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WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA: THE SITUATION AS REGARDS THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION



CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DIAGNOSES AND ACTIONS	5
II. SITUATION OF WOMEN AND SECTORAL TRENDS	11
A. Education	11
B. Employment	15
C. Health	20
D. Housing	22
E. Social participation	24
F. Legislation and administrative machinery	26
III. TYPES OF FAMILIES AND THE SITUATION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN	28
IV. THE AGENTS	33
V. POLICY GUIDELINES	35

Introduction

1. The World Conference of the International Women's Year held in Mexico in 1975 adopted the World Plan of Action which, in paragraph 217, states that "at the regional level, the regional commissions should assume responsibility for monitoring progress towards the greater and more effective participation of women in all aspects of development efforts".1/

2. The General Assembly, for its part, decided "to convene in 1980, at the mid-term of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, a world conference of all States to review and evaluate the progress made in implementing the objectives of the International Women's Year".2/

3. The Economic and Social Council recommended that the agenda of the 1980 World Conference should be so drawn up as to include a review and evaluation of the progress made in attaining the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, and the formulation of a Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade based on the sub-items "Employment, health and education".3/

4. In paragraph 46, the World Plan of Action establishes that by the end of the first five-year period (1975-1980) the achievement of progress in areas such as literacy, compulsory primary school education, co-educational technical and vocational training, equal access at every level of education, employment, infrastructural services, remuneration, recognition of the economic value of women's work, voting, eligibility, and participation in policy-making positions should be envisaged as a minimum.

5. In accordance with the decision adopted by CEPAL at its seventeenth session (Guatemala, 1977), the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America was held in Havana from 13 to 17 June 1977 and adopted the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social

1/ World Conference of the International Women's Year, United Nations publication, Sales N°: E.76.IV.1, p. 40.

2/ General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX), para. 20.

3/ ECOSOC resolutions 1978/30, 31, 32 and 33.

Development. This Plan was finally approved at the eleventh extraordinary session of the Committee of the Whole of CEPAL, held in New York on 21 November 1977 and one of its objectives is "to periodically evaluate the legal, economic, political, social and cultural status of women both of rural and urban areas in the different countries of the area, in accordance with the objectives and priorities fixed in this Regional Plan of Action. This must be done through an interdisciplinary and multisectoral approach that will permit evaluation of the current situation and trends".^{4/}

6. The Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, at their second meeting held in Mexico City on 28 and 29 September 1978, decided to recommend that the agenda of the Regional Conference should include an appraisal of the progress made in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action, including recommendations with a view to the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in 1980, and an analysis of the situation of children and youth in relation to women and the family.^{5/}

7. In connexion with the mandates spelled out in the foregoing paragraphs, it should be borne in mind that the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America held in Havana recommended that CEPAL should bring together a group of government experts in order to make an appraisal, of the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development and to present this appraisal to the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference for their information, review and comments before convening the Second Regional Conference.

^{4/} Document E/CEPAL/1042/Rev.1, para. 88 (5) (i).

^{5/} Report of the Second Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, E/CEPAL/MDM/2/Rev.2, para. 16 (4) (a).

8. At the first Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Kingston, Jamaica, on 14 and 15 February 1978, it was decided that a questionnaire should be sent to the governments in order to obtain information on the progress made in implementing the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development. The questionnaire should be dispatched by the secretariat as soon as possible, with a request to the governments that they reply not later than the end of July 1978.^{6/} In compliance with this mandate, the secretariat dispatched to all the governments a "Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development", which was answered by the Governments of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Peru, Suriname and the United States.

9. The appraisal falls within the context of the mandates and substantive content referred to above and forms part of the process involving the regional and world appraisal of the Second Decade covered by the International Development Strategy (IDS) currently in process. As a first appraisal exercise, various alternative possibilities were considered for its implementation, out of which the present procedure with the following characteristics was chosen:

(a) As in the successive appraisals carried out by CEPAL within the context of IDS, the economic and social development trends in the region are taken as a global frame of reference;

(b) The situation of women in the region and the prevailing trends in some specific sectors are established on the basis of the objectives and actions proposed in the Regional Plan of Action and the World Plan of Action. In view of the relatively short time that has elapsed since the former was adopted and the type of information available, rather than the proposal of detailed and exhaustive diagnoses, emphasis is placed on some central problems.

^{6/} Report of the First Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, E/CEPAL/HIDM/1, para. 9 (6) (d).

(c) Special attention is paid to the need to study the conceptual aspects in greater depth in order to enable their incorporation in the development plans and programmes as well as in sectoral analyses so that the machinery for the integration of women in development may become an integral part of the International Development Strategy, in observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women, and contribute effectively to the adjustment to the principles and postulates of the New International Economic Order.^{7/}

10. It should be noted that other agencies of the United Nations system have co-operated with the secretariat of CEPAL in the preparation of this document.

^{7/} Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development, para. 12.

I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DIAGNOSES AND ACTIONS

11. The difficulties in the way of including the question of the situation of women within the framework of global, regional or national development strategies and programmes still persist. These difficulties arise on different fronts. Some are of a general character, such as the real importance of planning in societies organized according to the rules of the market, the pressures exerted by different social sectors, the structure and location of planning and policy formulation bodies within the administration, the shortage of financial and human resources, etc.

Others stem from the nature of the prevailing approach used in planning and in the formulation of social development strategies and programmes, such as the separation of economic and social issues in watertight compartments or the assumption of the existence of average individuals. Others again derive from the conceptualization of the problem of women, i.e., from the group of concepts, relationships and assumptions which are referred to and applied in order to characterize, describe or explain their situation or to propose action to influence it.

12. The proposals regarding global conceptual frameworks for reporting on the situation of women suggest that most of the difficulties are concentrated in three problem areas:

- (a) the type of social cluster to which women belong;
- (b) the structural relationship between domestic work, for which women are mainly responsible, and the socio-economic system;
- (c) the nature of the sexual stereotypes.

13. It frequently happens that in a single context women are referred to indiscriminately as if they were a caste, a stratum, an estate, a class, a sector or a group. Each of those terms refers to different psychological, social and cultural circumstances, and consequently demarcate different areas of knowledge which would have to be taken into account in making a diagnosis or proposing action aimed at focal groups of very different kinds.

14. Women (and men) are not a group, sector, caste, estate, class or stratum, but belong to one or another of those categories in the society in which

/they are

they are living. Without them it is impossible to understand the situation of women since it is only through them that any connexion can be established between that situation and the historical development of society. In the first place, the role assigned to women differs from one socio-economic strata to another. Secondly, this role has common elements which are based on biological facts, but which, like every social role, go beyond the bio-sexual aspect. They consist of the relation between women and real or potential motherhood and the biological or social reproduction of individuals. These common elements and the manner in which they are defined by the various socio-economic strata make it possible to identify certain clusters or groupings of individuals which, on the basis of the biological fact of their sex, are assigned certain social roles according to the socio-economic stratum to which they belong.

15. From a different point of view, women constitute a nominal category in terms of a grouping of individuals defined by the biological fact of having the same sex. On the basis of this shared characteristic it is possible to classify the nominal category according to a number of variables (education, income, employment, etc.) and to compare it with another nominal category (in this case men) defined by the same variables, and draw conclusions regarding discrimination with respect to opportunities or access to certain goods and services. If the nominal category is defined by area of residence or age group, it is enriched from a new angle; but even in this case it is still assumed that all women included in the nominal category thus defined share the same social status, which has been proved to be incorrect.

