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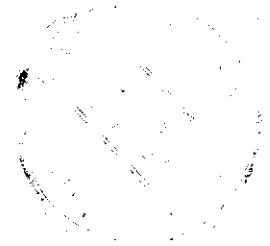
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WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA: THE SITUATION AS REGARDS THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION

This study is based on the document on the same subject entitled "Women in Latin America: The situation as regards the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action" (E/CEPAL/CRM/R.1/2).

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Introduction

1. The World Conference of the International Women's Year held in Mexico in 1975 adopted the World Plan of Action which, in paragraph 217, states that "at the regional level, the regional commissions should assume responsibility for monitoring progress towards the greater and more effective participation of women in all aspects of development efforts".1/
2. The General Assembly, for its part, decided "to convene in 1980, at the mid-term of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, a world conference of all States to review and evaluate the progress made in implementing the objectives of the International Women's Year".2/
3. The Economic and Social Council recommended that the agenda of the 1980 World Conference should be so drawn up as to include a review and evaluation of the progress made in attaining the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, and the formulation of a Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade as substantive items, and employment, health and education as sub-items.3/
4. In paragraph 46, the World Plan of Action establishes that by the end of the first five-year period (1975-1980) the achievement of progress in areas such as literacy, compulsory primary school education, co-educational technical and vocational training, equal access at every level of education, employment, infrastructural services, remuneration, recognition of the economic value of women's work, voting, eligibility, and participation in policy-making positions should be envisaged as a minimum.
5. In accordance with the decision adopted by CEPAL at its seventeenth session (Guatemala, 1977), the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America was held in Havana from 13 to 17 June 1977 and adopted the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development.

1/ World Conference of the International Women's Year, United Nations publication, Sales N°: E.76.IV.1, p.40.

2/ General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX), para. 20.

3/ ECOSOC resolutions 1978/30, 31, 32 and 33.

This Plan was finally approved at the eleventh extraordinary session of the Committee of the Whole of CEPAL, held in New York on 21 November 1977. One of the objectives of the Plan of Action is "to periodically evaluate the legal, economic, political, social and cultural status of women both of rural and urban areas in the different countries of the area, in accordance with the objectives and priorities fixed in this Regional Plan of Action. This must be done through an interdisciplinary and multisectoral approach that will permit evaluation of the current situation and trends".^{4/}

6. The Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, at their second meeting held in Mexico City on 28 and 29 September 1978, decided to recommend that the agenda of the Regional Conference should include an appraisal of the progress made in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action, including recommendations with a view to the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in 1980, and an analysis of the situation of children and youth in relation to women and the family. At their third meeting (Quito, 11 March 1979) the Presiding Officers made a similar recommendation.^{5/}

7. In connexion with the mandates and content of the foregoing paragraphs, it should be borne in mind that the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America held in Havana recommended that CEPAL should bring together a group of government experts in order to make an appraisal, prior to the World Conference, of the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development and to place that appraisal before the Officers of the Regional Conference before the convening of the latter for their information, study and views.^{6/}

^{4/} Document E/CEPAL/1042/Rev.1, para. 88 (5) (i).

^{5/} Reports of the Second and Third Meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, E/CEPAL/MDM/2/Rev.2, para.15 (4) (a) and E/CEPAL/MDM/5/Rev.1, paras. 24, 26 and 28 (c), (g), (h), (j) and (k).

^{6/} The report of the Group of Government Experts is contained in document E/CEPAL/1071, 28 March 1979.

8. At the first Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Kingston, Jamaica, on 14 and 15 February 1978, it was decided that a questionnaire should be sent to the governments in order to obtain information on the progress made in implementing the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development. The questionnaire should be dispatched by the secretariat as soon as possible, with a request to the governments that they reply not later than the end of July 1978.^{7/} In compliance with this mandate, the secretariat dispatched to all the governments a "Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development", which was answered by 21 of the 32 Governments of regional member countries of CEPAL.

9. The appraisal falls within the context of the mandates and substantive content referred to above and forms part of the process involving the regional and world appraisal of the Second Decade covered by the International Development Strategy (IDS) currently in process. As a first appraisal exercise, various alternative possibilities were considered for its implementation, out of which the present procedure with the following characteristics was chosen:

(a) As in the successive appraisals carried out by CEPAL within the context of IDS, the economic and social development trends in the region are taken as a global frame of reference;

(b) The situation of women in the region and the prevailing trends in some specific sectors are reviewed on the basis of the objectives and actions proposed in the Regional Plan of Action and the World Plan of Action. In view of the relatively short time that has elapsed since the former was adopted and the type of information available, rather than the proposal of detailed and exhaustive diagnoses, emphasis is placed on some central problems or on the basis of the more detailed, empirical studies

^{7/} Report of the First Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, E/CEPAL/MDM/1, para. 9 (6) (d).

which appear in the background documents and in the reports of the United Nations specialized agencies on each of the priority topics;

(c) Attention is paid to the need to study the conceptual aspects in greater depth and improve statistical sources and indicators so as to get more reliable data. This should lead to more comprehensive and precise studies as a result of which the question of the situation of women can be incorporated in development plans and programmes and in sectoral analyses, so that the machinery for the integration of women in development may be an integral part of the International Development Strategy, in observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and in order to contribute effectively to its adjustment to the principles and postulates of the New International Economic Order.^{8/} Another major element is the La Paz Appraisal recently adopted by CEPAL at its eighteenth session, 18-26 April 1979.^{9/}

10. It should be noted that other agencies of the United Nations system have co-operated with the secretariat of CEPAL in the preparation of this document, and have also contributed a number of studies, some of which have been submitted to the Conference as background documents. These include the major contributions by UNICEF, UNESCO, the ILO and PAHO/WHO concerning childhood and the family, education, employment and health, respectively, whose importance for the analysis and understanding of the problems of women's integration into economic and social development is fully recognized and has been underscored by the high priority attached to these questions in the agenda of the Conference. This document is a synthesis based on those studies and on work undertaken by the CEPAL secretariat.^{10/} Its chief purpose is to back up the Report of the Group of Experts ^{11/} which serves as

^{8/} Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development, para. 12.

^{9/} "La Paz Appraisal", Cuadernos de la CEPAL, N° 30, 1979. See in particular sections 22 to 23 inclusive

^{10/} This work appears in the document "Contributions to the diagnosis and promotion of the Integration of Women into the Development of Latin America and the Caribbean" (E/CEPAL/CRM.3/L.3).

^{11/} E/CEPAL/CRM/R.1/Rev.1, 28 March 1979.

a basis for the appraisal of the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action, one of the main tasks of the Conference. These documents and studies are likewise an important contribution to the preparation of the material required for the forthcoming World Conference of the Decade for Women in 1980. Finally, the procedure followed complies strictly with CEPAL practice as regards the regional appraisals of the International Development Strategy and with the specific recommendations on this question set forth in the Regional Plan of Action.^{12/}

^{12/} Regional Plan of Action, para. 88. 5,(i).

I. CRITERIA FOR DIAGNOSES AND ACTIONS

11. Despite all efforts and good intentions, it has not been easy to include the question of the situation of women within the framework of global, regional or national development strategies and programmes. The difficulties arise on different fronts. Some are of a general character, such as those stemming from the role actually played by planning in societies organized according to the rules of the market, the pressures exerted by different social sectors, the structure and location of planning and policy formulation bodies within the administration, the shortage of financial and human resources, etc. Others stem from the nature of the prevailing approach used in planning and in the formulation of social development strategies and programmes, such as the separation of economic and social issues in watertight compartments, which, as will be seen below, tends to become a serious obstacle to a proper understanding of women's real contribution to the development of a society. Others again derive from the conceptualization of the problem of women, i.e., from the group of concepts, relationships and assumptions which are referred to and applied in order to characterize, describe or explain concrete situations or to propose specific action.

12. The proposals regarding global conceptual frameworks for reporting on the situation of women suggest that most of the difficulties are concentrated in three areas:

- (a) the type of social group women constitute;
- (b) the structural relationship between domestic work, for which women are mainly responsible, and the productive social work;
- (c) the nature of sexual stereotypes and their discriminatory effects, which are usually damaging to the social status of women.

13. It frequently happens that in a single context women are referred to indiscriminately as if they were a stratum, a class, a sector or a group. Each of those terms refers to different psychological, social and cultural circumstances, however; and thus reference is made to different areas of knowledge which are not appropriate for identifying focal groups of very different kinds, or for making diagnoses or proposing action aimed at solving their more urgent proposals.

