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ACTIVITIES OF THE ECLAC SECRETARIAT WITH RESPECT TO THE INTEGRATION
OF WOMEN INTO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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Introduction

This report of activities, which is being submitted for consideration by the Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, covers the period from June 1983 to June 1988.^{1/} It complements and expands the summary of activities submitted by the ECLAC Secretariat to the Seventh 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.^{2/}

The period covered by this report is so vast that only the main activities are included. These have been selected because of their importance for the status of women, the priority they have given the matter and their innovative contribution. This type of analysis was chosen because it was deemed more useful for the work of the Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean. That conference was required specifically to assess the existing conditions, identify the needs and recommend future action by establishing the appropriate priorities and guidelines for the integration of women into the economic and social development of the region. It is also hoped that this type of presentation will help to structure future joint activities in respect of items of common interest and in accordance with the priority needs that have been identified.

The report describes several aspects of the activities carried out in respect of women. The first of them deals with the situation prevailing in the closing years of this decade, which has been marked by the severe crisis that devastated the region. The main considerations of and proposals put forward by the meetings held during the period are next submitted as the main landmarks that have provided the framework for taking measures concerning the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean. The meetings of the Presiding Officers which serve as a link between regional and international activities are dealt with separately.

Some of the activities carried out within the ECLAC system concerning the status of women are next summarized. In this connection, the efforts made to integrate the subject of women into the work of the Social Development Division as well as into the broader area of development and to strengthen its presence in all areas of the ECLAC system are highlighted.

The main types of activities carried out and some of the priority items of the period are also outlined very briefly. In addition, this section summarizes the relations with the main specialized agencies of the United Nations system with which ECLAC has worked in close contact and some of the joint measures taken.

Finally, some guidelines for the future regarding both the general subjects that affect women and specific ones relating to the more vulnerable sectors of women are suggested. The annex to the report summarizes the activities undertaken by the Secretariat on the subject of women which were referred to at Commission's twenty-second session held in Rio de Janeiro in April 1988.

1. Regional context: the crisis

A resolution of the 1979 Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America had already expressed concern over the crisis which has affected the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean from the beginning of the present decade. At the Third Conference, mention was made of the crisis and the international economic recession in connection with a number of subjects that refer specifically to women. These aspects were dealt with more fully at the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. At that meeting the United Nations Decade for Women was examined and critically assessed. It was stated that unlike what had occurred at the beginning of the century, "the signs today are a source of deep concern, because of the worsening of the crisis and the consequent deterioration of the life of our peoples".^{3/}

Today, despite the fact that since 1981 several formulas have been tried in Latin America and the Caribbean to adjust the economies and overcome the crisis, this has not abated, although some progress has been achieved in a minority of countries, albeit at the cost of great social sacrifice. On the contrary, the style of development has increased its tendency towards concentration and exclusion and this has been characterized by an "unequal distribution of income and the persistence of the phenomenon whereby large numbers of people live in conditions of extreme poverty" ^{4/} in the majority of countries during the last three decades, despite the economic growth and modernization of the societies. During this decade there have been "growing levels of unemployment and underemployment, diminished access to social services, a lessening of real wages and hence a lowering of the levels of consumption of the middle- and low-income sectors and, in general, fewer opportunities to rise on the social scale".^{5/} The economic crisis is viewed not only as an obstacle to the implementation of new programmes in support of women but also as endangering the maintenance of those programmes already under way. It has also had particularly adverse effects on women, especially those who are heads of households, young women and those from the poorest urban and rural strata. According to the report of the Nairobi Conference, based on replies from the developing countries, the increase in poverty in some of them constitutes a major obstacle to the advancement of women. The need to alleviate poverty has postponed the issues relating to equality, and the secondary role that women play makes them even more vulnerable to marginalization.^{6/}

This is the context in which the activities concerning women have been taking place, and it should be taken into account when future measures are

being proposed because it is precisely in periods of recession that it is important to intensify the measures designed to improve their situation.