16. From the foregoing considerations it may be inferred that, within a social context of sexual discrimination, the situation of women gives rise to two types of problems:

(a) Those common to all individuals (men or women) belonging to a particular socio-economic stratum (housing, employment, education, income, health, etc.);

(b) Those essentially affecting women which stem from the social role assigned to them in the socio-economic stratum to which they belong.

17. There is consensus that in order to bring about any change in the situation of women it is necessary to take into account the relationship between them and the domestic work aimed at the daily and generational reproduction of individuals, but inasmuch as the structural links between that type of work and the socio-economic system have not been clarified, neither has it been possible to establish the situation of women in the social structure.

18. Every socio-economic system produces and reproduces individuals in both a daily and a generational cycle. The science of economy usually includes this fact as compensation for the labour factor or as human capital, without considering how those processes of production and reproduction of individuals occur or their significance for the economic system as a whole. Thus, for example, in economic analyses the price of labour is defined as the value of resources generally necessary for the livelihood of the average manual worker, while the cost of developing the labour force and the cost of reproduction of the worker's family are generally ignored. As a result, the value of goods acquired on the market is included and the value of those produced by the family unit and the work involved in its reproduction are excluded. In this way the price of labour is reduced and the surplus produced by the economic system increases.

19. Therefore, the household work performed by the family unit is labour from several points of view: (a) it produces goods and services for consumption by members of the family; (b) it reproduces wholly or partially, day after day and generation after generation, the individuals without whom the socio-economic system would not be able to operate; (c) in many cases (small agricultural producers, own-account workers, artisans), it also produces goods for the market or involves activities connected with their production.

20. Society assigns the responsibility for daily and generational reproduction to household communities or family units, which fulfil it by performing the relevant tasks themselves or obtaining all or some of the goods and services from other units, either families, private economic units or State entities. In any case, it ceases to be the responsibility of society and becomes a problem which must be solved by the individual

/household units

household units which, from this point of view, are not exclusively consumer units, since such consumption occurs in terms of the production and reproduction of individuals.

21. The distribution patterns prevailing in every society assign to the family units of the various socio-economic strata the quantity and quality of goods and services that will be available to them in order to fulfil their responsibility, so that the individuals belonging to those socio-economic strata have access to the goods and services for their reproduction with marked differences in quantity and quality and also with respect to the unit in which they were produced. The more advanced the stage of economic development of a society and the higher the socio-economic stratum to which the family unit belongs, the greater is the proportion of goods and services that are used in the daily and generational reproduction of individuals and which are acquired from other private or government economic units.

22. The amount of family income, whether in money or in kind, the sources from which it is obtained, the contributions of various members of the family and the units which produced the goods and services compose the life strategy of the family units together with such factors as migration, the early incorporation of children in the labour force, paid work for women, families with female heads of household, number of children.

23. In view of the fact that the goods and services to which family units in the various socio-economic strata have access differ in quantity and quality and as regards the units producing them, there is also a considerable difference in the orientation and effect on the economic system of the actual aggregate demand of those family units, whether for goods and services consumed daily (food, fuels, etc.), goods and services of longer duration (household electric appliances, utensils, etc.) or infrastructural investment (housing, furniture, water, sewerage, etc.).

24. Reproductive domestic work is predominantly female and has the following characteristics: it is carried out independently, it is almost exclusively manual work, it involves activities of very different kinds, it is generally of a low level, and it is either free or poorly paid.

Since women are responsible for the management of the productive unit represented by the family, they strive to obtain the best possible results from their activities in relation to the resources available. Logically, therefore, publicity for goods and services for household consumption is aimed at them, and they tend to oppose any social movement that may appear to threaten the working conditions for which they are responsible. It is also logical, however, that as persons and producers of generations, as a focal group and as a key policy group they should receive strong support from society.

25. Sexual stereotypes are the cluster of standards, values, beliefs, images and symbols underlying attitudes, behaviour and other personality features on the basis of which activities considered suitable or appropriate for one sex or the other are defined. The female role and the male role are reciprocally interrelated with each other, so that if any question arises in the definition of one of them it means that both definitions should be questioned.

26. The sexual stereotypes on the basis of which the female and male aspects are defined are unconscious patterns or elementary matrixes which are also unconsciously transmitted, acquired and applied and which shape all the experience subsequent to their formation. Individuals of both sexes internalize them and apply them in all their activities. This very fact confers on them that permanent state which enables them to survive, even with other manifestations, under the most varied conditions and in the face of social changes which in their turn make their relationship with development somewhat problematical. In the industrialized countries women participate to a greater extent in paid economic activities, but they continue to do so in "female" sectors, with lower wages and less important posts, whether in capitalist or socialist industrialized countries.

27. Discrimination based on sexual stereotypes is evident in several spheres (employment, education, personal development, etc.) and the content varies according to the socio-economic stratum concerned. Therefore, the material conditions and assignment of specific social roles strengthen, maintain and reproduce the sexual stereotypes but do not

/create them.

create them. Tradition, culture, rules, publicity, radio, the press and television are mechanisms and means whose action maintains or aggravates the situations defined according to the stereotypes, but the factors producing them have not been determined, so that there only remains to act on their content and consequences. This opens up a broad field for the development of action designed to develop a consciousness of the absence of any real basis for many normative components of the female and male roles and to eliminate the discrimination deriving from those components.

28. In short, the minimum conceptual framework for the formulation of diagnoses and the design of policies should take into account that, according to the style and stage of development of a society, a social division of labour (including a sexual division of labour) takes place on the basis of which various socio-economic strata are established. The family units belonging to the various strata put into practice different strategies of living, one of whose main components is the organization and assignment of the work aimed at the daily and generational reproduction of individuals. The situation of women, as a nominal category and as a grouping, is defined in relation to all those factors.

II. SITUATION OF WOMEN AND SECTORAL TRENDS

A. Education

29. In establishing that "education is an essential factor in the economic and social development of peoples and a basic right of men and women as social beings",^{8/} the Regional Plan of Action is assigning it a dual function: on the one hand as an essential factor in the development of the human being, and on the other hand as a factor in the training of skilled human resources to undertake productive activities in relation to economic growth.

30. Accordingly, after noting that women are adversely affected by inequality in education, the following among other measures are proposed: to eliminate illiteracy, to increase women's incorporation into secondary and higher education, to establish co-education and to modify the existing image of women.

31. The following are some of the features of the educational systems in the region as a whole in the period 1960-1970:

(a) A high rate of growth, which is reflected in the decrease in illiteracy among the population aged 15 years and over (from 42% in 1950 to 34% in 1960 and 24% in 1970) and in the coverage of the school-age population;

(b) The social sector has shown most flexibility vis-à-vis social demand;

(c) In spite of their more open orientation, on the whole they maintain their elitist and exclusive features since, while enrolment in secondary and higher education is growing rapidly, a large proportion of the population aged 10 years and over remains illiterate.

32. As regards illiteracy, if the countries are arranged in order from those with the lowest to those with the highest percentage of illiterates, according to the situation in 1960, they will be found to have retained their position in 1970, particularly with respect to female illiteracy.

