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Executive Secretary of ECLAC
Gert Rosenthal

Deputy Executive Secretary
Andrés Bianchi

Director of the Review
Aníbal Pinto

Technical Secretary
Eugenio Lahera



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Notes and explanation of symbols

The following symbols are used in tables in the *Review*:

Three dots (...) indicate that data are not available or are not separately reported.

A dash (—) indicates that the amount is nil or negligible.

A blank space in a table means that the item in question is not applicable.

A minus sign (-) indicates a deficit or decrease, unless otherwise specified.

A point (.) is used to indicate decimals.

A slash (/) indicates a crop year or fiscal year, e.g., 1970/1971.

Use of a hyphen (-) between years, e.g., 1971-1973, indicates reference to the complete number of calendar years involved, including the beginning and end years.

Reference to "tons" mean metric tons, and to "dollars", United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

Unless otherwise stated, references to annual rates of growth or variation signify compound annual rates.

Individual figures and percentages in tables do not necessarily add up to corresponding totals, because of rounding.

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The incorporation of women in development policies

*Cecilia López M.**

*Molly Pollack E.***

There is an obvious imbalance between the magnitude of women's contribution to Latin American and Caribbean economies and the scope of actions and policies aimed at women. The same imbalance is seen between women's contribution and the benefits they receive through their participation in regional development.

This article analyses the lines of research and action concerning women undertaken in Latin America and evaluates the results. In the final section some proposals are made regarding, on the one hand, the identification and elimination of barriers to the integration of women in development policies. On the other hand, it is also pointed out that changes are required in the services offered by the State so that the volume, nature and specifics of women's work can be taken into account.

*Director of the Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC).

**Responsible for the PREALC project on Women and Development.

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Introduction

The topic "Women and Development" is an especially complex one to deal with if the aim is to make a contribution which will facilitate the effective and permanent integration of more than half of the population in development planning. During past decades, and especially during the Decade for Women, numerous research projects, policy proposals and diagnoses have been produced and to some extent they have laid the foundations for the beginning of this new phase.

Two stages can be distinguished in the process of women's integration in development. In the first the effort focused on improving their status as beneficiaries of the process. In the second the emphasis was on the design of policies to incorporate women as participants, i.e., as agents of development. However, the problem is not that women are not integrated, but rather that the manner of their integration translates into a loss of resources for society as a whole, and this in turn gives rise to a delay in meeting the proposed development targets. In effect, women participate in nearly all activities of the development process, they benefit from it to some degree and, also play a leading role in it. The problem lies in the imbalance between their contribution and the benefits they receive, an imbalance which is even greater if their potential contribution is compared with their actual benefits.

The reasons why women have not enjoyed the fruits of development to the same degree as men have been very well summarized in the report of the seminar on women and development organized by the United Nations Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) and held in New York in December 1986. The following are among the main reasons: i) women are not included as a target group in development projects since it is taken as given that they will benefit by a trickle-down effect, once development reaches men; ii) traditional strategies for reaching women have proven inadequate, because no methodologies exist for reaching the poor, which is the sector where they are mostly concentrated; iii) development efforts aimed at women have been essentially channelled

through specific projects for women or through the inclusion of "components for women" in projects, which have failed owing to the lack of connection between the proposed activities and the macroeconomic policies implemented; iv) governments have been unable to allocate sufficient resources to achieve the objective of women's complete integration in development; v) the situation of women has not been recognized as an issue warranting concern in studies on the repercussions of macroeconomic policies on growth (JCGP, 1986).

In order to tackle the third and last stage of the process of women's integration in develop-

ment, it is of utmost importance to identify the magnitude of the problem, and this is taken up in the following section. The other sections examine the general research guidelines and actions concerning women undertaken in Latin America. The purpose is to determine whether women have been reached efficiently and, if not, to detect the failings. Lastly, some proposals are made for progress into a new era which will enable women to participate in an effective and permanent way in the benefits and contributions entailed by true development and, in particular, to be involved in the decision-making process.

I

The situation of women

During the last three decades the participation by Latin American and Caribbean women in economic activity has greatly exceeded the levels expected in the light of observed historical trends. In the last 30 years the number of economically active women has grown by 120.2%, which is far greater than the total growth rate of economically active women in the world (ILO, 1980).

In 1950 women accounted for 17.9% of the region's labour force and this figure will rise to 27.5% in 2000 (IDB, 1987). During this period the male labour force will have doubled and the female tripled.

