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PRESENTATION AND PREPARATION OF PROJECTS FOR THE CONSULTATIVE  
COMMITTEE ON THE VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS  
DECADE FOR WOMEN

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A. Criteria and procedures for the presentation and preparation of projects for the Consultative Committee on the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women.

1. At their first meeting held in Kingston, Jamaica, on 14 and 15 February 1978, the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America decided to request the CEPAL secretariat to carry out the following specific activities:

- "(a) To prepare an information document on the criteria laid down by the General Assembly, by the Consultative Committee on the Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women, and by other resolutions on the preparation and formulation of projects;
- "(b) To draft some standardized guidelines to facilitate the formulation and presentation of projects."

2. The basic provisions are contained in the following documents:

- a. General Assembly resolution 31/133, "Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women" and the annex to this resolution;
- b. General Assembly resolution 31/136, "United Nations Decade for Women";
- c. Economic and Social Council document E/5894, "Programme for the Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 1976-1985, as adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its twenty-sixth session";
- d. Reports of the three sessions of the Consultative Committee on the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, held on the following dates: first session, 21-23 March 1977; second session, 21-24 June 1977; third session, 28 and 31 October and 2 and 11 November 1977.

3. The provisions that are most applicable for the identification, formulation and presentation of projects are contained in General Assembly resolution 31/133 (subsequently referred to as R.31/133) and in the reports of the Consultative Committee's sessions (subsequently referred to by the letters CC, followed by the number of the session, and the number of the paragraph containing the provision).

4. The following subjects are dealt with in this information document:

1. Consultative Committee and its sphere of competence;
2. Resources of the Fund: purpose, assignment, disbursement and use;
3. Criteria for the selection of programmes and projects;
4. Formulation of projects: aspects to be taken into account;
5. Role of the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, New York.
6. Role of the regional commissions (CEPAL);
7. Integration with other agencies of the United Nations system.

5. The Committee decided that the Fund should develop a personality of its own, not duplicating the operations of existing United Nations funds (CC., 2nd, para.9 (a)).

The Committee also considered that this mandate to advise the Secretary General on the criteria, as stipulated in the General Assembly resolution (R.31/133), should be interpreted in the widest possible sense and should include advising the Secretary General on the screening, appraisal and selection of projects to be funded and on the amounts to be allocated to these projects (CC., 1st, para.10).

The Committee reserves the right to examine the proposals and make appropriate observations on them; furthermore, the Committee feels that provisions should be made for evaluation of projects and follow-up programming as a necessary component of its review of the regional programme (CC., 2nd, para. 9 (h)).

6. The resources of the Fund should be utilized to supplement activities (R.31/133) since the Voluntary Fund should be a supplement to and not a substitute for other programmes undertaken within the United Nations system on behalf of women and serve as a catalyst for carefully selected specific projects (CC., 1st, para.20). Consequently, the Fund should not be allocated for overhead expenses or programme supporting services which should be carried out by the regular budgets of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the specialized agencies (CC., 1st, para.20).

/With regard

With regard to the manner of distributing resources, a system of block allocations shall apply to Regional Commissions and the United Nations Secretariat in order to implement the grass-roots approach and assure flexibility in co-ordinating Fund resources with those of regular programmes and other technical assistance projects (CC., 2nd, para. 9 (c)).

Nevertheless, it was stressed that actual disbursements of funds will be made only after consideration of well-formulated, worthy projects submitted by the Regional Commissions (CC., 2nd, para.14). Also, it must be considered that it is impossible for those responsible for the regional women's programmes to implement any project until the regional commissions be informed of the allotment number against which expenditures will be charged. This authorization should be received as soon as possible after projects have been recommended for acceptance and approved by the Secretary General. (CC., 3rd, para. 35.)

7. The following criteria will be used in assigning priority to projects:

- a. Projects to be carried out in the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries (R.31/133, CC., 1st, para. 20);
- b. The focal groups are defined as those composed of rural women, poor women in urban areas and other marginal groups of women, especially the disadvantaged (R.31/133, CC., 2nd, para.20);
- c. Priority will be given to projects of the following kinds: specific projects (CC., 1st, para.20); field projects (CC., 1st, para.20); operational programmes at the grass roots level (CC., 1st, para.26); taking into account that interest in the women's programmes could more effectively be generated from below from the women themselves; rather than from above (CC., 1st, para.26); the projects should reflect the needs of countries (CC., 2nd, para.9 (b)).

The resources of the Fund may be utilized for the following activities:

- (i) Technical co-operation activities;
- (ii) Development and/or strengthening of regional and international programmes;
- (iii) Development and implementation of joint interorganizational programmes;
- (iv) Research, data collection and analysis, relevant to (i), (ii) and (iii) above;
- (v) Communication support and public information activities designed to promote the goals of the Decade and, in particular, the activities undertaken under (i), (ii) and (iii) above (R.31/133).

Concerning information activities, it is necessary to bear in mind that operational programmes at the grass roots level should take priority over information programmes, aimed at the media and other opinion makers (CC., 1st, para.26) and that the Committee expressed the view that communication support and public information could be more effectively integrated into regional and national planning and execution (CC., 2nd, para.9 (i)).