^{8/} Regional Plan of Action, para. 24.

At one end of the scale are the countries with a proportion of 5 to 12% of illiterate women. At the other extreme are those in which illiterate women represent over 40%. In all the countries the percentage of illiterate women increases in proportion to their residence in rural areas. The fact that illiteracy is greater among rural men than among urban women would seem to indicate that the area of residence is a more influential factor than sex.

33. The higher the percentage of illiterates in a country, the wider are the differences between male and female illiteracy. In countries with a lower percentage of illiteracy, the difference between the sexes is less than 2%, compared with over 15% in countries with a higher percentage of illiteracy. This disadvantageous situation for women is aggravated in rural areas, where the difference between male and female illiteracy is greater. In all the countries, however, a considerable reduction is recorded in illiteracy, especially in rural illiteracy and in the differences between the sexes.

34. It should be noted that the order of countries referred to in the previous paragraph is also valid in the case of primary education. Those countries in which the educational situation of women is relatively more satisfactory, between 40 and 53% of the female population have completed primary school. At the other end of the scale the proportion is below 20% of the female population. Nevertheless, all the countries have recorded an increase in the percentage of women who had completed their primary education between 1960 and 1970. Taking the population enrolled in each level of education in relation to the population of an age to attend school at that level, it will be found that the rates of female enrolment have increased in nearly all the countries considered, and if the enrolment rates attained in 1970 are compared with the 95% enrolment which is the average for Europe, these rates are seen to be satisfactory in 17 out of the 24 countries analysed. It may be noted that in the interior of each country the difference between the enrolment rate of the female population and that of the total population tends to diminish.

35. In the first year of school the percentages of both boys and girls repeating classes are fairly high, although girls tend to repeat less than

/boys. In

boys. In the sixth year, however, the percentage of repeaters tends to be similar in both sexes. The extremely scanty relevant information on the basis of which to determine the percentage of continued attendance (number of pupils completing their studies out of every 100 originally enrolled) shows contradictory trends by sex, but suggests that continued attendance is greater in urban than in rural areas and that there is less difference between the sexes in the former. The biggest losses occur between the first and second years of primary education, which is explained by the unsuitability of the school system to the development of children, the attitude of parents to their children repeating the school year and the practical possibilities of continuing in the school system, depending on the socio-economic conditions.

36. The access of girls to secondary education in the region has improved. While in 1960 female enrolment at this level was less than male enrolment in every country, in 1970 there were as many countries with more girls enrolled than boys as there were countries in the reverse situation. The biggest differences with girls at a disadvantage were recorded in those countries with a low percentage of secondary students. At the secondary level, girls are oriented primarily towards teacher-training. Technical secondary education is selective, with boys predominating in industrial and agricultural specialties and girls in secretarial training, dressmaking and hairdressing.

37. Female enrolment has also increased at the university level and although in 1970 women were at a distinct disadvantage, their position tended to improve with the considerable increase in female enrolment. Women are mainly represented in the arts and education, constituting in nearly every country the majority of the students following these careers. Their representation is less in the social sciences, exact sciences and natural sciences, and very low in engineering and agriculture.

38. Co-education has been established in most countries at the primary level of education. At the secondary level it exists only in a few countries and in certain educational establishments. In the universities, education has traditionally been mixed. In practice, there are still some segregated primary schools, basically of a private nature for girls.

/Those countries

Those countries in which co-education did not previously exist have introduced it increasingly as from 1975, though confining it to the primary level and exclusively to public schools.

39. The curricular content and texts used in primary education are the same for boys and girls. Readers tend to present the woman in the role of housewife and mother, as a passive being without the capacity to make decisions. If she works in paid activities she appears in employment consistent with the female stereotype: secretarial work, domestic service, dressmaking, nursing, teaching, hairdressing.

40. There is a general trend towards revising school textbooks and some governments are prepared to eliminate all references implying discrimination between the sexes. One way of strengthening the sexual stereotypes through the educational system, which has been given little attention, lies in the fact that the teachers themselves represent them, as is reflected in their treatment of the students of either sex.

41. None of the countries in the region has reported the existence of official programmes specifically concerned with women, although some of them have special programmes that provide facilities for female workers, housewives and adults in general to complete their primary studies.

42. If the present strategies continue, it is probable that in the next decade the central problems in the education sector will be along the following lines:

(a) Illiteracy will continue to be a problem in some countries, in particular affecting rural areas and women;

(b) It will be difficult to achieve the objective of providing primary education for the whole population. Rural areas would call for special attention in this respect;

(c) Secondary education is expanding at a satisfactory rate with little discrimination. This does not seem to be happening in higher education, where specialization in careers is compatible with the sexual stereotypes;

(d) It may be expected that changes will occur in the role of education at its various levels, especially the primary level, in relation to general development policies and, in particular, the training requirements for the new types of employment;

/(e) It

(e) It is probable that, under other forms, the content of education will continue to transmit the sexual stereotypes.

B. Employment

43. In the Regional Plan of Action it is maintained that the participation of women in the political, economic and social life of their countries is hindered by their low participation in paid economic activity, one of the fundamental limitations on which is the excessive work load imposed on them by the domestic tasks which are wrongly viewed as the exclusive occupation of women and relegate the woman to a secondary and passive role limited to the narrow confines of the home, with the sole basic purpose of matrimony and child-bearing.^{9/} In order to remedy this situation, the Regional Plan of Action proposes a number of measures which may be grouped under the following heads: (a) formulation and implementation of policies necessary to ensure equality of employment opportunities and treatment of women workers; (b) adoption of legislative measures; (c) enhancement of the value of domestic activity, with particular attention to the conditions under which it is carried out and its contribution to the economy; (d) need for a revaluation of the roles of men and women in the family so that they will both have equal rights and responsibilities; (e) promotion of positive attitudes to female employment and determination of cultural factors causing discrimination. The cases of rural women and domestic workers are considered particularly critical.

44. The analysis of the situation of women in employment is hampered by problems of definition and enumeration. In order to be considered economically active or a worker or member of the labour force, an individual must produce economic goods or services negotiable on the market, or visible income. The tasks carried out by women in their family units, whether they consist of domestic work or activities related to the family unit's production for the market, are excluded from that definition. This is responsible for the sub-enumeration of women workers, especially in rural areas. Other causes of sub-enumeration are that these same women

^{9/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 22, 37 and 40.

do not regard their activities as work, do not declare their seasonal or part-time work, or conceal their paid activity for fear of losing it. As a result of all this, the analyses of female employment are more approximate than conclusive.

45. The following among other facts may be noted with respect to the employment situation in the region during the period 1960-1970:

(a) The structural heterogeneity of the Latin American economy, so often referred to, is reflected in the number and quality of the posts created and in the nature of the employment;

(b) There is surplus manpower in relation to the number of posts created, which causes chronic unemployment and under-employment. It is estimated that 27% of the total labour force is under-utilized;

(c) Employment in the services sector has shown the fastest growth. In agriculture, given the forms assumed by the modernization processes, an increase is recorded in the number of agricultural workers, and in the sector of small landowners and their family groups;

(d) The middle and upper employment strata have grown, with an increasingly uneven wage structure and concentration of income in the upper strata.

