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REPORT OF THE ELEVENTH 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

(Varadero, Cuba, 19 and 20 November 1990)

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date

1. In accordance with paragraph 88 (2) of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development, adopted at the eleventh Special Meeting of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), it is incumbent upon the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women to be the link between Governments and the secretariat of ECLAC in the field of women's integration into development.

2. In compliance with this mandate, the Presiding Officers elected at the fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Social and Economic Development of Latin America and the Caribbean held their eleventh meeting on 19 and 20 November 1990 at Varadero, Cuba.

Attendance

3. The meeting was attended by Presiding Officers from the following member countries: Argentina, Cuba, Guatemala, Venezuela and the Netherlands Antilles. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Raquel Blandón de Cerezo, First Lady of Guatemala. The representative of Venezuela acted as rapporteur.

Purposes of the eleventh meeting of the Presiding Officers

4. The purposes of the eleventh meeting were to examine the activities carried out in the region between 1 May and 31 October 1990, to establish the agenda of the fifth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean and to assess the preparations for it, to consider the outlook for regional projects and to discuss the comprehensive programme of work for the future.

B. OPENING OF THE MEETING

5. The Chairman of the Presiding Officers welcomed the participants to the meeting and thanked the Government of Cuba for its hospitality. She noted that although the period between the tenth and eleventh meetings had been very short, it had been characterized by great activity, and that the objectives proposed had been attained in their entirety. She referred to the need to continue cooperating actively in the activities relating to the improvement of the living conditions of the women of the region and stressed the importance of political factors in the achievement of that objective.

6. She emphasized that, in spite of difficulties, the social forces of the region continued to be the best hope for achieving development objectives.

7. She noted the need to strengthen South-South relations in light of some priority objectives, in connection with some of which the ECLAC proposal on changing production patterns with social equity had already been taken into consideration. Those objectives should be expanded to include considerations relating to the topic of women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

8. She ended her intervention by noting that even in the so-called "lost decade", some degree of success had been achieved in terms of the redemocratization of many countries of the region. That situation made it possible to look to the 1990s with more optimism.

9. The representative of ECLAC said the secretariat was pleased to meet once again with the Presiding Officers elected at the fourth Regional Conference, who had distinguished themselves by their extensive range of activity and the great success they enjoyed in their leadership.

10. He noted that the period under review had been characterized by great cooperation on the part of the ECLAC system and its secretariat with the Women and Development Unit as reflected in, among other things, the number of studies submitted to the Presiding Officers for their consideration. That support, some of which was paid for out of regular resources and some of it with extrabudgetary resources, had resulted in an increased role for women's issues within the institution. The increased importance attached to the subject was also reflected in the presence at the meeting of members of the Division of Operations, with which the Unit had worked closely and continuously in both the design and substantive discussion of projects and the analyses made of the inclusion of women's issues in comprehensive projects.

11. He said that during the period the Unit had also benefited from a substantial amount of cooperation from the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Mexico, which had taken the form of the assignment of the officer responsible for studies relating to women to Santiago for three months to receive training in activities in which the subject was approached within a more global context, that is to say, in connection with tasks in such areas as administration, project design, programming and planning and attendance at ILPES courses. The research undertaken in the Caribbean subregion was also bearing fruit, and the Presiding Officers had been seized with four of the studies which had been carried out in that subregion for the purpose of providing more detailed information concerning the status of women.

12. Another important line of action had been directed towards incorporating the topic of women into the new ECLAC proposal on changing production patterns with social equity. That was a priority for the secretariat since, as the Executive Secretary had already pointed out on various occasions, where ECLAC was concerned, the integration of women into development was not, nor had it ever been, a topic to be dealt with in isolation but constituted an integral part of the Commission's thinking and action concerning the development of Latin America and the Caribbean.

13. With regard to the activities planned for the following year, he said that 1991 would be primarily devoted to preparations for the Regional Conference and for the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference. In that connection, he said that the Meeting of the Presiding Officers provided a good opportunity for reviewing priority issues once again and for elaborating the main guidelines for making the assessment as accurate as possible. Another important activity in 1991 would be the execution of an initial project in support of the national machinery of four countries --an initiative which it was hoped could be extended later on to other countries of the region.

