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**REPORT OF THE FOURTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE INTEGRATION
OF WOMEN INTO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

(Guatemala City, Guatemala, 27-30 September 1988)

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A. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date

1. The fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean was convened by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC in fulfilment of ECLAC resolution 495(XXII). The objective of the Conference was to evaluate what had been done to meet the requirements of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development in the light of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, taking into consideration the impact of the crisis on the status of women.

Attendance

2. Participants in the meeting included representatives of the following States members of the Commission: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belice, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Venezuela.

3. The following States associate members of ECLAC were also represented: Aruba, the Netherlands Antilles and the United States Virgin Islands.

4. Italy and Sweden, States Members of the United Nations, not members of the Commission, also participated in an observer capacity.

5. The United Nations Secretariat was represented at the meeting by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA) and the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC).

6. The Conference was also attended by representatives of the following United Nations bodies: the International Research and Training Institute for the Advance of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

7. The following United Nations specialized agencies were also represented: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO) and the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO).

8. In addition, the meeting was attended by representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations: The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organization of American States (OAS), the OAS Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW) and the Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration (SIECA).

9. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council were likewise present: Category I - International Confederation of Free Trade Unions/Regional Organization of Workers of the ICFTU (ICFTU/ORIT), International Council of Women (ICW), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and World Confederation of Labour. Category II - Baha'i International Community, Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services and Zonta International. Roster - Altrusa International, Inc.

10. The following special guests attended the Conference: Eva Haydée Alarcón de Arriola, Miquel Angel Barrios Escobar, Dora Bekley, Carmen de Byrne, Sofía Castillo, Sara Ciriaiz de Fuentes, Elisa Cobar, Sonia Cordon Aldana, Lily del Valle de Marin, René de León Scholter, Rodolfo Estrada Hurtarte, Leonel Franco Morán, Marilda Garcia de Cruz, Ricardo Gómez Gálvez, Blanca Guerra, Rodolfo Maldonado Ruiz, Sonia Regina Martínez Mancilla, Crista Ruiz de Jhárez, Lizardo Arturo Sosa López, Dora Sprems, Gladys Tablada de Régil, Gloria Tujab, Ofelia Orbelina Vásquez and Raquel Zelaya.

Election of Officers

11. The Conference elected the following Officers:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Guatemala
<u>First Vice-Chairman:</u>	Netherlands Antilles
<u>Second Vice-Chairman:</u>	Argentina
<u>Third Vice-Chairman:</u>	Cuba
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Venezuela

12. It was agreed to follow the procedure laid down in sub-paragraph 2) of paragraph 88 of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, which reads as follows: "The Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference will continue their functions until new ones are appointed and will be the link between governments and the secretariat of CEPAL in the field of women's integration in development".

Agenda

13. At its first meeting the Conference adopted the following agenda:

1. Election of Officers
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Report by the Chairman of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean on the work done since the third Regional Conference
4. Review and critical evaluation of some aspects of the status of women in the region, including their incorporation into the labour market, women heads of household and the role of women in commerce in the Caribbean
 - a) Report by the Secretariat
 - b) General debate
5. Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women up to the Year 2000 and their implementation at the national, subregional and regional level, with consideration of the national machinery responsible for implementing the Strategies and special attention to the problem of the abuse of women and the effect of violence on their status
6. The impact of the regional crisis on women
7. Preparations for the fifth Regional Conference
8. Other business
9. Consideration and adoption of the report of the Conference.

Organization of work

14. On 27 and 28 September, the participants made statements in plenary on the various agenda items. At the same time the officers of the Conference were engaged in preparing a draft document entitled "Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: Evaluation and proposals for action". That document was subsequently reviewed by the Latin American and Caribbean Group and was adopted by the Conference on 30 September. It constitutes section C of this report.

15. At the end of the plenary meetings, the Rapporteur introduced the draft version of the final report, which was adopted by the Conference. On the invitation of the Rapporteur, three delegations conveyed amendments to the Secretariat, which are reflected in this report.

Opening meeting

16. The opening meeting was held on 27 September in the Teatro Nacional and was presided over by His Excellency Marco Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo, the President of the Republic of Guatemala.

17. Speakers at the opening meeting included Ms. Raquel Blandón de Cerezo Arévalo, the First Lady of Guatemala; Ms. Hilda Anderson Nevárez de Rojas, Chairman of the third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean; Mr. Gert Rosenthal, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, and Mr. John Mathiason, Deputy Director of the Branch for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Office at Vienna. The President of the Republic of Guatemala declared the fourth Regional Conference officially opened.

18. After welcoming the delegates attending the fourth Regional Conference, the First Lady noted the commitment of the women of her country to the objectives of ECLAC and to the task of creating a new and more peaceful and just society in the region.

19. She noted that women, over and above their political and ideological differences, could be in the forefront of the struggle to achieve the objectives shared by everybody in the country and by the international community. In that regard, she observed that while the Nairobi Conference was being held, the women of all the political parties participating in the Guatemalan elections campaign at that time had been able to unite in order to promote the common causes of national development and regional peace.

20. She said the presence of the delegations at the Conference reflected the commitment, will and resolve of the countries they represented to press forward in the struggle to achieve the objectives set by the United Nations and expressed her best wishes for the success of the work of the Conference.

21. The Chairman of the Presiding Officers of the third Regional Conference said that while in recent years there had been greater participation by women in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the region, there were still obstacles and problems to surmount and that the progress of women had been particularly hindered by the recent economic decline. In that connection, she said that women had been the ones hardest hit by the effects of the economic crisis since they had had to redouble their efforts to ensure the well-being of their family and were subject to much more uncertainty and insecurity in employment.

22. She stated, however, that the Nairobi Strategies constituted a true plan of action and provided a broad view of all the problems experienced by women in the international economic and political context and stressed that it was generally agreed that the success of their implementation was contingent on international economic trends and, in particular, on the impact had by those trends on the developing countries.

23. She urged the women of Latin America and the Caribbean, who had already made progress in the area of social and political co-responsibility, to join together in striving towards the goal of peace and more equitable

development. She concluded by saying that her country had considered it a great honour to chair the Presiding Officers of the third Regional Conference and to contribute to the success of their work.

24. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC thanked the authorities of the host country and its First Lady in particular for their effective support in the organization of the meeting.

25. The inequality and discrimination which still characterized the situation of women in the region were contrary to the principles of the United Nations. The fact that women constituted a large percentage of that portion of the population which experienced the greatest difficulty in satisfying their basic needs was attributable to social and cultural factors, to preconceived ideas about the role of women in society and to the burden of their reproductive tasks. Approaching development from the perspective of the problems and potential of women was part of the broader question of how to offer all strata of the population of the countries an increasingly higher standard of living.

26. He referred to the active participation of ECLAC since 1975 in activities relating to the participation of women in development, mentioning the regional meetings and conferences and other activities which had been organized in that respect. In that connection he said some significant achievements could be observed with regard to social awareness of the rights of women and to the establishment in most of the countries of specialized offices for the advancement of women and of numerous non-governmental agencies that dealt with that subject. The objective of the fourth Regional Conference was to ensure that that process of change continued to operate and grew in scope.

27. The social cost of the current economic crisis had been tremendously high, which had disproportionately affected the most vulnerable groups, including in particular poor urban and rural women. In the face of the crisis, a development objective more equitable than the objectives pursued in the past was being advocated. However, just as growth did not in itself ensure equity, neither did it, on its own, guarantee that women would be more effectively integrated into development; to integrate them more effectively, it was necessary to implement practical policies in various spheres, which would also be a subject of debate during the meeting.

28. He ended his statement by referring to the major objectives of equality, development and peace set by the World Conference to Review the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, placing them in the context of the evolution of the region during the post-War period.

29. The Deputy Director of the Branch for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Office at Vienna greeted the participants on behalf of the Director General of that office and said that the fourth Regional Conference had great significance at the regional and international levels since it marked the beginning of the processes of reviewing and evaluating the implementation of the Nairobi strategies, which would culminate in the special meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women to be held in 1990. It was appropriate that the process was being set into motion at regional

level since that was the level at which the strategies were being put into practice and advantage could be taken of the practical experience gained by countries in thinking priorities, identifying obstacles and testing the validity of proposals.