14. Women (and men) are not a group, sector, class or stratum, but belong to various of those categories in the society in which they are living. Without them it is impossible to understand the situation of women since it is only in that framework that any meaningful connexion can be established between their specific situation and the historical development of society. In the first place, the role assigned to women and their social possibilities, differ from one socio-economic stratum to another.^{13/} Secondly, this role has common elements which are based on biological fact, but which, like every social role, go beyond the purely bio-sexual aspect. They consist of the relation between women and real or potential motherhood and the biological or social reproduction of social agents. The manner in which these common elements are defined by the various socio-economic strata makes it possible to identify concrete groups of individuals, men and women, which, on the basis of the biological fact of their sex, fulfil certain social roles (rural, urban, marginal, poor women, etc.).

15. From a different point of view, women constitute a statistical or nominal category in terms of a group of individuals defined by the biological fact of having the same sex. On the basis of this shared characteristic it is possible to produce major statistical aggregates classifying the nominal category according to a number of other major variables (education, income, employment, etc.) and to compare it with the other relevant nominal category (i.e., men). Conclusions can thus be reached regarding discrimination with respect to opportunities as regards, for example, employment, wages or education, or access to certain goods and services. If the area of residence or age group is taken into account the analysis acquires further content. In such cases, it is still assumed that all women included in the statistical sexual category share the same social status, which has

^{13/} "The situation of women in the region varies according to the socio-economic stratum to which they belong. This also means variations in their share in economic, political, social and cultural life, and in the sources and manifestations of the discrimination of which they are the object. These differences should be taken into account in adopting measures to guarantee the equality of men and women and foster the economic and social development of the respective countries." La Paz. Appraisal, op.cit., para. 25.

been proved to be incorrect. A statistical group is not necessarily a real group, and when reference is made to women in general, account is not taken of the essential social differentiation inherent in social stratification.

16. From the foregoing considerations it may be inferred that, within a social context of sexual discrimination, the situation of women involves two types of problems:

(a) Those common to all individuals (men or women) arising from the fact that they belong to a particular socio-economic stratum which determines their possibilities of access to and enjoyment of goods and services (housing, employment, education, income, health, etc.);

(b) Those affecting women as such which stem from the social role assigned to them, within the socioeconomic stratum to which they belong. It is only in this case that it is strictly accurate to speak of sexual discrimination.

17. There is widespread consensus that in order to understand the situation of women it is necessary to take into account the relationship between them and the domestic work which is fundamental in the lives of the great majority of adult women, whatever their social or married status. However, domestic work is not properly valued in society: an artificial distinction has been made between domestic work and economic work, and the latter alone is recognized as labour. Thus inasmuch as the structural links between domestic work and the socioeconomic system have not been clarified, neither has it been possible to define accurately and fairly the situation of women in the social structure, given the ambiguity arising from the fact that they belong at once to the domestic world and to the world of social production.

18. Every socio-economic system produces and reproduces the individuals who take part in social production, as if the process were a national one. Economics usually considers this fact as a factor already included in the labour factor as human capital, without considering, or only inadequately those processes of production and reproduction of individuals or their significance for the social and economic system as a whole. Thus, for example, in conventional economic analyses the price of labour is defined as the value of resources generally necessary for the livelihood of the average manual worker, while the cost of reproduction of the worker's family

/is generally

is generally ignored. As a result, the money value of goods acquired on the market is included in economic accounting, while the value of those produced by the family unit for its own use and consumption, as well as the work involved in its reproduction, are excluded. In this way the economic value of domestic work is ignored and it is downgraded in comparison with direct participation in the economic system. This double standard for domestic and economic work is one of the main causes of women's social loss of status, particularly in the case of women primarily engaged in looking after the family household.^{14/}

19. Broadly speaking, the household work performed by the family unit is social labour from several points of view: (a) it produces goods and services for consumption by members of the family; (b) it reproduces wholly or partially, day after day and generation after generation, the individuals without whom the socio-economic system would not be able to operate; (c) in many cases (small agricultural producers, own-account workers, artisans), it also produces goods for the market or involves activities connected with their production.

20. Household communities or family units are maintained and reproduce their members by performing the relevant tasks themselves or obtaining, by exchange, goods and services from other units, either families, private economic units or State entities. In any case, life strategies cease to be the responsibility of society and become a problem which must be solved primarily by the individual household units. These, then, from this point

^{14/} "Since the most alarming situations are to be found among women belonging to the poorest groups, and particularly poor rural women, they must be given priority in planning development strategies, and especially in action aimed at alleviating the burden of household chores and improving housing conditions, the infrastructure, health, employment, education and other social aspects. Special attention must also be given to reappraising the contribution of women to society and an effort must be made to improve their social image, which is at present distorted by the mass media and current cultural patterns." La Paz Appraisal, para. 25.

of view, are not exclusively consumer units, since their consumption occurs in terms of the production and reproduction of individuals in a society.^{15/}

21. The income distribution patterns prevailing in every society assign to the family units of the various socioeconomic strata different possibilities of access to the available goods and services, according to the resources they receive. Thus the individuals belonging to those domestic units obtain the goods and services necessary for their reproduction with marked differences in quantity and quality and also with respect to the unit in which they were produced. The more advanced the stage of economic development of a society and the higher the socioeconomic stratum to which the family unit belongs, the greater is the proportion of goods and services consumed in the household that will be purchased in the market and not domestically produced.

22. The amount of family income, the proportion received in money or in kind, the sources from which it is obtained, the contributions of various members of the family towards obtaining it and the units which produced the goods and services form part of the family units' strategies of living, together with other factors including migration, the early incorporation of children in the labour force, paid work for women, families with female heads of household, number of children, etc., which are also heavily influenced by the above structural situations and factors.

23. It was stated that family units in the various socioeconomic strata have very different access to the goods and services, in quantity and quality and as regards the units producing them depending primarily on their income. For the economic system this means that, the composition

^{15/} "Since nearly all adult women in the region are responsible for and actually carry out household tasks, and a considerable percentage of women from the poor strata are heads of households, this link with the family units should be taken into account both as regards its consequences for the situation of women and its effects on children, who are the population of the future. It will therefore be necessary to pay special attention to improving the living conditions of the family units, and this, in addition to lightening the burden of the work done by women and opening up new possibilities for their participation in society, will make it possible to improve the quality of life of the population as a whole." La Paz Appraisal, para. 26.

of the actual aggregate demand of those family units varies greatly, whether for goods and services consumed daily (food, fuels, etc.), more durable goods and services (household electric appliances, utensils, etc.) or infrastructural investment (housing, furniture, water, sewerage, etc.).

24. Domestic work is predominantly female and has the following characteristics: it is carried out independently, it is almost exclusively manual work, it involves activities of very different kinds, it is generally of low social importance, and it is either free or poorly paid. In sum it may be argued that for many women domestic work is a heavy burden which they shoulder with resignation rather than a meaningful activity enriching their lives and stimulating their self-development. Since women are responsible for the management of the productive unit and family consumption, they strive to obtain the best possible results from their activities in relation to the resources available. Logically, therefore, advertising about goods and services for household consumption is aimed at women. It is also logical, however, that as those responsible for household management and shapers of new generations should be viewed as a key policy group and receive strong support from society.

25. Sexual stereotypes are the group of standards, values, beliefs, images and symbols underlying attitudes, behaviour and other personality traits on the basis of which activities considered suitable or appropriate for one sex or the other are defined. The female and male roles stand in a reciprocal relationship to each other, so that if any question arises in the definition of one it means that a question also arises in the definition of both. It is only by confronting these reciprocal roles and images that a better understanding of men's and women's status in a society can be achieved. Any separate treatment which fails to consider this reciprocity would be misleading and mistaken.

26. The sexual stereotypes on the basis of which the female and male aspects are defined are unconscious moulds or elementary mental matrixes which are unconsciously transmitted, acquired and applied and which shape all subsequent experience. Socialization in the family and the educational process bear a basic responsibility for the perpetuation of sexual stereotypes. Individuals of both sexes internalize them and then apply them in all their

/activities as

activities as if they were natural. This very fact confers on them that permanence which enables them to survive, even if in other forms; under the most varied conditions and in the face of social changes which in their turn make their relationship with development somewhat problematical. In the industrialized countries women participate to a greater extent in paid economic activities, but they continue to do so in what are socially defined as "female" sectors, with lower wages and less important posts.