46. The participation of women in economic activity (the number of women incorporated in the labour force as a percentage of the total number of women of economically active age) is approximately 20%. In comparison with other regions this is not only much lower, but after their retirement from economic activity there is no record of their returning to it. The result therefore is a curve which after reaching its highest level in the group aged 20-24 years shows a progressively declining trend with no recovery, which reflects on the one hand the course of the family life cycle and on the other the absence of services to allay the domestic tasks of women.

47. If the countries' rates of participation are compared it is found that the rates for men are relatively constant, while those for women show a marked variation. It has been found in the region that those countries which have been industrialized longest show a higher rate of female participation than the more recently industrialized countries, but

/lower than

lower than those with an agrarian economy. It may be concluded that in its early stages industrialization has the effect of excluding women from economic activities.

48. The influence of domestic activities is encountered once again when the marital status is considered. The rate of participation of single women is two or three times higher than that of married women but, depending on the country, is relatively similar to the rate of participation of separated or divorced women, who return to economic activity when they have to assume their responsibilities as heads of households.

49. Reproductive domestic work, i.e., that which is performed in the family units themselves for the consumption of their members or the maintenance of the unit, occupies not less than 80% of the female population of economically active age in the region, on a paid or free basis. At least two out of every three women engaged in this work are not paid.

50. Economically active women are employed primarily in the services sector, followed by manufacturing and commerce. Employment in agriculture is declining, possibly owing to the modernization of production systems. Thus there are sectors which are relatively open to the employment of women (services, manufacturing, commerce) and sectors which are relatively closed (mining and quarrying, construction, electricity, gas and transport).

51. When the situation in the various countries is compared it is found that this general structure of female employment is maintained; that there are fewer variations than might be expected in the percentage of women working in the manufacturing sector, possibly owing to the continuance of small cottage and artisan-type industries in the less industrialized countries; and that a high percentage of women is recorded in unspecified activities.

52. In a breakdown of employment in the services sector, which is where the majority of the women are employed, it may be noted that a large proportion of the employment in this sector consists of domestic work. In fact, approximately one-third of the economically active women in the region are employed in it. It has been found, as a rule, that the educational level of domestic workers is lower than the average for urban

women and that they consist mainly of single unskilled rural-urban migrants. They are paid very low wages and the work itself is not rated very high. The fact that the one-third of economically active women working in domestic service corresponds with the third working as professionals or office workers suggests that the two categories are closely linked and that the former's domestic work permits the latter to engage in social work.

53. Between 1960 and 1970 women gained access to the middle and upper levels of the employment structure in a higher proportion than men. The occupational groups to which women have most access are those of professionals and technical specialists, workers in services and office workers. Ten per cent of the economically active female population comprises dependent professionals, which, combined with the university careers most frequently followed by women, has given rise to the large number of women in nursing, teaching, and other activities connected with the arts. A proportion of around 12% are employed as office workers or saleswomen. It has already been shown that a little over 26% are engaged in domestic service. Small percentages of the rest are distributed among the remaining occupational groups.

54. Open unemployment affects women two or three times more than men. The shortage of work especially affects women, who are paid much less than their work is worth in view of the general attitude of employers. If consideration is given to the total economically active population, it will be seen that, on average, the educational level of women is higher than that of men. If the occupational strata are considered, however, their level of education is seen to be lower, except among own-account and industrial workers. This may be due to the fact that the professional and semi-professional stratum absorbs a considerable proportion of employed women, which affects the general average. Nevertheless, in this stratum, men show a higher average educational level than women, owing possibly to the type of career followed by the latter.

55. In all the countries of the region, women predominate in the low-income group and are fewer in the middle and upper income groups, which clearly indicates the wage discrimination to which they are subjected. It has not been determined whether this is due to a lower valuation of

female labour or to the nature of the activities in which they are engaged. This is a very important distinction to bear in mind in the formulation of policies.

56. Although professional training programmes have registered considerable growth, it is regarded as insufficient in terms of the number of individuals they include and their predominantly urban coverage and location. Only 20% of those participating are women, a large proportion of whom enrol in courses related to the services sector.

57. A negative attitude to the recruitment of women has been noted among employers, who by way of justification adduce the existence of additional costs such as the maintenance of creches, disruptions in production owing to maternity leave or absences for domestic reasons, and the difficulty of their working overtime. Employers maintain that they do not give opportunities of promotion to women because they lack the qualities of leadership, organization and planning.

58. Women appear to have different motives for working, which vary according to their socio-economic stratum. In the lowest stratum, wages are the basic factor; in the middle stratum, economic independence and a contribution to the family income; in the upper stratum, personal and professional fulfilment. A high percentage define their work as provisional, as a means of overcoming economic household problems. They express the view that a woman with children should not work and her greatest ambition is to be able to devote herself exclusively to the home.

59. The same woman will accept and seek activities that are a continuation of her reproductive role. She herself accepts the fact that she earns little, since she considers that her wage supplements her husband's, although in many cases the woman's wage amounted to 50% of the family income.

60. From 1975 up to the present time most of the governments have indicated the existence of legislative measures which in some cases offer greater protection for female work and may lead to limitations on employment. Secondly, the conditions of the world economy have affected the income of governments; this has led them to curb the expansion of education and other services and to freeze or reduce public employment, with particular incidence on the creation of posts for women.

61. In view of the difficulties facing the economies of the region in creating employment, it is probable that the following central problems will prevail in the next decade:

(a) In broad terms, reproductive domestic work will continue on much the same lines as at present, with its sequel of isolation, economic dependence on the male and subordination, at any rate outwardly, in the family and society. Men and women will be socialized in this context and will either develop or inhibit the relevant features of their personality. This means that the difficulties deriving from the dual work load of women who work, either as part of a family or as heads of households, will persist.

(b) If the basic structure of the sexual division of labour is maintained, it is unlikely that the attitudes towards women working and to female activities will change substantially; consequently, discrimination in pay and in the social valuation of work will be maintained.

(c) Since women tend to be concentrated in employment of a domestic nature or as street vendors in the tertiary sector, the expansion of education may mean that these posts will no longer be acceptable to them. This in turn may cause an increase in open female unemployment, or in open male unemployment if women are employed instead of men to carry out the same activities for less pay.

C. Health

62. Because of the special care they need during pregnancy, childbirth and lactation, women, together with children, are worst affected by the health conditions prevailing in the region.^{10/} The action proposals deal specially with mother and child care, food conditions and the coverage of health services.

63. The following general characteristics have prevailed in the region in the last few years:

(a) Maternal mortality, infant (children under one year of age) and child mortality, as well as fertility rates, have decreased, although they still remain relatively high;

^{10/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 32 and 33.

(b) Health services are still insufficient and inadequate to cover the population's needs. There are various reasons for this, including their poor geographical distribution. Such insufficiency and inadequacy of the services affect all aspects of the population's health.

64. Between 1960 and 1975 the maternal mortality rate, defined as the number of deaths of mothers per 10,000 live births, declined in the region, from 20 to 14 in South America and from 18 to 10 in Central America and the Caribbean. Some of the most important factors of risk are the high rate of parity, the excessive frequency of successive pregnancies, the previous loss of a foetus, under-nutrition and, in particular, births involving high risk, defined as births to women under 20 and over 34 years of age. The percentage of high risk births varies from country to country, but in many it is over 50% of the total number of births, and even as high as 67%.

