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**REPORT OF THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS
OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN
INTO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

(Santiago, Chile, 16 and 17 May 1996)

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Mandate and objective

1. As stipulated in subparagraph 2 of paragraph 88 of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development, adopted in 1977 at the eleventh extraordinary session of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean are to serve as the link between member Governments and the ECLAC secretariat in the field of women's integration into development.

Place and date of the meeting

2. The Presiding Officers, who were elected at the sixth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held their twenty-second meeting on 16 and 17 May 1996 in Santiago, Chile.

Attendance

3. Attending the meeting were representatives from the following countries members and associate members of the Commission, constituting the Presiding Officers: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles and Uruguay. The representatives of Honduras and Barbados were absent with timely excuse. The following United Nations bodies were represented at the meeting: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The following United Nations specialized agencies were also represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). In addition, the following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the meeting: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (IACW-OAS), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and International Organization for Migration (IOM). Also present at the meeting were representatives of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) and Isis International.

Chairperson and Rapporteur

4. The meeting was chaired by Zelmira Regazzoli, Ambassador of Argentina and head of the Argentine delegation. The functions of Rapporteur were entrusted to the Mexican delegation, headed by Elda Paz, First Secretary at the Mexican Embassy.

Agenda

5. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda for their twenty-second meeting:
1. Adoption of the provisional agenda and organization of the work of the twenty-second meeting of the Presiding Officers
 2. Activities of the ECLAC secretariat from 1 June 1994 to 30 March 1996 relating to the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean
 3. Reform of the United Nations and its impact on ECLAC
 4. Future activities of the Presiding Officers in follow-up to the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001
 5. Other matters

Documentation

6. The delegations had before them the following documents: Activities of the ECLAC secretariat relating to the women of Latin America and the Caribbean for the period from 1 June 1994 to 30 April 1996 (LC/L.939(MDM.22/3)); Reflexiones sobre los indicadores del mercado de trabajo para el diseño de políticas con enfoque de género (LC/R.1639); Reform of the United Nations and its impact on ECLAC (LC/G.1899(SES.26/4)); Social Panorama of Latin America (LC/G.1886-P); Report of the sixth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/G.1850(CRM.6/7)); El desarrollo de los asentamientos humanos desde la perspectiva de género (LC/R.1640); Directorio de los organismos nacionales a cargo de las políticas y programas destinados a las mujeres; Participación de la mujer en el sector manufacturero: patrones, determinantes y tendencias futuras. Análisis regional, región de la CEPAL (CPD.12(SPEC)); Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/CN.6/1996/CRP.2).

B. TOPICS DISCUSSED

7. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) welcomed the participants and referred to the importance of the meetings of the Presiding Officers as a channel for dialogue between the countries of the region. He pointed out that because of the process of reform the United Nations was currently undergoing, that dialogue had acquired special relevance as a forum for sharing information and determining future directions and new priorities.

8. The Chairperson of the Presiding Officers said that the present meeting of the Presiding Officers, the first since Beijing, offered a useful opportunity to consider what had been accomplished since the Fourth World Conference on Women. She called upon all the women of the continent to strengthen their ties of solidarity and to give new evidence of the same kind of creativity they displayed in their own homes, in order to meet the challenge of accomplishing "more with less", undoubtedly the watchword of the times.

Activities of the ECLAC secretariat from 1 June 1994 to 30 March 1996 relating to the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean (item 2 of the agenda)

9. Representatives of the ECLAC system reported on the activities carried out during the previous two years with regard to issues related to women, with special mention of the publication of the documents, "Reflexiones sobre los indicadores del mercado de trabajo para el diseño de políticas con enfoque de género" (LC/R.1639), "Directorio de los organismos nacionales a cargo de las políticas y programas destinados a las mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe" and "El desarrollo de los asentamientos humanos desde la perspectiva de género" (LC/R.1640), prepared by the Women and Development Unit, and the Social Panorama of Latin America (LC/G.1886-P), prepared jointly by the Social Development Division and the Statistics and Economic Projections Division in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund. The representative of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning reported in particular on the progressive incorporation of the gender perspective into the training courses the Institute offers. The Director of the Latin American Demographic Centre said that the Centre's work was closely intertwined with issues related to women; at the last ECLAC session the Centre had been given a mandate to concentrate its efforts on the topics of reproductive health and poverty.

Reform of the United Nations and its impact on ECLAC (item 3 of the agenda)

10. The head of the ECLAC Women and Development Unit presented a short report on the twenty-sixth session of the Commission and the agreements adopted on that occasion.