2. Main events

During the period under review, the United Nations Decade for Women ended and a cycle characterized by the formulation of long-term actions to be executed through strategies and action projected to the year 2000 began. In effect, although the world strategies flowing from the World Plan of Action for the implementation of the objectives of the International Women's Year (Mexico City, 1975) and of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women (Copenhagen, 1980) and the regional strategies flowing from the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America (Havana, 1977) and from the resolutions of regional conferences (Caracas, 1979; Mexico City, 1983) helped considerably to improve the outlook for women, it was necessary for the international community to repeat its support for activities geared to improving the status of women and to strengthen those designed to integrate them into the development process. To that end, the General Assembly confirmed the goals and targets of the Decade, stressed their validity and pointed to the need to adopt specific measures for the period 1986-2000.^{7/}

During this period, although a regional outlook was maintained, contact was maintained even from the preparatory stage of the work with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs based in Vienna. Thus, the first activity in relation to the subject was the joint organization with the Centre of an expert group meeting on the implementation strategies for the advancement of women up to the year 2000 at the ECLAC headquarters in Santiago in December 1983.^{8/} At that meeting, the experts recognized that progress had been made in devising conceptual frameworks on the subject and that recognition of the problems facing women had assisted in increasing public awareness of them. They confirmed that the situation of many sectors of women had not improved and in some cases had deteriorated, and that a project needed to be formulated for a new type of society where women participated more actively both as individuals and as members of organized groups. Concerning possible scenarios for the future, they raised the problems caused by the crisis, the absence of alternative economic models and the impact of the reduction in the social expenditure of the State and in the supply of productive resources and jobs on the situation of women. Among the areas where progress had been made in overcoming the discriminatory inequalities, they cited a heightened awareness, the creation of women's and feminist movements, the profusion of methodological innovations, progress in legislation, the increase in and diversification of the work done by women in the productive sphere. After reiterating the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and of instruments such as the New International Economic Order and the World Plan of Action to achieve the aims of the International Women's Year and the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, the experts proposed specific strategies in the area of research which would incorporate new methodologies with the streamlining of qualitative information, in-depth interviews, participation of women in the formulation of public policies designed to improve their living conditions, and other

policies relating to the communications media, social organizations, political parties, the role of non-governmental organizations, etc.

The report of the meeting of experts represented an important input for the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. The document helped to systematize the information coming from very different sources concerning the changes in the living conditions of women and in the perception of the subject, and provided the governmental meeting with information from the academic sphere and from action projects.

Subsequently, in November 1984, the Secretary-General of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace and ECLAC organized the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean of the above-mentioned conference. The meeting made a critical evaluation of the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered and formulated regional strategies and specific measures for overcoming the latter. It also examined all the documentation of the Decade on this subject and stated that the diversity of national situations, such as the differences in size and economic situation of the countries and their different methods of dealing with the crisis were fundamental elements which made an evaluation difficult. It was also noted that there was a complex variety of national situations and points of consensus should be sought with a regional criterion. The problem of the crisis and its effects on the situation of women was highlighted. The observations of the Regional Plan of Action were repeated and some critical aspects of employment were mentioned, such as the low percentage of women involved, their participation in subcontracting activities and unskilled labour and the extremely harsh conditions of rural women. The health problems caused by the structure which promoted only curative medicine, by the reduction in the expenditure allocated to this sector, the concentration of this expenditure in urban areas and the monopolistic production of medicines were all discussed. In the same way, the characteristics of the educational structure still prevented basic elementary education from being provided to all children and some discrimination still persisted in higher education because of cultural barriers. Progress had been made in the sphere of legislation but the laws had not been fully applied in all areas. Furthermore, the effects of the communications media and the persistence of sexist cultural patterns continued to be harmful. The meeting particularly noted the low level of political participation by women and the seriousness of the impact that socio-political tensions and conflicts that endangered peace in the region had on them. However, despite the difficulties, there was a greater awareness of the status of women and new models had emerged which were geared towards greater equality between the sexes. With respect to specific strategies and measures, the governments undertook to do their best, at the national level, to reformulate certain aspects of the development process so as to combine the socio-economic aspects with an ethical and cultural view of society. Development was a comprehensive process in which the involvement of women on an equal footing in the economic, political and cultural spheres was indispensable, and the measures affecting women should be fully incorporated into the relevant sectors in the developing countries. It was also vital that the necessary structural changes be made in order to promote suitable

mechanisms that would guarantee the full equality of women and ensure the follow-up and regular assessment of these measures. Other aspects examined were the participation of women in the decision-making processes in the areas of agriculture and food, the real democratization of education, the reduction of the housing shortage, free access to health, recreation and cultural services, the review of legislation, and the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Special attention was given to the questions of creating employment and ensuring the continuity of social policies. Concern was expressed for young women both as respect to their training and socialization and as a vulnerable group.

At the regional level, importance was attached to economic and technical co-operation programmes among the developing countries, the search for political solutions to conflicts between countries, the improvement of all aspects of statistics relating to the situation of women and the strengthening of the programme in the various forums and agencies. The meeting put forward strategies that reiterated the validity of the aims and instruments of the Decade by stressing the need to strengthen the links among the different international and regional agencies, especially the Commission on the Status of Women, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and recommended that a five-yearly evaluation should be made of the progress achieved in this area.