This means that at the end of the decade the region will have 55 million women in the labour market, of which some 22 million will have been incorporated between 1980 and 2000. The issue of women is certainly taking on a different dimension today.

There is consensus on the causes of such radical changes in the Latin American and Caribbean labour market and also on the fact that the massive incorporation of women in the labour market has not been the result of explicit policies in the matter. A study carried out by ECLAC in 1986 recognizes that many of the achievements were rather the result of exogenous processes than of strategies specially designed to give

women a share in the benefits of development (ECLAC, 1986). In fact, the processes of change which favoured women in the areas of health, education and welfare had begun before the launching of the Regional Action Plan approved in Havana in 1977, which represented a growing awareness at the Latin American and Caribbean level of the need to secure the participation of organizations and governments in support of women's integration.

The following are some of the phenomena normally cited in explanation of the greater participation of women in the labour market (Berger and Buvinic, 1988):

a) Urbanization, which has meant a migration of women to cities many times higher than that of men. The increase in poverty in rural areas has given rise to rural-urban migration and, given the division of labour by sex, a pattern has emerged according to which, for example, it is preferable for daughters to migrate first, and then sons;

b) Technological change which has meant that domestic work can be performed for the market;

c) Education, which by being available without discrimination has provided women with better work opportunities;

d) The ever greater need for households to have more than one income;

e) The trend for a greater percentage of households to be headed by women as a result of migration and new family-organization patterns. This has been accentuated by the feminization of poverty, which was intensified by the economic crisis and the adjustment process. According to an ECLAC study based on household surveys in 1982 in five Latin American cities, women headed between 18% and 38% of all households, with the highest rates found among the lowest income groups (ECLAC, 1984);

f) Family planning. The wider dissemination of birth-control methods, together with other factors (emigration, increased poverty levels, etc.), has resulted in declining birth rates.

In fact, all these factors boil down to two processes which have interacted at different times and with varying intensity during past decades: education and poverty. The first, i.e., the massive incorporation of women in the education system, acts in two ways: on the one hand it encourages women's participation in economic activity by providing them with opportunities for better-paid jobs, but on the other hand, by reproducing traditional roles, it puts women in a subordinate position *vis-a-vis* men. The second process, i.e., the deterioration of real household income levels as a result of the eco-

Table 1

PARTICIPATION RATES IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY BY LEVEL AND SEX

	Total	Households		
		Indigent	Poor	Non-poor
Costa Rica (1979)				
Total	54.1	-	-	-
Men	80.1	-	-	-
Women	28.2	-	-	-
Costa Rica (1982)				
Total	56.7	61.1	51.4	63.1
Men	77.5	78.9	74.4	82.7
Women	36.4	40.9	29.8	44.0
Venezuela (1978)				
Total	63.0	50.9	51.1	65.1
Men	86.8	65.6	77.4	88.6
Women	38.1	38.4	27.5	39.9
Chile (1979)				
Total	49.2	45.7	46.3	53.0
Men	70.6	68.8	68.2	73.3
Women	29.9	25.2	24.8	34.7
Chile (1984)				
Total	50.4	48.9	49.1	54.0
Men	70.4	72.0	70.3	71.1
Women	32.4	28.6	29.2	38.1
Peru (1982)				
Total	53.5	43.2	50.9	56.8
Men	71.7	61.4	71.9	73.9
Women	36.5	28.9	30.5	40.4

Source: Pollack, Molly, *Pobreza y mercado de trabajo en cuatro países: Costa Rica, Venezuela, Chile y Perú*. (Poverty and the labour market in four countries: Costa Rica, Venezuela, Chile and Peru.) Working paper series No. 309, Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC), Santiago, Chile, International Labour Office (ILO), 1987.