30. He said that a body of information had already been built up which would make it possible to conduct a review with regard to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace and to ensure that some balance had been struck between the achievements made in respect of those objectives and the concerns to which they gave rise. With regard to the objective of equality, he noted that more than two thirds of the countries of the region had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In addition, the situation with regard to access to education had improved, and national mechanisms to promote the advancement of women had been established. It was, however, a matter of concern that no significant progress had been made with regard to economic equality, partly because of the crisis experience by the region but also because little headway had been made in the past. With regard to development, he noted that there had been progress in connection with social indicators as reflected, for example, in a reduction of mortality in childbirth and an increase of life expectancy at birth but said there was reason for great concern over the rise in poverty, which affected mainly women, in both rural and urban environments. With regard to peace, he said there had been much progress and change for which women had been largely responsible. Violence at the international and national levels and within the home gave cause for concern, and it was necessary to seek ways of dealing with it and of eliminating its structural causes in the long term and its symptoms in the short term.

31. Finally, he noted in conclusion that the Conference was being held at a time which was precisely half way between 1975 and the year 2000. After a process of maturing, it had now been recognized that the advancement of women was the concern not of women alone but of society as a whole and that equality was not only a right but also a necessity on which everybody's advancement and the emergence of a world characterized by equality, development and peace depended.

32. In declaring the fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean open, Mr. Marco Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo, the President of Guatemala, noted that in past decades, the political leaders of the region had been able to choose between two broad categories of development model as reflected in the systems established in the United States and the Soviet Union. The current crisis had complicated the task of those leaders, and made it a real challenge to the imagination which must be tackled not only through the use of models but also at the level of feelings and convictions.

33. The countries of the region should opt for a model that could at once provide a minimum of well-being and a maximum of happiness. In that connection, he said it might be a mistake to define development in terms only of material objectives and to measure it only by material variables which concealed very important aspects of the development of nations. Constant criticism of the management of political leaders in the light of such variables alone did not take account of the power of their confidence in and

expectations for the future of their countries to bring about achievements that were difficult to measure in the short term and could be better evaluated and understood in the future.

34. Maximum happiness for nations could be achieved through the free participation of their margined sectors, including, in particular, sectors comprising women, young people and peasants. Development could be prompted only if those sectors became the subjects and objects of their nation's history. He ended his statement by saying that countries could solve their problems by political rather than economic means, and he appealed to margined sectors to install in their countries the qualities of hope, solidarity and participation needed to reach solutions of that kind.

Closing meeting

35. During the closing meeting, the floor was taken, on behalf of the participating delegations, by the representatives of Colombia and Antigua and Barbuda; on behalf of the Secretariat, by the Director of the ECLAC Social Development Division, and by the First Lady of Guatemala in her capacity as Chairman of the Conference.

36. The representative of Colombia delivered an expression of gratitude to ECLAC and to the authorities of the Government of Guatemala, in particular the President and the First Lady of the Republic.

37. Referring to the present position of women in the region, she noted that the substantial progress recorded did not obscure the discrimination which characterizes the societies in which they lived. Unless profound changes were made in the technical, social and cultural aspects of the present division between work done at home and the social and economic life of the nations, little progress could be made towards equality between the sexes. She felt that the State had a strategic role to play in the creation of conditions in which the values responsible for the subordination of women could be changed and a contested effort could be made to effect the institutional change required if that was to happen.

38. She said she was convinced that no obstacle, however daunting, could be allowed to stand in the way of the achievement of the fairer, more representative society to which every nation aspired, and she emphasized the need for the region to look to the future and to attend to its task of constructing a new, modern society. As a young society, Latin America had before it alternatives which made it possible for it to view the future hopefully. She ended her statement by saying that the new phase which had opened with the present conference made even greater demands on the countries to fight for a society which was more honorable, just and amenable in respect of all its members and where women could recover their rightful role in history.

39. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda began her statement by thanking the Chairman for the efficiency with which she performed her task and extended those thanks to the Government of Guatemala, the Secretariat of ECLAC and the ECLAC Office in Port of Spain and the entire conference staff.

She also thanked those bodies which co-operated with countries in activities related to women.

40. She said the achievements of the Conference should not be allowed to overshadow the work still pending and called upon the women of the region to renew their commitment to the total and egalitarian participation of women in development in the future. In that respect, she stressed the importance of fostering the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean.

41. The Director of the ECLAC Social Development Division stressed that in the meeting it had been made clear that the process of the integration of women in development appeared ambivalent in that it consisted in a combination of successes and failures. In order to overcome the failures, there was need to confront not only direct obstacles to the integration of women but also obstacles to development, equality and peace, goods which were requisites to the achievement of full integration. In that connection, he mentioned the structural obstacles of external origin which were so very evident in the present crisis and those of internal origin, especially social inequality, which was reflected in, among other things, discrimination against women.

42. He drew particular attention to the importance of ridding the mentality of women and men from the discrimination which persisted in all societies, whatever its level of development or socioeconomic or political system. Finally, he applauded the mixture of idealism and realism with which the tasks undertaken in order to achieve equality for women were being confronted.

43. The Chairman of the Conference, speaking on her own behalf and on behalf of the other officers, expressed gratitude for the confidence placed in them all and drew attention to the need to form a team to follow up on the work of the meeting. At the same time, she called upon the representatives to review the documentation submitted by the Secretariat within their own national teams and to disseminate it through various media.

44. After paying homage to those who had pioneered in activities for the advancement of women, she said that the time for action had come and should be seized with renewed inspiration and abnegation. Convictions grew stronger in an atmosphere of action, and the women of the region possessed the skills they needed to define their own parameters in full assurance that all that was done to promote women would eventually yield benefits for all mankind. In declaring the Conference closed, she called upon everybody to heed the age-old wisdom of the peoples, to strengthen peace and to confront bureaucracy and fear of ridicule by drawing upon the inexhaustible supplies of energy to be found in women's groups.

SUMMARY OF THE DEBATES

45. In opening the plenary meetings, the Chairman of the Conference thanked the outgoing Chairman for the work carried out over the past five years to promote the integration of women into the development of Latin America and the Caribbean. Speaking for all the women of Central America and of Guatemala in particular, she also thanked the member countries for their presence and urged them to persist in their efforts, their enthusiasm and their faith in the objectives to be attained by raising the status of the women of the region.

46. A crisis was also a time of change and consequently a time of opportunity for the people involved. At such a time, it was worth reaffirming the superiority of the values of solidarity and brotherhood to all forms of discrimination and inequality, including those directed against women. Those values enabled people to channel their potential for change and to seek their own road to a better future, even in the midst of the adversities caused by an economic crisis.

47. Where the issue of women's equality with men was concerned, much ground had been covered since the Conference held in Mexico City in 1975, and this had made it possible to accumulate a body of theory and abundant information; thus, it could be said that the most difficult phase had already passed. In that connection, she said that now was the time for action and that it was necessary to take advantage of the fourth Conference to devise new schemes overcoming problems which stood in the way. In her call to action, she asked the participants to propose inputs and solutions aimed at achieving the objectives of equality, development and peace.

48. In introducing the documentation, the representative of the Secretariat said that regional activities with respect to the subject of women already had a history since the fourth Regional Conference was in fact the fifth exercise of appraisal and proposals conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean.

49. The studies prepared by the Secretariat responded to the objectives of the Conference, which were to reappraise the current situation, to propose future activities and to reaffirm the region's commitment to the advancement of women. The main guidelines used in preparing the studies had been the search for equity and the concern over discrimination against women. The backdrop to those studies was constituted both by the crisis, which was responsible for a sharp decline in the living conditions of women, and partly by an approach to the future which, in accordance with the Nairobi Strategies, was global in scope but also embraced specific action.

50. The Secretariat agreed with the Chairman that since a body of information had already been compiled on the subject, what was now needed was to begin to put the proposals into practice. It firmly believed that the crisis should not be allowed to halt the progress made in the incorporation of women in the development process and that their increased training and participation in the work force had raised expectations which made a return to the past impossible.

51. The achievements attained included the development of public awareness of the issue relating to women and the incorporation into public debate of matters regarded as private, such as domestic violence, the family and maltreatment. The representative of the Secretariat also emphasized the importance assumed by women's movements and the participation of women in new organizations. She drew attention to alternative forms of participation and political activity women were discovering and to their ability to express their grievances more coherently and maturely. She noted the important role played by non-governmental organizations in general in the developments taking place in respect of the advancement of women.

52. In conclusion, she reminded the participants that the fourth Conference was the first regional meeting since the World Conference in Nairobi and said that, as such, its results would doubtlessly make a valuable contribution to the meetings due to be held in the other regions of the world in 1990.

53. The representative of Chile gave a historical review of the participation of women in employment in the various sectors of national life and their growing incorporation in education and the professions. She noted the various dimensions of the tasks performed by housewives and the significant contribution they made to society, despite the scant recognition accorded them and the fact that they were not considered to be part of the economically active population.