To sum up, the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, consolidated a regional position on the subject, endorsing the mandates already adopted in order to improve the situation of women and incorporating all the aspects of the crisis into the framework of the analysis and of the policies to be formulated on this subject. The two main levels to be dealt with under this heading were highlighted: the living conditions of women expressed in their socio-economic situations and the socio-cultural aspects of their role in society.

The World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, which was held in 1985, endorsed the views put forward by the regions and incorporated them in the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The Conference concluded that although the World Plan of Action and the Programme of Action need to be adjusted to regional needs, they represent a broad and flexible framework for implementing measures in Latin America and the Caribbean. This in fact constitutes a renewal of the commitment to improve the status of women, bearing in mind the changes in the socio-economic situations of the countries and taking a long-term view. The Conference repeated its commitment to the goals of the Decade: Equality, Development and Peace, and encouraged the implementation of policies to improve the economic situation, especially in the developing countries.

With respect to the first goal of the Decade, equality, the work done by the Commission on the Status of Women during the last 40 years was highlighted and it was repeated that legislation is only one of the essential

elements to obtain improvement in that status. The need for political will and for amendments to legislation within appropriate frameworks for social change was stressed. It was emphasized that attention should be given, in the application of legislation, to ensuring that appropriate precautions were taken to avoid internal conflicts. As far as specific measures were concerned, it was considered vital that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women should be signed and ratified, and that institutional procedures should be established from the local level. Equality in political participation and in the decision-making processes was regarded as fundamental.

The main obstacles to development which were highlighted were the worsening of the economic situation, the deterioration of the economic situation of the developing countries, the crisis, the lack of political will and determination and the perception of women as a burden and not as contributors to society. Development should be viewed as the most important means of promoting equality of the sexes and peace-keeping, and women should be regarded as integral participants in it.

Women, it was suggested, could achieve self-sufficiency through economic independence, an accurate appreciation of their contribution to society through their unpaid and hitherto unquantified work and the creation of co-ordination mechanisms, provided with suitable resources and attributions and supported by laws and programmes, to evaluate the extent to which women were being incorporated and assist such incorporation by promoting a greater awareness and specific programmes covering different aspects such as flexible working hours, reincorporation into work and related measures. The specific measures to be taken that were discussed concerned employment; health, education, food, water and agriculture; industry, commerce and commercial services; science and technology; communications; housing, settlements, development and transport; energy; the environment and social services.

With respect to the goal of peace, it was pointed out that the obstacles to it derived from international tensions and conflicts which deepened hostile attitudes, perpetuated ignorance of other countries and intolerance among countries, ethnic groups, races, sexes and socio-economic groups and limited women's participation in decision-making. The strategies therefore included the subject of violence in the home and the need for education for peace. In that context, global basic strategies were proposed for application at the national level as well as strategies for especially vulnerable groups that required priority attention. The latter included in particular women living in areas devastated by drought, the poor in urban centres, elderly women, the young, ill-treated indigent, women, victims of the traffic in persons and of unwilling prostitution, women deprived of their traditional means of subsistence, those suffering disabilities, detainees, refugees, migrants, those belonging to minorities and native women.

The subject of international and regional co-operation was given priority treatment in the strategies, and the need for consultative, information and co-ordination mechanisms was stressed in this connection. It was also deemed necessary to establish measures for supervision, co-operation, training and advisory assistance, institutional co-ordination, research and policy

analysis, the participation of women in activities and decisions, and support for information dissemination.

The spirit of the resolutions of the world meeting is similar to that of the regional meeting, although many of the subjects and problems dealt with do not respond to specific regional needs. It is important to highlight that there are no major differences as to the conception of the global context, the main obstacles or the most important achievements. The world conference tended to place greater emphasis on the cultural and social aspects, whereas the regional one stressed the socio-economic problems. This is probably due to the fact that different problems are faced by the developed and developing countries and that this obviously colours their outlook. In any case, the event gave a fresh impetus to the subject and incorporated new considerations for the future.

In January 1986, the General Assembly endorsed these strategies in its resolution 40/108 and urged that all necessary measures be taken to ensure their fulfilment.

The two meetings of the Presiding Officers provided an appropriate framework for the work of the regional meeting and assisted it in its work. The Sixth Meeting 9/ endorsed the election of the Officers of the meeting, reported on its work since the Third Regional Conference, and discussed the agenda, documents and organization of work.