Table 2

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY LEVEL AND SEX

	Total	Households		
		Indigent	Poor	Non-poor
Costa Rica (1979)				
Total	4.5	-	-	-
Men	3.7	-	-	-
Women	6.9	-	-	-
Costa Rica (1982)				
Total	10.2	14.2	8.9	3.5
Men	10.3	14.8	8.7	3.0
Women	9.9	13.0	9.1	4.8
Chile (1979)				
Total	13.4	32.2	16.4	5.9
Men	13.1	30.1	16.0	5.0
Women	14.2	37.2	17.7	7.5
Chile (1984)				
Total	19.4	32.0	18.7	8.2
Men	18.4	30.8	15.3	7.2
Women	21.5	34.8	26.3	9.8
Peru (1982)				
Total	6.3	13.5	7.1	4.8
Men	4.7	10.1	4.6	3.7
Women	9.3	19.3	12.8	6.6

Source: Pollack, Molly, *Pobreza y mercado de trabajo en cuatro países: Costa Rica, Venezuela, Chile y Perú*. (Poverty and the labour market in four countries: Costa Rica, Venezuela, Chile and Peru.) Working paper series No. 309, Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC), Santiago, Chile, International Labour Office (ILO), 1987.

conomic crises which have affected Latin American and Caribbean societies during the period, have forced women to overcome cultural barriers in order to find ways of generating income.

Thus, research on the relationship between the labour market and poverty carried out in some Latin American countries (Pollack, 1987) shows that women's participation in economic activity increases during times of crisis as a way of easing the impact of reduced household incomes. In Costa Rica and Chile this generally occurs at all income levels (see table 1). On the other hand, unemployment affects women with greater intensity than it does men, and the indigent and the poor more than the upper income groups (see table 2). Indeed, in the overall population unemployment in indigent households is three to six times higher than in non-poor households. The group most affected by unemployment consists of women from indigent households.

Table 3

WOMEN EMPLOYED IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

	(Percentages)	
	Informal sector	
	Excluding domestic work	Including domestic work
Bogotá		
1982	21.5	48.7
1985	25.1	50.6
Caracas		
1982	14.7	37.5
1985	12.2	36.3
Panama City		
1982	13.1	35.4
1985	8.4	33.3
San José		
1982	12.4	28.8
1985	13.4	29.4
Sao Paulo		
1982	-	-
1985	14.9	32.9

Source: ECLAC, *Mujer, trabajo y crisis* (Women, employment and crisis) (LC/L.458 (CRM.4/6)), Santiago, Chile, 1988. Data obtained from special tabulations from household surveys for 1982 and 1985.

There are two sectors in which women's participation in the labour market reaches very high levels: the agricultural and the informal.

With regard to the first, FAO reports that in 1983, according to the most conservative statistics taken from agricultural censuses, 19% of rural women in Latin America and 54% in the Caribbean participated in the agricultural labour market (ECLAC, 1986). However, it is recognized that the census methods underestimated women's participation in primary activities.

The differences between participation rates obtained in the censuses and those obtained in household surveys range from 10% to 50%.

There is consensus as to the need for more accurate surveys, especially if the information submitted by the various countries, based on specific studies, points to much higher participa-

Table 4

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN NOT HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR^a

(Percentages)

	Total	Households		
		Indigent	Poor	Non-poor
Costa Rica^b				
1982	35.4	65.3	46.4	31.4
Venezuela				
1978	45.1	50.0	83.1	40.8
Chile^c				
1979	32.1	55.3	50.9	25.2
1982	25.9	54.2	36.2	21.5
1984	23.9	34.0	39.2	17.3
Peru				
1982	61.3	100.0	86.7	49.2

Source: Pollack, Molly, *Pobreza y mercado de trabajo en cuatro países: Costa Rica, Venezuela, Chile y Perú*. (Poverty and the labour market in four countries: Costa Rica, Venezuela, Chile and Peru.) Working paper series No. 309, Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC), Santiago, Chile, International Labour Office (ILO), 1987.

^a Estimated, since the figures refer to the employment of spouses who are not heads of household, the majority of whom are women.

^b Secondary household members (spouses, children and others).

^c Excluding wage-earners in small enterprises, since the figures reflect an underestimate of the percentage of persons working in the informal sector.

tion rates than those indicated in official sources (ECLAC, 1986). This is made even more necessary by the evidence that the crisis has resulted in a feminization of small-scale agriculture (Arizpe, Salinas and Velásquez, 1989).

With respect to the informal sector, some estimates based on household surveys in some countries in 1982 and 1985 reveal high participation by women in informal activities. According to an ECLAC study (ECLAC, 1988), in some cities of Latin America in 1985 the percentage of women employed in the informal sector, including domestic service, fluctuated between 30% and 50% (see table 3). On the other hand, the employment of women in the informal sector discriminates by household-income level, which

increases as the poverty level rises. Table 4 shows that in four cities of Latin America the percentage of women who are not heads of household, belong to indigent and poor households and work in the urban informal sector is much higher than the percentage of women from upper-income households. In San José, Costa Rica over 65% of married women from indigent households with jobs are employed in the informal sector, but the percentage of working women from poor and non-poor households drops to 46% and 31% respectively. Something similar occurs in the other cases studied: Caracas, Santiago and Lima. In Lima 100% of married women from indigent households with jobs are employed in the informal sector.