54. Although equality of rights for men and women in the area of employment was established by law, certain obstacles still remained to the effective participation of women, deriving from the inadequate recognition given to the role played by women in society. She noted the progress that had been made in that connection as a result of the ILO recommendations that the entire employment process should be organized in such a way that personal requirements and lifestyles were respected.

55. The social security legislation of Chile took account of provisions in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights relating to the needs of female workers and the risks and hazards they encountered. In that respect, she referred in particular to the provisions concerned with the protection of mothers, day-care centres, play schools and special supplementary food programmes and to social security benefits in respect of illness, childbirth, accidents on the job, occupational diseases, unemployment, disability, old age and death.

56. She said the participation of women in the professions and in political life was increasing, that women in Chile had had the right to vote since 1949 and that the first woman minister of government in Latin America had been a Chilean appointed in 1952.

57. The representative of Venezuela referred to the achievements made and obstacles encountered in the advancement of women in her country. One step forward had been the establishment of the Sectoral Office for the Advancement of Women, which strengthened State management in the design of social policies and in the implementation of programmes. One of the achievements of that office had been the creation of working committees in

the fields of education, employment, legislation, social communications media, health and political participation.

58. With regard to education, she said that sexual stereotypes had been eliminated from schoolbooks. In connection with social communications, she reported the establishment of a reference and information service on women. With regard to employment, she noted the project to reform the labour law by correcting articles which discriminated against women and also mentioned projects to provide managerial training for women. Referring to political participation, she explained that the thrust of the efforts made had been to increase the presence of women in posts at the decision-making level. With regard to legislation, she emphasized the proposed reform of the penal code to provide for legislation on abortion, rape and incest and to sanction abuse within the home and also mentioned the creation of a legal assistance network comprising government and non-governmental agencies. All those accomplishments had been achieved in conjunction with women from different political backgrounds who shared the same goals.

59. The representative of Argentina described the progress made in the legal field in her country since the third Regional Conference. That progress included the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the promulgation of a law which eliminated discrimination based on sex, race and religion. She also noted the existence of two government offices on women, one dealing with work outside the home and the other with work at home. Achievements included the adoption of laws on shared patria potestad; equality among offspring (ending the distinction made between legitimate and illegitimate children and the designation of children as such); divorce; the establishment of the conjugal domicile by mutual consent between the man and the woman; a woman's use of her maiden or married name, according to her own choice and pension rights for common-law wives. She also mentioned the National Food Plan, which, while not directed exclusively towards women, benefited over one million families and had resulted in a notable decline in malnutrition among children. She referred too to the implementation of the literacy plan, which had just received an award granted by UNESCO. This plan was aimed at the adult population, in which illiteracy was much more common in women than in men.

60. Finally, she urged that when the final document of the Conference was drafted, the issue of the heavy burden represented by the external debt and the constraints it placed on development should be taken separately and highlighted, noting, in that connection that her country's balance-of-payments surplus was not large enough to meet the interest payments on its debt. She also stated that the exaggerated protectionism practised by the developed countries limited the development possibilities of the countries of the region.

61. The representative of Cuba referred to the severity of the present situation in the Latin American and Caribbean region, noting that the enormous burden represented by the external debt, amounting to US\$410 billion, which was proving impossible to meet in economic, legal and moral terms, constituted an obstacle to the economic and social development of the people of the region and had to be tackled unitedly.

62. The adjustment policies imposed by IMF made it necessary to effect even greater reductions in the consumption of the great majority of people living in Latin America and the Caribbean and also to cut down on national investment, the net result being poverty which impacted on women in particular. In that respect, she referred to the "feminization of poverty," an issue which had been identified in international bodies and had gained acceptance in the studies made in relation to the advancement of women.

63. Unequal trade, dumping, protectionism and other ruinous measures practiced by the developed capitalist countries to the detriment of the countries of the region aggravated the already dreadful economic and social situation of those countries -- a situation whose chief victims were women.

64. The application of a fair solution to the external debt problem and the establishment of a new international economic order would create the conditions needed if the countries of the region are to achieve full development of a humanitarian type in which both men and women find fulfilment. Development of that kind called for the combined efforts of everybody concerned.

65. The representative of Brazil expressed her Government's satisfaction at having been able to participate in the current conference held to evaluate the existing situation, to identify needs and to recommend measures for the intergration of women into economic and social development. She said she would limit her statement to matters which related specifically to the women's issue in the belief that such an approach would result in the realization of more realistic and concrete objectives. She also said that the advancement of women was not an issue which affected only women but that it concerned the whole of society and everybody's progress was touched by it. Progress in recent years included increased awareness of the issue, more evidences of equality in legislative provisions and diversification of the employment open to women. However, since the need to surmount the poverty now experienced in the countries of the region deprived the objective of equality of much of its immediacy and increased the vulnerability of women to the effects of the crisis, it was essential to take concrete development planning policy measures in order to guarantee that women enjoyed political, economic and cultural equality.

66. The efforts made in her country included the creation of the National Council on Women's Rights and the work done by it to defeat discrimination. Brazil had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1984. The growth of women's movements was indicative of adhesion to the principles behind the United Nations Decade for Women and also of a considerable increase in the number of women in the labour force, which was many times higher than the statistics indicated since women were to be found in occupations, such as work at home in the informal sector, for which no records were kept. The percentage of women in the student body of universities was surprisingly high, and there had been a tremendous increase in the number of women engaged in scientific and technical activities. The work of the National Council on Women's Rights was two-fold, consisting first in identifying the desires of the women in the population by engaging in dialogue with organized groups of women and second in devising action which was integrated with the public sector and co-

ordinated with government agencies. She gave examples of the kind of progress made, including the establishment of 49 police stations devoted exclusively to women, a pioneer venture in Brazil. She also referred to provisions of the new Constitution of Brazil relating to equality between the sexes in terms of rights and responsibilities, job equality, maternity and paternity leave, land and credit rights for peasant women and similar provisions. She ended her statement by appealing to the participants to come to realistic conclusions which would help to raise the status of those women who were living on the fringes of the societies of Latin America and the Caribbean.

67. The representative of the Dominican Republic first referred to the principal problems affecting the population of her country in general, and women in particular. Those problems included unemployment, the low wages paid to working women, migration outside and within the country, inadequate social security coverage, an increase in the use of violence against women, inadequate basic services (electricity, drinking-water supply, health facilities, housing and transportation) and the persistence of legislative discrimination against women with respect to access to land and credit, the administration of household goods, etc.

68. The measures adopted to combat these problems included some aimed at promoting the participation of women in political life as an effective means of achieving their incorporation in the development of the country on an equal footing. At the same time, every effort had been made to co-ordinate all measures in favour of women at the levels both of governmental institutions and of non-governmental agencies. In that regard, efforts had been made to reactivate a governmental inter-agency committee, the highest consulting body at the political and technical level, of the Department for the Advancement of Women. It was planned to appoint a national body to co-ordinate the non-governmental agencies engaged in tasks relating to women. Activities were also being co-ordinated with international agencies such as INSTRAW (whose headquarters are in the Dominican Republic), UNICEF and ECLAC.

69. The co-ordination exercise included a study carried out in 1987 to evaluate state financing of programmes and projects benefiting women. That study had been considered at a consultative meeting held in January 1988 and attended by the technical experts responsible for planning and projects in the various public institutions. That meeting represented the first step towards the initiation of a process of planning, programming and following up on those activities.

70. The representative of Costa Rica noted that the Costa Rican society had traditionally been characterized by a rigid division between the roles of the sexes. Although in recent decades women had increased their participation in the labour market, they still represented a low percentage of the economically active population and were more apt than men to be the victims of unemployment. She said the objectives of the present government were to raise the standard of living, especially in the more vulnerable sectors, through the implementation of multisectoral programmes and that progress had been made in the fields of education and health. Some problems still existed, however, included those of household violence and the insufficient number of women in high political posts although the fact that the office of

Vice President of the country was held by a woman showed that there were some very obvious exceptions to the latter problem.

71. She also referred to the draft law on real equality for women, which was being promoted by the First Lady and by the National Centre for the Development of Women and the Family and made it mandatory for the State to promote and guarantee real equality between men and women in all fields. It provided for political, social, economic and educational measures and for measures against violence, including the establishment of an office for the defence of women. The draft law was part of the action taken under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which had been ratified by Costa Rica in 1984.

72. The National Development Plan included general policies relating to women, which she listed. Among them she cited policies on living conditions, equality of rights, the elimination of stereotypes and the promotion of women's participation in production. The activities linked to those policies were carried out at the national, local and project levels.