14. He again drew attention to the substantial impetus, support and encouragement provided by the present Presiding Officers in respect of the activities of the secretariat. Permanent contact with the countries represented by them helped the secretariat to keep abreast of the real situation and needs of its member countries. However, owing to the financial costs involved, it would be more realistic to work on the basis of a maximum of one meeting of the Presiding Officers a year. One annual meeting, at which frank and open discussions were held and the work accomplished was reviewed, would be highly positive and would enhance the prospects for action.

15. He expressed gratitude at the presence of all the Presiding Officers and extended special thanks to Cuba for its hospitality.

16. The representative of Cuba welcomed the participants at the eleventh 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, expressing her satisfaction at their presence in her country and extended a warm welcome to them on behalf of her Government. Every possible effort had been made to ensure that conditions were such as to enable the Presiding Officers to carry out their work in a sisterly and hospitable atmosphere. She invited the representatives, who had already formed friendships based on their shared desires, worries and dreams in their arduous endeavours to put into motion the complex process of integrating the women of Latin America and the Caribbean into the economic, political and social development of their countries, to feel completely at home in Cuba.

17. She went on to refer to the objectives of the meeting, which were to consider the expectations and stress the need for joining forces and adopting the views which would make it possible to move towards the fulfilment of the most beautiful dreams of the leaders of America. Her country had participated very actively in the initial efforts and activities which had given rise to the prestigious regional machinery responsible for carrying out the historic mission of giving impetus in the region to the process of improving the status of women, and she reminded the other participants that Cuba had had the honour of hosting and chairing the first Regional Conference. Since then, 13 years had passed, and it was lamentable to note that, in spite of the constant and serious efforts of the ECLAC secretariat, during that time there had been no tangible improvement in the status of women, which had in fact deteriorated as a consequence of the economic situation in the region.

18. It was not possible to talk about the development of Latin America at a time when an external debt of over US\$434 million was hanging over the region and the number of poor people in it had risen to over 183 million, of whom 84 million were living in extreme poverty; this high social cost was reflected in the persistence of unequal trade and the growth of protectionism due to the absence of the essential new international economic order demanded by Governments in the United Nations.

19. One indication of the impact had by the economic crisis had been the tremendous size to which the so-called "informal economy" had grown as an eloquent expression of the amazing ability of human beings to adapt to the most adverse circumstances as a survival tactic. In that scenario of struggling for one's day-to-day existence without the protection provided by labour laws, social security, trade unions and bank credits, women constituted 50% of the workers in the region. The feminization of poverty was a visible and tragic consequence of the economic crisis.

20. Another aspect of poverty in America was its impact on children, which was reflected in the increase in school-leaving for economic reasons and the pluralization of the social drama of the "street children" and "working children", which was becoming increasingly alarming and whose protagonists came from the poorest sectors of the population and had experienced abandon and mistreatment; had operated as beggars, delinquents and child prostitutes and had been exploited as human resources who lacked protection.

21. A decade in which all the countries of Latin America had experienced a sizeable decrease in their gross domestic product (GDP) and a dramatic drop in the standard of living of their population was drawing to a close, leaving the region immersed in the same crisis from which it had been trying to emerge since the beginning of the 1980s and forced to embark on the new decade with gloomy prospects rendered even more uncertain by the crisis in the Persian Gulf.

22. Those who suffered the most from that tragic situation were women, who bore the full brunt of the adverse social and economic effects associated with the debt and with adjustment policies in a society where inequality between men and women was notable. The inability of some sectors of the economy to absorb a sufficient number of the women in the labour force; the reduction of women's income, particularly in farm areas; the appreciable difference between the level of men's and women's income and the decrease in public funds were some of the many problems confronting the female population in the region and in the third world, which also had profound repercussions on the children in the younger generations, who were growing up already marked by the effects of the high cost of living and by despair.

23. She insisted that Latin America and the Caribbean needed firm, mobilizing decisions from their leaders if living conditions were to change. It was necessary to establish coordination and cooperation among peoples thereby strengthening their resistance and to seek rational ways of helping the region to get its economy off the ground in a context of fairness and social equity and to eliminate discrimination against women.