65. Between 1965 and 1975 the infant mortality rate dropped by 20% in Central America and the Caribbean and by 26% in South America, the rate of decrease accelerating between 1970 and 1975. The mortality rate for children aged 1 to 4 years dropped even more sharply (an average of 40%). Among the causes of mortality, the biggest decline was in infectious and parasitic diseases, which is partly attributable to the decrease in mortality from diarrhoea and enteritis.

66. The mother's health is the most important factor of risk for the new-born child, although cultural factors also play an important role in determining the risk of disease and death for the mother and child. Emphasis is placed on the close association found between child mortality and the educational level of the mother, and between these two factors and residence in rural areas.

67. Although fertility rates remain relatively high in some cases, they have decreased in the region as a whole. On the other hand, life expectancy at birth has shown significant increases in all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

68. The number of doctors, nurses and auxiliary medical personnel in the individual countries of the region varies widely, e.g., from 21.7 doctors for every 10,000 inhabitants at one end of the scale to only 0.9 at the

/other. Much

other. Much the same situation arises with respect to the number of paediatricians. These indicators of the average stage of health in the countries of the region not only vary from one country to another but present even greater variations within the countries themselves. Life expectancy in rural areas is 17% less than in metropolitan areas, while the infant mortality rate is 109% higher and the proportion of undernourished children 232% greater. The high percentage of rural population in most countries of the region tends to aggravate this problem.

69. Since the factors affecting the state of health of the population are complex and interrelated, it is difficult to envisage any substantial change within the next decade. Moreover, given the prevailing style of development and the foreseeable shortage of resources for social development, it seems unlikely that a solution will be found to the problems of geographical coverage and human and technical resources.

D. Housing

70. As regards housing, the Regional Plan of Action notes that women are the basic users of the houses since they spend most time in the home and use it as a base of operations.^{11/} The action proposals deal with the possession and nature of the dwellings and their implications for living conditions on the basis of the urban and rural human settlements in which they are located, focusing on the most underprivileged sectors of the population.

71. The salient feature of this sector in the region is the growing housing deficit, to which no adequate solution has been found, especially for the low-income social strata; this is reflected in the low quality of the available housing and basic services. Furniture for dwellings is also scarce, one of the most alarming indicators of which is the number of persons per bed.

72. In the poorest urban sectors, housing conditions may be considered on the basis of three major groups. Precarious settlements generally come into being as a result of land take-overs, occupying empty plots or situated

^{11/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 54, 55, 57 (a) (2).

on the periphery of the cities. Their inhabitants erect their dwellings by their own efforts, with waste materials (tin, cardboard, tar-impregnated paper). Most of these settlements have no piped water and this is obtained from one or two taps installed to serve the whole population. There are no sewage services, and a few cesspools are constructed for common use. Moreover, the residents live under the constant threat of being ejected by the authorities, either because of complaints from the owners of the land or for other reasons (floods, infections, etc.). The women and children have the task of fetching water and queuing for it in all weathers. The deficient water supply and waste disposal service have their impact on the sanitary conditions and make these settlements more vulnerable to diarrhoea and parasitic diseases and epidemics. Usually, too, they have no access to the most essential urban services (doctors, school, telephone, police, etc.) and anybody who has contracted infectious or contagious disease remains in the settlement without the minimal safeguards, in the women's care.

73. Slum district, which are generally situated in the oldest parts of the cities, include tenement buildings or other similar kind of housing. They generally lodge one family per room, with communal sanitary services and cooking facilities. The crowding and aforementioned inconveniences would seem to be compensated for in the eyes of their inhabitants by access to urban services and the relatively short distance to their sources of work.

74. The plots and services programmes consist of land on which the State has installed minimum services and the families erect a provisional dwelling, generally with government assistance. The dwellings have basic services and legal security of tenure, and contact is maintained with government services in a relatively organized manner. As they are usually situated on the periphery of the cities, they do nothing to facilitate female labour outside the home. It should be noted that as the governments' financial difficulties have increased, the conditions under which such dwellings are offered, in terms of both quality and area, have gradually deteriorated.

75. Rural housing is even more inadequate than urban housing. The relatively scattered distribution of rural settlements and the poor capacity of their inhabitants to organize themselves in defence of their own interests convey some idea of the magnitude of the problem.

76. In the great majority of the countries in the region there is piped water in 60% or more of urban dwellings and in less than 30% of rural dwellings. In one country of the region the proportion of dwellings with piped water and sewage services was 77% in the metropolitan area and 12% in localities of up to 2,500 inhabitants, while the proportion lacking both these services was 3% and 64%, respectively. This situation is found to a greater or lesser extent in all the countries of the region for which data are available. It is not surprising, therefore, that mortality rates - particularly maternal and infant mortality rates - are so high.

77. In view of the persistent migration from the country to the town, the pattern of residence of recent unions, and the fact that the drop in the fertility rates will not be reflected in a decrease in the number of unions within the next decade, an increase may be expected in the demand for housing, both urban and rural. The consequent deficit will somehow be solved by the persons concerned and the most likely possibility would seem to be that the recent unions will live with the family of one or the other of the spouses. Although this may give the woman of a recent union the chance of joining or remaining in the labour force, it will also prolong her subordinate status as daughter or daughter-in-law. The increased crowding will result in a deterioration of the sanitary and environmental conditions.

E. Social participation

78. The Regional Plan of Action notes that women do not participate in decision-making and their needs are not taken into account in the planning of development; therefore, efforts should be made so that in practice women have the same rights and opportunities as men.^{12/} The action proposals to that end are to support and promote the participation of women in political activities, to encourage them to run for public and elective office, and to create awareness of the problem.

^{12/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 59 and 60.

79. The participation of women in public and elective posts - although still insufficient - has been increasing throughout the region. The main difficulties facing increased participation of women reside, on the one hand, in the stereotyped images of domestic and family duties which women themselves recognize, accept and even defend and, on the other hand, in the very conditions in which domestic activities are carried out.

80. Participation in feminist organizations (defining their identity in terms of women in opposition to men on the basis of comparisons and claims) never developed in the region to the same extent as in the central countries, and is clearly declining vis-a-vis other possibilities of participation. Its most important source of supporters was always among women in the middle and upper urban strata.

81. Participation in women's organizations with specific common interests has mobilized women from all the social strata. From groups of professional women to groups for the production and marketing of handicraft-type products, and mothers' centres operating in the low-income sectors, this alternative possibility for the organization of women has been gaining impetus in the region.

82. The participation of women in organizations has not been confined exclusively to female organizations; increased participation by women of different socio-economic strata is recorded in professional associations, trade unions, neighbourhood committees set up to improve infrastructural services, etc. On occasion they have come out into the streets en masse to defend their interests.

83. There has also been increased participation of women in government mechanisms and political parties, although in only a few countries have they participated fully or at more than very low quantitative levels (about 10% of the candidatures and 5% of the elective posts). It is maintained that the increase has been greater in the public and elective posts of small localities in the interior which are of little interest to men. In any case, it should be noted that the question of the participation of women is often dealt with as though it were excluded from rules in force in every society with respect to the establishment of and participation in political, trade union or other forms of organizations.