73. The representative of Belize reported on the evolution and objectives of the Department of Women's Affairs, which had adopted new directives in 1986. She stated that gender-based attitudes in society accounted for the limited participation of women in certain productive sectors of the economy.

74. She mentioned the incorporation of cottage industries within the community-based productive activities of the Department of Women's Affairs and acknowledged the assistance provided by local, regional and international organizations to training programmes and to projects related to management, leadership, health and income generation.

75. The representative of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) said that in the years immediately preceding the United Nations Decade for Women, the economic performance of the CARICOM countries had been reasonably satisfactory. By the end of the Decade, however, there were indications of a generally worsening situation due to the world crisis, which had a negative impact on the employment of women and particularly on that of young women.

76. The positive results of the Decade included a demonstration of commitment on the part of Governments of countries members of the Community, evidenced by the establishment of national machinery and the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the development of a greater awareness of the issues affecting the situation of women; the establishment of regional agencies/institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, to support programmes at national level and improved participation of women and girls in educational institutions in non-traditional areas.

77. She then listed the following priorities established by CARICOM in 1985 in respect of activities relating to women: i) data collection and dissemination of information, ii) strengthening of national machinery, iii) public education, iv) strengthening of the economic power of women and v) technical assistance. In that connection, she named some of the activities carried out in each of the fields mentioned. She drew attention

to the usefulness of and need for technical assistance for national machinery and to the absolute necessity of such machinery's being able to rely on more abundant, relevant and disaggregated information on women. In respect of the need for information, she said that some of the activities conducted by the secretariat of CARICOM had received initial support from INSTRAW. She also referred to the recent establishment of women's studies programmes in the University of the West Indies and the University of Guyana and to the programmes being conducted by the non-governmental organizations of the region in connection with the advancement of women.

78. She expressed particular gratitude for the co-operation of the ECLAC Office in Port of Spain in the execution of programmes and referred to the possibility of setting up South/South co-operation programmes, in which the ECLAC Office could play an important role in the establishment of linkages. She appealed for the allocation of greater resources for the Office's work and for the inclusion of the CARICOM countries in all programmes (e.g., training programmes) which were consonant with the priorities of CARICOM. She ended her statement by calling on all countries to pay particular attention to the situation of the young people of the region.

79. The representative of Jamaica informed the meeting that her country was the first in the English-speaking CARICOM region to have issued a national policy statement on women. That statement had been formulated through a process of participation and consultation among government and non-government agencies and with individuals at all levels of the society.

80. She highlighted the achievements made in the advancement of women with regard to income, labour force participation and services to meet the needs of abused women, adolescent mothers and women whose working conditions were poor. In that regard, she mentioned the existence of crisis centres and shelters, women's centres and credit facilities for women in agriculture and small business. She also referred to the situation of women in free zones and to the contribution made to the national economy by informal importers known as "higglers".

81. She expressed gratitude for the technical assistance received from the ECLAC Port of Spain Office in such areas as women traders and women in development planning and drew attention to the relevance and usefulness of the video films produced for use in programmes at the national and community levels.

82. She reiterated the commitment of her government to the pursuance of programmes and projects for the advancement of women notwithstanding the turbulent times and the effects of natural disasters such as those caused recently by Hurricane Gilbert.

83. The representative of the Netherlands Antilles said, firstly, that participation in the Nairobi Conference had marked a culminating point in the process of recognizing that the status of women was a subject of concern not only to women but also to Governments and to the society as a whole.

84. Women in her country did not constitute a homogenous group. To some degree, however, women in certain social groups lagged behind men with

respect to their integration into the development process. Moreover, they were more gravely affected by the contraction of the job market.

85. Against that background, the Government was seeking to increase the economic power of women, to expand employment opportunities, to establish day-care centres for the children of working mothers, to promote co-operation among the different women's groups throughout the island and among the various islands that comprised the Netherlands Antilles and to combat the drug problem.

86. She reported that her Government was seeking to repeal all laws which discriminated against women and that it supported the useful work undertaken within the framework of the Programme on Women in the ECLAC Office in Port of Spain and stressed the importance of the contribution that programme was making to the advancement of women.

87. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda highlighted the work of her country's Women's Desk to promote the advancement of women in many areas, such as training, data collection, conscience-raising in respect of the problems encountered by women and their increased participation in the economy.

88. She emphasized her government's commitment to address problems related to women and violence, to the aged, to the unemployed and housewives and to the legal status of women, priority being placed on research programmes to reveal the real situation of women in that country.

89. She noted that considerable progress had been made through linkages with international agencies and non-governmental organizations, particularly on subjects such as abused women, alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, delinquency and disturbed and abused children.

90. She acknowledged the support received from the Women-in-Development Programme in the ECLAC Port of Spain Office with regard to women traders and women in small business and the technical assistance provided in respect of government programmes relating to women. She added that the video films produced by the ECLAC office had been very useful, not only for programme activities in the countries but also for non-governmental organizations.

91. The representative of the United States Virgin Islands noted the advances made by women in various professional fields in her country and the commitment at the national level to efforts to enable the National Commission on the Status of Women to address the problems experienced by women in particularly vulnerable groups. She said the issue of battered women deserved special attention.

92. She commended the meaningful contributions made by such national organizations as the Women's Resource Center, and also expressed gratitude for the support offered at regional level by the ECLAC Port of Spain Office.

93. She said her country considered it an honour to be hosting the eleventh session of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee, a subsidiary

body of ECLAC, and noted that issues relating to women would probably be discussed at that meeting as well.

94. The representative of El Salvador said that in 1980 a process of democratization and a quest for stabilization had begun in her country. The conflicts experienced by the country had been particularly damaging to the social and economic life of women and had also had repercussions on the family in the form of family disintegration, the uprooting of people from their place of origin and physical violence. She said women constituted the most marginal group in a marginated population since the situation caused by the armed strife had forced them to enter the labour market, usually the informal sector, at a time when its conditions had deteriorated.

95. She went on to identify some areas in which the integration of women into development had been reflected, referring first to reforms in family law, penal law and legislation on minors. She then touched on the changes which were being made in programmes relating to primary health care, mother and child care and family planning. With regard to education, she mentioned literacy projects and technical assistance in production activities. She stressed that one of the Government's priorities was the care provided for women in the lowest income groups with a view to bringing them into the formal sector and giving them access to credit in the future. Finally, she said her Government was constructing the conceptual framework of its women's policy while at the same time, organizing Women's Bureaux in the various sectors so that to give co-ordinated impetus to plans of action within a global approach to integration and participation of women in the economic and social development process.

96. After expressing his gratitude for the honour of participating in a meeting chaired by the First Lady of the host country, the representative of France congratulated the ECLAC secretariat on the high quality of the documentation submitted, which he said he found extremely interesting in that it would enable his country to form some idea of the present position of women in the region.

97. Reading the documents had given him a feeling of great satisfaction because of the tremendous changes recorded, as reflected especially in the field of legislation; in the incorporation of millions of women in the labour force --a process he termed irreversible-- and in the progress made of the political life of women, primarily as a result of efforts made by the women themselves.

98. The hiatus between the laws adopted and the way in which they were applied and the present conditions on the labour market were, however, cause for concern.

99. Speaking in the light of his country's experience in the matter, he said that in his view it was necessary to insist that women should be trained at the same level as men and that they should be trained for non-traditional, high-level occupations; if that were done, economic difficulties would not have a direct impact on the employment of women. He also stressed the importance of women's participating at the local level, not only in order to

defend certain causes but also and in particular as a means of conscience-raising.

100. With regard to the secretariat document containing inputs which might be used in drafting the conclusions of the meeting, he said it was very well balanced and contained reasonable recommendations and that his delegation would like to see it accepted as the final document of the Conference.

101. The representative of Mexico said that her country had already laid the legal foundations for the equality of women with men, which were indispensable if women were to be integrated into development. In that connection, she drew attention to Article Four of her country's Constitution, in which the principle of the full equality of men and women was enshrined; to the amendments to the nationality and naturalization law, which provided that Mexican nationality could be assumed by a national's children and foreign spouse, and to the agrarian law, in which women were granted the right to own land and to have access to credit facilities.

102. She also reported on the establishment of the National Women's Commission within the National Population Council. That Commission had prepared a diagnostic study and a programme of action in the fields of employment, labour, education, health, social communications, research, political participation, legislation, peace and integral support for women. The programme was being applied in a decentralized manner throughout the country.

103. With regard to employment, she stressed the increasing number of women entering paid employment in what she felt was an irreversible process and the programmes for training women and enlisting them in co-operatives. She also said, among other things, that attempts were being made to satisfy the need for day-care centres for a growing number of working women.