24. The equality of women was not an abstract concept which existed in isolation from the social environment. For that reason, efforts and action designed to establish it as a legitimate principle related to the inalienable rights of man would meet with no success until profound changes were made in society.

25. On the other hand, it would be very difficult for the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean to transform their lives and overcome the barriers of underdevelopment without incorporating women into the process as active agents of change, not out of humanitarianism towards an underprivileged sector of society but

in full recognition of the dynamic role they could play as factors of incalculable value in the integral development of the countries of the region.

26. She stressed that in the conditions described, it was essential to act without delay to bring unity, cooperation and integration to the region. In order to achieve those vital goals it was necessary to think more deeply concerning the priorities towards which the efforts to meet the expectations of Latin American women should be aimed.

27. In that respect, she noted that the document submitted by ECLAC at its twenty-third session, recently held at Caracas, represented a serious effort at changing production patterns with social equity and said she agreed that the subject of women should be included in that proposal when it was submitted to the next conference. She also noted the need to tackle some questions relating to the situations encountered by the women of the region owing to the economic crisis, mentioning, in particular, the effects of adjustment policies on the quality of life and the level of education, health and employment; the growth of the informal sector; the violence resulting from the economic crisis, both in the family and in society; the negative impact of new technologies and special problems relating to young women and adolescent girls, including those relating to their prospects for development and to pregnancy in adolescence.

28. She pointed out that the region's wealth lay in its diversity. Many views were held concerning the nature and the possibility of solving the urgent problems experienced; certainly, the countries of the region were united by their common zeal for using all their strength, intelligence and creativity to bring about a more integrated and independent region free from exploitation and from the economic and political pressures which were currently stifling it.

29. She stressed the desire for dialogue of the Cuban Government and people and their aspirations to use their talents to carry out common action aimed at the attainment of the objectives expressed by José Martí, who had said "In our America, we still have leagues to travel and wills to unite before the community of nations of which Bolívar dreamed can be achieved". Women would help to make that dream, which represented the ideal of the Latin American people, a reality.

30. She ended her intervention by wishing the Presiding Officers success in their work and again extending a warm and cordial welcome to them.

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Adoption of the agenda

31. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda for their eleventh meeting:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Report on the activities of the Chairman of the Presiding Officers, the Presiding Officers and the secretariat from 1 May to 31 October 1990
3. Fifth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean
4. Preparation of regional projects: Present situation and future prospects
5. Other matters.

2. Report on the activities of the Chairman of the Presiding Officers, the Presiding Officers and the secretariat from 1 May to 31 October 1990

32. The Chairman of the Presiding Officers welcomed the participating delegations and members of the ECLAC secretariat, and introducing the report on her activities, said that the period between the tenth and eleventh Meetings of the Presiding Officers had been a time of dynamic growth, in which it had been possible to obtain the programmed objectives.

33. Referring to the activities carried out by the Chairman of the Presiding Officers, she said they fell into three major categories and consisted in activities directly related to the Presiding Officers, those performed as part of the duties of the Chairman of the Presiding Officers and, finally, those carried out in the Central American subregion.

34. Among the principal activities carried out by her in her capacity as Chairman of the Presiding Officers, she mentioned the interviews and meetings held with government authorities, parliamentarians and women officers of political parties and executives of communications media in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Panama, during which she had reported on the preparations for a world conference on women to be held in 1995 to appraise the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies and of United Nations objectives for raising the status of women by establishing quotas of senior posts to be filled by them.

35. Referring to activities relating to the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), she said that interviews had been held in Washington with PAHO staff members working in the Women, Health and Development Programme and that Guatemala had hosted the Seminar/Workshop on the Central American Information System on Women, Health and Development (SIMUS), which received technical support from ECLAC.

36. She also said she had participated in a conference of Hispanic women in the United States concerning the topic of integration, at which a paper had been presented on activities being carried out in Latin America for the purpose of integrating women into development. In addition she reported on her participation in a seminar commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, held at Kiev in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

37. In connection with Central America, she reported on her attendance at a meeting of First Ladies of Central America held as part of the preparations for 1994 and dedicated to the topic of the family by the United Nations and at the coordination meeting of national women's bureaux held in Honduras and attended by Mrs. Chafika Sellami-Meslem, Director of the Division on the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, at which the creation of the Women's Bureau in Honduras was formalized.

