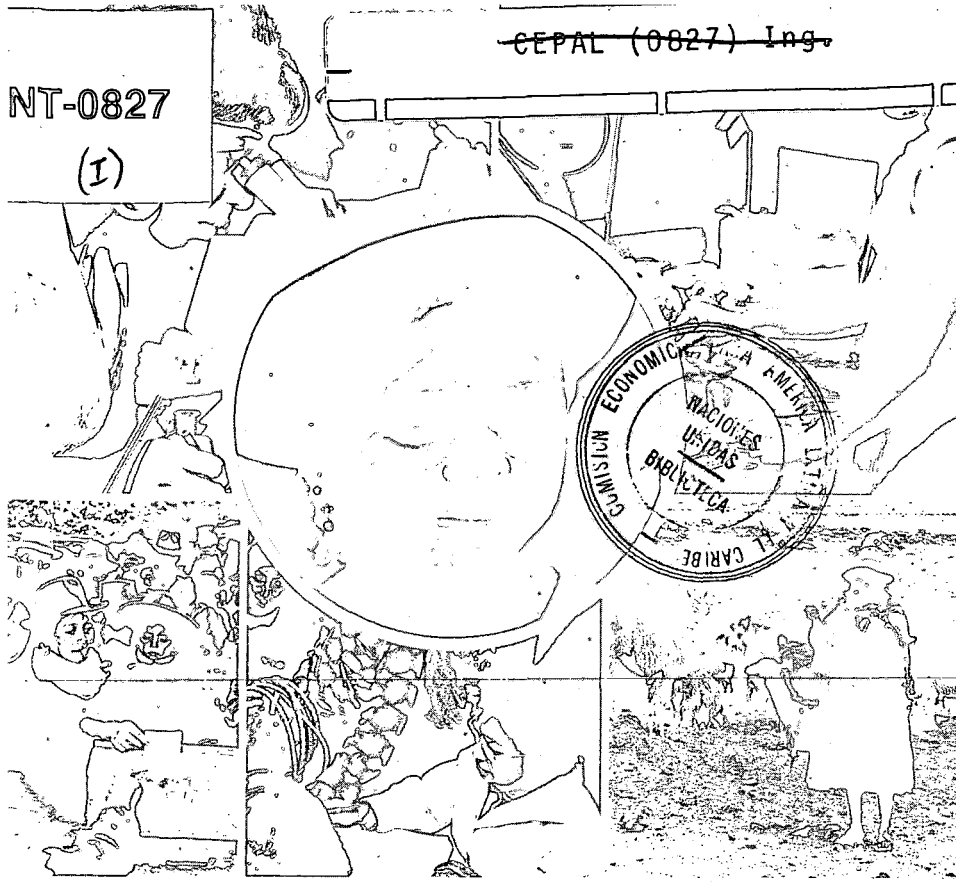


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LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

UNITED NATIONS



CEPAL

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This leaflet has been prepared by the CEPAL Information Services, with the assistance of the Social Development Division and the Women's Unit, for distribution in connexion with the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women (Copenhagen, Denmark, 14-30 July 1980).

I. INTRODUCTION

The concern of the United Nations with the situation of women dates back to the very beginning of the Organization's work. At the first session of the Economic and Social Council in 1945, a subcommission devoted to the study of the social, legal, economic and political situation of women was established within the Commission on Human Rights. One year later, it was decided to give special priority to that subject by creating the Commission on the Status of Women, which was to meet regularly to prepare reports and recommendations for the Council in order to promote the rights of women in the educational, social, economic and political fields. The Commission was also to work out proposals and recommend machinery to facilitate the full application of the principle of equal rights for men and women.

Within the United Nations system, this Commission has been a major force in promoting the development and improvement of the situation of women. It has worked non-stop since its foundation, its latest achievement being the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1976), approved by the General Assembly in 1977. In 1972, demonstrating anew the interest of Member States in the subject, the General Assembly proclaimed 1975 as International Women's Year and later resolved to hold a World Conference.

The goal of the work programme of International Women's Year was to initiate national, regional and international activities aimed at improving the situation of women and to achieve three basic objectives: "Equality, Development and Peace". Other, more specific goals are connected with the promotion of equality between men and women, the full integration of women in all development efforts and the recognition of the importance of women's growing contribution to the development of friendly relations and co-operation among nations and the strengthening of world peace.

At the regional level, the fifteenth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America (Quito, 1973), charged the secretariat

with carrying out studies on the subject. This process, promoted by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations in co-operation with the CEPAL, culminated in the Regional Seminar for Latin America on the Integration of Women in Development, held in Caracas in 1975 at the governmental level as a preparatory activity for the World Conference. On that occasion it was recommended that, in addition to other substantive work, the CEPAL secretariat should "hold a regional conference after the World Conference of the International Women's Year in order to evaluate the results of the latter and consider its application to the Latin American region". These recommendations were transmitted to the World Conference of the International Women's Year (Mexico City, June-July 1975) where a World Plan of Action was approved which included concrete actions to be carried out by member governments. Guidelines were established for regional and global action, and it was recommended that regional plans of action should be adopted.

In its resolution 3520(XXX) of 1975, the General Assembly ratified the World Plan of Action, proclaimed the period 1976-1985 as the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace and decided to convene a World Conference in 1980 to evaluate the results of the activities undertaken during the first half of this Decade.

The Regional Seminar on the Participation of Women in Economic, Social and Political Development: Obstacles that Hinder their Integration (Buenos Aires, March 1976), organized by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations in consultation with CEPAL, recommended the establishment of a working group appointed according to an equitable geographic distribution and formed by specialists appointed by the Governments to prepare a preliminary draft Regional Plan of Action. This draft was prepared in Mexico City in January 1977 in accordance with the guidelines of the World Plan of Action; it proposes concrete strategies for the incorporation of women into active economic, political, social and cultural life in specific areas such as employment, education, health, the family, housing and political participation and mentions CEPAL's responsibilities in this field.