104. In the field of health, the first point she raised was that of the vulnerability of women, due to their dual social role in the areas of production and of reproduction. She then referred to the important contribution made by women in the provision of health services and described some of the measures taken to improve their situation with regard to health.

105. With regard to education, she noted that an attempt was being made to reorient the national education system and to take action in the field of informal education with a view to lengthening the duration of schooling for girls, increasing their participation in education and accelerating the changes taking place in attitudes to women. She also said that the women in the population had been encouraged to choose occupations and professions other than those traditionally assigned to them, that in general an attempt was being made to eliminate stereotypes and prejudices based on sex and that the number of women in professional and technical education had increased considerably.

106. Much progress had been made in terms of political participation by women, and many women occupied important posts. At present 2 Governors, 62 congressional representatives, 10 senators and 108 local legislators were women. In addition, in each of the country's 3 500 municipalities there were

3 or 4 women serving as town councillors. Progress of great import had also been made in communications and research. Finally, she reported that the Federal Labour Law and the Penal Code were under study with a view to defining the crime of sexual harassment.

107. In expressing gratification at Guatemala's being the host country for the fourth Regional Conference, the representative of Guatemala noted that Guatemala had also been given the honour of membership in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Coming at a time when the country had entered a new phase of democracy, these tributes paid to Guatemala had allowed it to engage in more substantive work with regard to the women's issue and to perform activities which were very useful and beneficial for women.

108. In the phase upon which it had recently entered, her country had been concentrating on three priority issues --the consolidation of the democratic process, the pursuit of peace in Central America and the reactivation of its economy. It wished to move forward in a process of economic and social development in which increased integration of women was promoted. She referred to emergency programmes in rural areas, to urban and rural regionalization programmes and to development councils and stressed the allocation of budgetary funds to the municipalities. She noted the great extent to which women had participated actively in the peace movement led by the First Ladies of the region in the spirit of Esquipulas.

109. The representative of Colombia said her country was proud of being a State in which the basic rights of individuals were protected. It had, however, experienced a prolonged period of violence owing to drug trafficking, the emergence of certain elements who took the law into their own hands, common criminal activity and violence perpetrated for ideological reasons. Fortunately, most of the country was unaffected by such violence.

110. After congratulating the secretariat on the documentation it had submitted, she proposed that the effects of violence on women in the most vulnerable groups of society should be adopted as a topic for study. She then went on to describe the achievements made and the constraints experienced with regard to the status of women in her country. In the field of labour, progress had been made in that decrees had been passed bringing women in the informal sector and in domestic service into the Social Security System. In addition, jobs were being created and attempts were being made to relieve the double workload of women by setting up family welfare centres in a movement presided over by the First Lady and operated under the auspices of the Family Welfare Institute of Colombia (ICBF). With regard to health, she stressed the role played by mothers' helpers and health monitors; where education was concerned, she drew attention to the increase in the number of rural teaching posts; and at the level of the family, to the substantial family subsidies and the exemption from taxes of families receiving less than three minimum wages. With regard to legislation, she noted a number of short-term measures and the goal of incorporating the subject of family protection in the country's Constitution. She also mentioned that the agreement between the Government and the Holy See was under review. After describing the objectives of the National Planning Department and of the offices responsible for social and economic

development, normalization and pacification and the defence of human rights, she ended her statement by appealing to countries to enlist in the struggle against extreme poverty in the spirit of the conference recently held at Cartagena.

111. The representative of Honduras reported that within the context of the United Nations Decade for Women, policies specifically aimed at the participation of women with special emphasis on rural women, urban women in low-income groups and indigenous women had begun to be incorporated in her country's national development plans in 1979.

112. With technical support from the United Nations system and from friendly Governments of other countries, a number of programmes had been implemented with the objective of raising the social and economic status of women. In the legislative field, she noted the adoption in 1985 of the Family Code, in which the laws relating to responsibility for paternity, de facto union and family patrimony had been improved. She remarked, however, that many unresolved problems still remained in respect of access to land, housing and other means of production. De facto discrimination persisted in respect of wages and categories of employment. She also referred to other housing projects which were aimed at female heads of household and to health and education projects and commented, in particular, on the project being implemented by the Planning Department with the support of UNIFEM and in co-ordination with non-governmental organizations. Under that project, a socio-economic diagnostic study on the status of women had already been formulated, and the promotion of a national plan on women was nearing completion. She ended her statement by affirming that the women of Honduras were organized and aware that the struggle for equality, development and peace was a daily battle and that their Government was doing all it could to put its policies into practice in co-ordination with the non-governmental and external co-operation sectors.

113. The representative of Nicaragua noted the importance of considering the impact of the economic and political crisis in the region on the current status of women. She described the structural factors common to the countries of Central America, which had turned them into a group of economies dependent on the exterior and stressed the special situation of Nicaragua, where external aggression was disrupting the national economy, making it necessary to spend a high percentage of the resources available on defense and delaying the level of development which would benefit the working class sectors.

114. The country's original development objectives had been to improve the living conditions of its population, to apply a mixed-economy model and to reorganize external trade in order to reduce its dependency and to channel its resources into development. However, the blockade erected by the government of the United States against the country had caused the economy to deteriorate.

115. In the crisis situation of Latin America, women were becoming more deeply entrenched in their traditional subordinate role of administering poverty and absorbing increases in the family work-load, pressured into becoming the protagonists of survival strategies in order to meet the basic

needs of their immediate family. Women had in fact already been incorporated into the labour force; their problem now was to achieve conditions of greater equality. Finally, she appealed for a joint effort in understanding the political context in which women lived their lives and in securing peace in Central America since that was the only way to ensure the development of the countries of that subregion. In that regard, she made special mention of the efforts enlarged at Esquipulas, in which women were required to play a key role in the process of peace and the attainment of equality.

116. The representative of Aruba referred to some of the improvements made with regard to the status of women in her country, among them the attainment of equal rights for children born within and outside of wedlock and the fact that professional women now constituted a larger share of the labour market and female students of graduating classes and that the number of women occupying executive positions had increased.

117. With regard to plans for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, she said her Government was of the view that problems affecting women concerned all sectors of society. Measures that would be taken included action to incorporate women currently unemployed into the labour force, the preparation of a historical survey of the position of women in the country and a measure providing for the protection of women from violence.

118. The ECLAC Office in Port of Spain had contributed much to the country in the form of technical assistance, and the information it supplied made it possible for Aruba to establish points of comparison with other Caribbean islands. In that respect she emphasized very substantial differences between Aruba and the other Caribbean countries (including an almost total absence of illiteracy in it and the fact that it had no rural workers. Moreover, it had received a tremendous number of immigrants, and its economic activities were shifting towards tourism. It hoped to continue working with ECLAC in its activities relating to women.

119. The representative of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), a United Nations body established following the Mexico City Conference in 1975, said that INSTRAW was currently directing its efforts towards implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women by engaging in tasks which included technical co-operation; co-ordination of institutions at the international, regional and subregional level; research and policy analysis and the follow-up and appraisal of policies and plans relating to the advancement of women and their incorporation into all levels of development.

120. INSTRAW operated on the basis of co-operative arrangements with Governments, United Nations bodies and non-governmental and academic organizations concerned with the advancement of women, networking, carried out through its Focal Points, was fundamental to its work. The Focal Points all worked at national level in co-ordination with INSTRAW, and their objectives were the same as those of the Institute. They facilitated communications and conducted research and training, using INSTRAW methods. INSTRAW supported the Focal Points by facilitating their access to information, providing them with advisory services and fellowships,

sponsoring meetings, supplying training materials and modules and helping to finance them, in non-convertible currency, through the INSTRAW Trust Fund.

121. Networking enabled INSTRAW to project its activities in support of the integration of women in economic and social development to all parts of the world. In that respect, she said that at the fourth Regional Conference INSTRAW had advocated the holding of a special meeting to explain the establishment of an INSTRAW focal point in each country and also that the participants had promised to support the work of INSTRAW.

122. Finally she reminded the participants that INSTRAW was located in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, where it operated under the headship of a Director with a staff appointed by the United Nations. Its Board of Trustees was composed of 11 women elected by the United Nations Economic and Social Council from a list of candidates from countries all over the world. For financing INSTRAW depended on voluntary contributions made by countries Members of the United Nations.