38. At national level, she reported on the participation of women in the reconciliation talks held within the spirit and framework of the Esquipulas II Agreement, signed by the Presidents of the Central American countries.

39. Other activities carried out at national level included the submission of a bill to the Congress of Guatemala concerning the reconciliation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with the municipal laws of the country; the holding of a plenary cabinet meeting on 28 August 1990, with the President and all the ministers in attendance, at which policies relating to the advancement of women were dealt with for the first time and as the only subject of the meeting and the document prepared in that connection by the National Women's Bureau (ONAM), which would be conveyed to the United Nations on 18 December 1990, was presented.

40. Another activity carried out by the National Women's Bureau had been the preparation of a study on the legal status of women under Guatemalan law and another study on the stereotyped roles of women as they were depicted in textbooks. After the question of stereotyping had been discussed with the Minister of Education and with publishers from the private sector, a decree had been issued calling for the revision of all textbooks and the elimination of those whose contents discriminated against women.

41. She also reported the promulgation of a government decree to strengthen the activities of the National Women's Bureau.

42. Finally, she presented the Presiding Officers with the special edition, prepared by the Office of the First Lady, of a book containing the Constitution of Guatemala and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The purpose of the work was to call attention to the need for publicizing the leading role played by Latin American and Caribbean women in the process of economic and social development for the achievement of peace and the construction of a more just and humane society.

43. The representative of the Netherlands Antilles greeted the Chairman, the other Presiding Officers and the members of the secretariat staff, saying that her Government considered it a great honour to be represented among the Presiding Officers, whose task was to work together in fulfilling the mandate of ECLAC with regard to the advancement of women in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

44. She said that every day it became clearer how much the advancement of women depended on various factors, not only those which could be to some extent manipulated by human beings but also many others, some of them in the natural order. In that respect, she said that in the Caribbean, environmental problems were a cause for particular concern. As an example, she cited the disastrous hurricanes which occurred almost every year and had a devastating effect both on the environment and in sociopsychological terms. However, since the subregion was very rich in human resources, it was permissible to hope that sooner or later the Caribbean as a whole would surge ahead and that women would play a very important role in that connection. She drew attention to the continuous efforts and support on the part of the United Nations in terms of motivation and training.

45. She noted that less than one year remained to make a joint assessment of the progress achieved and in that respect said that the Government of the Netherlands Antilles felt very honoured that its proposal to host the fifth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean had been taken into consideration and accepted. Feeling responsible for the smooth conduct and satisfactory organization of the Regional Conference, her Government would be thankful for receiving suggestions and help from the Presiding Officers.

46. She said her Government had taken the decision to add a foreign relations officer and another officer from a non-governmental organization at island level to its delegation. They would make up a team responsible for the preparations for the Regional Conference.

47. She informed the Presiding Officers of a special task which her country was now performing within the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) and of the possibilities which that task offered for the advancement of women in ECLAC: the Netherlands Antilles was now in the chair of CDCC, which would be occupied by its Prime Minister until April 1991. That meant helping to orient and steer the work carried out for the overall development of the region. In the performance of that task, special priority was given to matters relating to education, the economy, culture and social affairs. As an example of the kind of work done, she mentioned the projects relating to women engaged in small commercial ventures which operated between the islands of the Caribbean.

48. She said she felt that increasing the working links between the Presiding Officers, CDCC and the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Trinidad and Tobago would have a positive effect and would probably result in increased general understanding between the Latin American and the Caribbean countries.

49. She also informed the Presiding Officers of a very practical and effective CDCC mechanism entitled the Monitoring Committee, which was also chaired by the Netherlands Antilles in so far as the technical aspects of its work was concerned. That committee was now planning two important events --an inter-agency meeting for the purpose of drawing up an inventory of all the projects implemented by UNIFEM and INSTRAW and various Caribbean organizations, and a seminar held for all CDCC activity-coordinating centres for the purpose of improving project and programme management.