In accordance with the mandate received at its seventeenth session (Guatemala, May 1977), CEPAL convened a Regional Conference on

the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, which was held in Havana from 13 to 17 June 1977 and adopted the Regional Plan of Action. In order to implement the Plan in view of the fact that some countries possess only limited financial resources to carry out their national plans and programmes, the Economic and Social Council established a voluntary fund for the International Women's Year by its resolution 1850(LVI). The General Assembly extended that fund to cover the period of the decade and, in its resolution 31/133, adopted the criteria for its management.

The Regional Plan of Action, ratified by member governments at the eleventh extraordinary session of the CEPAL Committee of the Whole (New York, 21 November 1977), calls for "periodical evaluation of 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. . . which must be done through an interdisciplinary and multisectoral approach that will permit evaluation of the current situation and trends". At their Second Meeting (Mexico City, September 1978), the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference recommended that the Regional Conference should include in its agenda an "appraisal of the progress made in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action, including recommendations with a view to the World Conference on 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".

In anticipation of the holding of the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and in accordance with the Regional Plan, CEPAL convened a group of governmental experts which met in Quito, in March 1979, in order to carry out the first phase of the appraisal of the situation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean. They had before them information from the replies of countries to a questionnaire that had been circulated previously.

At the Second Regional Conference, held in Macuto, Venezuela, in November 1979 and convened by CEPAL in preparation for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in July 1980, Governments had the opportunity to make a more complete and up-to-date evaluation of the situation of Latin American women and to plan future regional activities in this field.

One of the basic documents submitted by the CEPAL secretariat for the consideration of the Regional Conference was entitled "Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: the situation as regards the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action". An informative outline of this document is presented in the second part of this pamphlet in order to bring out in brief but systematic manner, some of the main aspects of the current situation of Latin American women.

The third part of this publication includes comments on important aspects of the meeting held in Macuto, Venezuela in 1979 and the subjects that were given special scrutiny.

II. WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: THE SITUATION AS REGARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION

To prepare this document, CEPAL made use of background studies that were submitted to the Conference by other organizations of the United Nations system such as UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and PAHO/WHO concerning childhood and the family, education, employment and health, respectively, as well as other works undertaken by the CEPAL secretariat. The document is a first regional evaluation based on the replies to a questionnaire sent by the secretariat to all member governments of CEPAL regarding the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America.

The questionnaire, which was answered by 21 of the 32 regional Member States of CEPAL, was sent in conformity with the decision taken by the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean at their first meeting, held in Jamaica in February 1978, and with the Regional Plan of Action itself, which was adopted in Havana in June 1977, specifically its recommendation 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 the Regional Plan, through an interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral approach.

The appraisal document takes the economic and social development trends in Latin America and the Caribbean as a global frame of reference and reviews the situation of women in the region and the prevailing trends in some specific sectors on the basis of the objectives and actions proposed in the Regional Plan of Action and the World Plan of Action. Attention is paid to the need to study the conceptual aspects in greater depth and improve statistical sources so as to produce more comprehensive and precise studies that would facilitate the integration of the subject in development plans and programmes and in sectoral analyses, in observance of the International Development Strategy, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the postulates of the New International Economic Order. Another element of special importance in this appraisal exercise carried out by CEPAL for the Regional Conference is the recent "La Paz Appraisal", adopted by CEPAL at its eighteenth session (La Paz, 18-26 April 1979).

A. Criteria for diagnoses and actions

The study notes that it has not been easy to include the question of the situation of women within the framework of global, regional or national development strategies and programmes because of difficulties on various fronts. The obstacles stem firstly from the role actually played by planning in societies organized according to the rules of the market; the structure of planning bodies, the machinery used to formulate policies, the functions performed by the State administrative apparatus and the shortage of financial resources are also significant. Other difficulties derive from the conceptualization of the problem of women in society, i.e., from the group of concepts, relationships and assumptions which are referred to and applied in order to characterize, describe or explain concrete situations or to propose specific action.

Basically, the proposals regarding global conceptual frameworks for characterizing the situation of women suggest that most of the conceptual difficulties are concentrated in three areas: (a) the type of social group women constitute; (b) the structural relationship between domestic work, for which women are mainly responsible, and productive social work; and (c) the nature of sexual stereotypes and their discriminatory effect, which are usually damaging to the social status of women.

Within a social context of sexual discrimination, the situation of women involves two types of problems:

- (i) Those common to all individuals (men or women) arising from the fact that they belong to a particular socio-economic stratum which determines their possibilities of access to and enjoyment of goods and services (housing, employment, education, health, etc.); and
- (ii) Those affecting women as such which stem from the social role assigned to them, within the socio-economic stratum to which they belong. It is only in this case, according to the CEPAL study, that it is strictly accurate to speak of sexual discrimination.

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 the 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 life strategies, one of whose main components is the organization and assignment of the work aimed at the reproduction of individuals. The social situation of women is defined in relation to all these factors and processes and within the framework of the economic and social structures shaping them.

B. Women in Latin America

In analysing the situation of women in the region and the tendencies on a sectoral basis, the document devotes different chapters to appraising the situation in the fields of education, employment, health, housing, social participation, legislation and administrative machinery.

1. Education

With regard to *education*, the document recalls the role which this is assigned by the Regional Plan of Action as an essential factor in the development of human beings and in the training of skilled human resources to undertake productive activities. After noting that women are adversely affected by inequality in education, the Plan proposes a series of measures including, *inter alia*, action to eliminate illiteracy, to increase women's enrolment in secondary and higher education, to establish coeducation and to modify the image of women disseminated

through the educational system. After mentioning some of the salient features of the educational systems in the region as a whole in the period 1960-1970, the document points out the high overall rate of growth of school enrolment, 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. It also mentions as a distinctive feature the greater flexibility in adjusting to social demand, particularly of the middle and upper sectors, and states that while enrolment in secondary and higher education has grown rapidly, primary education has grown much more slowly and drop-out rates are high; thus, a large proportion of the population remains illiterate or semi-illiterate, having never completed the basic educational cycle.