Concerning research activities, the Committee decided that it could only recommend that a limited proportion of the \$400.000 allocation to each region should be spent on research and felt that for the time being an upper limit of \$50.000 would be appropriate. The Committee recommended that research should as far as possible be designed to produce information that was directly relevant to the planning of particular projects and programmes; it was realized, however, that case studies of the impact of modernization of women might also have a part to play in so far as they provided a clear indication to planners of the need to take account of women's role in all development planning (CC., 3rd, para.7). Also, the Committee decided that it would be willing to give its support for disbursement for action-oriented research activities related to project formulation and that the amount of the proposal to the Committee for this purpose should not exceed \$50.000. (CC., 3rd, para.22).

8. In the formulation of projects the following aspects should be considered:

a. Origin of the projects: the Committee believes that many of the projects which it supports will be those developed by the regional commissions in consultation with governments and non-governmental organizations, which involve a direct contribution by the staff of the commissions.

On the other hand, some projects may be prepared by governments or non-governmental organizations and require no direct operational contribution from the regional commissions. In addition, other United Nations agencies may identify country level projects, or components of projects, for which support from the Voluntary Fund might be appropriate. (CC., 3rd, para.29).

Notwithstanding, the committee recommends that irrespective of the way in which a project is first identified and formulated, the final selection of all regional or country level projects for submission to the Voluntary Fund should be made by the regional commissions (CC., 3rd, para.30).

b. Description of activities: the project's content should be elaborated by breaking it down into specific projects and activities (CC., 2nd, para.9 (g)).

/c. Evaluation,

c. Evaluation, monitoring and follow-up: the Committee feels that provisions should be made for evaluation of projects and follow-up programming (CC., 2nd, para.9 (h)). A project should be funded if follow-up activity were assured, providing evidence on this point (CC., 3rd, para.14).

d. Overhead: The project must bear in mind the United Nations requirements for an appropriation for overhead costs of specific projects (CC., 2nd, para.10).

e. Budgeting: The Committee decided that it could not take a decision on any projects which were not costed (CC., 3rd, para.7 and 17).

f. Government support: The projects must be submitted to the governments and have their support, interest and approval, evidence of which must be provided (CC., 3rd, paras. 11, 12, 14, 15, 29).

g. Inter-agency co-ordination: The projects must be reviewed, consulted and co-ordinated with the appropriate agencies of the United Nations system (CC., 3rd, paras. 11, 12). This will prevent the submission of projects for which financing has been requested from other agencies (CC., 3rd, para.10) or for which other agencies may have available funds (CC., 3rd, para.16).

9. In connection with the role of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the Committee recognizes that effective implementation of its recommendations will require continual follow-up communication and action on the part of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (as the administering agency) and the regional commissions in order to carry out the following steps:

(a) Transmission of the Committee's views on project orientation and related criteria by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to the regional commissions promptly after each Committee session, with particular attention to any new aspects emerging from the Consultative Committee's review and appraisal of programme implementation;

(b) Provision of technical support or guidance to the regional commissions, if this is required, in the preparation of project proposals appropriate for the Fund;

(c) Submission of project proposals to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs by the regional commissions for consideration;

(d) Initial technical appraisal of project proposals undertaken by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, and submitted together with the proposals to the Committee for its appraisal and recommendation;

/(e) Administrative

- (e) Administrative and financial processing of the Committee's recommendation by the Secretariat for release of project funds to the regional commissions in a prompt manner consistent with the priorities assigned to the various projects and programmes;
- (f) Project implementation by the regional commissions and other participating organizations and promise of necessary support by the appropriate organizations in the United Nations system;
- (g) Monitoring and evaluation of project execution based on reports prepared periodically by the regional commissions and submitted to the Committee through the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. (CC., 3rd, para.32).

10. In connection with the role of the Regional Commissions, the Committee recommends that irrespective of the way in which a project is first identified and formulated, the final selection of all regional or country level projects for submission to the Voluntary Fund should be made by the regional commissions. It is clear that this will require a close co-operation between the regional commissions and other United Nations agencies (CC., 3rd, para.30).

On the other hand, in the case of all projects which are submitted by the regional commissions for support from the Voluntary Fund, the Committee recommends that it should be the responsibility of the commissions to ensure, in consultation as appropriate with other United Nations agencies, that:

- (a) The project is acceptable to the appropriate authorities in the country concerned;
- (b) The long-term budgetary implications, if any, have been fully accepted by the government, non-governmental organizations or other agency requesting the project;
- (c) Adequate provision is made for appropriate follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of projects;
- (d) A final report on the project is submitted to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs which will in turn be presented to the Consultative Committee. (CC., 3rd, para.31).

11. Attached to this information document are copies of General Assembly resolutions 31/133 and 31/136 and Economic and Social Council document E/5894.

It should be borne in mind that the consideration of new projects submitted to the Consultative Committee may suggest the necessity or desirability of that Committee proposing new criteria or procedures, or proceeding to review or reformulate the previously established criteria or procedures.

/B. Standardized

B. Standardized guidelines to facilitate the formulation of projects

12. The Office of the Executive Secretary understands that the drafting of standardized guidelines to facilitate the formulation of projects would represent a duplication of work which is difficult to justify.

The interested government institutions may consult the National Offices of the United Nations Development Programme, which have a manual with guidelines on the subject.