50. As for national policy in connection with the status of women, she said that in May 1990 the Government of the Netherlands Antilles had introduced an important change relating to women in governmental service. The law had been amended so that now the widowers and children of deceased female civil servants had the right to receive a pension. Also, in order to be able to deal with the diverse questions relating to women, the Government was putting the finishing touches to the process of establishing an intra-departmental consulting body.

51. Finally, she noted that the Government of the Netherlands would soon ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and had already identified all discriminatory laws with a view to changing them as soon as possible.

52. The representative of Argentina said that in spite of the economic crisis experienced by her country, intensive work had been done on the women's issue with a view to ensuring greater and more productive participation by women in the economic growth of the country. As a consequence of adjustment programmes and the need to reduce the size of the State apparatus, the coordination of the

tasks involved was now in the hands of the Department of Human Rights and Women in the Ministry of External Relations and Worship.

53. She said it had been decided to strengthen the women's bureaux in the provincial governments (secretariats of state, under-secretariats, women's councils, advisory services, women's departments and others). To that end and with financing from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a seminar/workshop on technical training and loans for women was held with the participation of all the government offices and non-governmental organizations invited. As a result, the National Network of Provincial Women's Bureaux had been established for the following objectives: to coordinate policies, exchange experiences and unify criteria; to hold training courses and to manage technical and financial resources so that policies based on the receipt of excessive assistance could be replaced and impetus given to the incorporation of women in economic development by establishing microproduction units and cooperatives.

54. It was planned to integrate the National Network into a Latin American and Caribbean network, with assistance from UNICEF.

55. She stressed the need to bring women into the economic development process, noting that they bore the major brunt of the crisis and contributed 60% of the output of the informal economy.

56. In the field of legislation, a bill amending the law regulating political parties was under consideration in the National Senate and that one of the changes proposed was to reserve 30% of the posts for women. She also said that a bicameral commission of the national legislature had been established to study all laws which might in some way discriminate against women.

57. Referring to the programme to combat family violence conducted by the Municipality of the City of Buenos Aires, she said it assisted vulnerable groups (women, children and old people) by making 12 telephone lines available 24 hours a day for reaching a support service made up of professionals (doctors, psychologists, attorneys and social workers). Financing was being provided for the establishment of a provisional home to supplement the professional attention provided.

58. She reported that the Department of Human Rights and Women's Rights maintained contacts with United Nations agencies, the Organization of American States (OAS), the World Bank and the International Development Bank (IDB) to promote other technical and financial assistance projects aimed at creating jobs to incorporate women into the production process.

59. In consideration of the large number of migrants from neighbouring countries (Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil), a project on migrant women had also been submitted to the

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with backing from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the National Bureau of Migration.

60. In order to make the best possible use of the resources available, an agreement was being drawn up with the National University at La Pampa and the Federal Investments Council, with regard to the elaboration of projects providing for market and marketing studies.

61. The Argentine Government was also studying a UNIFEM proposal on debt swapping for financial assistance for women and, with help from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), assistance for activities relating to women had been established.

62. She noted that at the twenty-fifth Assembly of the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW), Argentina had been selected to serve as Vice-chairman.

63. With regard to the conventions signed between Spain and Argentina and Italy and Argentina, she said it was hoped to include the topic of women in them with the idea of obtaining financing, training, technology exchange, access to credit and other facilities.

64. She drew attention to the participation of Argentina in the seminar held in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, from 15 to 19 October, on public policies and made the report on that seminar available to the Presiding Officers.

65. Finally, she said that the Human Rights and Women's Rights had invited the Director of the Women and Development Programme to Argentina to visit areas in which some of the programmes of the national network were being executed.

66. The representative of Venezuela, after greeting the other Presiding Officers, gave a report on the most important activities recently carried out in her country with regard to the women's issue.

67. She referred first to the institutional side of the issue, saying that the Office of the Minister of State for the Advancement of Women and the President's Advisory Commission on Women had formulated an action plan for the advancement of women, which had been included in the country's eighth Development Plan.

68. In that respect she said that the National Plan for Women established overall policies in strategic areas. Steps were being taken to create a National Women's Council, which would be financially and legally independent and have permanent status. In that respect, a document and a supplement to it containing the

justification for the Council and its rules of procedure were already available and had been submitted to the President of the Republic and approved in the Council of Ministers.