As regards illiteracy, the relative ranking of the countries in the region has not changed with respect to the percentages of illiteracy and, particularly, of female illiteracy. *At one end of the scale are the countries with a proportion of 5% to 12% of illiterate women aged 15 and over. At the other extreme are those in which illiterate women represent over 40% of the entire female population.* In all parts of the region, the percentage of illiterate women increases with residence in rural areas. Illiteracy is greater among rural men than among urban women, which seems to indicate that the area of residence is a more influential factor than sex in this respect.

With regard to primary education the document points out that the previously mentioned ranking of countries is also valid: those countries in which the educational situation of women is relatively better have a rate of female participation in primary education ranging from 40 to 53% for the corresponding age groups. While at the other end of the scale the proportion is below 20% of the total primary school enrolment. All the countries recorded an increase between 1960 and 1970 in the percentage of women who had completed their primary education.

The access of girls to secondary education in the region has improved sharply: in 1960, female enrolment at this level was less than male enrolment in every country, but ten years later, half the countries had more girls enrolled than boys. Female enrolment has also increased greatly at the university level. Although in 1970 women were still at a disadvantage, the existing disparities have tended to diminish with the considerable increase in female enrolment in recent decades. In

nearly every country women are most heavily represented in the arts, letters, education and psychology. Their representation is less in the social sciences, exact sciences and natural sciences, and much lower in engineering and agriculture.

After pointing out some progress made by the countries of the region with regard to the establishment of coeducation and the content of the curricula and texts used, the document states that 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 serious problem in some countries, in particular affecting the populations of rural areas, and primarily women; (b) it will be difficult to achieve the objectives of providing primary education for the whole population without more resources and appropriate overall programmes, particularly in countries with problems of bilingualism. Rural areas will call for special attention in this respect, and particular attention should be given to rural women, since they are unquestionably the most handicapped sector; (c) secondary education is expanding at a satisfactory rate with little discrimination, but this does not seem to be happening in higher education, where specialization in careers follows professional sexual stereotypes, although there is a positive trend towards more balanced participation by women; (d) changes can be expected to occur in the role of education in line with general development policies and, in particular, the technical training requirements for the new types of employment in the modern sector of the economy; (e) it is probable that, hidden in various forms, the content of education will continue to transmit differential and discriminating sexual stereotypes.

2. Employment

In their most recent appraisals of the employment situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, the governments of the region expressed their concern over the growth of the rates of unemployment and generalized underemployment, which together result in a high degree of underutilization of the labour force in the region and constitute one of the most serious problems, owing to the low capacity of absorption of personnel in the modern and dynamic sector of the economy and the loss of production potential which this implies. Open unemployment and underemployment around 1970 are estimated to have accounted

for around 28% of the labour force, i.e., no use was made of the productive potential of one out of every four persons of working age.

After estimating that over one-fourth of the entire labour force in the region is underutilized, the secretariat study points out that the problems of unemployment and underemployment exist on a considerable scale, and that present trends do not warrant very optimistic forecasts for the short and medium term.

With regard to the situation of women, the document mentions the recommendations contained in the Regional Plan of Action regarding the need for increased female participation in the labour force of the region and adds that the analysis of the situation of women in employment is hampered by problems of definition and census enumeration, all of which means that the analyses of female employment constitute very approximate estimations and are neither complete nor reliable.

The participation of women in economic activity (the number of women aged 15 years or more incorporated in the labour force as a percentage of the total number of women of economically active age) in 1970 was approximately 20%, ranging between 14% and 30%. In comparison with other regions these rates are much lower, and also do not indicate that women return to economic activity after retiring from it.

Those countries which have been industrialized longest in the region show a higher rate of female participation than the more recently industrialized countries, but lower than those with a predominantly agricultural economy.

The majority of economically active women are employed 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).

A large proportion of the employment in the services sector consists of domestic work. Between one-fourth and one-third of the economically active women in the region are employed in it; they receive very low wages, and the work itself is not rated very highly.

The better-educated women are rapidly joining the labour force. 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.

Open unemployment affects women two or three times more than men. The chronic shortage of jobs especially affects women who are paid less than the going rate for their work.

In all the countries of the region, women predominate in the low-income group and are fewer in the middle and upper income groups. 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 for many women of working overtime or night shifts. According to the document, employers maintain that they do not give opportunities of promotion to women because, in addition to the interruption of their employment, they lack the qualities of leadership, organization and planning.

In view of the difficulties facing the economies of the region in creating sufficient employment, it is probable that the following central problems will prevail in the next decade: (a) in broad terms, domestic work will continue on much the same lines as at present, with its sequel of isolation, economic dependence and subordination to men. Men and women will be socialized in different contexts and will either develop or inhibit the relevant features of their personality in adapting to them. This means that the difficulties deriving from the dual work load of women who work, either as members and/or heads of households or as members of the labour force, will persist; (b) if the basic structure of the sexual division of labour is maintained, it is unlikely that the attitudes to women's work and the value placed on female activities will change substantially; consequently, discrimination in pay and in the social valuation of their work will be maintained; (c) the growth of female education may lead to progressive rejection of employment of a domestic nature or as street vendors in the tertiary sector, which is where the women of the poorer strata at present tend to be concentrated. This may place greater pressure on the already saturated predominantly male job markets. An increase in open male unemploy-

ment may result if women are employed instead of men to carry out the same activities for less pay; (d) since the participation of women in the labour force depends largely on the education they receive, presumably the growing number of women passing through the educational system will lead to greater pressure for them to occupy jobs in the modern sector of the economy.