84. It is foreseeable that in the near future, under the existing rules for social participation, the difficulty of increasing the participation of women will not lie so much in values and attitudes as in the actual possibility of combining the activities involved in such participation with domestic duties (particularly the care of small children), and it will be more serious in the case of housewives also performing a paid economic activity.

F. Legislation and administrative machinery

85. The Regional Plan of Action considers that while it is true that legislative measures are not in themselves sufficient to ensure women's equality, they open the way to it and eliminate the support for and strengthening of de facto discrimination.^{13/} For these purposes, the proposal is to revise existing legislation and international instruments, adopt the relevant legislative measures to eliminate discrimination against women, and establish adequate machinery for the purpose of accelerating the implementation of the global, regional and national plans within the Decade for Women.^{14/}

86. Prior to the International Women's Year, most countries of the region recognized the equal political rights of men and women (citizenship, voting, etc.). Undoubtedly, progress has continued in the sense of eliminating the many causes of discrimination contained in bodies of legislation, although there is still a long way to go in this direction.

87. It is impossible to evaluate the progress made in the region since 1975 on the basis of available information and the governments' replies to the questionnaire sent by the CEPAL secretariat. In most cases they enumerate bodies of legislation prior to the date specified. Only a few countries referred to the elimination of discrimination against women in certain areas and furnished information on the legislative measures and progress actually achieved.

^{13/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 17 and 18.

^{14/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 19 and 21 (1).

88. According to the information supplied, one of the crucial points continues to be legislation on the family, since only in a limited number of countries has the married women full economic, social, political, labour and legal independence, which finds expression in the regulations governing parental authority and custody of the children in cases of separation.

89. Few countries have set up a body for planning and concentrating all the activities related to women. It has occasionally been suggested that a body of this type would result in isolating the problems of women from global development problems. In any case, only one country of the region is implementing a policy aimed at improving the situation of women, children and the family within a global concept of social development.

90. It is probable that in the near future - as a result of the pressure of women in the middle and upper urban strata, particularly professionals - progress will continue in the elimination of discriminatory legislation. It seems less likely, however, that great strides will be made in the actual enforcement of women's rights in those groups which most need it.

III. TYPES OF FAMILIES AND THE SITUATION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

91. In the Regional Plan of Action, the family is considered as the nucleus which generates and transmits the values, norms and attitudes that orient the individual and collective conduct of the members of a society, and as a mediating institutions between the individual and the social group.^{15/} In the light of this basic approach, the action proposals take into account not only the importance of the family as regards the situation of women and vice versa, but also the importance of the family and women for the healthy development of children.

92. Families mediate between the individual and the larger social group depending on the socioeconomic stratum to which they belong. They accordingly develop strategies for living by means of which they organize and use their resources for the reproduction of their members in both the daily and the generational cycle, and define the demands they make on society. All this influences the conditions in which domestic work is performed (housing, basic services infrastructure, instruments and raw materials), the possibilities of effecting investment that would modify such conditions, the amount of family income, and the need for different members of the family group to contribute towards it. All these facts, together with the traditional sexual division of social labour, largely determine the situation of women and children in the region.

93. The intensive rate of economic and social change recorded in the region has affected the living conditions of family units and their members. This is shown by a cursory review of those processes. From the demographic point of view, the drop in the fertility and mortality rates has affected the various sectors differently. In the poor rural and urban sectors the decrease in the mortality rate (particularly infant mortality), combined with the present fertility rates, has resulted in a larger number of surviving children per family. In these social sectors with the lowest level of family income, per capita income decreases still further in view of the number of members. Other

^{15/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 35 and 45.

sectors, particularly the middle and upper strata of the metropolies, have managed to control their fertility and have reached an average number of members per family similar to that in some developed countries. This fact, added to their access to services, enables them to obtain the maximum benefit from their situation.

94. The process of agricultural modernization carried out by means of the improvement in technology and land concentration has had various effects on the family organization, women and children. Internal migration, both rural-urban and rural-rural, has modified the population structure by sex and age, in both the place of origin and that of destination. This influences the rate of family dependence, the position of women as heads of households, either seasonal or permanent, the urban installation of recent arrivals in precarious settlements or slum districts, etc. The absorption of a large part of the rural population in the wage-earning system and the monetarization of the agricultural economy affect the amount of income and the manner of obtaining it, the diet, the sexual division of labour and, therefore, the distribution of work and authority within the family units.

95. The industrialization process carried out by means of intensive capital investment has failed to create sufficient employment, has been concentrated in the principal cities and its effects have spread to the rest of the country, destroying the subsistence economies and artisan-type production. The difficulty of obtaining a monetary income restricts the rural families' access to manufactured goods, in addition to which the income obtained from artisan-type industry and the marketing of agricultural production decreases. The urban population lacking skills and capital seeks to obtain an income in sporadic occupations or in the so-called "informal sector". The middle and upper urban sectors, for their part, are incorporated in the modern sector of the economy owing to their relatively high qualifications, so that they obtain enough income to acquire durable consumer goods that lighten the burden of domestic tasks, possess a suitable dwelling and have access to education and other services. All these facts, to which should be added various kinds of aspirations and motives, contribute to the formation of small families in these strata.

96. The value content, attitudes, and patterns and forms of life related to the family and the relations among its members have been subjected to a less intensive rate of change, which has mainly affected the more educated social strata. This is reflected to a great extent in the patterns and attitudes with respect to the role of women and the internal relations of authority.

97. Since most of the women in the region are engaged in domestic work resulting in the reproduction of individuals in the daily and generational cycle, it is necessary to stop and consider, although briefly and by way of illustration, the conditions in which this work is performed and their implications, particularly in the poor rural and urban sectors.

98. Generally speaking, the income of poor rural families is obtained partly in money and partly in kind, in greatly varying proportions. The total is barely enough for somewhat inadequate food and clothing. In accordance with the cultural pattern, the man is responsible for providing the monetary income. To obtain it he joins the ranks of the wage-earners, or migrates seasonally or permanently. Normally, seasonal migration does not mean dissolution of the union, but it causes all kinds of difficulties for the family unit, and particularly for the woman, who assumes the temporary responsibility of head of the household. In the case of permanent migration the woman continues as head of the household, while the difficulties increase considerably and give rise to family units with a succession of fathers. Women make their contribution to the monetary income by the making handicraft-type products and the sale of these and some agricultural products. Income in kind is obtained from the land in the unit's possession which is worked by all the members of the family, according to a fairly rigid sexual division of labour. The dwellings lack piped water and sewage systems, although it is not unusual to find a cesspool next to the dwelling. In these circumstances, domestic work is heavier, the conditions of hygiene are poor, and diarrhoea and parasitic diseases abound, with the resulting infant mortality. The unions tend to be of a consensual nature and present high percentages of women as heads of households (up to 30%) normally associated with the presence of successive fathers, which is
/responsible for

responsible for the large number of children of the women concerned. These women lack professional care in connexion with pregnancy and birth. The children are born in the dwelling and are looked after by local midwives. The parents' educational level is low, and the children, because of the difficulty of attending school and the need to contribute their share of the work, tend to drop out of school or repeat the years, so that they end up as functional illiterates. In view of the type of rural settlement concerned there is little chance of organization beyond the sphere of the local community. The family unit is a closed nucleus and its members identify themselves with it more than with the global society or with some intermediate group. The diet is based on what the family unit itself produces; it is anything but varied and is below the minimum protein and calorie levels. If the male is present, authority is vested in him and the unit's economic operation is his responsibility, while everything in connexion with the reproductive area is reserved to the woman.