11. Pursuant to section E, paragraph b), of the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, and bearing in mind the climate of reform and financial constraint in which the United Nations is now operating, the following measures were adopted to provide for follow-up on activities aimed at implementation of the Programme of Action and the Platform for Action:

- a) Reinforcing the activities of the Presiding Officers;
- b) Strengthening the Presiding Officers' liaison function by establishing closer ties with government agencies responsible for women's issues in the countries of the region; to that end, it was decided that during the next six months each Presiding Officer would contact certain the countries for the following purposes:¹

¹ Distribution of responsibility: Barbados, Cuba and Netherlands Antilles: English-speaking countries of the Caribbean, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic; Chile: Brazil and Colombia; Honduras and Mexico: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama; Argentina: Paraguay; Bolivia and Ecuador: Peru; Uruguay: Venezuela.

- To report on the reform of the United Nations and its possible impact on activities related to women;
 - To request information from the appropriate government agencies to add to the directory prepared by the ECLAC secretariat, so that it will reflect clearly the needs and capacities of institutions dealing with women's issues;
 - To inform the countries of the region about the activities of the Presiding Officers;
 - To encourage government agencies to accord more importance to women's issues.
- c) Sending a note through the Chairperson of the Presiding Officers to the ad hoc working group open to all ECLAC member countries that was created at the last session of the Commission and is to meet in July, asking it to give priority to the situation of women and to implementation of the Regional Programme of Action for Women;
- d) Adopting the topics the Commission on the Status of Women has selected as high priorities for the next few years, in order to help ECLAC member and associate member States to be better prepared to participate in international debates;
- e) Maintaining informal contacts with networks of government agencies on women, primarily through the heads of the regional and subregional networks.
- f) Sending the schedule and agenda of meetings of United Nations commissions and agencies, through the intermediary of the ECLAC secretariat, to the States members of the Presiding Officers and to governmental agencies responsible for matters related to women in order to encourage attention to women's issues.

Future activities of the Presiding Officers in follow-up to the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001 (item 4 of the agenda)

12. The Government of Chile offered to host the seventh session of the Regional Conference, to be held in November 1997. The Presiding Officers were pleased to accept the invitation of Chile.
13. A number of alternatives were considered to enable the Presiding Officers to continue meeting twice a year. To that end, it was agreed that the secretariat would prepare a cost analysis of meetings of the Presiding Officers at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile, and at the subregional headquarters in Mexico City and Port of Spain. It would also investigate possible sources of financing for the meetings.
14. It was decided that the ECLAC secretariat, with the assistance of the countries, would add to the directory of government agencies as part of the follow-up activities on the status of such agencies to be done in preparation for the seventh Regional Conference.
15. Representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported to the Presiding Officers on their activities in relation to women in the countries of the region.

Other matters (item 5 of the agenda)

16. The head of the ECLAC Women and Development Unit reported on the meeting of the specialized agencies and other bodies and organizations in the United Nations system that was held on 15 May and on the topics discussed at that meeting (see annex 1).

17. Finally, it was agreed that support would be requested from the United Nations Population Fund to enable the ECLAC secretariat to systematize the indicators on the status of women, a matter of prime importance in both analysis and planning.

Annex 1

TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE
SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES AND
ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Scarce financial resources: The participants agreed that the decline in funding, which had become more acute in recent years, was making it difficult to ensure the continuity of programmes and projects.

Incorporating the gender perspective (mainstreaming): A clear trend towards incorporation of the gender perspective in global programmes and projects of all kinds was noted, although the process had been slower than desirable. The change was observable both at ECLAC and at the other organizations in attendance; in a departure from past practice, activities related to women were not simply being tacked onto projects designed to meet other concerns, but were being made an integral part of such projects, in recognition of the fact that the issue could not be addressed in isolation.

Not all bodies and organizations in the United Nations system had made equal progress towards this goal, but it could be said that they had all shown an interest and had put the principle into practice to a greater or lesser degree, as their opportunities and respective mandates permitted.

Information: Discussion focused chiefly on the activities carried out by the FLACSO relating to indicators and by ECLAC, with special emphasis on the Social Panorama of Latin America, produced with the collaboration of UNFPA. Some of the problems identified in this area were lack of continuity and inadequate dissemination.

The meeting saw a need to update the data available and to break down data by sex, and pointed out the desirability of greater coordination between the various organizations compiling data for different purposes and between compilers and users of the data. Better coordination would make it possible to gather the information needed to formulate and target programmes. In addition, it would avoid duplication of efforts, a factor of considerable importance in the light of the general shortage of funds.

Information-sharing offered a good opportunity for interchange and coordination, without requiring a specific allocation of resources, and could prove highly valuable. It was pointed out, as an example to follow, that in the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, inter-agency coordination had involved not so much joint activities as the distribution of tasks according to areas of specialization.