123. The Director of UNIFEM said the Fund was proud to have worked in partnership with Governments and non-governmental organizations in the region for over a decade. She described the scope of the financing the Fund provided and gave concrete examples of ways in which it served as a catalyst in obtaining additional funds for projects in the region and financing innovative activities. UNIFEM's work was not limited to activities at national level but extended to regional level through its partnership with ECLAC and other bodies and even embraced global projects.

124. She stressed that UNIFEM's priorities corresponded to those of the countries and regions and pointed out that the Fund had a data bank, which provided information not only on the projects themselves but also on the impact they actually had.

125. She called on countries to co-operate with UNIFEM in its task of promoting "people-centered" development and in its work with women in the field of development, always bearing in mind the Fund's need for flexibility, innovation and sustainability so that results could be obtained in the time needed to give the processes a chance to mature. Over 100 countries had contributed to the resources of UNIFEM, and in such giving there was no conflict of interests since all the funds donated were earmarked for the advancement of women. Finally, she emphasized that women were not simply the victims of economic difficulties but also provided for the welfare of large numbers of people and were in some cases the sole source of their family's income.

126. The representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) said that over the past decade Governments and international bodies had increasingly recognized the status of women and their role in development. Improving the status of women was important not only in its own right but especially in the context of the terms of reference of UNFPA, because the status of women affected and was affected by such demographic variables as fertility and mother and child mortality.

127. The assistance provided by UNFPA in improving the status and situation of women had taken several forms. Its support of projects in its main areas of activities, such as data collection and analysis, mother and child health and family planning, had often helped to raise the status of women and their other beneficiaries. The Fund also supported special projects or components of projects specifically designed to assist women. Such projects included training, research and skill-development projects which gave women access to activities of greater economic usefulness and provided a realistic and practical starting point for developing more comprehensive programmes and projects aimed at improving the situation of women.

128. In order to ensure the full incorporation of women's interests into all population policies and programmes, the Fund had prepared a four-year strategy, which was provided with a detailed work plan and with budgetary resources. It covered the period 1987-1990.

129. In the course of the debates, the Chairman paid a special tribute to those women who held some of the highest political posts in the region. In that connection she mentioned Ms. María Liberia Peters, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles; Ms. Eugenia Charles, the Prime Minister of Dominica, and Ms. Victoria Garrou de Doryan, the Second Vice-President of Costa Rica.

C. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

130. The conclusions and recommendations of the Conference are summarized in the document entitled "Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: Evaluation and Proposals for Action", the text of which is reproduced below.

WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:
EVALUATION AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

1. In assessing the progress made and the obstacles encountered with regard to the status of women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the fourth Regional Conference has taken into consideration and ratified the mandates and recommendations emanating from the instruments adopted in the past on this subject. These instruments include the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year (Mexico City, 1975), the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women (Copenhagen, 1980) and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. At the regional level, consideration was given in particular to the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development (Havana, 1977) and to the resolutions of the second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America (Caracas, 12-16 November 1979), the third Regional Conference on the Integration of women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, 8-10 August 1983) and the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (Havana, 19-23 November 1984). Consideration was also given to the resolutions adopted on this subject by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). In addition, consideration was given to the concepts contained in the declaration emanating from the Regional Conference on Poverty held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 29 August to 1 September 1988.

EVALUATION

2. Latin America and the Caribbean are currently experiencing the most severe economic and social crisis of the past 50 years. This has left most of the countries of the region in a precarious position, and its causes have been both external and internal. Since the final years of the United Nations Decade for Women, the general economic situation in the region has perceptibly worsened. The financial, economic and social crisis in the developing world has caused the situation of broad sectors of the population to deteriorate steadily, the effect on women being proportionally greater than that on men. In particular, the decline in economic activity is having an adverse impact on the already unequitable distribution of income and on the high rates of unemployment which prevail in the region and has affected women more than men. This is especially true of the countries of the Caribbean on account of the structure and size of their economies.

3. The impact of the crisis in the region is reflected in the drop in the prices of the commodities it exports, in the manifestation of protectionism in a number of developed countries, in the prevalence of high nominal and real interest rates, in the instability of the foreign currency markets and in the scarcity of fresh financial resources. It has become essential to

remedy these conditions. Adjustment programmes have become counterproductive in so far as the economies of some countries of the region are concerned, and the policies that flowed from many of the external debt agreements that were negotiated have not yielded the expected positive results.*/

4. The adjustment programmes adopted contained short- and medium-term conditionalities which have hindered development and, in the final analysis, have stood in the way of efforts to eliminate poverty. The external debt cannot be repaid in the conditions which now obtain and in the absence of sustained economic development. While the principles of co-responsibility and of the right to development have now been widely accepted by the international community, they could find expression in more concrete policies. The meeting of the need for a political dialogue between creditors and debtors and for the establishment of a new international economic order can no longer be postponed. There can be no development without peace and no peace without development. There can be no stability without dialogue or rules of the game that are accepted by the society. The development and stability to which the region aspires cannot be achieved without negotiated agreements between the North and Latin America and the Caribbean on the mutual understanding that these objectives are advantageous to both sides.**/

5. One of the effects of the crisis and of the debt has been an accelerating decline in the quality of life of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean, which has had a particularly dramatic effect on the living conditions of women. There has in fact been a sharp drop in the funds earmarked for meeting the expenses required for the implementation of social policies, particularly those relating to education, health and housing, and the social well being of the population as a whole has been strongly affected.

6. As suggested in the Regional Plan of Action, the problems which keep women from participating in the economic, political, social and cultural life of a country are closely related to the conditions generally characteristic of underdevelopment. Thus, it is essential to make the alterations needed in the socio-economic structures while at the same time taking action designed specifically to change the situation of the women of Latin America and the Caribbean to enable them to play an active role in the transformation of the existing structures and to be decisive agents in the achievement of full equality between men and women.

7. As regards participation in the labour force, although the situation varies in accordance with the specific circumstances in each country, it is a fact that the incorporation of women into the labour force has occurred on a scale which was unimaginable 30 years ago. The number of women in the labour force of Latin America and the Caribbean increased threefold between 1950 and 1980, rising from 10 million to 32 million. Account must also be taken of the fact that, although statistics have improved, a large number of jobs, both

*/ The Government of the United States dis not accept this paragraph, considering it to be inaccurate and extraneous to the issue of the incorporation of women into the economy.

**/ Ibid.

paid and unpaid, performed by women are still not quantified nor the principle of equal pay for equal work yet being observed throughout the region.

8. Although they have been brought into the labour market, the deterioration of the employment situation brought on by the crisis severely affects women, who form a majority of the unemployed and of those in the informal sector. This situation is compounded by the fact that in many countries they are paid less than men owing to discrimination.

9. The services sector remains predominant in the economic participation of women and the process of tertiarization continues. Towards 1980, the percentages corresponding to this sector fluctuated between 38% and 55% of the total number of active women. Although their makeup varies, personal services remain important, while the role played by social services is increasing. In most countries, office employees constitute the second most numerous group, and that group is steadily increasing.

10. The work performed by housewives cannot be ignored. In the various countries between 30% and 50% of women over 25 are performing unpaid domestic tasks.

11. It may be concluded that in the field of employment, a pattern has prevailed that is in keeping with the traditional role. However, the autonomy and economic independence of women have increased and have begun to be perceived positively by a part of society and by a growing number of women as having intrinsic value.

12. With respect to education, attention should be drawn first of all to the tremendous expansion which has taken place in formal education and to the growing number of women enrolled in it. However, there are major differences between countries, between rural and urban areas and between native, indigenous and black populations. In some countries the illiteracy rates are as high as 90% for elderly women, while in the 15-19 year age group, they do not exceed 15% and are the same for both sexes. In addition, in some countries, particularly those with high illiteracy rates, women still represent a minority of school enrollments and a majority of school drop-outs, which increases the difficulties they encounter in terms of access to employment.

13. Opportunities were now nearly equal at high-income levels, while the most notable instances of discrimination have persisted among the rural poor and different ethnic and racial groups. The disparity between "highly educated" and illiterate women has also persisted. The school texts used for basic education still portray women in their traditional roles. Higher education for women still relates to skills considered as being most appropriate for women in cultural terms, although there is no doubt that women are increasingly beginning to educate themselves for work and not merely to perform a traditional social role.

14. In the area of health, the majority of countries still fail to provide adequate free public services for a large percentage of the population, and curative medicine predominates. Health services tend to be concentrated in

the urban areas. Since many of them are offered on a private basis, access to them is difficult for the majority of the population. Women's capacity for gestation created specific health requirements. Very frequent pregnancies combined with poor nutrition and lack of rest lead to debilitation, malnutrition and fatigue, resulting in high indices of mortality in childbirth. Adolescent pregnancies, which are on the rise, and induced abortions, which are very numerous and for the most part carried out clandestinely, may constitute a threat to life. All this is often compounded by cultural factors which invite discrimination against girls with regard to medical attention and nutrition. Despite the gravity of the situation, no progress has been made in the area of health and sex education for the population in general and for young people in particular.