3. *Health and housing*

The secretariat document concentrates its analysis of the situation of women with reference to *health* on problems connected with mother and child care, nutritional conditions and the provision and coverage of health services. 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.

The number of doctors, nurses and auxiliary medical personnel in the individual countries of the region varies widely, from 21.7 doctors for every 10 000 inhabitants at one end of the scale to only 0.9 at the other. Much the same situation arises with respect to the number of paediatricians. These indicators not only vary from one country to another but present even greater variations within the countries themselves, the situation being especially acute in rural areas.

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 of the human and technical resources necessary for steadier progress in the sphere of health, particularly in rural areas.

As regards *housing*, the study states that the salient feature in the region is the growing housing deficit, to which no adequate solution has been found, and which especially affects the low-income social strata. It points out that within the next decade and 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 recently-married women the chance of joining or remaining in the labour force, it will also prolong their subordinate status as daughters or daughters-in-law.

4. Social participation

The participation of women in public and elected posts –although still insufficient– has been increasing. The main difficulties facing increased participation by women reside, on the one hand, in the stereotyped images of women's 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. The social participation of women has not been confined exclusively to female organizations; increased participation by women of different socio-economic strata is recorded in professional associations, trade unions and neighbourhood committees as well as 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 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.

5. Legislation and administrative machinery

Although it is impossible to evaluate the progress made in the region since the Regional Plan was adopted in 1975 on the basis of available information and the governments' replies to the questionnaires sent by the CEPAL secretariat, it should be noted that one of the crucial points continues to be legislation on the family, since only in a limited number of countries do married women enjoy full economic, social, political, labour and legal independence, as reflected in the regulations governing parental authority and custody of the children in cases of separation, and in women's legal powers to share in the administration of their own property and of shared property in marriage. It is probable that in the future progress will continue to be made 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 social groups which most need it.

C. CEPAL and the integration of women into development

The Regional Plan of Action addresses its action proposals to a number of agents: 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 the Economic and Social Development of Latin American will be reviewed.

The Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean held three meetings: one in Kingston, Jamaica, on 14 and 15 February 1978, the second in Mexico City on 28 and 29 September 1978, and the third in Quito on 11 March 1979.

In accordance with the mandate given in this Plan of Action the CEPAL secretariat established the Specialized Unit for the Integration of Women into 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 the co-ordination of these various kinds of action.

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.

This reports 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), subregional 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 proper to 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. A few 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 woman, economically active in the services sector, may be discerned.

D. Policy guidelines

The last part of the work is devoted to the enumeration of policy guidelines indicating the type of measures which, in the secretariat's view, should be adopted in future so as to facilitate the implementation of programmes allowing women to be better integrated into Latin American economic and social progress.

Inasmuch as this is considered to be a problem that exclusively affects women rather than society as a whole there is less chance of its being integrated in global development strategies and programmes. It would therefore seem advisable to adopt the integrated approach that women share with individuals in other categories a number of situations which are common to them all as members of a particular society and a specific socio-economic stratum, while women also face situations particularly affecting them because of the social and sexual division of labour. 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, with a view to increasing their productivity: it is they who primarily receive training in production and marketing techniques, credit, and sometimes land and other benefits. In this respect, in order to correct this distortion, it would seem necessary: (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 aimed at eliminating poverty by increasing the productivity of the poor; and (b) to foresee the possible effects of proposed modernizing changes in the production systems on the social and sexual division of the work of domestic production, intrafamily relations, the raising and socialization of children, and the social status of women, which may become relegated to an even more secondary position than was previously the case.

As regards sectoral social policies it should be borne in mind that women have a place in them in varying respects: (a) as *consumers of services*, in many cases they do not have access to them on an equal

footing with men. The causes of this difference should therefore be determined and the necessary corrective measures adopted; (b) as those who *implement or promote the implementation of social development policies* through their domestic work, their training assumes first priority; (c) as *beneficiaries of special social policy measures*, in such cases as maternal and child care services, or in the form of the basic services infrastructure, housing, techniques for lightening the burden of domestic work, etc. Through the identification of these various situations the effects of many social development programmes that are currently in process may be multiplied.

To summarize by sectors, the following measures or policies would seem to affect the situation of women most directly:

1. *Education*

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

2. *Employment*

(i) In connexion with *domestic work* it is necessary: to revalue its significance, to provide training in hygiene, nutrition and other fields; to take steps to lighten such work as, for example, through the extension of infrastructure services, community organization for the provision of some services, the development of simple types of technology etc.; to divest it of its exclusively female connotation; and to examine the possibility that in some circumstances (large families with children and women heads of household) the right may be recognized of receiving a money income (social wage) as a compensation for domestic work; (ii) with respect to *women incorporated in the labour force* it is necessary: to combat sexual stereotypes; to promote

and expand training, taking care to ensure that this includes other than female occupations; to give women who are already employed opportunities which facilitate their access to supervisory posts; to review legislation affording protection for women and eliminate that which increases discrimination and harms women more than it protects them.

3. *Health*

(i) It is necessary to extend the coverage of health services, with adequate technology and participation by the community, and expand integrated health services in rural areas; (ii) it is necessary to apply the concept of integrated family health services, in terms of both the nature of the services (promotion, prevention and cure) and the integration of existing piecemeal facilities; (iii) the material and human resources in the field of maternal and child care should be strengthened, with attention to the types, distribution and training of health personnel.

4. *Housing*

(i) Consideration should be given to housing plans to provide adequate housing for those sectors lacking sufficient income to acquire it on the normal market; (ii) special efforts should be made in connexion with the provision of piped water and sewerage systems to sectors which lack them.

5. *Legislation*

(i) Existing legislation should be reviewed, with particular reference to the institution of the family (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) there should be a review of legislation that may interfere with the social participation of women in the relevant economic, cultural, social and political activities.