27. Discrimination based on sexual stereotypes is evident in several spheres (employment, education, personal development, etc.) and the content varies according to the national culture and socio-economic stratum concerned. Therefore, the material conditions and assignment of specific social roles maintain and reproduce the sexual stereotypes but do not create them. Tradition, national culture, education, advertising, radio, the press and television are means which tend to maintain the situations defined according to the stereotypes. However the underlying factors producing them have not been clearly established and thus it is only possible to act on their content and on the mechanisms which propagate them. This opens up a broad field for action designed to develop awareness of the absence of any real basis for many normative components of the female and male roles and to eliminate the ensuing discrimination.

28. In short, the minimum conceptual framework for the formulation of diagnoses and the design of policies should take into account that, according to the style and stage of development of a society, a social division of labour (including a sexual division of labour) takes place on the bases of which various socioeconomic strata are established. The family units belonging to the various strata put into practice different life strategies, one of whose main components is the organization and assignment of the work aimed at the reproduction of individuals. The social situation of women is defined in relation to all those factors and processes and is the framework of the economic and social structures shaping them.

II. SITUATION OF WOMEN AND SECTORAL TRENDS

A. Education 16/

29. In establishing that "education is an essential factor in the economic and social development of peoples and a basic right of men and women as social beings",^{17/} the Regional Plan of Action is assigning it a dual function: on the one hand as an essential factor in the development of human beings, and on the other hand as a factor in the training of skilled human resources to undertake productive activities.

30. Accordingly, after noting that women are adversely affected by inequality in education, the Plan proposes a series of measures. These include action to eliminate illiteracy, to increase women's enrolment in secondary and higher education, to establish co-education and to modify the image of women disseminated through the educational system.

31. The following are some of the features of the educational systems in the region as a whole in the period 1960-1970:

(a) A high overall rate of growth of school enrolment, which is reflected in the decrease in illiteracy among the population aged 15 years and over (from 42% in 1950 to 34% in 1960 and 24% in 1970) and in the coverage of the school-age population;

(b) Greater flexibility in adjusting to social demand, particularly of the middle and upper sectors, which is visible in the disproportionate growth of secondary and university education;

(c) Nevertheless, on the whole they maintain their elitist and exclusive features as a result of this disproportionate expansion; while enrolment in secondary and higher education is growing rapidly it is much lower in primary education, and drop-out rates are high: thus a large proportion of the population remains illiterate or semi-literate, having never completed the basic educational cycle.

^{16/} For a more thorough, statistically-supported discussion of this question, see the UNESCO document and the background "Contributions to the diagnosis and promotion of the Integration of Women into the Development of Latin America and the Caribbean" (E/CEPAL/CRM.3/L.3) particularly chapter IV.

^{17/} Regional Plan of Action, para. 24.

32. As regards illiteracy, the relative ranking of the countries did not change between 1960 and 1970, particularly with respect to the percentages of illiteracy and of female illiteracy. At one end of the scale are the countries with a proportion of 5 to 12% of illiterate women. At the other extreme are those in which illiterate women represent over 40% of all women aged 15 and over. In all the countries the percentage of illiterate women increases with residence in rural areas. Illiteracy is greater among rural men than among urban women, this seems to indicate that the area of residence is a more influential factor than sex.

33. The level of educational development plays a major part in this field. The higher the percentage of illiterates in a country, the wider are the differences between male and female illiteracy. In countries with a lower percentage of illiteracy, the difference between the sexes is less than 2%, compared with over 15% in countries with a higher percentage of illiteracy. This disadvantageous situation for women is aggravated in rural areas. In all the countries, however, a considerable reduction is recorded in illiteracy, especially in rural illiteracy and in the differences between the sexes. Once again, it may be observed that the incorporation of women in education occurs late in the development of education.

34. It should be noted that the ranking of countries referred to in the previous paragraph is also valid in the case of primary education. Those countries in which the educational situation of women is relatively better have a rate of female participation in primary education ranging between 40 and 53% for the corresponding age groups. At the other end of the scale the proportion is below 20% of total primary school enrolment. All the countries recorded an increase between 1960 and 1970 in the percentage of women who had completed their primary education. Taking the population enrolled in each level of education in relation to the population of an age to attend school at that level, it will be found that the rates of female enrolment have increased in nearly all the countries considered, and if the enrolment rates attained in 1970 are compared with the 95% enrolment which is the average for Europe, these rates are seen to be satisfactory in 17 out of the 24 countries analysed. It may be noted that in the great majority of countries, the difference between the enrolment rate of the female and male populations is tending to diminish.

35. As regards educational performance, in the first year of school the percentages of boys and girls who have to repeat the year are fairly high, although generally lower for girls than boys. In the sixth year, the amount of repetition of school years tends to be similar in both sexes. The extremely scanty relevant information on the basis of which to determine the percentage of continued attendance (number of pupils completing their studies out of every 100 originally enrolled) shows contradictory trends by sex, but suggests that continued attendance is greater in urban than in rural areas and that there is less difference between the sexes in the former. For both sexes, the biggest losses occur between the first and second years of primary education.

36. The access of girls to secondary education in the region has improved sharply in the region. While in 1960 female enrolment at this level was less than male enrolment in every country, in 1970 half the countries had more girls enrolled than boys. Comparatively, the greater proportion of male enrolment occurred in those countries with a low overall percentage of secondary students. At the secondary level, girls are oriented primarily towards teacher-training. Technical secondary education is selective, with boys predominating in industrial and agricultural specialties and girls in activities relating to trade, secretarial and personal services such as nursing, hairdressing, fashion, etc.

37. Female enrolment has also increased at the university level. Although in 1970 women were at a distinct disadvantage, the existing disparities have tended to diminish with the considerable increase in female enrolment in recent decades. In nearly every country women are mainly represented in the arts, education and psychology. Their representation is less in the social sciences, exact sciences and natural sciences, and much lower in engineering and agriculture.

38. Co-education has been established in most countries at the first level of education. At the secondary level it exists only in a few countries and in certain educational establishments. In the universities, education has traditionally been mixed. In practice, there are still some segregated primary schools, basically of a private nature for girls. Those countries in which co-education did not previously exist have instituted it increasingly as from 1975, though confining it to the primary level and only occasionally to secondary education.

39. The curricula and texts used in primary education are the same for boys and girls. Readers tend to present the woman in the role of housewife and mother, as a passive and self-sacrificing person without much initiative or capacity to make decisions. If she is gainfully employed she appears in jobs consistent with the female stereotype: secretarial work, domestic service, nursing, teaching, hairdressing and dressmaking.

40. There is a general trend towards revising school textbooks in this respect, and many governments have expressed willingness to eliminate all references implying discrimination between the sexes. One way of strengthening the sexual stereotypes through the educational systems, has been given little attention: the teachers themselves tend to apply them as is reflected in their differing treatment of the students of either sex and in the way in which they encourage and guide them in shaping their future careers.

41. Government replies to questionnaires do not report on the existence of official programmes specifically concerned with women in countries of the region although some of them have special programmes that provide facilities for women workers, housewives and adults in general to complete their primary studies.

42. If the present strategies continue, it is probable that in the next decade the central problems in the education sector will be along the following lines:

(a) Illiteracy will continue to be a serious problem in some countries, in particular affecting the populations of rural areas, and primarily women;

(b) It will be difficult to achieve the objective of providing primary education for the whole population without more resources and appropriate overall programmes, particularly in countries with problems of bilingualism. Rural areas would call for special attention in this respect, and particularly women in them, since they are unquestionably the most handicapped sector;

(c) Secondary education is expanding at a satisfactory rate with little discrimination. This does not seem to be happening in higher education, where specialization in careers follows professional sexual stereotypes, although there is a positive trend towards a more balanced participation of women;

/(d) It

(d) It may be expected that changes will occur in the role of education in relation to general development policies and, in particular, the technical training requirements for the new types of employment in the modern sector of the economy;

(e) It is probable that, hidden in various forms, the content of education will continue to transmit differential and discriminating sexual stereotypes.

