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Economic Commission for Latin America

INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO DEVELOPMENT: ACTIVITIES PERFORMED  
BY THE CEPAL SECRETARIAT IN MEXICO, CENTRAL  
AMERICA, CUBA AND PANAMA



1. Since the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into Development, held in Macuto, Venezuela, in October 1979, the CEPAL secretariat, together with the Secretary-General of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women and with the financial support of the Voluntary Fund (VF), has carried out the provisions of the Final Report, Section B: "Priority areas, strategies, and actions", as regards the recommendations for CEPAL, paragraph (f): "Continue taking the necessary steps, with the urgency which the situation requires, and in accordance with the recommendations of the Presiding Officers of the First Regional Conference, to obtain the human and financial resources needed by the secretariat to be able to make a better response to the requests of governments; and to fill as soon as possible the corresponding post in the Mexico Office, so as to make a more effective contribution to the appropriate implementation of the objectives of the Regional Plan of Action and of the United Nations Programme for the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America".

In accordance with these recommendations and the operating procedures of the Voluntary Fund, the CEPAL secretariat, using Voluntary Fund resources, established the post of subregional co-ordinator at CEPAL's Mexico Office as from June 1980.

The post deals with Panama, Central America, Mexico and Cuba, in line with the area covered by CEPAL's Mexico Office.

2. The co-ordinator's work has been divided into two major stages:
- (a) familiarization with and analysis of CEPAL's work in the subregion;
  - (b) establishment of a programme of work for the first six months
- and, after a period at Headquarters, planning the work for the entire year 1981.
3. The co-ordinator has carried out two working missions in the subregion for the purpose of gaining direct knowledge of offices devoted to women and of relevant non-governmental organizations, and has made contact with them. She has co-ordinated her efforts with the UNDP Resident Representative in the various countries, and has studied national projects and sent her evaluations thereof to the Voluntary Fund.

4. The co-ordinator of the area has tightened up the relationships with other United Nations organizations concerning the integration of women into development. In view of the fact that all of the organizations are represented in Mexico, the greatest activity has been carried out in that country.

Many links have been established, i.e., with UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, ILO, WFP, PAHO and UNIDO, which has made it possible to hold a series of meetings and recruit a consultant for four months, to be financed by UNDP and CEPAL. The work will be carried out under the CEPAL Subregional Programme for Women (Mexico), assisted by the above-mentioned organizations.

This analysis will furnish an idea of how each United Nations organization is dealing with the problems of women and make it possible to co-ordinate future work in order to avoid duplication and find areas which must be concentrated on. This will give the Mexican Government an overview of the work being done in connexion with women and of United Nations efforts in that field in Mexico.

In collaboration with the Resident Representatives, efforts are now underway in order to obtain better results in projecting the problems of women in each country of the subregion.

5. Close contact has been established with the subregional co-ordinator for the Caribbean area, both in terms of the exchange of experience, since she has been performing her functions longer, and in the formulation of plans for the future which could combine work involving women of both regions, for although there are differences, there are also common points which might assist in the integration and development of the two areas.

6. With respect to the Voluntary Fund, the agreements reached in 1979 at Macuto, Venezuela, have been complied with, since the Fund is financing the posts of both the Caribbean and Central American subregional co-ordinators up to December 1981.

During the period under analysis, the Fund's Consultative Committee held two meetings in 1980:

- at its seventh meeting, held in March, the Consultative Committee of the Voluntary Fund approved a project for the subregion (UNDP/18 - "Participation of Women in Production"), based in Honduras, for US\$ 21 700;

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- at the Consultative Committee's eighth meeting, which was held from 8 to 12 September, the following projects for this subregion were considered:

- Nicaragua (NGO) - Campaign to Educate Women  
US\$ 89 960 (approved)
- Costa Rica (NGO) - Advancement, Orientation and Training of Women  
in Puntarenas  
US\$ 50 000 (approved in principle, pending  
further information)
- Costa Rica (GOV) - Integration of Rural Women into the Development  
Process  
US\$ 100 000 (approved in principle, contingent  
upon the required radio equipment being  
obtained through the use of other resources)
- Honduras (NGO) - Working Women's Co-operative. The project is  
considered interesting, but must be refined.  
The Fund could provide financing for a consultant,  
if necessary.

As may be seen, no subregional projects were submitted for our area during this period, except for an earlier one on radiophonic schools and their use in efforts to integrate women into development, which will be carried out during 1981, and for which US\$ 15 000 will be contributed.

A six-day technical meeting will be held in Mexico, at which 15 representatives of the most important radiophonic schools in the subregion will develop a co-ordinated project for utilizing these schools in the integration of women into development and prepare the educational material needed for its implementation.

Finally, a project for a training seminar on the preparation of projects and the promotion of activities for the Decade for Women is being submitted to the Voluntary Fund. This seminar could be held in Panama in September with the participation of the entire subregion, that is to say, Panama, Central America, Mexico, Cuba, and also the Dominican Republic. The latter country would take part, even though it is outside our area, because owing to language problems it will not be attending the same seminar to be held in April for the English-speaking Caribbean, so as to avoid the expense of simultaneous interpretation.

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In the future, there is the possibility of submitting joint projects for the second half of 1981 combining the work of the Caribbean and Central American regions.

It has been agreed with the Fund that the subregional co-ordinators will support UNDP's work in their areas of responsibility by monitoring the national projects, as necessary.

7. Programme of work for 1981

It should be noted that the orientation of the work to be carried out in the subregion during this year is determined by the recommendations of the Regional Plan of Action and the two regional conferences on the integration of women into development, as well as the Copenhagen World Conference.

Within this broad working framework, the following points are noteworthy as having the greatest impact in the region and as deserving priority:

(a) Promoting the creation and/or strengthening of national offices for women in the area. Helping governments and non-governmental organizations to achieve improved co-ordination of work;

(b) Maintaining, expanding and intensifying the co-ordination of work, both within the CEPAL system (ILPES, CELADE, CLADES, DOCPAL) and with the other specialized agencies of the United Nations;

(c) Promoting a broad exchange of experience and knowledge in the area among both governments and non-governmental organizations regarding the problems of women;

(d) Sponsoring, supporting and linking up national and regional academic research;

(e) Promoting and expanding work in the area of planning in order that the women's component may be present in national development plans and in order to make planning criteria and machinery more capable of gauging the real nature of the problems of integrating women into development;

(f) Achieving improved training of women in the region as far as national development plans are concerned. Only thus will it be possible to ensure that this training really allows women to be incorporated into development;

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(g) Seeking national and subregional machinery for the improved spreading and dissemination of existing information on the problems of women in development; and

(h) With respect to the implementation of the programme of work for 1981: carrying out the above-mentioned projects financed by the Voluntary Fund; co-operating with FAO in holding a workshop on rural women in Honduras; making efforts in the subregion to ensure that the women's component is present in the documents - both of CEPAL and of the countries - being prepared for the World Energy Conference.