6. *Sexual stereotypes*

(i) Action in this field (school books, advertising, mass 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; (ii) systematic campaigns should be undertaken through schools and the mass media to avoid discriminatory stereotypes.

III. THE SECOND REGIONAL CONFERENCE AND ITS MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, convened by CEPAL to appraise the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action and to design strategies and propose priorities for the second half of the Decade for Women with a view to the forthcoming World Conference, was held in Macuto, Venezuela, from 12 to 16 November 1979.

The meeting was attended by representatives of Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Spain, St. Lucia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, and the West Indies Associated States. Various bodies of the United Nations system, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations were also represented.

The Second Regional Conference elected its Presiding Officers, who came from 8 countries and were chaired by Venezuela, the host country of the Conference.

The subjects, discussed during the meetings centred on the appraisal of the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action since the holding of the First Regional Conference (Havana, 1977), including an analysis of the situation of children and young people in relation to women and the family and on the consideration of regional measures for the execution of programmes on women and their integration into development, including recommendations, priorities and strategies which also serve the objectives of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark in June 1980.

The Regional Conference made a detailed examination of the document *Women in Latin America: the situation as regards the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action* (summarized in the previous chapter), other documentation submitted by the secretariat, and reports from countries concerning the situation of women and their integration into development.

During the discussion, there was consensus on the need to go further in formulating diagnoses and laying down objectives. The participants agreed on the importance of concentrating efforts and resources on identifying and solving the problems which women must face in the next decade.

In that connexion, various measures and recommendations were proposed and embodied in six resolutions regarding mother and child problems, the appraisal and priorities of Latin America with a view to the World Conference, and support for the development and integration of women in Nicaragua. Other recommendations concerned women at the decision-making levels in the CEPAL secretariat and the problems of refugee women.

Due to its special significance for the subject, the relevant portion of the main resolution adopted by the Second Regional Conference regarding the appraisal of the Regional Plan of Action is reproduced below.

**APPRAISAL AND PRIORITIES OF LATIN AMERICA WITH A
VIEW TO THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN:
EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE**

The Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America,

Considering that women are agents in the development process and that the situations and problems experienced by them are not exclusive to them but affect all society, and furthermore that these situations should be considered in the context of global processes in order to attain the New International Economic Order,

Bearing in mind CEPAL resolutions 386 and 388 (XVIII) adopted at the eighteenth session, containing the preparations and contributions by CEPAL for the formulation of the New International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, which

should reflect “in an appropriate manner the need for adequate policies for the promotion of social development to be defined by each country within the framework of its development plans and priorities”,¹

Recalling that in keeping with the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX) called upon the regional commissions “to develop and implement as a matter of priority effective strategies to further the objectives of the World Plan of Action at the regional and subregional levels, bearing in mind their respective regional plans of action”,

Taking into account in all points the spirit and letter of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development, approved at the first Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development (Havana, Cuba, June 1977), and endorsed by Member States at the eleventh extraordinary session of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America (New York, November 1977),

Also taking into account that several General Assembly resolutions, notably 3520 and 3505 (XXX), 31/175 and 33/200, as well as resolution 2 of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development urge the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, all financial institutions and the international, regional and subregional development banks, and the bilateral funding agencies to accord high priority as soon as possible in their development assistance to projects and programmes for the promotion of the integration of women into development, in accordance with requests by the governments,

Also considering that the efforts and strategies to implement the objectives of the Regional Plan of Action were insufficient and inadequate in the majority of countries for bringing about changes of any qualitative or quantitative significance in the situation of women, or for increasing their participation in political, economic and social life, particularly in the lowest socio-economic strata and among rural women,

¹E/CEPAL/1083/Rev.1, p. 181.

Bearing in mind that the time has come to go beyond the reiteration of diagnoses which have already been made and the statement of desirable objectives, which have already been set forth in many United Nations documents such as the La Paz Appraisal,²

Considering that the delay in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development stands in the way of improving the standard of living and further participation of women in the region, and also produces discouragement among broad groups of women in the region, whose hopes were raised when the Decade for Women was proclaimed,

Particularly concerned by the fact that a substantial number of countries of the region have not yet reviewed existing legislation with a view to eliminating the aspects which affect the legal and social status of women, preventing their full incorporation into development,

Taking into account the Resolution on Conditions of Work, Vocational Training and Employment of Women of the Eleventh Conference of American States Members of the ILO (Medellín, Colombia, September-October 1979),³

Considering that the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America constitutes a preparatory activity of the Latin American region for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women to be held in 1980,

Decides that this resolution, together with the report of the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, should be forwarded to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and Committee for Development Planning, the Preparatory Committee for the formulation of the new International Development Strategy and the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women to be held in 1980.

²*Ibid.*, p. 203 ff.

³Document CRA/XT, AP/13, presented at the Conference as annex II of the reference document, *Activities of the International Labour Organisation in favour of Women in Latin America* (ILO/W.4/1979).

**A. APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL
PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN
INTO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
OF LATIN AMERICA**

1. This first process of appraisal is taking place mid-way through the "United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace", and on the eve of the formulation of the new international strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, which should incorporate the results of the appraisal of the situation of women. Consequently, it is necessary to concentrate efforts and resources on solving the problems connected with national and regional economic and social development that women will have to face in the next decade.
2. The living conditions of women of the region constitute a problem which affects the whole of Latin American and Caribbean society. Accordingly, their improvement should be a basic and explicit objective of the global processes of economic and social development and change in the countries of the region. Men and women share the living conditions determined by the fact that they belong to a particular society and a socio-economic stratum of that society, but women also face the specific types of discrimination resulting from the social and sexual division of labour.
3. It may be affirmed that the situation of women in the region has generally improved, relatively speaking, but this cannot be said of all women or of every aspect of social life. The conditions in which women are living vary widely according to the socio-economic stratum to which they belong, and their modes of participation in economic, political, social and cultural life and the sources and forms of discrimination against them vary accordingly.
4. The women most affected by this situation resulting from inadequate socio-economic structures are those belonging to poor groups, particularly in rural and marginal urban areas.
5. The social organization of the region attributes to the family unit the responsibility for the biological and social reproduction of its members and, therefore, of the population. Virtually all adult women carry out the domestic work. However, this important contribution of women in fulfilling their reproductive roles enjoys no social recognition, and merely serves as a means of perpetuating the existing sexual