The Seventh Meeting of the Presiding Officers 10/ examined the Nairobi Strategies, studied some aspects of the crisis and completed the work of preparation for the Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally, at its twenty-first session, ECLAC adopted resolution 483(XXI), Effective mobilization and integration of women in development (25 April 1986), in which it endorsed the Nairobi Strategy and welcomed the decision to convene the Fourth Regional Conference.

3. Main activities carried out

An important feature of this period was the inclusion of the subject of women in the general work of the Social Development Division and the linking of this issue with general development problems. This made it possible to initiate a multidisciplinary debate and to make better use of the existing human resources, since the different specializations of the professionals of that Division enable a more thorough study to be made of new aspects of the problems concerning women and allow new lines of approach to be given to this study.

For example, the subject of young women arose out of the work done in connection with International Youth Year, and the successive approaches to this subject show that this is the area of greatest relevance and validity.

Similarly, in the debate on the crisis and the emergency social policies the most vulnerable sectors of women were examined again in the context of policies 11/ and the labour market.12/

Furthermore, within the framework of the analysis that the Social Development Division undertakes as part of its ongoing work on development styles in the region, during 1986 a joint seminar was held with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the subject of women was one of the agenda items.13/ It is hoped that this method of work will be adopted more frequently in order to improve the actual actions taken to incorporate the subject of women.

Among the items which have been studied more carefully and more specifically during this period were development planning; statistical analysis, both for quantifying information on the situation of women and for methodological studies; the situation of women in the popular urban sector, young women in the region, and women and commerce. In addition to this, studies have been made on legal aspects, the level of information on women in the region, and a global summary of the situation of women.14/

The work done in respect of the above-mentioned subjects can be classified into: technical assistance activities to countries, other agencies and projects; expert studies by ECLAC professionals; training courses, seminars, workshops; analyses of household surveys and censuses; preparation of books, etc. In general, the work has focused on certain aspects of the subject and in some cases (young women, women from the popular urban sector) expert meetings were organized at the ECLAC headquarters. The Secretariat prepared a global study, while the participants prepared the national studies. The results of the debates were recorded and the information obtained was disseminated in books.15/16/ On other occasions (statistical analysis), a specialized document was prepared for a workshop on the subject organized by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). This made it possible to assemble the existing information and knowledge and to generate as a result of the debate, new information which is indispensable for carrying out more systematic studies on the subject.

a) Development planning

With regard to women and development planning, the activities were carried out jointly with various institutions and different aspects were discussed. Planning has perhaps been one of the first items that the Women's Unit has tackled, and from the beginning it was given high priority.17/ During this period the conceptual aspects continued to be dealt with, once again fellowships were negotiated for women planners so that they could attend the ILPES planning courses, and a course-workshop on Women, Development and Planning in the Andean Area was organized jointly with ILPES/CELADE/ECLAC/INSTRAW and the Ecuadorian Institute for Research and Training of Women.18/ In the Caribbean countries, national studies have been drawn up since the Third Regional Conference on the repercussions that the execution of national budgets especially in the social sector has had on the incorporation of women. These studies were carried out within the framework of a project on women and development, and reports have been published so far on

Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.^{19/} In the context of the same project, meetings were held in Saint Lucia ^{20/21/} to exchange experiences among sectoral planners and to promote the incorporation of women's programmes in the national development process.

b) Statistics

In keeping with the relevant mandates, continued efforts have been made to improve the statistical information on the situation of women both in respect of obtaining data and of analysing the methodological aspects. On one of the aspects of this subject the work was done in close contact with INSTRAW and ECLAC prepared studies on the situation of women in the region through household surveys in general and in the labour market.^{22/23/} With regard to the information provided by censuses, the occupational changes between the 1960s and 1970s affecting the participation of women were analysed and work continued on the methodological aspects, especially in connection with the study of the informal sector in Latin America.

c) Women in the popular urban sector

Because of the concern for this sector of women, which is considered vulnerable, ECLAC organized jointly with the International Development Research Centre and with support from UNIFEM a regional technical seminar on women and families in the popular urban strata in Latin America and the Caribbean. This seminar was held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, from 28 November to 2 December 1983, and the papers presented at it and the studies submitted by the Secretariat were subsequently published in book form.^{24/} In addition to giving a global view of Latin American and Caribbean women, the seminar studied both community and political involvement, either in relation to survival strategies or to urban movements, as a means of consciousness raising in women and as a broader social movement. In addition, the possibilities of community participation as an alternative channel were analysed, together with the problems arising from the lack of continuity of participation. Subsequently, attention was focussed on as the subject of the family as a unit of research, its social consumer relations, the extended family and its generational processes, the young couple and their communication, and think tanks to analyse the question of women's identity. Another item dealt with was the economic involvement of women of the popular sectors, their role in the labour force, especially in the informal sector, work at home, domestic work, the multiple forms of trading in the Caribbean and the case of women workers. Methodological and other aspects were studied.