B. Employment 18/

43. In their recent appraisal (1979) of the employment situation, the governments of the region drew attention to the following points of concern: "The growth of the rates of open unemployment and the continued existence of high levels of generalized underemployment, which together result in a high degree of underutilization of the labour force in the region, constitute one of the most serious problems, owing to the low capacity of absorption of personnel in the modern and dynamic sector of the economy, and the loss of production potential which this implies. Open unemployment and underemployment around 1970 are estimated to have accounted for around 28% of the labour force, i.e., no use was made of the productive potential of one out of every four persons of working age. Although the so-called informal sector has shown unexpected flexibility in offering subsistence opportunities to the urban poor, this has been achieved at the inadmissible cost of very low incomes and great insecurity in the sources of activity which generate them"... "There are serious doubts as to whether the informal sector can continue to carry out the functions which it has relatively successfully engaged in to date. The growing demand for employment among sectors of increasingly educated young urban dwellers who are facing ever greater difficulties in finding suitable jobs can hardly be palliated by the substitute constituted by the informal sector, where the lowest-qualified, transitory and poorest paid jobs predominate. Something similar

18/ A broader analysis supported by appropriate data, may be found in "Contributions to the Diagnosis and Promotion of the Integration of Women into the Development of Latin America and the Caribbean" (E/CEPAL/MDH.3/L.3), especially chapter V.

is to be expected as a result of the increased flow of educated women seeking to enter the job market. This is a source of tensions which will tend to get worse with the rapid growth of these sectors of the population, particularly the new generations of men and women graduating from secondary and higher education, for whom the informal sector has no solutions to offer."^{19/}

44. As regards the more specific situation of rural workers in relation to the ongoing transformation of agriculture, the La Paz Appraisal makes the following statement which is sufficiently important to justify reproducing it here in full: "The progress achieved in rural production has not given the expected results because the needs of large sectors of the rural population who remain outside the processes of agricultural modernization or have been harmed by them remain unsatisfied. The compelling forces of migration towards the cities have not been countered either (nor the process of disintegration of the archaic but still prevalent forms of production for actual subsistence and social security in the rural milieu). Urban and rural differences continue to increase, frequently to the disadvantage of those groups living in rural areas who do not benefit from the modernization of agriculture."^{20/}

45. The problems of unemployment and underemployment exist on a considerable scale, and present trends do not warrant very optimistic forecasts for the short and medium terms in the region. It is estimated that over one-quarter of the total labour force is underemployed. Only one-fifth of this total underemployment can be directly attributed to open unemployment. The remainder is due to different forms of underemployment. The greatest incidence of underemployment is concentrated in low-productivity activities, with unsteady, interrupted employment and very low incomes. Many of the underemployed are seasonal rural workers and urban own-account workers (street vendors, occasional workers, etc.). The fact that the great majority of heads of households thus affected are underemployed and that open unemployment is relatively low among them may be attributed to the fact that a lack of income would in a more or less brief period make it impossible for them and their dependents to survive. This also explains why most of the registered unemployed are young people of both sexes and adult women who are not heads of households.

^{19/} CEPAL, "The La Paz Appraisal", paras. 22 and 23.

^{20/} CEPAL, Ibid., para. 24.

46. In the Regional Plan of Action it is maintained that the participation of women in the political, economic and social life of their countries is hindered by their low participation in paid economic activity. One of the fundamental limitations on that participation is the excessive work load imposed on them by the domestic tasks which are wrongly viewed as the exclusive concern of women and relegate the woman to a secondary and passive role limited to the narrow confines of the home, with the sole basic purpose of matrimony and child-bearing.^{21/} In order to remedy this situation, the Regional Plan of Action proposes a number of measures which may be grouped under the following heads: (a) formulation and implementation of policies to ensure equality of employment opportunities and treatment of women workers; (b) adoption of suitable legislative measures aimed at the removal of obstacles to greater participation by women in directly productive work; (c) enhancement of the value of domestic activity, with particular attention to the conditions under which it is carried out and its contribution to the economy; (d) revaluation of the roles of men and women in the family so that they will both have equal rights and responsibilities; (e) promotion of positive attitudes to female employment and determination of cultural factors underpinning discrimination. The cases of rural women and domestic workers are considered particularly critical.

47. The analysis of the situation of women in employment is hampered by problems of definition and census enumeration. In order to be considered economically active, i.e., a worker or member of the labour force, an individual must produce economic goods or services negotiable on the market and money income. The tasks carried out by women in their family units, whether they consist of domestic work or activities related to the family unit's production for the market, are excluded from that definition. This is responsible for the sub-enumeration of women workers, especially in rural areas. Other causes of sub-enumeration are that women themselves do not regard their domestic activities as work, do not declare their seasonal or part-time work, or conceal their paid activity for fear of losing it. As a result of all this, the analyses of female employment constitute approximate estimations and are neither complete nor reliable.

^{21/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 22, 37 and 40.

48. The transformations of development are accompanied by contradictory consequences as concerns the occupational situation of women within what is usually referred to as the labour force. On the one hand, the elimination of artisanal and family production activities in the industrial sector and in productive services excludes from economic production a considerable number of women who previously participated in it. On the other hand, social modernization unquestionably brings new occupational possibilities in fields such as education, health and other social services, and in the growing bureaucratization of public and private administrative tasks. New technical and professional activities also arise, while others previously reserved for men tend to become open to women. Be that as it may, the fact is that all these activities call for much higher levels of education than that of the women excluded from artisanal and family production activities. In these circumstances at least, no substitution is possible. Many women of little education must, upon losing their work, switch to primarily urban domestic work or other equally badly paid and socially lowly activities. Considering women working in subsistence agriculture, domestic service and so-called urban informal activities as well as unemployed women, this group amounts to between one-half and three-quarters of economically active women, according to the country.

49. Consequently, the global diagnoses of the employment situation in the region highlight the following as being of particular importance for the problem of the employment of women:

(a) The structural heterogeneity of the Latin American economy, so often referred to, is reflected in the number and quality of the posts created and in the highly different features of employment in the traditional and modern sectors, in both rural and urban areas;

(b) There is a shortage of jobs in relation to the size of the labour force, which causes chronic unemployment and under-employment. This problem tends to be worsened by rapid population growth and large-scale migration to the cities in many countries of the region. The use of capital-intensive forms of production limits the absorption of labour, particularly in the cities where the labour force is growing very rapidly.

(c) Employment in the services sector has shown the fastest growth, whereas in industry it has grown very moderately, and sometimes barely above the population growth rate, and certainly below the growth rate of the urban population. In agriculture, given the forms of concentration assumed by the agrarian modernization processes, an increase has been recorded in the number of permanent agricultural workers and specialists, and to a greater extent of seasonal workers subsisting with their family groups;

(d) The middle and upper employment strata (bureaucrats, technical experts and professionals) have grown very rapidly. An increasingly uneven wage structure accentuates the greater concentration of income in the upper strata.

50. The participation of women in economic activity (the number of women aged 15 years or more incorporated in the labour force as a percentage of the total number of women of economically active age) in 1970 was approximately 20%, ranging between 14% and 30%. In comparison with other regions these rates are much lower, and also do not indicate their return to economic activity after retiring from it. The result therefore is a curve which after reaching its highest level in the group aged 20-24 years shows a progressively declining trend.

51. If the countries' rates of participation are compared it is found that the rates for men are relatively constant, while those for women show a marked variation. It has been found that those countries which have been industrialized longest in the region show a higher rate of female participation than the more recently industrialized countries, but lower than those with a predominantly agricultural economy. It may be concluded that in its early stages industrialization has the effect of excluding women from economic activities.

52. The influence of domestic activities is encountered once again when marital status is considered. The rate of participation of single women is two or three times higher than that of married women but, depending on the country, is relatively similar to the rate of participation of separated or divorced women, who return to economic activity when they have to assume their responsibilities as heads of households.

53. Domestic work performed in the family units themselves for the consumption of their members or the maintenance of the unit occupies not less than 80% of the female population of economically active age in the region, on a paid or free basis. At least two out of every three women engaged in this work do so on a free basis, i.e., without direct monetary compensation.

54. Economically active women are employed primarily in the services sector, followed by manufacturing and commerce. Employment in agriculture is declining, possibly owing to the modernization of production systems. Thus there are sectors which are relatively open to the employment of women (services, manufacturing, commerce) and sectors which are relatively closed (mining and quarrying, construction, electricity, gas and transport).

55. When the situation in the various countries is compared it is found that this general structure of female employment is maintained; that there are fewer variations than might be expected in the percentage of women working in the manufacturing sector, possibly owing to the continuance of small cottage and artisan-type industries in the less industrialized countries; and that a high percentage of women is recorded in unspecified activities, where there is a great variety of ill-defined, unstructured and badly paid jobs.