stereotypes and cultural patterns that discriminate against women. What is more important, since the situation of women is usually viewed as forming part of the social welfare sector no recognition tends to be given to women's domestic activities, and thus their contribution to economic and social development is ignored. Many national development strategies and plans do not take account of the link between the majority of women and domestic work. At the same time the objective of integrated development is hampered by a group of interrelated social problems which affect men and women alike, such as critical poverty, inequitable income distribution, unemployment, illiteracy, or semi-illiteracy, the marginality of large urban, rural and indigenous sectors, little or no participation in the most important aspects of national life and so on.

6. The problems which hinder the participation of women in the economic, political, social and cultural life of their countries are closely linked with the general state of under-development. It is therefore fundamental to bring about the necessary changes in socio-economic structures, and at the same time undertake specific action aimed at changing the Latin American woman's situation so that she becomes an active agent in transforming the existing structures and a determining factor in achieving full equality of men and women. This signifies that the situation of women in rural areas is particularly serious, they suffer not only from isolation, but also from lack of education, employment and other disadvantages which cause them to migrate to the cities in search of work, with the corresponding sequel of prostitution, begging and growth of slum areas.

7. It is therefore evident that legislation, in so far as it adversely affects women, impedes their integration into development, and while it is true that legislative measures are not in themselves sufficient to ensure women's equality, the elimination of all discriminatory provisions opens the way to equality. The *de facto* discrimination that exists in the region has been based on, and vitalized by, *de jure* discrimination and it is urgent to take appropriate measures of a legal nature to ensure the legal equality of the sexes.

8. Although education is a vital factor for the economic and social development of peoples, in the region women represent a high percentage (between 60 and 80%) of the total illiterate population.

Even in the countries considered to be of a higher cultural level, the percentage of women with secondary, technical and higher education is low.

9. The limited access to education by majority groups of the population, particularly women, has led the latter to turn to the traditional sectors of the economy, basically domestic services, trade, artisanal activities and agricultural work. There is also the special problem of young people leaving school due to economic reasons, pregnancy, the need to go to work to contribute to the family income or other factors.

10. According to CEPAL and United Nations studies, the health problem in the region is alarming. Low life expectancy and high mortality and morbidity rates, and the region's critical public health situation highlights the differences which exist between the health and living conditions of the Latin American countries and those of the developed countries of the world. This is all the more critical if one bears in mind the great differences which exist in this field among the different countries of the region and among the different social groups and regions within each country.

11. Because of the special care they need during pregnancy, childbirth and lactation, women together with children, are worst affected by the situation. There is also the problem of the increasing cost of medicines and the monopolistic control exercised over them by transnational enterprises as well as the shortage of available and suitable medical resources.

12. With regard to employment, it may be observed that a very low percentage of women is incorporated in the labour force, although this percentage is higher in the Caribbean subregion than in the rest of the region.

13. Most of them carry out unskilled work, particularly in the services sector and above all domestic service, including unpaid family work. In many cases women are the object of discrimination and exploitation as regards pay working conditions and hiring practices; and there are real limitations on the incorporation and retention of women in work, which hinders their participation in the political, economic and social life of their countries.

14. According to current data, the female work force is concentrated in the cities and primarily in the large capitals, where the greatest

quantity of services and jobs traditionally attributed to women are grouped together, but which lack the social and educational facilities to enable the great majority of them to remain employed. Against the background of the chronic unemployment and under-employment affecting the region, thus further worsens the position of women.

15. The family still inculcates and promotes among its members activities and vocations which are based more on assigned sexual stereotypes than on their possibilities and abilities as human beings, which affects not only women's opportunities of personal development but also their part as agents of development.

16. One of the fundamental limitations on the access of women to work, education, management responsibilities and possibilities of development is the excessive work load imposed on them by the domestic tasks which are wrongly viewed as the exclusive occupation of women. This double working day has an enormous influence on the millions of women incorporated into production and services, who, on top of their working day, have the added burden of all the domestic chores.

17. It is significant that women's political participation in the region in the interests of the economic and social development of their countries is extremely low. They currently form about half the electorate, but only a minute fraction of them are members of legislative bodies and an even smaller proportion are members of executive bodies. Women do not participate sufficiently in decision-making, their opinions are neglected and their needs are not taken into account in the development planning of many countries.

18. All the above, reflected in the economic and social situation of the region, is compounded by the existence of problems such as prostitution, the illegal traffic in persons and drugs, rape, drug addiction and other forms of crime and antisocial behaviour.

19. The mass media, which offer great possibilities through their functions of information, education, entertainment and persuasion, often do not attain these objectives because they usually tend to present and reinforce a stereotyped, degrading and inadequate image of women, whom they treat as sexual objects and as agents to promote indiscriminate consumption, particularly when seeking to market various types of articles.

20. To a very considerable extent the communication media, basically motivated by the economic interests of the transnational enterprises,

have perpetuated the dependence of women by showing them a reality which is not theirs and hiding from them their real identity; they have contributed to keeping them restricted to the confines of the home, preventing the development of their critical consciousness and propagating the concept of their role as useful merchandise for consumption.

21. In accordance with the appraisal undertaken and in order to overcome the above-mentioned obstacles to the full integration of women in economic and social development, governments, women, CEPAL and international organizations should commit themselves to giving importance and priority to the following measures aimed towards improving the existing state of affairs.