99. In poor urban family units the male heads of household are generally independent workers without capital, or unskilled wage-earners with sporadic employment. This instability of the male's work is one of the reasons for the high percentage of consensual unions of short duration, and the large number of family units with female heads of household. Their income is exclusively in money, and in view of the insufficient amount contributed by the male the women and children must also work. The women must always have some paid occupation to supplement the family income. They work mainly as street vendors or in paid domestic service or some personal service they perform in the home. Dwellings are precarious; water is often obtained from a common tap, and a cesspool is located near the dwelling. Domestic tasks are performed with primitive implements, which accounts for the levels of hygiene, resulting in diarrhoea and parasitic diseases. Owing to the closeness of the dwellings and the crowding, infectious diseases spread rapidly. Insecurity is a daily problem, in both personal terms and with respect to their scarce belongings, and even the dwelling itself. This situation is aggravated by the lack of access to urban services such as the
/police, fire

police, fire brigades, telephones, etc. In these settlements the proportion of young people, particularly children up to nine years of age, is higher than in the rest of the city. Women have some - although insufficient - access to public services in the way of medical care during pregnancy, birth and the post-natal period. Both men and women have low levels of education. The children are several years behind in school, or have dropped out to earn some kind of income. Some are sent to better-off relatives; others leave home and live through cycles in the street and in rehabilitation institutions. As a rule, the social status of the women is lower than that of the men: they have had less education, earn lower wages and perform work which is rated lower than the men's. It is they who suffer directly from the lack of services and its effects on the children, and also from male authority; this is usually expressed violently, especially when the man is under the influence of drink. The women are usually responsible for contacts with public officials and for mobilizing the inhabitants in order to obtain or organize some minimum community service.

100. In view of the style of development prevailing in the region, it seems unlikely that there will be any substantial change in the conditions in which the poor rural and urban families carry out their task of reproducing individuals in the daily and generational cycles. In spite of the high infant mortality rates in these families, they have the largest number of surviving children, which means that the accumulation of problems they face will probably be aggravated. Furthermore, although these problems can be analysed by sector, in actual fact they co-exist, strengthen one another and affect the family units which, by a process of social delegation, assume the responsibility of reproducing individuals. In its turn, because of the sexual division of labour, this task is assigned to the women.

IV. THE AGENTS

101. The Regional Plan of Action addresses its action proposals to a number of agents: the governments, CEPAL, other agencies inside and outside the United Nations system, public and private organizations and institutions, employers, trade unions, and the mass communication media. In the light of the information available, the activities carried out by some of these agents since the adoption of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development will be reviewed.^{16/}

102. The Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean held two meetings: one in Kingston, Jamaica, on 13 and 14 February 1978, and the other in Mexico City on 28 and 29 September 1978.

103. In accordance with the mandate received in this Plan of Action, the CEPAL secretariat established the Specialized Unit for the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean. This Unit has carried out activities in the fields of technical assistance, research, the collection and dissemination of information, and co-ordination, details of which are included in the "Report on Activities of the CEPAL secretariat relating to the integration of women in the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean", and the "Report on the activities of the CEPAL system secretariat on the problems of youth most closely related to the situation of the family and the status of women (education, health and housing)", which form part of this appraisal.^{17/}

104. The various aspects of the activities of the United Nations agencies may be described on the basis of a project inventory prepared with information supplied by them

^{16/} Documents E/CEPAL/MDM/1 and E/CEPAL/MDM/2/Rev.2.

^{17/} Documents E/CEPAL/MDM/3 and E/CEPAL/MDM/4.

/105. They

105. They report the existence of 150 projects in the region: 53% involve technical assistance activities, 23% the analysis and collection of data, and 8% the dissemination and exchange of information. The rest of the projects combine various activities. There are regional projects (28), sub-regional projects (6 for Central America and 8 for the Caribbean), and projects for countries or groups of countries. The aspects considered in the projects are essentially those covered by each agency, but they basically centre on the promotion and integration of women in development, health and nutrition, education and training, and occupation and employment. Some deal with the family, family well-being and fertility. Rural women are considered a priority group in one out of every five projects; only five projects concern urban women, while the remainder make no distinction between the two areas. In some of the projects, the presence of the stereotype of a modernized, urban, educated and economically active woman in the services sector may be discerned.

106. This brief information seems sufficient to show that the agencies of the United Nations system are increasingly interested in participating in activities designed to modify the situation of women in the region.

107. In addition to the United Nations agencies, regional projects are also executed and financed by some intergovernmental agencies, governments, non-governmental organizations with consultative status vis-à-vis the United Nations, private institutions and foundations.

108. As stated in paragraph 8, only 12 countries replied to the questionnaire sent by the CEPAL secretariat. The information provided relates primarily to legislative aspects. On the whole, it centres on the education and maternal and child health sectors, and, to a lesser degree, on aspects of employment, income and political participation. Only one country of the region seems to have incorporated the situation of women in its global development programmes.

109. The international agencies appear to be willing to undertake activities in connexion with the integration of women in development. The utilization of international co-operation in the near future would seem to depend basically on the will of the governments.

V. POLICY GUIDELINES

110. The explicit or implicit answers to questions as to what development, for what purpose, for whom and how to achieve it permeate every programme whatever the focal group or sector it covers. Even if they are not integrated in the global development programmes and strategies, the policies aimed at modifying the situation of women inevitably fall within the framework of the characteristics and content of national development styles and their relevant global policies.

111. In dealing with the question of women, a number of old arguments re-emerge in connexion with general aspects of development (what it consists of, what are its dynamic elements, which is the most favourable organizational framework for society, etc.). Similarly, measures or strategies which are already well known are proposed, as though they had never been put into practice before and no knowledge or experience existed regarding their possibilities or limitations. It is advisable to discard this ingenuous attitude and tackle the real dimensions of the problem.

112. Inasmuch as this is considered to be a problem that exclusively affects women and not the society in which they have a specific role to play - as a person and in connexion with the daily and generational reproduction of individuals - there is less chance of its being integrated in global development strategies and programmes.

113. In this respect, it would seem advisable to adopt the approach that women share with individuals in other nominal categories (men, youth, children) a number of situations which are common to them all as members of a particular society and a specific socioeconomic stratum, and that women also face situations essentially affecting themselves in view of the social and sexual division of labour.

114. The problem therefore lies in determining how women participate and are integrated in society, and in establishing why such participation and integration are unsatisfactory for the development of society, and how and by what means this situation can be remedied.

/115. Women

115. Women participate and are integrated in society as consumers and producers. As individual consumers, mention must be made of the inputs for their own reproduction (food, education, health, etc.). The quantity and quality of the inputs are basically determined by the social stratum of the family units to which the women belong, and not by sex; however, some information shows that there is a more equal division of inputs between the sexes in family units of the middle and upper strata than in those of the lower strata. Women are consumers to the extent that they are responsible for obtaining the goods and services for the family unit's consumption. As producers, an attempt is made to determine how they are incorporated in paid economic activities, and in what conditions they perform those activities, their domestic tasks, or both. From the standpoint of the contribution of women as producers in domestic activity, there are also significant differences according to the social stratum of the family units to which they belong. The demand for goods and services for the daily and generational reproduction cycle is very specific according to the sex. Thus, for example, an adequate dwelling provided with infrastructure services benefits all the members of the family but especially the woman, since it is she who performs her domestic tasks with greater or lesser labour, and spends most time in the home.