69. Secondly, she referred to various priority areas to be considered at the second Venezuelan Congress on Women, which would be held from 5 to 8 March 1991.

70. For purposes of the Congress, a series of meetings had been held in the country to consider and identify the needs of each area and make recommendations relating to policy design. A meeting had been held on leadership training; another between women working in industry, handicrafts and the cooperative movement; a meeting on women and culture; a meeting between women in the field of social communications; and meetings on women and environment, women and legislation and women and community.

71. Events scheduled for the future included meetings on women and policy, women and violence and women and work; a meeting of young women and a meeting of peasant and indigenous women and meetings on women and education, women and health and women and poverty.

72. Thirdly she touched on matters in the legal field, noting that, as a result of the family protection programme in the area of maltreatment and of the programme for the provision of indirect and free legal assistance, the need had arisen for legal teaching instruments. Booklets had been prepared on women's rights and on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Consideration was now being given to the possibility of distributing them nationally and in training workshops.

73. Finally, she said her delegation was providing the Presiding Officers with a directory of members of her country's Legal Assistance Network, the booklets on legal matters to which she had referred and the draft constitution of the National Council for Women. She also mentioned a national social directory which was currently being prepared.

74. The representative of Cuba spoke on the activities carried out within the framework of the thirtieth anniversary of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), including exhibits of social and economic projects approved by various United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations. Films had also been shown and meetings with women intellectuals and exhibitions of handicrafts and visual arts had been held.

75. She noted that progress was being made in connection with the project of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), in which statistics were given on Latin American women.

76. During the period under review, the FMC Documentation and Information Centre had been strengthened through its attendance of

the seminar/workshop convened by PAHO in connection with the application of SIMUS. For that purpose, valuable technical assistance had been received from an ECLAC advisor in information, documentation and communications.

77. In cooperation with PAHO three workshops had been held to train members of the Sanitary Brigade, and preparations were being made for the National Workshop, which would be held in January and February and would be attended by Latin American experts.

78. The country's second report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was being prepared. Contributions to it had been made by all state bodies on those articles of the Convention in their purview.

79. She explained how FMC worked with all women individually with a view to their incorporation into the country's development effort at various levels. She placed special emphasis on the preparation of women required to meet the present economic crisis, which could grow worse as a result of the crisis in the Persian Gulf and was aggravated in Cuba by the economic bloc imposed by the Government of the United States of America for over three decades. Should the present situation deteriorate, provision had been made for a special period to be set aside in times of peace in which Cuban women would give their maximum support for maintaining the production of essential foodstuffs. That special period would not be accompanied by cuts in medical attention or educational programmes.

80. As a result of the consideration given to the items on the agenda of its Congress, FMC was working to establish orientation centres for women, which would provide legal assistance, family guidance, sex education, etc.

81. She mentioned the establishment in her country of a preparatory committee in respect of the International Year of the Family, whose membership would include representatives of FMC, the Ministry of External Relations, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Justice. Its aim would be to strengthen the Cuban family. In that respect, she stressed the need to investigate the extremely varied forms of family structure in the Latin American and Caribbean region, with a view to designing policies which would differ according to the problems experienced by each of them.

82. She reported that a representative of Cuba had participated in the Expert Group Meeting on Vulnerable Women held at Vienna. Cuba had also been represented at the meeting on the strengthening of national machinery in support of women, organized by UNICEF.

83. She also reported concerning the preparations for the population census in 1992, in which data would be separated by sex.

84. Finally, she said that support was being sought from UNDP, UNIFEM and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in connection with the execution of a number of projects, including one on the marble industry, another on essential oils and another on the manufacture of furniture from special fibres.

85. Following the statements made by the country representatives, the Chief of the ECLAC Women and Development Unit completed the contribution made by the ECLAC secretariat by summarizing the activities carried out during the period under review. Financing had been obtained for an important regional project designed to strengthen the national mechanisms for the integration of women, and it was hoped to initiate the corresponding activities at the beginning of 1991. In spite of the efforts made by the Division of Operations to mobilize resources in connection with information and communications, so far there had been no donors interested in those topics. For that reason, some of the needs expressed by the Presiding Officers in that connection had been met by technical assistance received from the Central American Information System together with PAHO and by direct assistance to one country which had requested it.

