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CEPAL

MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE
REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE INTEGRATION OF
WOMEN IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
OF LATIN AMERICA

Kingston, Jamaica, 14-15 February 1978

REPORT

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. In compliance with the relevant recommendations contained in the Regional Plan of Action on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, which was adopted at the eleventh extraordinary session of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL), held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 21 November 1977, the Chairman of the Conference convened a meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Conference at Kingston, Jamaica, on 14 and 15 February 1978. The purpose of this meeting was to carry out consultations, jointly with the secretariat of CEPAL, on the progress made in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action, including the convening of a group of government experts to evaluate the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action before the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America.

Membership and attendance

2. The Meeting was attended by the following Presiding Officers of the Conference: Chairman: Vilma Espín (Cuba); First Vice-Chairman: Carmen McGregor (Jamaica); Second Vice-Chairman: Carmen Moreno de del Cueto (Mexico); Rapporteur: Veronica Lepage (Venezuela). The Presiding Officers were accompanied by the following advisers: Eugenio Latour, Olga Finaly, Esther Véliz, Mirta Barquet (Cuba); Lucille Mair, Hazel Nelson, Valerie McNeil, Elizabeth Philips (Jamaica); Gloria Espinoza (Venezuela). Jorge Viteri, Carlos Borsotti and Jean Casimir attended on behalf of the Office of the Executive Secretary of CEPAL.

Opening of the Meeting

3. The opening ceremony of the Meeting of Presiding Officers took place on the morning of 14 February in the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Jamaica, where the working meetings were also held. Mrs. Carmen McGregor, Jamaican Minister of State for Women's Affairs and First Vice-Chairman of the Regional Conference, speaking on behalf of the host Government, welcomed the Presiding Officers, their advisers,

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and the representatives of the Office of the Executive Secretary of CEPAL. She said that the favourable and prompt reaction of the governments represented by the Presiding Officers in putting into practice the initiative of holding a meeting of the Presiding Officers in Kingston was evidence of their will to move resolutely ahead in the efforts to achieve the integration of women in the economic and social development of their respective countries and in the region as a whole.

4. Mrs. Vilma Espín, Chairman of the Regional Conference and of the Presiding Officers, stressed the importance of the Meeting of Presiding Officers in Kingston, since it was the first one to be held following the formal adoption of the Regional Plan of Action by the Committee of the Whole of CEPAL. The Presiding Officers were keenly interested in receiving information from the secretariat of CEPAL on the progress made in compliance with the Regional Plan of Action, including the activities being carried on by the CEPAL secretariat itself in that connexion. Such information should give the Presiding Officers a clearer idea of the action already taken in the region and of the problems that remained to be solved in order to achieve the full participation of women in the economic, social, political and cultural development of the countries of the region. She further stated that the United Nations General Assembly had proclaimed 1979 as International Children's Year, and in view of the close relationship between the problems affecting children and those affecting the family and women she suggested that the subject could well be dealt with at a future meeting of the Presiding Officers.

B. AGENDA

5. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda for their first meeting:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Report of the secretariat of CEPAL on the results of the eleventh extraordinary session of the Committee of the Whole of CEPAL, held in New York on 21 November 1977.

/3. Report

3. Report of the secretariat of CEPAL on the progress made in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action and the execution of programmes related to the integration of women in development.
4. Group of government experts to appraise the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action.
5. Programme of work of the Presiding Officers and its co-ordination with the work of the secretariat of CEPAL.
6. Provisional agenda for the next meeting of Presiding Officers.
7. Date and place of the next meeting of Presiding Officers.
8. Consideration and adoption of the final report of the Meeting of Presiding Officers.

C. SUMMARY OF DEBATES, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS

Report of the secretariat of CEPAL on the results of the eleventh extraordinary session of the Committee of the Whole of CEPAL, held in New York on 21 November 1977

6. With regard to agenda item 2, the representative of the CEPAL secretariat underlined the importance which both the Executive Secretary of CEPAL and the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs attached to the fact that the Regional Plan of Action on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America had been adopted with only one amendment to the text recommended by the Havana Conference. The only change introduced in the Regional Plan of Action ^{1/} was to replace sub-paragraph 86(9) on the question of Panama Canal by a new text proposed jointly by the United States and Panama, which was also adopted by consensus by the Committee of the Whole. In view of the formal adoption of the Regional Plan of Action by the member governments of CEPAL, its recommendations should now be implemented

^{1/} This Plan is given in document E/CEPAL/1042/Rev.1.

as soon as possible, and in that respect the secretariat of CEPAL appreciated the opportunity of holding consultations with the Presiding Officers of the Conference, in conformity with the provisions of the Regional Plan of Action.