B. PRIORITY AREAS, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

1. *It is recommended* that governments should:
 - (a) Do their utmost to furnish maximum support for the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action, which constitutes the essential instrument of the action priorities for the region;
 - (b) Take measures to ensure that regional, national and sectoral plans actively pursue specific actions to benefit women, provide adequate resources for this purpose and monitor and evaluate their application and impact on the situation of women;
 - (c) Include objectives, concrete strategies and studies relating to the situation of women in national preparatory activities for the formulation of the New International Development Strategy;
 - (d) Adopt the necessary measures as rapidly as possible to implement the World Plan of Action and the Regional Plan of Action in order to establish and improve national machinery for the integration of women into development, and also analyse and identify the factors hindering the creation and implementation of, and where appropriate devise the most adequate machinery;
 - (e) Adopt as rapidly as possible in each country the necessary measures for the complete review of national legislation in order to ensure the legal equality of men and women in all areas, with particular emphasis upon civil, family, labour, agrarian and criminal law; and establish where appropriate regulations governing family property

which ensure that the goods acquired in the marriage or consensual union of a couple benefit both members; and in countries where no Family Code exists such provisions should be included in civil legislation and finally implement the necessary measures to ensure that women are suitably informed of all the legal and legislative aspects affecting them, thus making for a better implementation of those provisions;

(f) Take the necessary measures to implement the recommendations concerning employment contained in the resolution on conditions of work, vocational training and employment of women adopted at the Eleventh Conference of American States Members of the ILO in Medellín, Colombia, September-October 1979:

- (i) Create conditions for generating employment for the growing number of women particularly heads of households who constitute a high percentage of the unemployed and underemployed;
- (ii) Design and implement training programmes in non-traditional areas for unskilled young urban women and migrant women workers, bearing in mind their age, in order to prepare them for, and advance them in the job market and place them in a position to generate incomes through the production of goods and services and slow down migration from the countryside to the cities;
- (iii) Improve the conditions of work, promote access to credit and social security and increase the managerial training for women in the "informal" sector of the economy;

(g) Give priority in the short term to very broad literacy and adult education programmes with emphasis on women in rural areas since they show the highest percentages of educational backwardness; it is also suggested that use should be made of the means offered by modern techniques both in the formal and the non-formal systems. In countries which still have not done so, the discrimination implicit in education where there is a separation of the sexes should be abolished very rapidly, while co-education which fundamentally strengthens coexistence, breaks with sexual patterns and stereotypes, and makes optimum use of resources, should be fostered, as should sexual education;

(h) Adjust programmes and adopt flexible curricula so as to make it possible for women to be reincorporated into secondary or university education, when their responsibilities as mothers so permit or, once their desire to devote themselves full-time to the care,

education and upbringing of their children has been satisfied they consider that the time has come to resume their education or careers;

(i) Use the mass media to disseminate the Regional Plan of Action, and incorporate it into the formal education system, so that the population is suitably informed and able to participate actively and consciously in the country's development process;

(j) Provide equitable access to health services, especially for the poorest sectors, covering all the basic medical needs of the population, including suitable infrastructure and the necessary medical and para-medical services, without distinction on sexual grounds, to achieve a good level of medical care for all;

(k) Reformulate, in the countries which have social security, the criteria governing the financing and cost of nurseries or infant day care centres, for example, so that the cost is borne equally by the contributions of men and women who are parents, thus putting an end to the idea that such services are provided for mothers alone;

(l) Pay special attention to improving national information and statistical services, so as to make it possible to appraise the participation of women in all levels and sectors of the planning system; and provide timely, up-to-date information on the situation of women when so requested by United Nations specialized agencies;

(m) Promote, within the framework of programmes of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, as well as in the context of regional and subregional agreements, those aspects of this resolution aimed towards securing the full integration of women into the economic and social development of their countries;

(n) Adopt and implement, in conjunction with the bodies of the United Nations system, measures designed to alter the current image of women as sexual objects and portray women as economically, socially and politically productive human beings;

(o) Develop specific policies to improve the status of rural women, particularly in relation to the extension of social security;

(p) Include in national technical co-operation programmes, and in the corresponding indicative planning figures, those projects which concern the increased participation of women in development, attaching high priority to them;

(q) Lend firm support to the setting up in the Dominican Republic of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women;

(r) Request the United Nations Secretary-General to speed up the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the advisory board of the Institute, so that the latter may begin its work as rapidly as possible;

(s) Likewise request the Secretary-General to study the possibility of submitting to the 1980 World Conference a report on the work undertaken, the programmes prepared and immediate action.

2. *It is recommended that CEPAL should:*

(a) Submit as rapidly as possible this resolution, which contains the fundamental strategies for the integration of women into development, and the relevant documentation mentioned in General Assembly resolution 33/200, paragraphs 3 and 4, to the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the New International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, and the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women for consideration at its third session;

(b) Include in the implementation of its regular programmes the recommendations of the Regional Plan of Action as part of the instrumentation required by the New International Development Strategy and in its periodic appraisals consider specific aspects of the form in which the situation of women has been affected in each area;

(c) Supplement the request contained in the last paragraph by establishing machinery to permit a close link between the Special Unit for the Integration of Women and the rest of the CEPAL system so as to provide for a joint analysis of the quantitative and qualitative impact of this New Strategy on the situation of women;

(d) Recommend that the Committee of High-Level Government Experts (CEGAN), convened periodically by the secretariat, should include in its periodic appraisals an appraisal relating to the incorporation of women in economic and social development and formulate recommendations which will lead to the active participation and improvement of the situation of women in the regional development process, and to achieving the objectives of the New International Development Strategy.