d) Young women

The results of this meeting were published in a book.^{25/} In order to continue exploring this subject and to begin an analysis which would help to provoke thought on the subject, the ECLAC Social Development Division, in line with the organization's tradition of welcoming new subjects which were little known and of great importance, convened a seminar entitled "Thoughts on young

women: problems and preliminary experiences" which was held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago from 3 to 5 December 1984. Latin American specialists who had worked on the subject of women, of youth or of both participated in this seminar. The seminar sought to study the conditions under which young women were incorporated into the society and to reflect on the cultural patterns affecting their socialization. As a contribution to this activity, the Social Development Division submitted an interpretative framework on the situation of youth in Latin America and also a paper that dealt with the subject of young Latin American women from a regional standpoint.

e) Rural women

Official United Nations documents, ECLAC studies and the results of research conducted in the region were reviewed as a contribution to the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. This review made it possible to appreciate the extent of the progress registered in learning about rural women in the last 10 years; to identify the topics which appear to be sufficiently studied and those which have not received equal attention, and to determine the new situations which have arisen in respect of women as a result of global changes, especially in the agricultural sector. The results were assembled according to whether they provided background on the Decade for Women in the world context, in the Latin American context or in relation to rural women in the region; on rural Latin American women; on the rural family, and on the demand for women's involvement in organizations. A number of policy recommendations were also made. The results were recorded in a study which also includes new topics such as how women spend their income; the social and cultural role played by women in small communities and smallholdings, and the process of proletarianization of women and their position as wage earners.^{26/} A national study was also carried out on the role of rural women in the 1970s.^{27/}

f) Trade

Given the growing importance of the trading activities of women merchants for the economies of the Caribbean countries, national studies were initiated to evaluate the real contribution made by this activity, its characteristics and projections for the future. So far, studies have been published on Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. Training material has also been produced to assist these women in organizing themselves and forming associations.

A national seminar on violence against women was also held in the Caribbean as part of the technical assistance activities.^{28/}

g) Activities carried out within the ECLAC system

In pursuance of resolution 483(XXI), Effective mobilization and integration of women in development, adopted at its twenty-first session, the ECLAC Secretariat analysed all the programmes of its system to ensure the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies, taking account of sectoral aspects.

Thus, the Economic Development Division dealt with the incorporation of women from the rural sector in productive employment. It is considered especially important to analyse the impact that the modernization of agriculture has had on the absorption of women workers into the agro-industrial sector. It also seems important to investigate the extent to which women are engaged in seasonal employment and the conditions under which they work in it.

The Joint ECLAC/UNIDO Industry and Technology Division has been reviewing and evaluating the existing statistical sources as a contribution to the information on the participation of women in the industrial labour market in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Statistics and Quantitative Analysis Division has incorporated into its data bases information broken down by sex, obtained from census samples, population censuses, ongoing statistics and household surveys, and this has made it possible to prepare studies on statistical analyses of women in the labour market and on the impact caused by the crisis. This work was done in collaboration with the Social Development Division.

In some divisions, the subject of women was approached indirectly. This was observed particularly in the projects and programmes of the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit, the Natural Resources and Energy Division and the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, where work was done using information on peasant families as the nucleus of the basic unit of analysis and action. In these programmes it is difficult to break down the contribution made by each family member, or to distinguish the impact of the programmes on each of them, although there is a possibility of making use of such data in the future.

The Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit has studied, among other processes, peasant survival in highland ecosystems, where the participation of women is very important. However, it is difficult to study women's role separately, so for the present the family as a whole is being studied.

Similarly, having regard to the fact that the analysis of the metropolitanization process particularly stressed marginal urban areas, the role of women there will receive priority attention.

The Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, with the collaboration of the Government of the Netherlands, prepared a series of proposals aimed at greater participation by peasant families and communities in the development and national agriculture, in which mention was made of the important role played by women in peasant regions.