56. In a breakdown of employment in the services sector, which is where the majority of the women are employed, it may be noted that a large proportion of the employment in this sector consists of domestic work. Approximately one-third of the economically active women in the region are employed in it. Various studies have shown that, as a rule, the educational level of domestic workers is lower than the average for urban women and that they consist mainly of single unskilled migrants from the countryside to the cities. They are paid very low wages and the work itself is not rated very high. The coincidence between the one-quarter of economically active women working in domestic service and the one-quarter working as professionals or office workers suggests that the two categories are closely linked and that the former's domestic work permits the latter to engage in their work.

57. The better-educated women are rapidly joining the labour force. Between 1960 and 1970 women gained access to the middle and upper levels of the employment structure in a higher proportion than men. The occupational groups to which women have most access are those of professionals and technical specialists, workers in services and office workers. Ten per cent of the economically active female population comprises dependent professionals, which, combined with the university careers most frequently followed by women, has given rise to the large number of women in nursing, teaching, and other occupations connected with different services. A proportion of around 12% are employed as office workers or saleswomen. It has already been stated that a little over 26% are engaged in domestic service. Small percentages of the rest are distributed among the remaining occupational groups.

58. Open unemployment affects women two or three times more than men. The shortage of jobs especially affects women, who are paid less than the going rate for their work. Economic recessions affect women more than men, and their jobs are therefore less stable. Considering the total economically active population, it will be seen that, on average, the educational level of women is higher than that of men. If the occupational strata are considered, however, their level of education is seen to be lower, except among own-account and industrial workers. This may be due to the fact that the professional and semi-professional stratum absorbs a considerable proportion of employed women, which affects the general average. Nevertheless, in this stratum, men show a higher average educational level than women, owing possibly to the shorter courses of studies the latter usually follow.

59. In all the countries of the region, women predominate in the low-income group and are fewer in the middle and upper income groups, which clearly indicates the wage discrimination to which they are subjected. As a rule, the average income of women is lower than that of men, even within the same occupational group.

60. Although vocational training programmes have registered considerable growth, it is regarded as insufficient in terms of the number of individuals they include and their predominantly urban coverage and location. Only 20% of those participating are women, a large proportion of whom enrol in courses related to the services sector. In rural areas, women's participation in training activities is virtually insignificant.

61. A negative attitude to the recruitment of women has been noted among employers, who by way of justification adduce the existence of additional costs such as the maintenance of creches, disruptions in production owing to maternity leave or absences for domestic reasons, and the difficulty for many women of working overtime or night shifts. Employers maintain that they do not give opportunities of promotion to women because, in addition to the interruption of their employment, they lack the qualities of leadership, organization and planning.

62. According to specialized social surveys, women appear to have different motives for working, which vary according to their socio-economic stratum. In the lowest stratum, wages are the basic factor; in the middle stratum, economic independence and a contribution to the family income; in the upper stratum, personal and professional fulfilment. A high percentage define their work as provisional, as a means of overcoming temporary household economic problems. Many of them express the view that a woman with children should not work and her greatest ambition is to be able to devote herself exclusively to the home.

63. When getting a job, women themselves seek activities that are a continuation of their domestic role. They accept the fact that they earn little, or less than they should, since they consider that their wages supplement the husband's although in many cases the woman's wage amounted to 50% of the family income.

64. Attention has been drawn to situations where the existence of legislative measures offering greater protection for female work may sometimes lead to restrictive effects on employment. In addition, the conditions of the world economy have affected the income of governments; this has led them to curb the expansion of education and other services and to freeze or reduce public employment, with particular incidence on the creation of posts for women.

65. In view of the difficulties facing the economies of the region in creating sufficient employment, it is probable that the following central problems will prevail in the next decade:

(a) In broad terms, domestic work will continue on much the same lines as at present, with its sequel of isolation, economic dependence and subordination to men. Men and women will be socialized in different contexts

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and will either develop or inhibit the relevant features of their personality in adapting to them. This means that the difficulties deriving from the dual work load of women who work, either as part of a family or as heads of households, will persist.

(b) If the basic structure of the sexual division of labour is maintained, it is unlikely that the attitudes to work for women and to female activities will change substantially; consequently, discrimination in pay and in the social valuation of their work will be maintained.

(c) The growth of female education may lead to a steady reevaluation of employment of a domestic nature or as street vendors in the tertiary sector, which is where the women of the poorer strata at present tend to be concentrated. This may place greater pressure on the already saturated predominantly male job markets. An increase in open male unemployment may result if women are employed instead of men to carry out the same activities for less pay.

(d) Since the participation of women in the labour force depends largely on the education they receive, presumably the growing number of women passing through the educational system will lead to greater pressure for them to occupy jobs in the modern sector of the economy.

C. Health

66. Because of the special care they need during pregnancy, childbirth and lactation, women, together with children, are worst affected by the health conditions prevailing in the region.^{22/} The action proposals deal specially with mother and child care, nutritional conditions and the provision and coverage of health services.

67. The following general characteristics have prevailed in the region in the last few years:

(a) Maternal, infant (children under one year of age) and child mortality, as well as fertility rates, have decreased, although they still remain relatively high;

(b) Health services are still insufficient and inadequate to cover the population's needs. There are various reasons for this, including their

^{22/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 32 and 36.

poor geographical distribution to the detriment of rural areas. Such insufficiency and inadequacy of the services affect all aspects of the population's health.

68. Between 1960 and 1975 the maternal mortality rate, defined as the number of deaths of mothers per 10,000 live births, declined in the region, from 20 to 14 in South America and from 18 to 10 in Central America and the Caribbean. Some of the most important risk factors are the high number of births, the excessive frequency of successive pregnancies, foetal death malnutrition and, in particular, births involving high risk, defined as births to women under 20 and over 34 years of age. The percentage of high-risk births varies from country to country, but in many it is over 50% of the total number of births, and even as high as 67%.

69. Between 1965 and 1975 the infant mortality rate dropped by 20% in Central America and the Caribbean and by 26% in South America, the rate of decrease accelerating between 1970 and 1975. The mortality rate for children aged 1 to 4 years dropped even more sharply (an average of 40%). Among the causes of mortality, the biggest decline was in infectious and parasitic diseases, which is partly attributable to the decrease in mortality from diarrhoea and enteritis.

70. The mother's health is the most important factor of risk for the newborn child, although cultural factors also play an important role in determining the risk of disease and death for mother and child. There is a close association found between child mortality and the educational level of the mother, and between these two factors and residence in rural areas.

71. Although fertility rates remain relatively high in some cases, they have decreased in most of the region. On the other hand, life expectancy at birth has shown significant increases in all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

72. The number of doctors, nurses and auxiliary medical personnel in the individual countries of the region varies widely, e.g., from 21.7 doctors for every 10,000 inhabitants at one end of the scale to only 0.9 at the other. Much the same situation arises with respect to the number of paediatricians. These indicators of the average state of health in the countries of the region not only vary from one country to another but

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present even greater variations within the countries themselves. Life expectancy in rural areas is 17% less than in metropolitan areas, while the infant mortality rate is 109% higher and the proportion of undernourished children 232% greater. The high percentage of rural population in most countries of the region tends to aggravate this problem.

73. Since the factors affecting the state of health of the population are complex and interrelated, it is difficult to envisage any substantial change within the next decade. Moreover, given the prevailing style of development and the foreseeable shortage of resources for social development, it seems unlikely that a solution will be found to the problems of geographical coverage and human and technical resources necessary for steadier progress in the sphere of health, particularly in rural areas.

D. Housing

74. As regards housing, the Regional Plan of Action notes that women are the basic users of the houses since they spend most of their time in the home and use it as a base of operations.^{23/} The action proposals deal with the ownership and nature of dwellings and their implications for living conditions, on the basis of the urban and rural human settlements in which they are located, focusing on the most underprivileged sectors of the population.

75. The salient feature of this sector in the region is the growing housing deficit, to which no adequate solution has been found, especially for the low-income social strata; this is reflected in the low quality of the available housing and basic services. Furniture for dwellings is also scarce, one of the most alarming indicators of which is the number of persons per bed.