II

Research and action

According to the above diagnosis, it can be said that the problem of women in the region is not their integration in the development process. The fact that at the end of the twentieth century there will be 55 million women in the labour market, besides the traditional contribution of women to the reproductive process and their important role within the family unit, is proof of their definitive insertion in the socio-economic processes of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The problem is different. Is this contribution efficient? Is this contribution valued? Has the status of women improved as their economic contribution increases? Do women benefit from government strategies aimed at the sectors in which they operate? Is there increased awareness of the new role of women in the design of policy strategies, given the advances made in the region in planning matters?

In general terms the reply is negative. This is confirmed by much research undertaken during the last decade (ECLAC, 1986) (Joekes, 1987) (Wilson, 1985) (Berger and Buvinic, 1988) (León and Deere, 1986). There is indeed a problem of integration, but it is definitely not a question of integration in development.

Various studies carried out in the region—many of which have been partial in their geographic coverage or in their scope—clearly support the conclusion that women have not been taken efficiently and realistically into account either in development strategies or in development policies.

1. Research

The volume of knowledge accumulated worldwide and from Latin America and the Caribbean on the subject of women, in particular in the last decade, cannot be rejected. It has made it possible today to identify with relative ease the magnitude of the main problems pertaining to women. Progress has also been made on what could be called the diagnosis of the capacity of the various strategies designed for dealing with these problems; this diagnosis has proven negative.

For example, the dire effects of the agrarian reform on rural women are known with some certainty. According to the conclusions of a study by Wilson, in the majority of cases of agrarian reform in Latin America and the Caribbean the number of women beneficiaries has been insign-

nificant or, worse still, women have been excluded because the criteria for the allotment of land have given priority to men. Wilson attributes this exclusion to legal, structural, cultural and ideological mechanisms which derive from the formulation of strategies whose unit of action is the household or the nuclear family. The head of the family is of necessity the man, who in turn performs the remunerated agricultural activity, while the woman belongs to the category of worker as an unpaid family member (Wilson, 1985).

A second example is the restrictions established in credit policies. According to Lycette and White, women, especially in the rural and informal sectors, have had scant access to the resources of financial institutions, owing to restrictions relating to supply and demand. Among the main demand factors the authors indicate transaction costs, collateral requirements—in many Latin American and Caribbean countries women are still forbidden to own property in their own name—and social and cultural restrictions (Lycette and White, 1988).

A third example is the policies of rural technical assistance, or of technological modernization in general, which have shown an exiguous capacity for bringing about significant changes in the production methods of women workers. Research carried out by Boserup shows that agricultural modernization, far from improving the situation of women workers, heightens the differences in productivity between the sexes. However, technological innovation seems to have had positive effects, in the current modernization of the agricultural export sector, for a massive incorporation of female labour has been recorded (Boserup, 1970).

2. Action

Given the magnitude of their contribution to the Latin American and Caribbean economy, women are affected not only by actions aimed specifically

at them but by all the measures directed at the sector in which they are employed. Two types of bias are observed in this. The first denies women's economic role and recognizes only their reproductive role. In this case, projects and programmes are focused on the family or on the man. The second accepts women's contribution, but denies the specific nature of women's work. If the objective is to obtain recognition for these specifics, it is essential for current strategies to be modified.

In their actions both institutions and specific projects aimed at women start off from the erroneous premise that there is a need to integrate women in development. Moreover, they then arrive at the simplistic idea that this integration is attained through more education, more health and more employment, in circumstances where the reality shows that women, especially poor women, contribute to the economy in the services sector, in agriculture and in trade, without access to education, health or formal jobs (López, 1988).

Added to this is the fact that governments and international agencies have been designing programmes for women focused more on welfare objectives than on development objectives (Germain, 1982). This has meant on the one hand that the efforts have been concentrated on improving women's status as beneficiaries of development and not as agents of development, and on the other hand that income-generating projects have not facilitated improvements in women's productive capacity because the majority of them have been assistance-oriented.