15. Where legislation is concerned, the region shows substantial progress. In the first place, over half the countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, thereby expressing their commitment to combat discrimination. The majority of them have also adopted domestic measures in the legal field in order to meet the objectives of the Convention. In addition, in recent years most of the governments in the region have set up specialized agencies to help to raise the status of women and have adopted plans and policies designed to ensure equality of opportunity. These national mechanisms are attached to specific ministries as government departments, divisions or offices in the family, social welfare, education, cultural, labour, planning and economic development sectors. However, most of these do not have enough resources to implement their programmes. In respect of legislative reforms, several countries have drawn up projects to amend provisions which discriminate against women, particularly provisions in their civil code (patria potestad, co-ownership, divorce, etc.), their labour code (maternity privileges) and their penal code (rape, abuse). However, de facto discrimination still exists because of failure to comply with the law or provisions relating to concordats.

16. With regard to the family, the sharp deterioration of the current economic situation in Latin America and the Caribbean has resulted in serious problems, which affect women more than men. The crisis has caused traditions to deteriorate, the result often being instability and violence detrimental to women and children. In some countries migration from the countryside to the city has increased as has the number of households headed by women. In addition, the traditional allocation of roles, in which housework and the raising of children are regarded as the responsibility of women and not of men still persists.

17. As regards political participation, women, who represent half the population and in many countries more than 50% of the electorate, still participate minimally in the executive and legislative organs of their countries. The structure of their political participation is eminently pyramidal in that the majority of them are to be crowded among the lower party echelons and the higher the level of leadership, the fewer the women in it. While the political awareness of women in the region has increased, significant obstacles to their participation in political life remain.

18. The social participation of women in development shows how they serve as active agents in the political, economic, social and cultural process. In recent decades in low-income districts of major cities, new social movements have emerged which are comprised of and led by women. Women form mothers' clubs, take part in social welfare programmes run by churches, take the lead in movements to obtain day-care centres or health facilities, participate in voluntary and vocational associations, establish organizations to design survival strategies to deal with the grave situation that they face or form pressure groups to obtain housing or infrastructure services. They also take part in associations of professionals and producers, federations of women employed in different branches of production and federations of peasant women.

19. Participation by women in social movements and their participation as a social movement in and of itself are phenomena which seem to suggest that a broad cultural transformation linked to new approaches to policy-making is taking place. They have played a basic role in the articulation of grievances and demands that they be settled. In this process, non-governmental agencies have made a decisive contribution to the design of projects for mobilizing and assisting women from the low-income sector in particular.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

20. Considering the contents of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and bearing in mind in particular the crisis situation which the Latin American and Caribbean region is now experiencing, the fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean makes the following recommendations:

At national level:

21. In the economic and social field consideration should be given first to the effects of the crisis and second to the need to rethink what seem to be the most important aspects of the development process. In an analysis of this kind, the socioeconomic considerations should be viewed from an ethical and cultural perspective of society. Thus, development should be envisaged as an integral process characterized by the achievement of economic and social objectives and goals which ensure that the population actually participates in the development process and in its benefits. To this end it becomes necessary to effect thoroughgoing structural changes as a prerequisite for a process of integrated development of the kind desired and to ensure the full participation of women on a plane of economic, political and cultural equality. During the next few years at least, efforts must be made to attain certain closely related objectives, including the following: acceleration of economic and social development and of the structural transformation of national economies; more rapid development of the scientific and technological capacity of the countries of the region;

the promotion of an equitable distribution of national income and the eradication of pockets of absolute poverty in the shortest possible time, in particular through the application of an integral strategy aimed at the elimination of hunger and malnutrition; the structuring of an appropriate economic policy designed with a view to the establishment of conditions in which inflation can be brought under control or avoided without measures of a recessive nature which cause unemployment and exacerbate social tensions, or for adjustment processes which may further the deterioration of the socioeconomic conditions of low-income sectors, particularly of the women within them, and the promotion of real economic, social and political participation by women as an effective means of securing their incorporation into the process of economic, social and cultural development and into the decision-making process as the equals of men.

22. It is essential to consider the special conditions which exist in the small economies of the region, which are characterized primarily by their limited scope and openness to the exterior and by the vulnerability to which these two factors give rise and therefore find the burden of external restrictions more oppressive than do other economies. These small economies urgently require assistance in order to overcome the obstacles to their sustained development. To this end, it is necessary to resort to mechanisms designed to remove artificial barriers which hamper their trade and impede their access to external financial resources granted on concessionary and non-concessionary terms.

23. In the circumstances described above, the solution lies in a change of perspective. Debt, trade and protectionism must be studied not as phenomena in and of themselves but rather as obstacles to development. Development is an objective shared by both the North and the South. It does not bear only on the welfare of the Latin American and Caribbean countries but on the peace and stability of the whole world.

24. Attention may be drawn to some of the principal measures that need to be taken in the field of employment. First, there is need to devise employment-generating programmes which give preference to the employment of female labour. It would be well to explore the possibility of establishing mutual benefit societies, co-operatives or other forms of producer or service associations that promote the employment of women and facilitate the access of female heads of household to the means of production. Secondly, there is a need to formalize informal employment, particularly in occupations performed by live-out domestics, women who work at home, rural workers and traders; in order to meet this need, it will be necessary to adopt regulations governing contracts and the work day and to establish a system of payment in which remuneration would be based on one day's work (as a minimum) instead of on piecework. Thirdly, all benefits of social security must be extended to women working on their own account. Fourthly, special situations in the formal sector, such as those which apply to domestic employees and to women working in industrial free zones must be regulated with a view to the establishment of maximum working hours, minimum wages, the right to days off and vacations, etc., and hence to the elimination of all aspects of

servility. Similar measures should be taken to improve the working conditions of women employed in sub-contracting plants. Fifthly, as regards the rural sector, it is essential to recognize the status of women farmers, peasant women working on minifundios and indigenous and creole women with small land holdings. The right of such women to have access to credit, agricultural training and technological advances and to own land must be supported. They must also be included in land reform programmes and development projects. Moreover, action is needed to promote regional development of a kind which guards against the phenomenon of increasing urbanization since the migration of young women to cities makes them highly subject to risk. A solution to this situation may be found in the elaboration of programmes to prevent the evils inherent in it and to promote the welfare of and provide training for young women who migrate.

25. All measures aimed at socializing housework and promoting its performance by both men as well as by women must be strengthened. Since it is recognized that both production and reproduction are the responsibility of both men and women, this will be a major step forward along the path to genuine equality. The first step to be taken in furtherance of this objective must be the socialization of those activities that are associated with the raising of children, through the establishment or expansion of nurseries and day-care centers, networks of laundries, and the provision of low-cost or free meals at the places where women work or in centres near their homes. These and other measures will help initially to relieve and subsequently to eliminate the burden of household tasks, which at the present time are performed almost exclusively by women.

26. In the field of education, measures ensuring that girls and women have access to primary, secondary and technical/professional education must be strengthened. In addition, the taking of measures to eliminate educational differences between rural and urban areas should be encouraged. Indigenous women are in a special situation in that their mother tongue is not the official language and this puts them at a disadvantage. Full consideration must be given to the identity of each people on the basis of its cultural, religious and linguistic characteristics, through bilingual and bicultural programmes. In addition, in order to ensure that each people is integrated into the rest of society on equal terms, recourse must be had to radio, monitors, itinerant teachers and other means in order to offset the effects of isolation and distance. Emphasis must also be placed on the role of informal education as a tool of growth and development and as a means of enabling people to find their place in society.

27. At all levels of formal education efforts must be continued to eliminate materials and practices which discriminate against women and help to perpetuate stereotypes of their role in society. For this purpose, it is recommended that schoolbooks be revised and that encouragement be given to the participation of women in non-traditional areas of education and especially in the sciences in order to reduce their dependency at the level of technology.

28. The main lines of action in the field of education, related to training for women in specific subjects to enable them to enter the job market with some qualifications and a chance at better jobs and higher wages or, in the case of rural women, to play their role as agricultural producers armed with the technological and marketing know-how they need in order to earn more profits. It is also essential to conduct campaigns to definitively eradicate illiteracy, particularly among young indigenous women.