CELADE's participation in this field has been more recent. It should be recalled that its goals in this area are to promote the inclusion of the specific situation of women in all the relevant development programmes, policies and projects, focussing on those aspects most directly related to population dynamics. As a first step, an effort was made to include the topic in the structural conceptual framework that was applied in a study on the fertility of women in Ecuador,^{29/} and in 1987 the Centre for Latin American Studies (CELA) began operation. A study was conducted with advisory assistance from CELADE on the social situation of women and fertility in Panama. In addition, one issue of CELADE's Demographic Bulletin was devoted to the systematic presentation of a set of demographic, social and economic indicators for the female population.

4. Activities with other agencies of the United Nations system

During the period under review, close collaboration was maintained with the Advancement of Women Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, especially in respect of regional activities in preparation for the World Conference held in 1985. Despite the fact that the Advancement of Women Branch deals with problems from an international perspective, there is now a good deal in common in the subjects covered, and it would appear that the experience accumulated over the decade has made communication smoother and swifter.

Effective co-operation has also been maintained with INSTRAW and has extended beyond participation in programming. In fact, joint work plans have been elaborated in substantive areas relating to improvement of statistics, planning and others. Technical studies have been elaborated and training courses and workshops held on a joint basis.

The relationship with UNIFEM has mainly taken the form of joint action to evaluate projects for women, to programme workshops and seminars designed to train women, and to prepare publications to disseminate studies on the status of women in different countries.

A continuous exchange of information has been maintained with the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and their work is partly reflected in the document on the situation in the region, prepared for the Fourth Regional Conference.^{30/}

5. Future action

The main activities of the Integration of Women Unit of the Social Development Division are reflected in the Secretariat's programme of work.^{31/} While the severe financial restrictions make it impossible to think of increasing activities to any great extent, it is also true that the experience gained and the networks and channels of communication established over almost two decades of work on the subject with governments, other agencies of the system, non-governmental agencies, academic and research centres make it possible to rationalize the use of the resources and achieve results in essential areas of activity. Rather than opening up new areas of

action, an effort will be made to systematize the vast amount of knowledge generated, analyse the results, and study more thoroughly the subjects initiated, especially those concerning improvement of statistics, contributions in the area of legislation, and analysis of education and employment. Priority attention will continue to be given to the vulnerable groups of women, especially the urban and rural poor, young women and those belonging to ethnic minorities.

Every effort will be made to continue serving as a forum and a substantive base for experts in the subject through seminars and workshops. One area of special interest is that of policies geared towards women, and an attempt will be made to give greater importance to this.

Notes

1/ See also Report on the implementation and orientation of the ECLAC Secretariat's activities on the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America (E/CEPAL/CRM.3/L.3/Add.1), Santiago, Chile, 5 August 1983; Report on the activities of the ECLAC Secretariat closely related to Children, the Family and Women (Education, Health and Housing) (E/CEPAL/MDM/4/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, May 1979; Report on activities of the ECLAC Secretariat relating to the integration of women in the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean (E/CEPAL/MDM/3/Rev.2), Santiago, Chile, November 1979.

2/ See ECLAC, Report of the Seventh 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 (LC/L.435(MDM.7/3)), Santiago, Chile, 18 January 1988, pp. 3 and 4, paras. 9 to 13.

3/ ECLAC, Report of the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (LC/G.1339), Santiago, Chile, 31 January 1985.

4/ ECLAC, Restrictions on sustained development in Latin America and the Caribbean and requisites for overcoming them (LC/G.1488(SES.22/3)/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 8 February 1988, pp. 49 and 50.

5/ Ibid., p. 50.

6/ United Nations, Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (A/CONF.116/28/Rev.1), New York, 1986, p. 11, para. 19.

7/ General Assembly resolutions 40/108 and 41/111.

8/ ECLAC, Informe del Grupo de Expertas sobre las estrategias de ejecución para el adelanto de la mujer hasta el año 2000 (LC/G.1322(Conf.77/4)), Santiago, Chile, 1984.

9/ See ECLAC, Report of the Sixth Meeting of the Presiding Officers ..., op.cit.

10/ ECLAC, Report of the Seventh 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 (LC/L.435(MDM.7/3)), Santiago, Chile, 18 January 1988.

11/ ECLAC, Development, change and equity: vanquishing poverty (LC/R.538(Sem.35/3)), Santiago, Chile, 21 November 1986.

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ANNEX

COMMITTEE II
Conference Room Paper
II/1
20 April 1988

E C L A C
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Twenty-second session
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20-27 April 1988

COMMITTEE II

ACTIVITIES OF THE ECLAC SYSTEM IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT

In compliance with resolution 483(XXI), the ECLAC Secretariat has reviewed all the programmes of the ECLAC system in order to ensure the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. In this respect, and bearing in mind the sectoral and intersectoral problems associated with the role of women in the region's development, the Secretariat wishes to report to the Commission on the action scheduled within the different programmes of the ECLAC system for the present biennium and on that proposed for execution during the period 1990-1991.