86. In compliance with recommendations made by the Presiding Officers, the ECLAC secretariat had initiated the tasks aimed at incorporating women's issues in its proposal on changing production patterns with social equity. For that purpose, a technical meeting involving the entire ECLAC system and with cooperation from experts from Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) had been held at Santiago in November 1990.

87. Speaking on the same subject, the ECLAC representative said that, in view of the systemic nature of the ECLAC proposal for changing production patterns, the incorporation of gender-related dimensions would enrich the proposal from two points of view --that of the woman as an economic agent and that of the contribution of the women's movement to strengthening the democratic process in individual countries. Moreover, the increased visibility of women in proposals for development would result not only in effective policies but also in greater social equity. Finally, he noted that the analysis would focus on the intentions announced in the proposal for changing production patterns with social equity and in particular on the development of human resources and the incorporation of women into scientific and technological development.

88. The ECLAC secretariat introduced the documents prepared during the period between the tenth and eleventh meetings, all of which had to do with the preparation of a far-reaching study on the status of women in Latin America and the Caribbean and the

elaboration of proposals for improving their living conditions through both policies and projects.

89. The Officer-in-Charge of the Women in Development Programme of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean introduced the results of research carried out in connection with women traders in the Caribbean, as contained in documents submitted to the meeting.

90. In speaking of studies carried out in the Caribbean to assist the member countries, she stressed the collaboration of the Subregional Headquarters with other United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations at regional level and government offices at national level. In that connection, she reported on a seminar for women executives held in the Office of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago concerning the operational aspects of working relations between the sexes and said she had chaired a meeting of non-governmental organizations to assess an ILO proposal on vocational health and safety. The Programme had also cooperated with PAHO in putting into operation a research project relating the effects on women's health of the use of insecticides and fertilizers in agriculture, had helped to mobilize UNICEF and government personnel to contribute to a conference held in Curaçao on children and the family and had worked with the secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and non-governmental organizations in the subregion in preparing the Regional Conference of Economists to be held early in 1991.

3. Fifth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean

91. The Presiding Officers agreed to hold the fifth Regional Conference in Curaçao from to September 1991.

92. They agreed that the basic guidelines for preparing the Regional Conference were to be found in the ECLAC proposal on changing production patterns with social equity and on the considerations related to gender incorporated in it. They recommended that the position paper should be centred around that proposal.

93. They also agreed on the need for the region's preparations for the World Conference to include solid regional data, policy designs and proposals. They reviewed headquarters priorities for the period 1992-1997 in order to harmonize regional and international priorities. The secretariat was asked to see that the document incorporated the priority issues referred to at previous meetings of the Presiding Officers.

94. The representative of the Netherlands Antilles asked the secretariat to prepare a special document on the Caribbean since the Conference was to be held in that subregion, which, moreover, had its own specific features and needs. Her request was endorsed by other Presiding Officers, who drew attention to the importance of throwing light on the realities of the lives of Caribbean women. It was requested that Cuba and the Dominican Republic should be covered in the document requested.

95. A request was also made to study the possibility of obtaining finances to ensure that the smaller countries were represented at the meeting.

96. The Presiding Officers proposed on agenda for the fifth Regional Conference, which is annexed to this report.

4. Preparation of regional projects: Present situation and future prospects

97. The ECLAC representative briefly explained how extrabudgetary funds for financing projects were mobilized and managed internally.

98. He stressed the importance of extrabudgetary projects for the accomplishment of various ECLAC activities of benefit to the countries of the region. In that context, he mentioned that extrabudgetary projects executed by ECLAC must be included in the ECLAC programme of work and must be regional in scope.

99. He stressed the need for project applications and proposals made by countries to be precise and submitted in writing so that ECLAC could identify the needs and priorities of countries when it formulated projects and submitted them to potential donors. The donor countries were placing increasing emphasis on action-oriented projects which really helped countries to solve their economic and social problems.