76. In the poorest urban sectors, housing conditions may be considered on the basis of three major groups. Shanty settlements generally come into being as a result of land take-overs, occupying empty plots or situated on the periphery of the cities. Their inhabitants erect their dwellings by their own efforts, with waste materials (tin, cardboard, tar-impregnated paper). Most of these settlements have no piped water and this is obtained

^{23/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 54, 55, 57 (a) (2).

from one or two taps installed to serve the whole population. There are no sewage services, and a few cesspools are constructed for common use. Moreover, the residents live under the constant threat of being ejected by the authorities, either because of complaints from the owners of the land or for other reasons (floods, infections, etc.). The women and children have the task of fetching water and queuing for it in all weathers. The deficient water supply and waste disposal service have their impact on the sanitary conditions and make these settlements more vulnerable to diarrhoea and parasitic diseases and epidemics. Usually, too, they have no access to the most essential urban services (doctors, school, telephone, police, etc.) and anybody who has contracted infectious or contagious disease remains in the settlements without the minimal safeguards, in the women's care.

77. Slum districts, which are generally situated in the oldest parts of the cities, include tenement buildings or other similar kind of housing. They generally lodge one family per room, with communal sanitary services and cooking facilities. The crowding and aforementioned inconveniences would seem to be compensated for in the eyes of their inhabitants by access to urban services and the relatively short distance to their sources of work.

78. The plots and services programmes consist of land on which the State has installed minimum services and the families erect a provisional dwelling, generally with government assistance. The dwellings have basic services and legal security of tenure, and contact is maintained with government services in a relatively organized manner. As they are usually situated on the periphery of the cities, they do nothing to facilitate female labour outside the home. It should be noted that as the governments' financial difficulties have increased, the conditions under which such dwellings are offered, in terms of both quality and area, have gradually deteriorated.

79. Rural housing is even more inadequate than urban housing. The relatively scattered distribution of rural settlements and the poor capacity of their inhabitants to organize themselves in defence of their own interests convey some idea of the magnitude of the problem.

80. In the great majority of the countries in the region there is piped water in 60% or more of urban dwellings and in less than 30% of rural dwellings. In one country of the region the proportion of dwellings with piped water and sewage services was 77% in the metropolitan area and 12% in localities of up to 2,500 inhabitants, while the proportion lacking both these services was 3% and 64%, respectively. This situation is found to a greater or lesser extent in all the countries of the region for which data are available. It is not surprising, therefore, that mortality rates - particularly maternal and infant mortality rates - are so high.

81. In view of the persistent migration from the country to the town, the pattern of residence of recent unions, and the fact that the drop in the fertility rates will not be reflected in a decrease in the number of unions within the next decade, an increase may be expected in the demand for housing, both urban and rural. The consequent deficit will somehow be solved by the persons concerned and the most likely possibility would seem to be that the recent unions will live with the family of one or the other of the spouses. Although this may give the woman of a recent union the chance of joining or remaining in the labour force, it will also prolong her subordinate status as daughter or daughter-in-law. The increased crowding will result in a deterioration of sanitary and environmental conditions.

E. Social participation

82. The Regional Plan of Action notes that women do not participate in decision-making and their needs are not taken into account in the planning of development; therefore, efforts should be made so that in practice women have the same rights and opportunities as men.^{24/} The action proposals to that end are to support and promote the participation of women in political activities, to encourage them to run for public and elective office, and to create awareness of the problem.

83. The participation of women in public and elected posts - although still insufficient - has been increasing throughout the region. The main difficulties facing increased participation of women reside, on the one

^{24/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 59 and 60.

hand, in the stereotyped images of women's domestic and family duties, which women themselves recognize, accept and even defend and, on the other hand, in the very conditions in which domestic activities are carried out.

84. Participation in feminist organizations (defining their identity in terms of women in opposition to men on the basis of comparisons and claims) never developed in the region to the same extent as in the central countries, and is clearly declining vis-à-vis other possibilities of participation. Its most important source of supporters was always among women in the middle and upper urban strata.

85. Participation in women's organizations with specific common interests has mobilized women from all the social strata. From groups of professional women to groups for the production and marketing of products of artisan-type industry, and mothers' centres operating in the low-income sectors, this alternative possibility for the organization of women has been gaining impetus in the region.

86. The participation of women in organizations has not been confined exclusively to female organizations; increased participation by women of different socioeconomic strata is recorded in professional associations, trade unions, neighbourhood committees set up to improve infrastructural services, etc. On occasion they have come out into the streets en masse to defend their interests.

87. There has also been increased participation of women in government mechanisms and political parties, although in only a few countries have they participated fully or at more than very low quantitative levels (about 10% of the candidatures and 5% of the elective posts). It is maintained that the increase has been greater in the public and elective posts of small localities in the interior which are of little interest to men. In any case, it should be noted that the question of the participation of women is often dealt with as though it were excluded from prevailing restrictions and possibilities in every society with respect to the establishment of and participation in political, trade union or other forms of organizations.

88. It is foreseeable that in the near future, under the existing rules for social participation, the difficulty of increasing the participation

/of women

of women will not lie so much in values and attitudes as in the actual possibility of combining the activities involved in such participation with domestic duties (particularly the care of small children), and it will be more serious in the case of housewives also performing a paid economic activity.

F. Legislation and administrative machinery

89. The Regional Plan of Action considers that while it is true that legislative measures are not in themselves sufficient to ensure women's equality, they open the way to it and eliminate the support for and strengthening of de facto discrimination.^{25/} For these purposes, the proposal is to revise existing legislation and international instruments, adopt the relevant legislative measures to eliminate discrimination against women, and establish adequate machinery for the purpose of accelerating the implementation of the global, regional and national plans within the Decade for Women.^{26/}

90. Prior to the International Women's Year (1975), most countries of the region recognized the equal political rights of men and women (citizenship, voting, etc.). Undoubtedly, progress has continued in the sense of eliminating the many causes of discrimination contained in bodies of legislation, although there is still a long way to go in this direction.

91. It is impossible to evaluate the progress made in the region since 1975 on the basis of available information and the governments' replies to the questionnaires sent by the CEPAL secretariat. In most cases they enumerate bodies of legislation prior to the date specified. Only a few countries referred to the elimination of discrimination against women in certain areas and furnished information on the legislative measures and progress actually achieved.

92. According to the information supplied, one of the crucial points continues to be legislation on the family, since only in a limited number of countries has the married women full economic, social, political, labour and legal independence, which finds expression in the regulations

^{25/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 17 and 18.

^{26/} Regional Plan of Action, paras. 19 and 21 (1).

governing parental authority and custody of the children in cases of separation, and in women's legal powers to share in the administration of their own property and of their property in marriage.

93. Few governments have set up a body for planning and concentrating all the activities related to women. It has occasionally been suggested that a body of this type would result in isolating the problems of women from global development problems. In any case, only very rarely are policies implemented to improve the situation of women, children and the family within a global concept of social development.

94. It is probable that in the near future - as a result of the pressure of women in the middle and upper urban strata, particularly professionals - progress will continue in the elimination of discriminatory legislation. It seems less likely, however, that great strides will be made in the actual enforcement of women's rights in those groups which most need it, namely, poor rural and urban women.

III. TYPES OF FAMILIES AND THE SITUATION OF WOMEN
AND CHILDREN 27/

95. In the Regional Plan of Action, the family is considered as the nucleus which generates and transmits the values, norms and attitudes that orient the individual and collective conduct of the members of a society, and as a mediating institution between the individual and the social group.28/

In the light of this basic approach, the action proposals take into account not only the importance of the family as regards the situation of women and vice versa, but also the importance of the family and women for the healthy development of children.

96. Families mediate between the individual and the larger social group depending on the socioeconomic stratum to which they belong. They accordingly develop strategies for living by means of which they organize and use their resources for the reproduction of their members in both the daily and the generational cycle, and define the demands they make on society. All this influences the conditions in which domestic work is performed (housing, basic services infrastructure, instruments and raw materials), the possibilities of effecting investment that would modify such conditions, the amount of family income, and the need for different members of the family group to contribute towards it. All these facts, together with the traditional sexual division of social labour, largely determine the situation of women and children in the region.

97. The intensive rate of economic and social change recorded in the region has affected the living conditions of family units and their members. This is shown by a cursory review of those processes. From the demographic point of view, the drop in the fertility and mortality rates has affected the various sectors differently. In the poor rural and urban sectors the decrease in the mortality rate (particularly infant mortality), combined with the present fertility rates, has resulted in a larger number of live children per family.

27/ For further information, see the supporting document "Contributions to the Diagnosis and Promotion of the Integration of Women into Development" (E/CEPAL/Conf.69/L.3), particularly Chapter II.

28/ Regional Plan of Action, paras. 35 and 45.