A synthesis is provided below of the activities of the various Divisions which will be co-ordinated by the Women's Unit.

It should be noted first of all that ECLAC's activities in relation to the situation of Latin American women began almost twenty years ago, in the Social Development Division. Thus, at the fifteenth session of the Commission, held in Quito in March 1973, the member States recommended in resolution 321(XV) that the ECLAC Secretariat should prepare a study on the participation of women in the development of the region and the measures to be taken to eliminate discrimination and the lack of educational, employment and economic opportunities for women.

Following the declaration of the International Women's Year and of the decade devoted to the topic, activities intensified, and in 1977, following the First Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, a Regional Plan of Action constituting the official instrument for activities in this connection was drawn up, and a Unit for the Integration of Women into Development was established within the Social Development Division to carry out the programmes planned.

Activities in connection with the integration of women into the development of Latin America and the Caribbean are thus regularly reflected

in the programmes of work of the ECLAC system as an integral part of Programme 21: Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Latin America and the Caribbean, under Subprogramme 21.2: Integration of Women into Development.

In recent years a variety of topics have been dealt with in accordance with regional requirements and with the mandates issued stemming from resolutions adopted by governments at regional and international meetings. Among the main topics, mention may be made of the following: paid and unpaid work, health, education, legislation, social participation, specific groups of women (rural poor, marginal urban, young women and others). In addition, a start was made on the analysis of the impact of the crisis on the status of women and possible social policies to tackle the worst situations.

On account of its novelty and significance, the topic of women has been tackled from different angles and through manifold activities and systematic studies designed to increase and improve the scant information available. Thus, national, subregional and regional projects have been carried out, training activities have been performed, assistance has been provided to governments in the formulation of programmes, and meetings, seminars and other events have been held in order to exchange information and initiate processes for the acquisition of new knowledge. In addition, many publications of a technical and informational nature have been produced and a persistent and ongoing effort has been made with a view to systematizing, investigating and studying the topic.

At the present time on the eve of a new regional conference to continue with the regular assessment of the progress in and obstacles to the integration of women into development, work has been pursued in a number of directions. First of all, in the form of a process of review and evaluation, warranted by the considerable length of time during which the topic has been examined by the Division. Secondly, an effort has been made to develop a number of themes which have proved to be significant, especially in order to provide more efficient technical assistance, to contribute towards the formulation of social policies, and to produce studies and research capable of being used in the different levels of training. The principal topics examined deal with information on the situation of women in the region, legislative support and the improvement of statistical information.

Thirdly, in view of the complexity of the issue, work is underway to integrate the topic of women into ECLAC's theoretical work and to link it with other social issues, while an effort is also being made to ensure that in all the programmes of work the situation of women is taken into account wherever possible, in the breakdown of information, both as regards their productive activity and their status, and is given specific and explicit consideration in projects (especially those in which the family is adopted as the unit of analysis) as well as in general areas of policy development.

Mention should also be made of a number of specific activities. In November 1986, ILPES, in collaboration with CELADE and with the Unit for the Integration of Women into Development, held a first course for women planners in Santiago, which was attended by 40 professionals from planning organizations and non-governmental institutions of all the countries of the

region. During 1987, ILPES included among its new topics the incorporation of women into the development processes.

In the category "Seminars and Training Workshops", a Course-Workshop was held on Women, Development and Planning in the Andean Area. This two-week course, which was jointly organized by ILPES, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and the Ecuadorean Research and Training Institute for Women, with collaboration from ECLAC and CELADE, took place in Quito from 16 to 27 November 1987, and was attended by 30 Ecuadorean professionals, in addition to 10 fellowship-holders from Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

In addition, a document entitled Mujer y Sociedad was prepared for presentation at the Seminar on the Participation of Women in Development, organized by the Intendency of Montevideo and UNICEF, and held in Montevideo in 1987.

The Economic Development Division is concerned with the integration of women into productive employment in the rural sector. While it would appear that the crisis has had a relatively lighter impact on the rural sector, this is not reflected in the same way in all strata of the population. Thus, it is important to carry out research on the extent to which agricultural modernization has led to the absorption of more female labour into the agro-industrial sector and into seasonal work, as well as on the level of wages received by this sector of labour. It is suggested that in order for these studies to be continued, countries should provide their available statistics in order to permit the necessary comparisons to be made.

