financial reports used to monitor and control budgetary resources that are prepared from the same books and records.