A third characteristic of these types of action is that they operate at the macroeconomic level and are carried out in an isolated and uncoordinated fashion. These efforts help to resolve specific problems of the handling of women's issues, but in practice their effect is as yet very limited.

III

A new era: women in planning

The imbalance is evident between the level of women's contribution to the economy of Latin America and the Caribbean and the scope of the policies aimed at them. Marginal and short-term strategies and biased global policies prevent increases in the efficiency of women's work, improvement of their status and that of their families, and productivity increases the sectors where they work. In the case of women, the imbalance between diagnosis and action means not only a very high economic cost but also an even higher social cost, since it delays the relief of poverty, which is the sector where the majority of women are found. To illustrate this point, table 5 shows that the percentage of households headed by women is much greater at indigent levels than at other levels.

Table 5

HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD BY LEVEL AND SEX

(Percentages)

	Total	Households		
		Indigent	Poor	Non-poor
Costa Rica (1982)				
Men	84.3	62.7	82.3	86.2
Women	15.7	37.1	17.7	13.8
Venezuela (1978)				
Men	88.3	63.7	86.4	89.4
Women	11.7	36.3	13.6	10.6
Chile (1984)				
Men	89.3	87.6	90.4	89.6
Women	10.7	12.4	9.6	10.4
Peru (1982)				
Men	88.5	76.7	90.3	91.3
Women	11.5	23.3	9.7	8.7

Source: Pollack, Molly, *Pobreza y mercado de trabajo en cuatro países: Costa Rica, Venezuela, Chile y Perú*. (Poverty and the labour market in four countries: Costa Rica, Venezuela, Chile and Peru.) Working paper series No. 309, Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC), Santiago, Chile, International Labour Office (ILO), 1987.

However, neither research nor the experience gained through action have yet contributed enough material for the design of macroeconomic strategies with sufficient theoretical and empirical backing to locate women properly within the overall planning processes. The immediate, dispersed and fragmented nature of the majority of actions directed at women hinders the collection and integration of all the information and experience obtained in the region.

There thus arises a disjunction involving various risks: there is a delay until all these isolated efforts generate the appropriate conceptual framework, with the possible negative effect of delaying women's incorporation, or risks are taken and women are taken into account in planning on the basis of the available materials. The current and future volume of the female workforce, with its consequent economic contribution, and especially the need to reduce the level and intensity of poverty in the region, demand the immediate adaptation of macroeconomic policies. The issue is then reduced to determining who runs the risks.

By virtue of the political power they wield and the resources at their disposal, and because running risks is in their mandate, it is the policy-making authorities who must take the initiative.

1. Positive factors for a new approach

Among the numerous factors which could be mentioned there are two which support the definitive insertion of women in development planning in Latin American and Caribbean countries. The first is to make many of the region's Governments and important sectors of society aware that the relief of poverty cannot be postponed. The crisis of the 1980s which reversed the positive trends in economic and social variables during the last three decades generated a social debt for the whole region equivalent to 5% of GNP (PREALC, 1988). Moreover, not only did the level and intensity of

poverty grow in this decade, but poverty also underwent feminization. In the design of strategies, therefore, women are indispensable, and the strategies have to be macroeconomic, integrated and long-term ones.

The other important factor is the growing awareness of this problem on the part of United Nations agencies. After a critical review of its role in this field during the last 15 years, it realized the need to support efforts aimed at women at the highest possible level of the planning process. There is a whole range of human and economic resources available to Governments and other organizations that wish to commit themselves to the effort of backing the launch of the new era. United Nations organizations should therefore provide incentives for policy-makers to devise a method of development planning which takes Latin American and Caribbean women into account in their full dimension (JCGP, 1986).

2. Methodological steps

Taking women into consideration in planning processes requires two kinds of adjustment of global policies which are complementary rather than exclusive. The first, which starts with a diagnosis of the degree of women's participation in economic activity and all the restrictions on it, consists in identifying and eliminating the barriers which obstruct women's access to policy measures. A typical example of these restrictions is the rural and general credit systems, in which a man's presence is a mandatory requirement in order for women to obtain financing. But without doubt, the largest structural barrier in the majority of policies is that they are aimed at the family unit, and this, as has been shown, excludes women.