The Joint ECLAC/UNIDO Industry and Technology Division has been carrying out a review and appraisal of existing statistical sources (population censuses, industrial censuses and surveys undertaken in the region between 1950 and 1980), as a contribution to the body of information on the participation of women in the industrial labour market in Latin America and the Caribbean. In evaluating the information, account has been taken of the degree of disaggregation of the data by sex, by occupation and by industrial branches.

The Statistics and Quantitative Analysis Division has incorporated into its data bases the information disaggregated by sex, obtained from census samples, population censuses, ongoing statistics and household surveys, which has permitted the preparation of studies on statistical analyses of women in the labour market (in collaboration with the ECLAC Unit for the Integration of Women into Development and with INSTRAW) and on the impact of the crisis, the latter task being undertaken in collaboration with the Social Development Division. In the future it is hoped to continue incorporating new household surveys into the data bank in order to keep the information updated. Work is also being done on the elaboration of material which will permit improvements to the instruments for measuring economic activity, and it is hoped that this will lead to more accurate measurements of the economic activity of women, which is precisely the population group that has been most seriously under-recorded so far.

In some Divisions the question of women has been approached in an indirect manner. This may be noted especially in the projects and programmes of the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit, the Natural Resources and Energy Division, and the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, which work with information on rural families as the basic unit of analysis and action. In these programmes it is difficult to disaggregate the contribution of each one of the members of the family or to discern the impact on each one of them, although the potential does exist for the future exploitation of such data.

The Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit has centered its efforts mainly on the analysis of four processes: metropolitanization, peasant survival strategies in high-altitude ecosystems, the expansion of agricultural frontiers, and environmental management in major civil engineering projects. Women appear to be deeply involved in the question of peasant survival strategies in high-altitude ecosystems, although it is difficult to treat the study of their role separately, since the productive unit for purposes of analysis is composed of the complete family nucleus and at present the participants are being studied only as a group.

Likewise, in view of the fact that the analysis of the process of metropolitanization has placed greater emphasis on urban marginal areas, priority will be given to the role of women in this case.

The Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division, with the collaboration of the Government of the Netherlands, has prepared a set of proposals aimed at achieving greater participation of rural families and communities in the development of national agriculture. The study of the various levels of participation has taken into account the important role played by women in rural areas.

Also with the collaboration of the Government of the Netherlands, the same Division has undertaken an evaluation of the agrarian reform processes which adopted, as alternative social structures, haciendas and plantations; associative forms of production based on undeterminate co-operative ownership; and collective labour. The movement away from the colony system and other forms of servitude which characterized the traditional systems towards systems of production based on collective labour attaches most significance to the labour of the head of household, and discriminates against the participation of women and of the other members of the family. This situation has led to the breakup of associative enterprises and to a movement instead towards forms of agricultural production based on the parcelization of land.

It is generally recognized today that the situation of women, to which the governments of the region made specific reference at the 1984 International Conference on Population, constitutes an important area of study which helps to clarify key aspects related to demographic evolution. The improvement of the situation of women has significant effects on the reduction of fertility and on the enhancement of levels of health of the population.

Particular reference should be made in this connection to the work of CELADE, whose main objectives in this field are to promote the incorporation of the specific situation of women in all relevant development programmes,

policies and projects so that these will be of equal benefit to the population as a whole, focusing attention on those aspects that are more directly related to population dynamics. CELADE's participation in this field is relatively recent. As from 1986, activities were initiated with a view to studying the question in greater depth and incorporating it to the full in technical co-operation, training and research activities. As a first step, an effort was made, in a study entitled La situación de la mujer y la fecundidad. El caso de Ecuador, to include the question in a structural conceptual framework. In 1987, in the Centre for Latin American Studies (CELA), a study was initiated with advisory assistance from CELADE on the social situation of women and on fertility in Panama.

As a contribution to the knowledge of the situation of women, and in view of the importance of statistics, an issue of the Boletín Demográfico of CELADE was devoted to the systematic presentation of a set of demographic, social and economic indicators on the female population. As regards the improvement of statistical data on the participation of women in employment, efforts have been made to encourage countries to include in their demographic surveys and population censuses instruments that have been especially designed to compile more reliable information on the productive work of women.

In the programme of work of CELADE for the forthcoming biennium, provision has been made for courses and seminars designed to promote the incorporation of women in development planning; technical co-operation to develop national capabilities for the preparation of diagnostic studies on the situation of women in population-related aspects; and collaboration with the countries in identifying the problems that affect women in selected social, age, or ethnic groups and adopting measures to resolve them.