100. Projects should be formulated as specified by the donors; that is to say, the documents submitted should include background information and specify objectives, output and activities of the project proposed as well as the required input, all such information to be as accurate as possible in order to facilitate the approval and financing of the project.

101. He reiterated the Commission's willingness to lend its support, at government request, to the formulation of project documents and the identification of potential donors.

102. He then informed the Presiding Officers of the steps taken by the Division of Operations to obtain financing for project proposals relating to women. An agreement had recently been signed

with the Government of the Netherlands for the execution of a project on the improvement of the legal and institutional facilities needed to incorporate women into the development of selected Latin American countries. The Division was currently in the process of seeking finances for the implementation of a proposal on improving the legal and institutional framework in which women were incorporated in the development of selected Latin American countries. Financing was being sought for a proposal on improving data on women in censuses carried out in the 1990s in some Latin American countries. Another proposal on helping women heads of household to find work in production in selected Central American countries was currently in the preparation phase.

103. Speaking on the subject of projects, one Presiding Officer pointed out that, in spite of the recommendations made at the tenth meeting, no progress had been made in that connection. She stressed the importance of market and marketing studies in projects and the need to use the resources available in United Nations specialized agencies to their best advantage in order to avoid duplication of research and projects. Another Presiding Officer also emphasized the need for technical assistance to carry out projects in countries, drawing attention in particular to such subjects as cooperatives, micro-businesses, legal training, training for employment, access to credit, family violence, self-help groups, community development, the strengthening of national networks and the holding of technical seminars.

104. One of the Presiding Officers asked whether simple pamphlets could be prepared to disseminate information concerning appropriate technologies for helping families with few resources. In that connection, the secretariat was asked to study the possibility of systematizing experience in training in appropriate technologies in various countries. Stress was laid on items which reflected concern for both women and environment, such as cookers and dryers which minimized pollution and the use of solar energy in general.

105. The Presiding Officers stressed that donors were becoming increasingly demanding with regard to the presentation of projects and insisted that countries required assistance in identifying their needs and carrying out market, feasibility and marketing studies. Other recommendations with regard to projects related to the need to increase donor awareness, especially with regard to some countries of the region to which priority was not currently attached in spite of the economic problems they faced; the importance of viewing projects directed towards women as investment projects and the need to improve information, communications and infrastructure systems and any systems of particular benefit to women living in poverty and acting as heads of household.

106. The Presiding Officers recommended the implementation of concrete projects relating to the specific needs of women in the subregions, particularly Central America. For this purpose, the

secretariat was asked to support the focal point on women located at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters at Mexico City.

107. The UNDP representative stressed the importance of strengthening national agencies and institutions responsible for projects by providing them with training relating to all project stages --identification, feasibility studies, design, presentation and execution.

5. Other matters

108. The Presiding Officers agreed to hold their twelfth meeting in Argentina the first week in May 1991. They also agreed to hold their thirteenth meeting on 7 September 1991 prior to the fifth Regional Conference. They recommended that the first of those meetings should be attended by experts in order to discuss the contents of the position paper prepared by the secretariat. In that connection, they requested the secretariat to make the reports of their meetings longer in order to reflect the debates more fully; they also asked to receive the documentation submitted to their meetings a month in advance.

109. They recommended improving communications between ECLAC and the Governments of its member States by disseminating more of the work accomplished by the Presiding Officers among the countries of the region.

110. They asked to receive the documentation relating to meetings attended by members of the secretariat and reports of seminars on technical subjects, in particular reports of meetings held by the Division for the Advancement of Women in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna.

111. Addressing the members of the secretariat, they reiterated the need to hold technical and training seminars in the countries.

Annex 1

FIFTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN, CURAÇAO, 17-19 SEPTEMBER 1991

PROPOSED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of Officers
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Report of the Chairman of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Social and Economic Development of Latin America and the Caribbean concerning the work accomplished since the fourth Regional Conference
4. Report of the ECLAC secretariat on activities carried out since the fourth Regional Conference and introduction of the documentation prepared
5. Changing production patterns with social equity and the integration of women into the development of Latin America and the Caribbean
6. Preparations for the sixth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean
7. Other matters
8. Consideration and adoption of the report of the Conference.