Report of the secretariat of CEPAL on the progress made in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action and the execution of programmes related to the integration of women in development

7. At the beginning of the discussions on agenda item 3, the representatives of the CEPAL secretariat informed the Presiding Officers of the progress made and the problems thus far encountered in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action. The information supplied by the secretariat covered four main points. First, the consultations made by the secretariat with various member governments of CEPAL concerning the action already in progress or envisaged at the national level, including the difficulties that had arisen in some cases in the preparation of specific projects which might be submitted for the consideration and approval of the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Decade of Women. Secondly, the consultations with member governments with a view to the possible initiation of specific projects at the sub-regional level, particularly in the Caribbean and Central American areas, which could also be submitted to the Advisory Committee for financing. Thirdly, the activities being carried out by the secretariat within the CEPAL system and also in co-ordination with other members of the United Nations family concerned with the integration of women in the economic and social development of Latin America, including high-priority interdisciplinary projects such as those being organized in connexion with the problems of extreme poverty and rural social development. Fourthly, future activities, including a seminar on mass communication media and the image of woman as a sex object; an interregional meeting with staff members of other regional economic commissions working on the problems of the integration of women in development; and the initial work on the preparation of the appraisal to be made, before the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and

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Social Development of Latin America, of the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action in this connexion.

8. Mrs. Lucille Mair then described the criteria established by the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Decade of Women and the manner in which those criteria had been developed.

9. After an active exchange of views, the Presiding Officers decided:

(1) To convey to all the governments of the region, and all the institutions involved, their grave concern at the delay in the effective implementation of the World Plan of Action and the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America;

(2) To stress the need, in view of the fact that the basic responsibility lies in the action taken by each country at the national level, for governments to ensure the implementation of those recommendations of the Regional Plan of Action which are of most importance within the framework of the relations and strategies established by each country, and to formulate specific priority projects for which they hope to obtain external technical and financial support;

(3) To emphasize that use should be made of all the existing sub-regional, regional and international instruments and mechanisms in order that the measures envisaged in the Regional Plan of Action may be put into practice as soon as possible;

(4) To recommend to CEPAL and its secretariat that, without prejudice to any activities being carried out by them in support of national programmes, they should also pay special attention to sub-regional projects that coincide with priority areas indicated by the governments concerned;

(5) To emphasize the desirability of devising specific programmes and projects capable of being put into practice immediately and of giving results within a short period. In projects involving studies and research, it was considered advisable that the activities should be closely related with the execution of specific projects planned or already in operation;

/(6) To

(6) To request the CEPAL secretariat to carry out the following specific activities:

- (a) To prepare an information document on the criteria laid down by the General Assembly, by the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Decade of Women, and by other resolutions on the preparation and formulation of projects;
- (b) To draft some standardized guidelines to facilitate the formulation and presentation of projects;
- (c) To prepare an inventory of relevant projects planned or being carried out in the region with support from the United Nations system, and an inventory of existing projects in other regions which have obtained financing from the Voluntary Fund;
- (d) To send a questionnaire to governments in order to obtain information on the progress made in implementing the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America. 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;
- (e) To send governments a sufficient number of copies of the Regional Plan of Action for distribution to all the government and non-governmental institutions concerned;
- (f) To prepare a directory of institutions, persons and experts in the region engaged in activities designed to achieve the full participation of women in development;
- (g) To include in future reports on its activities concerning the Programme for the Decade of Women a detailed account of the manner in which the Programme fits in with the rest of the activities of the secretariat.

Group of government experts to appraise the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action

10. For logistic and economic reasons, and because of the need to establish close co-ordination between the activities in connexion with

/women and

women and the rest of the CEPAL programmes, it was recommended that the meeting of the group of government experts from the region, envisaged in paragraph 4 of the resolution adopted at the Havana Regional Conference, should take place in the first quarter of 1979, shortly before the meeting of the Committee of High-Level Government Experts and in the same place.

11. It was recommended that the report of the group of government experts on the integration of women in development should be considered by the Committee of High-Level Government Experts.

Programme of work of the Presiding Officers: dates and places of future meetings

12. It was agreed to consider jointly agenda items 5, 6 and 7 on the work programme of the Presiding Officers, the provisional agenda, and the places and dates of future meetings.

13. The Presiding Officers agreed to meet on at least two occasions. The first meeting will be not later than October 1978, at a place to be decided on in consultation between them and their governments, but preferably in some country which has not yet been the venue of their meetings. The provisional agenda is expected to include, among other subjects, an appraisal of the activities carried out up to the time of the meeting in compliance with the Regional Plan of Action, and consideration of decisions connected specifically with those problems affecting children which are most closely related to the situation of the family and women (education, health, housing, etc.).

14. A second meeting will be held in co-ordination with the meeting of the group of government experts which is to evaluate the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action as a preparatory stage for the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America.

Adoption of the final report

15. Before the closing address by the Presiding Chairman, Mrs. Vilma Espín, the present report was considered and unanimously adopted.