In these social sectors with the lowest level of family income, per capita income decreases still further in view of the number of members. Other sectors, particularly the middle and upper strata of the metropolises, have managed to control their fertility and have reached an average number of members per family similar to that in some developed countries. This fact, added to their access to services, enables them to obtain the maximum benefit from their situation.

98. The process of agricultural modernization carried out by means of the improvement in technology and land concentration has had various effects on the family organization, women and children. Internal migration, both rural-urban and rural-rural, has modified the population structure by sex and age, in both the place of origin and that of destination. This influences the rate of family dependence, the position of women as heads of households, either seasonal or permanent, the urban installation of recent arrivals in precarious settlements or slum districts, etc. The absorption of a large part of the rural population in the wage-earning system and the monetarization of the agricultural economy affect the amount of income and the manner of obtaining it, the diet, the sexual division of labour and, therefore, the distribution of work and authority within the family units.

99. The industrialization process carried out by means of intensive capital investment has failed to create sufficient employment, has been concentrated in the principal cities and its effects have spread to the rest of the country, destroying the family subsistence economies and artisan-type production. The difficulty of obtaining an adequate monetary income restricts the rural families' access to manufactured goods, in addition to which the income obtained from artisan-type industry and the marketing of agricultural production decreases. The urban population lacking skills and capital seeks to obtain an income in sporadic occupations or in the so-called "informal sector". The middle and upper urban sectors, for their part, are incorporated in the modern sector of the economy owing to their relatively high qualifications, so that they obtain enough income to acquire durable consumer goods that lighten the burden of domestic tasks, possess a suitable dwelling and have access to education and other services. All these facts, to which should be added various kinds of aspirations and motives, contribute to the formation of small families in these strata.

100. The value content, attitudes, and patterns and forms of life related to the family and the relations among its members have been subjected to a less intensive rate of change, which has mainly affected the more educated social strata. This is reflected to a great extent in the patterns and attitudes with respect to the role of women and the internal relations of authority in urban nuclear families.

101. Since most of the women in the region are engaged in domestic work resulting in the reproduction of individuals, it is necessary to stop and consider, although briefly and by way of illustration, the conditions in which this work is performed and their implications, particularly in the poor rural and urban sectors.

102. Generally speaking, the income of poor rural families is obtained partly in money and partly in kind, in greatly varying proportions. The total is barely enough for somewhat inadequate food and clothing. In accordance with the predominant cultural pattern, the man is responsible for providing the monetary income. To obtain it he joins the ranks of the wage-earners, or migrates seasonally or permanently to work in different kinds of harvest work or in the mines. Normally, seasonal migration does not mean dissolution of the union, but it causes all kinds of difficulties for the family unit, and particularly for the woman, who assumes the temporary responsibility of head of the household. In the case of permanent migration the woman continues as head of the household, which considerably increases their difficulties. Women make their contribution to the monetary income by the manufacture of artisan-type products and the sale of these and some agricultural products. Income in kind is obtained from the land in the unit's possession which is worked by all the members of the family, according to a fairly rigid sexual division of labour. The dwellings lack piped water and sewerage systems. In these circumstances, domestic work is heavier, the conditions of hygiene are poor, and diarrhoea and parasitic diseases abound, with the resulting infant mortality. The unions tend to be of a consensual nature and present high percentages of women as heads of households (up to 30%), normally associated with the presence of successive fathers, which is responsible for the large number of children of the women concerned. These women lack professional care in connexion with pregnancy

/and birth.

and birth. The children are born in the dwelling and are looked after by local midwives. The parents' educational level is low, and the children, because of the difficulty of attending school and the need to contribute their share of the work, tend to drop out of school or repeat the years, so that they end up as functional illiterates. In view of the type of rural settlement concerned there is little chance of organization beyond the sphere of the local community. The family unit is a closed nucleus and its members identify themselves with it more than with the global society or with some intermediate group. The diet is based on what the family unit itself produces; it is anything but varied and is below the minimum protein and calorie levels. If the male is present, authority is vested in him and the unit's economic operation is his responsibility, while everything in connexion with the domestic area is reserved to the woman.

103. In poor urban family units the male heads of household are generally independent workers without capital, or unskilled wage-earners with sporadic employment. This instability of the male's work is one of the reasons for the high percentage of consensual unions of short duration, and the large number of family units with female heads of household. Their income is exclusively in money, and in view of the insufficient amount contributed by the male the women and children must also work. The women must always have some paid occupation to supplement the family income. They work mainly as street vendors or in paid domestic service or some personal service they perform in the home. Dwellings are precarious; water is often obtained from a common tap, and a cesspool is located near the dwelling. Domestic tasks are performed with primitive implements, which accounts for the levels of hygiene, resulting in diarrhoea and parasitic diseases. Owing to the closeness of the dwellings and the crowding, infectious diseases spread rapidly. Insecurity is a daily problem, in both personal terms and with respect to their scarce belongings, and even the dwelling itself. This situation is aggravated by the lack of access to urban services such as the police, fire brigades, telephones, etc. In these settlements the proportion of young people, particularly children up to nine years of age, is higher than in the rest of the city. Women have some - although insufficient - access to public services in the way of medical care during pregnancy, birth

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and the post-natal period. Both men and women have low levels of education. The children are several years behind in school, or have dropped out to earn some kind of income. Some are sent to better-off relatives; others leave home and live through cycles in the street and in rehabilitation institutions. As a rule, the social status of the women is lower than that of the men: they have had less education, earn lower wages and perform work which is rated lower than the men's. It is they who suffer directly from the lack of services and its effects on the children, and also from the frequent excesses of male authority; this is usually expressed violently especially when the man is under the influence of drink. The women usually form organizations to approach and contact public officials and for mobilizing the inhabitants in order to obtain or organize some minimum community service.

104. In view of the style of development prevailing in the region, it seems unlikely that there will be any substantial change in the conditions in which the poor rural and urban families carry out their domestic tasks. In spite of the high infant mortality rates in these families, they have the largest number of surviving children, which means that the accumulation of problems they face will probably be aggravated. Furthermore, although these problems can be analysed by sector, in actual fact they co-exist, strengthen one another and affect the family units. In turn, because of the sexual division of labour, they primarily affect the position of women.

IV. THE AGENTS

105. The Regional Plan of Action addresses its action proposals to a number of agents: the governments, CEPAL, other agencies inside and outside the United Nations system, public and private organizations and institutions, employers, trade unions, and the mass communication media. In the light of the information available, the activities carried out by some of these agents since the adoption of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development will be reviewed.

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

107. In accordance with the mandate received in this Plan of Action, the CEPAL secretariat established the Specialized Unit for the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean. This Unit has carried out activities in the fields of technical assistance, research, the collection and dissemination of information, and the co-ordination of these various kinds of action, details of which are included in the "Report on Activities of the CEPAL secretariat relating to the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean", and the "Report on the activities of the CEPAL system secretariat on the problems of youth most closely related to the situation of the family and the status of women (education, health and housing)", which form part of this appraisal.^{30/}

108. The various aspects of the activities of the United Nations agencies may be described on the basis of a project inventory prepared with information supplied by them.

109. This reports the existence of 150 projects in the region: 53% involve technical assistance activities, 23% the analysis and collection of data,

^{29/} Documents E/CEPAL/MDM/1, E/CEPAL/MDM/2/Rev.1 and E/CEPAL/MDM/5/Rev.1.

^{30/} Documents E/CEPAL/MDM/3 and E/CEPAL/MDM/4.

and 8% the dissemination and exchange of information. The rest of the projects combine various activities. There are regional projects (28), subregional projects (6 for Central America and 8 for the Caribbean), and projects for countries or groups of countries. The aspects considered in the projects are essentially those covered by each agency, but they basically centre on the promotion and integration of women in development, health and nutrition, education and training, and occupation and employment. Some deal with the family, family well-being and fertility. Rural women are considered a priority group in one out of every five projects; only five projects concern urban women, while the remainder make no distinction between the two areas. In some of the projects, the presence of the stereotype of a modernized, urban, educated and economically active woman in the services sector may be discerned.

110. This brief information seems sufficient to show that the agencies of the United Nations system are increasingly interested in participating in activities designed to modify the situation of women in the region.

111. In addition to the United Nations agencies, regional projects are also executed and financed by some intergovernmental agencies, governments, non-governmental organizations with consultative status vis-à-vis the United Nations, private institutions and foundations.

112. As stated in paragraph 8, a considerable number of countries replied to the questionnaire sent by the CEPAL secretariat. The information provided relates primarily to legislative aspects. On the whole, it centres on the education and maternal and child health sectors, and, to a lesser degree, on aspects of employment, income and political participation. Only one country of the region seems to have incorporated the situation of women in its global development programmes.