(e) Co-operate with the governments of the region, in conjunction with the Permanent Secretariat at the Latin American Economic System (SELA), to identify and generate economic co-operation

projects which affect the position of the women of the region in economic and social growth and development;

(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 Programme of the Unit for the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America;

(g) Attach priority in the different CEPAL fora and bodies to the study and analysis of the basic concepts, strategies and action contained in the Regional Plan of Action with a view to avoiding the duplication of effort and strengthening the approach that the so-called "question of women" is not divorced from the economic, social, political and cultural problems of the countries;

(h) Deploy the necessary human, technical and financial resources to co-ordinate projects for the region through the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

3. *It is recommended* that women should:

(a) Participate with a greater sense of commitment in trade union organizations and, through the women's or mixed organizations to which they belong, in the implementation of the action programmes aimed at achieving their integration into social, political and economic development; and promote the local popular organizations which strengthen the democratic principles of equality and social justice;

(b) Collaborate in the dissemination of the Regional Plan of Action, and consider it as far as possible as an instrument of reference for the specific actions which their groups may undertake;

(c) Urge non-governmental organizations and particularly women's associations to continue their invaluable work, focussing on activities to achieve directly or in co-operation with governments, the solutions proposed for the Decade for Women and the Regional Plan of Action.

4. With regard to the generation of projects *it is recommended* that the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations system should:

(a) Furnish the necessary collaboration to the countries of the region for reinforcing the insertion of these projects in the national infrastructure in all the aspects mentioned, either by means of technical assistance or by bilateral and multilateral collaboration;

(b) Attach greater importance to the training of women with special emphasis on non-traditional areas of training so that they can prepare and implement all aspects of projects; and create marketing, production and other areas which may enable them to generate income and their situation and that of their families;

(c) Establish through regional bodies the necessary flows of information and co-ordination so as to avoid the duplication of activities and concentrate efforts on key issues;

(d) Set up producer's and consumer's co-operatives, disseminate intermediate technology which relieves rural women of their heavier work and create an adequate infrastructure of basic services.

5. With regard to financing *it is recommended* that governments and the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system should:

(a) Ensure the effective allocation and use of financial resources for the generation and implementation of projects aimed towards the incorporation of women into development;

(b) Request in particular the organizations of the United Nations system to appraise what they have done to improve the status of women, increase their financial contributions and identify the necessary measures to implement the Regional Plan of Action;

(c) Request CEPAL to seek further funds from the General Assembly for projects, without thereby causing any reduction in the funds to be allocated by the Consultative Committee of the Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women;

(d) Reaffirm paragraph 88.8 (i) of the Regional Plan of Action, which "requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to assign additional resources to the CEPAL secretariat from the regular budget to strengthen its regular activities concerning women and to facilitate the establishment within the CEPAL secretariat of a specialized unit for the integration of women in development". It is also recommended that these resources should be increased so as to consolidate the unit.

Additional human and financial resources should be allocated at headquarters of CEPAL and its regional offices pursuant to the recommendations to CEPAL in the resolution, and studies and research undertaken for the creation of appropriate programmes of information and dissemination;

(e) Reiterate paragraph 88.8 (ii) of the Regional Plan of Action which "requests the Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women to give the greatest possible support to CEPAL's activities, programmes and specific projects deriving from the priorities laid down in this Regional Plan of Action in the field of the integration of women in development and consistent with the criteria established by the United Nations for disbursements from the Fund", and also give greater flexibility to the criteria for the allocation of resources according to the region's needs; the time which elapses between the allocation of funds for the projects and their implementation depending on their reception should be cut as far as possible; financial support should be secured for the projects until they are inserted in the national programmes; and the maximum priority should be given to integrated programmes which will ensure a genuine impact on the situation of women;

(f) Reiterate paragraph 88.8 (iii) of the Regional Plan of Action which "requests the Administrator of UNDP to give the greatest possible co-operation —on the national and regional level— to the provisions of the present Regional Plan of Action, supporting the specific activities, programmes and projects of the CEPAL secretariat aimed at the achievement of its goals", so that it is the offices of UNDP in the countries which are responsible for this co-ordination in order to avoid duplication of efforts; and inform the CEPAL secretariat in accordance with the procedures recently established by the Consultative Committee of the Voluntary Fund in March 1979;

(g) Reiterate paragraph 88.8 (iv) of the Regional Plan of Action which "requests the Executive Secretary of CEPAL to explore and negotiate with bodies for international co-operation on a bilateral or multilateral basis, financial support for specific programmes connected with the fulfilment of the goals of the present Regional Plan of Action", and request him to seek, through organizations such as UNCTAD, UNIDO, and others, financial support for programmes whose priorities include aspects relating to women in relation to the New International Development Strategy.

OTHER RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS

The first of the resolutions adopted by the Conference on other subjects concerns the effect of the economic crisis on mothers and children. In that regard, it recommends the establishment of an *ad hoc* commission to make an on-the-spot study of the serious problems affecting them.

Another resolution says that in spite of various international conventions on the legal equality of the sexes, there are glaring differences among countries between the provisions of the legislation and even more their practical application. For that reason, it urges governments to give priority to constituting national commissions to co-ordinate and study the full integration of women into development, and in particular the real situation and problems of mothers and children.

Another resolution concerns the situation of women in Nicaragua. It notes that Nicaragua, a country of Central America, is at a crucial state in its political transformation, in which women have from the start played an outstanding role. It therefore urges the States Members of the United Nations and the international organizations to support projects designed to benefit the women of Nicaragua in order to continue the process of rebuilding the country.

The next resolution, entitled "Women at the decision-making level in the CEPAL secretariat", begins by noting that the majority of the officials at the decision-making level in the United Nations in general and in CEPAL in particular are men and recommends that efforts be made to achieve greater representation of women at those levels, in order to secure a better balance in the distribution of posts within the system.

The resolution on the problem of refugee women takes account of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women concerning this subject. It recommends that the basic rights of those affected by situations of emergency, natural disasters and armed conflicts, in the struggle for peace, self-determination and independence, should be promoted and safeguarded, and that special consideration should be given to the situation of women and children obliged to leave their countries due to well-founded fears of persecution on grounds of race, religion, nationality political opinion or membership of a particular social group.