116. In the design and implementation of policies with a direct bearing on the operational levels of the economy (investment, inflation, industrial or agricultural development, etc.) it frequently happens that their social implications are overlooked, although it is well known that such policies directly or indirectly affect all the social strata and the families and individuals belonging to them (children, young people, women, men, etc.). It would therefore be desirable if those who decide or plan policies apparently unrelated to the social sectors were to take such implications into account.

117. Some integrated multisectoral policies such as those related to critical poverty or integrated rural development often place emphasis on employment, productivity, income and access to a number of services, and are primarily oriented towards the male heads of household: it is they who receive training in production and marketing techniques, credit, and, where appropriate, land, etc. In this respect it would be necessary:

/(a) To

(a) To determine the existence and proportion of family units with female heads of household with the purpose of directly including them in the policies;

(b) To foresee the possible effects of proposed changes in the production systems, and of the exclusive incorporation of the male head of household in the relations characteristic of a "modernized" economy, on the social and sexual division of labour, intrafamily relations, and the raising and socialization of children.

118. As regards sectoral social policies (education, training, employment, health, etc.), it should be borne in mind that women participate in them on a varying basis:

(a) As consumers of services; in many cases they have access to them on an unequal footing with men. The causes of this difference would have to be determined and the necessary corrective measures adopted;

(b) As those who implement or promote the implementation of social development policies through their reproductive domestic work, their training assumes first priority;

(c) As regards meriting special consideration, this is given to them in such cases as maternal and child care services, or as recipients of facilities which benefit them in particular, in the form of basic services infrastructure, housing, techniques for lightening the burden of domestic work, etc.

119. Through the identification of these various points of view the effects of many social development programmes that are currently in process may be multiplied.

120. The situation of women as heads of households deserves special attention. Female heads of household occur in different social strata, but more frequently and with more serious consequences in rural and poor urban sectors. The policies aimed at these family units should take into account both the reproductive domestic work of the female heads of household and the fact that they are responsible for obtaining the family income, with the resulting difficulties in combining both types of activities. It should be borne in mind that in the case of the problems of this group an assistance-oriented approach is only a short-term solution.

121. From a sectoral point of view, the following measures or policies would seem to affect the situation of women most directly:

(a) Education:

- (i) Rural areas require special attention in every country;
- (ii) Primary education entails the adoption of measures classified in four major groups: special programmes for young adults; improved performance of the educational system; elimination of the discriminatory content in respect of sexual roles, both in school textbooks and in the teacher-pupil relationship; extension of co-education to secondary level and to the private sector;
- (iii) At the secondary level, it is important to revise the technical and professional training programmes so as to bring them into line with the requirements of the labour market and prevent discrimination.

(b) Employment:

- (i) In connexion with domestic work: to revalue its importance; to provide training in hygiene, nutrition and other fields; to take steps to lighten it, for example through the extension of infrastructure services, community organization for the provision of some services, the development of simple types of technology, etc.; and to divest it of its exclusively female connotation;
- (ii) With respect to women incorporated in economic activities: to combat the sexual stereotypes upheld by the women themselves; to promote and expand training facilities, taking care to see that they include other than female occupations; to train women who are already employed so as to facilitate their access to supervisory posts; to review legislation affording protection for women and eliminate that which increases discrimination.

(c) Health:

- (i) Extension of coverage, with adequate technology and participation by the community;

/(ii) Implementation

- (ii) Implementation of the concept of integrated family health services, in terms of both the nature of the services (promotion, education, prevention and cure), and the integration of existing piecemeal facilities;
 - (iii) Strengthening of the material and human resources in the field of maternal and child care, with attention to the types, distribution and training of health personnel.
- (d) Housing:
- (i) Need for special efforts in connexion with the supply of piped and water and sewage systems.
- (e) Legislation:
- (i) Review of existing legislation, with particular reference to the family institution (marital union, parental authority, duties, duties and rights of spouses with respect to each other and the children), accompanied by campaigns for the spread and extension of legal services;
 - (ii) Review of legislation that may be interfering with social participation.
- (f) Sexual stereotypes:
- (i) Action in this field (texts, publicity, social communication media) should focus on the stereotypes of both sexes and not only the female sex, in view of the mutual relationship by means of which they are defined.

122. The choice of the proper strategy will depend on the conditions found in each particular country, according to the nature of the problems and the available resources. Given the general situation prevailing in the region, a satisfactory strategy should be to assign priority to the poor rural and urban sectors; incorporate them in global national or regional development programmes and strategies; adopt an integrated and multisectoral approach, since the deficiencies in each sector affect the rest; take into account the role of the family, and within it that of women, in the reproduction of individuals in a daily and generational cycle.

123. A possible strategy would be to define as accurately as possible the focal groups and a high priority central objective (for example, the supply of drinking water or the elimination of illiteracy in the entire rural population within a specific period). Action would be centred on this objective and the resources would be channelled and other objectives and programmes established according to the needs detected. If several countries of the region were to define the same central objective, a broad field would be opened for horizontal technical co-operation and a basic framework would be available for the co-ordination of international assistance.

124. A policy aimed at improving the situation of poor families which would complement the above strategy could comprise the following minimum group of measures:

(a) Stable employment for the head of household, whether male or female with a sufficient minimum income and near the family unit's place of residence;

(b) Health, housing, educational and basic services infrastructure programmes for lightening the burden of domestic work and enabling the women to initiate other activities;

(c) Large-scale family education programmes, especially for adolescents and families of young people;

(d) Programmes for organizing families in neighbourhood or community associations;

(e) Legislative measures in support of the above action and objectives.

125. This is considered a minimum group of measures because the absence of any of them leaves virtually unchanged the limitations affecting the organization of poor family units, with their sequel of implications for the situation of their members, in particular women and children. They are also considered as minimum measures because the governments of the region are in greater or lesser degree implementing policies in nearly all these respects, assigning for the purpose human and financial resources the co-ordination of which would make them more effective and permit a more rational use of international technical assistance.

126. The strategy chosen, the focal group defined and the objective to which priority is assigned have some influence, even if only a partial one, on the continuity of these policies. It often happens in the region that pilot or experimental projects are no more than experiences with no subsequent extension or any significant effects for lack of continuity.

127. It has long been recommended that programmes and projects be evaluated not only when they are completed but throughout the process of their execution. It is quite common for some fairly complex machinery or criteria to be associated with this. Since programmes and projects for women have a relatively short history, appraisal activities are essential for purposes of accumulating the widest possible experience for their future development. At the national level it would be best to consider very simple mechanisms involving the participation of the government officials that implement them and the recipients themselves.

128. The regional appraisals are dependent upon the availability of information, and in this respect simple expeditious machinery should be developed for communication purposes. The clearing house which the Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation (CLADES) is bringing into operation may be considered a central element in the development of such machinery.

129. The entry into operation of the clearing house is not only a key factor in the collection and dissemination of information but it will also permit the countries and international agencies gradually to increase their co-ordination in various fields and in any separate or joint activities they may undertake.