113. The international agencies appear to be increasingly willing to undertake activities in connexion with the integration of women in development. The utilization of international co-operation in the near future would seem to depend on the will of the governments and their willingness to undertake action in this field.

V. POLICY GUIDELINES

114. The explicit or implicit answers to questions as to what development, for what purpose, for whom and how to achieve it permeate every programme whatever the focal group or objective it covers. Even if they are not integrated in the global development programmes and strategies, the policies aimed at modifying the situations of women inevitably fall within the framework of the characteristics and content of national development styles and their relevant global policies.
115. In dealing with the question of women, a number of old arguments re-emerge in connexion with general aspects of development (what it consists of, what are its dynamic elements, which is the most-favourable organizational framework for society, etc.). Similarly, measures or strategies which are already well known are proposed, as though they had never been put into practice before and no knowledge or experience existed regarding their possibilities or limitations.
116. Inasmuch as this is considered to be a problem that exclusively affects women rather than society as a whole there is less chance of its being integrated in global development strategies and programmes.
117. In this respect, it would seem advisable to adopt the integrated approach that women share with individuals in other social categories (men, youth, children) a number of situations which are common to them all as members of a particular society and a specific socioeconomic stratum, and that women also face situations essentially affecting themselves in view of the social and sexual division of labour.
118. The problem therefore lies in determining how women participate and are integrated in society, and in establishing why such participation and integration are unsatisfactory for the development of society, and how and by what means this situation can be remedied.
119. Women participate and are integrated in society as consumers and producers. As individual consumers, mention must be made of the inputs for their own reproduction (food, education, health, etc.). The quantity and quality of the inputs are basically determined by the social stratum of the family units to which the women belong, and much less by sex; however, some

/studies show

studies show that there is a more equal division of inputs between the sexes in family units of the middle and upper strata than in those of the lower strata. Women are consumers to the extent that they are responsible for obtaining the goods and services for the family unit's consumption. As producers, an attempt is made to determine how they are incorporated in paid economic activities, and in what conditions they perform those activities, their domestic tasks, or both. From the standpoint of the contribution of women as producers in domestic activity, there are also significant differences according to the social stratum of the family units to which they belong. The use and consumption of goods and services is very specific according to the sex. Thus, for example, an adequate dwelling provided with infrastructure services benefits all the members of the family but especially the woman, since it is she who performs her domestic tasks with greater or lesser labour, and spends most time in the home.

120. In the design and implementation of policies with a direct bearing on the operational levels of the economy (investment, inflation, industrial or agricultural development, etc.) it frequently happens that their social implications are overlooked, although it is well known that such policies directly or indirectly affect in different ways all the social strata and the families and individuals belonging to them (children, young people, women, men, etc.). It would therefore be desirable if those who decide or plan policies apparently unrelated to the social sectors were to take into account their consequences for the social situations which condition the social life of women, particularly poor women in both urban and rural areas.

121. Some integrated multisectoral policies such as those related to critical poverty or integrated rural development often place emphasis on employment, productivity, income and access to a number of services, and are primarily oriented towards the male heads of household to increase their productivity: it is they who primarily receive training in production and marketing techniques, credit, and, at times, land, etc. In this respect, and to correct this distortion, it would be necessary:

/(a) To

(a) To determine the existence and proportion of family units with female heads of household with the purpose of directly including them in the policies aimed at eliminating poverty by increasing the productivity of the poor;

(b) To foresee the possible effects of proposed modernizing changes in the production systems, on the social and sexual division of labour, domestic production, intrafamily relations, the raising and socialization of children, and the social status of women, which may become more secondary than was previously the case.

122. As regards sectoral social policies (education, training, employment, health, etc.), it should be borne in mind that women participate in them on a varying basis:

(a) As consumers of services, in many cases they have access to them on an unequal footing with men. The causes of this differences would have to be determined and the necessary corrective measures adopted;

(b) As those who implement or promote the implementation of social development policies through their domestic work, their training assumes first priority;

(c) As beneficiaries of special social policy measures, in such cases as maternal and child care services, or in the form of basic services infrastructure, housing, techniques for lightening the burden of domestic work, etc. Through the identification of these various situations, the effects of many social development programmes that are currently in process may be multiplied.

123. The situation of women as heads of households deserves special attention. Female heads of household occur in different social strata almost invariably in critical situations; but more frequently and with more serious consequences in rural and poor urban sectors. The policies aimed at these family units should take into account both the domestic work of the female heads of household and the fact that they are responsible for obtaining the family income, with the resulting difficulties in combining both types of activities. It should be borne in mind that in the case of the problems of this group an assistance-oriented approach is only a short-term solution.

124. To summarize by sectors, the following measures or policies would seem to affect the situation of women most directly:^{31/}

(a) Education:

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

(b) Employment:

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

^{31/} Many of the following recommendations were made by the governments of the region on the occasion of the "La Paz Appraisal", op. cit., sections 25 and 26.

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

(c) Health:

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

(d) Housing:

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

(e) Legislation:

- (i) Existing legislation should be reviewed, with particular reference to the family institution (marital union, parental authority, duties, duties and rights of spouses with respect to each other and the children), accompanied by campaigns for the spread and extension of legal services;
- (ii) There should be a review of legislation that may interfere with the social participation of women in the relevant economic, cultural, social and political activities.

/(f) Sexual

(f) Sexual stereotypes:

- (i) Action in this field (schoolbooks, advertising, mass media) should focus on the stereotypes of both sexes and not only the female sex, in view of the mutual relationship by means of which they are defined;
- (ii) Systematic campaigns should be made through schools and the mass media to avoid discriminatory stereotypes.

125. The choice of the proper strategy will depend on the conditions found in each particular country, according to the nature of their problems and the available resources. Given the general situation prevailing in the region, a satisfactory strategy should be to assign priority to the poor rural and urban sectors; incorporate them in global national or regional development programmes and strategies; adopt an integrated and multisectoral approach, since the difference in each sector affect the rest; take into account the role of the family, and within it that of women, in the reproduction of individuals within the domestic community.

126. A strategy should begin by defining one or more high priority central objectives (for example, the supply of drinking water or the elimination of illiteracy in the entire rural population within a specific period, the raising of nutritional levels, etc.). To achieve these objectives, a body could be set up to focus and co-ordinate action and policies and channel resources, and other complementary objectives and programmes could be established according to the needs detected in the sectors and fields defined as beneficiaries. If several countries of the region were to define a similar or related central objective, a broad field would be opened for horizontal technical co-operation and a basic framework would be available for the co-ordination of international assistance.

127. A policy aimed at improving the situation of poor families could comprise the following minimum group of measures:

(a) Stable employment for the head of household, whether male or female with a sufficient minimum income and near the family unit's place of residence;

/(b) Health,

(b) Health, housing, educational and basic services infrastructure programmes for lightening the burden of domestic work and enabling the women to initiate other activities;

(c) Large-scale family education programmes;

(d) Programmes for organizing families in self-help neighbourhood or community associations;

(e) Legislative measures in support of the above action and objectives.

128. This is considered a minimum group of measures because the absence of any of them leaves virtually unchanged the limitations affecting the organization of poor family units, with their sequel of implications for the situation of their members, in particular the women and children. They are also considered as minimum measures because the governments of the region are in greater or lesser degree implementing policies in nearly all these respects, assigning for the purpose human and financial resources the co-ordination of which would make more effective and permit a more rational use of international technical assistance.

129. The strategy chosen, the beneficiaries chosen and the objective to which priority is assigned have some influence, even if only a partial one, on the continuity of these policies. It often happens in the region that pilot or experimental projects have no subsequent extension or application not any significant effects for lack of follow-up.

130. It has long been recommended that programmes and projects be evaluated not only when they are completed but throughout the process of their execution. It is quite common for some fairly complex machinery or criteria to be associated with this. Since programmes and projects for women have a relatively short history, appraisal activities are essential for purposes of accumulating the widest possible experience for their future development. At the national level it would be best to consider very simple mechanisms involving the participation of the government officials that implement them and the recipients themselves, as well as representative women's organizations.

131. The regional appraisals are dependent upon de availability of information and in this respect simple expeditious machinery should be developed for communication purposes. The clearing house which the Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation (CLADES) of the CEPAL system is bringing into operation may be considered a central element in the development of such machinery.