Role of the United Nations: It was said that the United Nations could and indeed had been making an important contribution by drawing attention to issues that had not yet been systematically addressed. In this area, greater coordination was essential.

Agreement: The meeting identified a theme of mutual interest among the priority topics of the Platform for Action for 1997 and the Regional Programme of Action, namely, the empowerment of women in all areas.

It was agreed that IACW-OAS, FLACSO and ECLAC would draft a proposed matrix on women's participation and leadership and present it to the other bodies and organizations, with the idea that they might assume responsibility for various aspects of the subject. The result of this activity would be a diagnostic analysis of the situation and promotion of women's participation in power structures and leadership positions at all levels and in all areas of society in each country of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Annex 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ANTILLAS NEERLANDESAS
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

Ann Phillips, Funcionaria del Departamento de Bienestar, Asuntos de Familia y Humanitarios

ARGENTINA

Zelmira Regazzoli, Embajadora, Subsecretaria de Derechos Humanos, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto

María Mercedes Muro de Nadal de Avogadro, Responsable Área ONG's y Universidades, Derechos Humanos y la Mujer

Laura Velásquez, Directora de la Mujer, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto

Corina Lehmann, Diplomática, Embajada de Argentina en Santiago

BOLIVIA

Ivonne Farah Henrich, Subsecretaria de Asuntos de Género

CHILE

Josefina Bilbao, Ministra, Directora del Servicio Nacional de la Mujer

Paulina Veloso, Subdirectora del Servicio Nacional de la Mujer

Teresa Rodríguez, Jefa del Departamento de Relaciones Internacionales y Cooperación, Servicio Nacional de la Mujer

CUBA

María Yolanda Ferrer Gómez, Diputada, Secretaria General de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas

Magalys Arocha, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas

ECUADOR

Leonardo Carrión, Encargado de Negocios del Ecuador, Embajada del Ecuador en Santiago

María Eugenia Larrea, Agregada Cultural, Embajada del Ecuador en Santiago

MEXICO

Elda Paz, Primer Secretario, Embajada de México en Santiago

URUGUAY

Alba Estela Osos Pereda de Lanza, Directora del Instituto Nacional de la Familia y la Mujer

OBSERVADORES

OBSERVERS

Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo/Inter-American Development Bank (BID/IDB)

Mauricio de la Barra, Especialista Sectorial

Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres/Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM/OEA)

Margarita Roque, Secretaria Ejecutiva

Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales/Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO)

Teresa Valdés, Coordinadora, Área de Estudios de Género

Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Joan French, Asesora Regional: Mujer y Género

Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas/United Nations Population Fund (FNUAP/UNFPA)

Marisela Padrón, Directora, División de América Latina y el Caribe
Ingrid Hernández-Matheson, Regional Advisor

Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura/ Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

Ariel Rivera, Representante/Economista
Julio Gil del Muro, Especialista en Desarrollo Rural

Isis Internacional/Isis International

Soledad Weinstein, Coordinadora

Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (OACNUR/UNHCR)

Therese Morel, Asesora Regional sobre Mujeres

Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Santiago Funes, Representante Regional Adjunto
Vilma Aray, Oficial Regional Mujeres en el Desarrollo

Organización de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Industrial (ONUDI)/United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Molly Pollack, Consultora, Economista

Organización Internacional para las Migraciones/International Organization for Migration (OIM/IOM)

Gunther Mussig, Jefe de Misión
Sara Ward, Jefa CIMAL

Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo/United Nations Development Programme (PNUD/UNDP)

Liliana de Pauli, Representante Residente Adjunta
Sylvia Broder, Oficial Principal de Programa

SECRETARÍA DE LA CEPAL
ECLAC SECRETARIAT

Lais Abramo
Experta
Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de
Planificación Económica y Social

Diane Almeras
Oficial de Asuntos Sociales
Unidad Mujer y Desarrollo
Secretaría de la Comisión

Irma Arriagada
Oficial de Asuntos Sociales
División de Desarrollo Social

Reynaldo Bajraj
Director
Centro Latinoamericano de Demografía

Juan Chackiel
Oficial de Asuntos de Población
Centro Latinoamericano de Demografía

Iris Corbalán
Asistente de Investigación
Centro Latinoamericano de Demografía

Asha Kambon
Oficial de Asuntos Sociales
Subsede de la CEPAL para el Caribe

Isabell Kempf
División de Planificación de
Programas y Operaciones

Miriam Krawczyk
Jefa
Unidad Mujer y Desarrollo
Secretaría de la Comisión

Evangelina Mijares
Punto Focal CEPAL México
Programa Mujer y Desarrollo

Nieves Rico
Consultora
Unidad Mujer y Desarrollo
Secretaría de la Comisión