The second adjustment relates to changes which have to be made in the services offered by the State in order to take into account the level, nature and specifics of women's work. These services must facilitate women's work and should not produce negative side-effects. Government training programmes for women in the rural and informal sectors are a typical case in point where this kind of change must be made. While ignoring women's true socioeconomic situation, Governments allocate substan-

tial amounts of resources to traditional programmes which do not cater to women's production needs. Moreover, these programmes are scheduled at times which are incompatible with their other roles. Another important example is rural technical assistance, where women are offered technological alternatives which are better suited to men's production methods and impose difficult working hours which are unsuitable for women.

These two types of problem can be identified by using two complementary methods. The first is to make an analytical comparison of the realistic diagnosis of the situation of women with the situation implicit in government policies. The second is to review the content of the programmes and actions of institutions offering services to sectors in which women work (López and Campillo, 1985). The first method identifies structural barriers and the second indicates the operational changes needed to overcome them.

Once these two basic problems and the way of dealing with them have been made clear, the next step is to determine in which sector of global policy the process of taking women into account in planning should begin. It is still naive to expect changes in long-term macroeconomic policy. However, the conditions are present for this effort to be made in sectoral policies, especially in those aimed at the agricultural and informal sectors.

Income-generating projects, which are the traditional methods which Governments and international agencies rely on for incorporating women, have a dominant role to play in this new strategy. If the necessary adjustments are made, and with less welfare and more development, these projects could be either the seeds which multiply and thus justify the sectoral policy, or else laboratories where the implementation of macroeconomic decisions is verified or where necessary adjustments are suggested in the light of experience.

The factor which energizes these efforts is women themselves, who must be made aware and organized. Communication mechanisms between the State and the female users of its services should be regarded as a vital instrument for consolidating comprehensive and long-term strategies in an area in which sufficient experience has not yet been gained.

3. *Limitations*

There are three main types of problems which arise. The first and doubtless the most important is cultural in nature and has to do with the reluctance to view women's work as something natural, in spite of the magnitude of their economic contribution. This is reflected in policy design and implementation at the macroeconomic level, in the unwillingness of the State, its governors and sectors of society involved in this decision to accept the economic and social importance of taking women into consideration in development plans. For this reason, sectoral policies envisaging strategies suited to the specifics of women's work must enjoy political support at the highest level.

Given that institutions change at a slower pace than the situation of the societies in which they operate, the refusal to accept both women's contribution and the need to include them in institutional actions could be even more determined when it comes to actual operations. Only a clear political will and a massive information campaign based on irrefutable figures which rule out any denial of the facts can eventually succeed in increasing the flexibility of these attitudes which tend to be adopted when concrete actions are put into operation. This institutional obstacle could seriously jeopardize the success of this kind of initiative.

Finally, the concentration of women at the poorest levels of society constitutes an operational barrier which extends beyond the specific sphere of women. This barrier is connected with a limitation which is more structural in nature and consists in the failure to discover, up to now, how to reduce poverty. For this reason many sectoral policies which effectively introduce the modifications needed for the incorporation of women are necessary though insufficient conditions for making a definite impact on women's productivity and quality of life. Given a serious commitment to improving the status of women,

it is then necessary to promote the design of strategies to relieve poverty. Otherwise, the planning efforts will only be able to reach women in the middle and upper levels.

4. *A final comment*

There is an obvious imbalance between the magnitude of women's contribution to the Latin American and Caribbean economies and the scope of actions and policies aimed at women. There is thus an imperative need to close the gap between this diagnosis and the action taken.

Among the numerous problems raised by the initiation of this process, there are two which are fundamental. The first has to do with the need to raise the awareness of Governments and of society in general concerning the true role of Latin American and Caribbean women and the high concentration of women at the poorest sectors. Many Governments hard pressed by the crisis of the 1980s still do not grasp the fact that women must be taken explicitly into account in development and survival strategies.

The second problem relates to the need to fill the evident vacuum in research, in order to ensure that policies are effective. The meagre knowledge of the employment of women in the informal sector, in addition to the spotty nature of the data which suggest a majority participation by women in informal activities, raises the urgent need for a more thorough understanding of the characteristics of women who work in this sector.

However, these obstacles may be finally overcome once the need is recognized to tackle the problem at the appropriate level. It can thus be said that the first bases have already been established for the incorporation of women in sectoral policies and thus for a start to be made on their permanent and definitive incorporation in the development planning processes of Latin America and the Caribbean.

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