29. In the area of health, women must be assured of having easy access to free or reasonably priced services at all stages of the life cycle. For this purpose there is need to design comprehensive health-care programmes for women, which include special plans for elderly women and for mother and child care: a) the nutrition of nursing infants and mothers by making milk available to pregnant women and nursing mothers and infants and by supplying school breakfasts or a glass of milk to pre-school-age children living under conditions of extreme poverty, these representing the categories of highest risk; b) protection for women during the pre-delivery and post-delivery periods through the establishment, particularly in rural areas, of clinics offering basic gynecological services; c) education and services for women and men in connection with human fertility and methods of controlling it in order to enable them to decide how many children to have, how long to wait between pregnancies, which family planning methods are most appropriate for them and how to prevent abortion; d) special programmes for the prevention of certain chronic, high-risk diseases, such as AIDS, cancer and stress-related maladies and of drug-use and e) the prevention of mortality in childbirth.

30. In the legislative field, all forms of discrimination in civil, trade, criminal, labour and agrarian law must be eliminated. All matters relating to legislation concerning married women and women living in relationships equivalent to marriage, which is characterized by discrimination in respect of nationality, marital rights, patria potestad, inheritance, control of property, place of residence, etc., are of particular importance. Special attention should be paid to the rights of women who are heads of household and of unmarried mothers and their children. In the field of labour law, there is need to ensure that women receive the same pay as men for work of equal value and that legislation is adopted in respect of all forms of informal work, including piecework, work in the home and subcontracting work. Special attention must also be paid to the rights of women who are heads of household and of unmarried mothers and their children. In the field of labour law it must be ensured that women receive equal pay for equal work, and that legislation is adopted to cover all forms of informal work --piece-work, work in the home, subcontracting work, etc. Government control mechanisms must be strengthened in line with labour regulations. In addition, steps should be taken to promulgate laws in areas such as family violence, with emphasis on the prevention and punishment of the abusive treatment of women, sexual harassment of women on the job and sexual violence. Such legislation must also establish mechanisms for providing assistance and support to victims of this type of violence. Laws providing for the discriminatory treatment

of women in cases of adultery, parricide, infanticide, abortion and rape must be removed from the penal code. Control mechanisms must be set up and existing mechanisms strengthened in order to ensure compliance with the legislation and to disseminate information about it so that women know what their rights are and to what authorities they may appeal to ensure that their rights are respected.

31. With respect to political participation, must be made in respect of the participation of women in decision-making within political parties, social movements, economic associations and the different branches of government. The national mechanisms established for the advancement of women must serve as a meeting ground for women from different political parties and organizations in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

32. After a decade of formulating and implementing projects pertaining specifically to women, an integrated approach to such activities is recommended for the future. However, it is of vital importance to establish appropriate methods and mechanisms to ensure that the needs of women are adequately addressed and that women participate on an equal basis in all development activities.

33. It is becoming essential to strengthen governmental and non-governmental women's organizations that promote social participation by women in all spheres of national life under conditions that are equal to those enjoyed by men.

34. Adequate links, respect and co-ordination should be sought between governmental and non-governmental bodies. Greater progress can be made in the participation and promotion of women if channels can be created for transmitting information and common strategies between the two types of organization. Training programmes should also be continued to increase the participation of women so that they may become the formulators and beneficiaries of public policies, thus initiating a new form of interaction between institutions and the society.

35. National mechanisms for the promotion of women must be established and existing ones strengthened, and they must be provided with budgets large enough to enable them to fulfil their functions effectively.

36. The major difficulties relating to change arise in the cultural sphere, where forms of discrimination against women are still to be found, and these are transmitted to all other areas of social life. In the area of culture, many discriminatory values and stereotypes persist and are responsible for the emergence of new and more subtle forms of discrimination. In order to remedy this situation, there is need for the public dissemination of values to all members of society without distinction as to sex but with a special effort made to reach women. The objective of these efforts should be to create awareness in women of their own dignity and capacity as persons and of the contribution which they make to society as workers and mothers. Measures in the field of

culture require a limited amount of financial resources and may have a tremendous impact.

37. Since the stereotypes responsible for the difference in the value attached to men and that attached to women in society are formed on the basis of differences in the socialization of the two sexes, a special effort must be made to promote an egalitarian form of socialization which does not cast women in a subordinate role. Egalitarian socialization must be pursued both in formal education (by eliminating discriminatory practices and materials) and in informal education (primarily by monitoring the written and pictorial content of material disseminated through the mass communications media. Steps should also be taken to disseminate alternative models of women based on the tasks which they actually perform in the society.

38. Full participation of women under conditions of equality cannot be achieved without stable and lasting peace. Consequently, all obstacles to peace at the national and international levels must be removed. This means that those principles and guidelines recommended in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women for the purpose of strengthening peace must be put into practice. The personal commitment of every woman to the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies is bound to yield fruit, and Latin America and the Caribbean will be able to operate as a single family held together by ties of solidarity. In this regard, it is recommended that regional and subregional women's organizations working for peace, equality and solidarity should be supported and that assistance programmes should be created for all women who are victims of political violence or other forms of armed conflict, which turn them into widows or refugees or subject them to displacement or repatriation.

At the regional and international levels:

39. Commitment to the goals of the Nairobi Strategies should be reaffirmed on the understanding that unity exists in the objectives of equality, development and peace.

40. The institutional linkages between the Commission on the Status of Women, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and all other United Nations bodies should be maintained in order to facilitate efforts to integrate women into the development process at the international level.

41. Economic, scientific and technical co-operation and social and cultural exchanges between countries of the region and other developing countries should be promoted in such a way that the region's capacity is strengthened and emphasis is placed on the need to ensure the full participation of women in such co-operation and exchange.

42. Research and studies aimed at increasing and improving the statistical data produced on women should be encouraged, particularly with regard to the recognition of the value of work done at home, the

real economic contribution of women working in the informal sector, demographic changes, migration and the work done by rural women living in rural areas. In view of the profound changes which have occurred in the region as a result of the crisis, studies should also be carried out on the situation of families in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the question of extent to which they play a socializing role should be examined more closely. It is also recommended that the status of young women in present day society be examined in greater depth and that ECLAC be requested to incorporate into its periodic reports information about the social status of women in Latin America and the Caribbean. In short, studies on the status of women in the region should be systematized in so far as the technical aspects of the progress now being made or the difficulties encountered are concerned, and qualitative and political analysis should continue to be used in the elaboration of future proposals.

43. To follow up on some of the activities already initiated by Governments and non-governmental organizations to address problems related to the use of violence against women, research and technical co-operation methods and techniques which are appropriate for dealing with such a sensitive subject should be devised, and the situation of women should be systematically assessed in terms of the violence inflicted upon them in the private and public spheres, through such acts as rape, battering, incest and abuse. ECLAC should be requested to try to acquire the funds needed in this connection.

44. Action taken to reach negotiated political settlement of the conflicts in Central America should be supported. Support should be given to the peace moves being made by the Contadora Group and the Support Group and to the Esquipulas II agreements, as the most viable alternatives for the solution of the crisis in Central America.

45. The recommendation that the Committee of High-Level Government Experts (CEGAN) should include matters relating to the incorporation of women in economic, social and cultural development in its periodic appraisals should be reiterated.

46. In view of the importance of the women's issue, an enormous effort should be made to strengthen the ECLAC programme for women, and the United Nations should be urged (in so far as available resources permit) to provide the Commission with adequate staff and means to carry out its programmes. ECLAC should also be asked to continue approaching the General Assembly and other organizations within and outside of the United Nations with a view to obtaining the financial resources it needs in order to meet the requests of governments more fully.

47. ECLAC should be asked to act as soon as possible in filling the post of Subregional Co-ordinator of the Programme for Women in its Mexico Office so that it can contribute more effectively to the achievement of the objectives of the Regional Plan of Action as agreed at the third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, 1983).

48. The ECLAC Secretariat should be urged to support the participation of non-Spanish-speaking member countries in matters relating to training, research and other projects, which are in accordance with the activities being carried out in those countries.

49. ECLAC should be asked to increase the participation of women specialists in aspects of the work of the Commission, with a view to raising the number of women in decision-making positions as agreed to by the General Assembly.

50. In recognition of the contribution made by United Nations bodies, such as INSTRAW and UNIFEM, created during the United Nations Decade for Women and in view of what they are doing to raise the status of women, governments should be advised to continue and increase their financial support of those bodies in their research, training, information dissemination and technical and financial assistance activities to enable them to extend their coverage to all the countries of the region. Also, in view of the valuable contribution made by United Nations bodies, such as UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR and UNDP, and specialized agencies such as the ILO and FAO, which are designing programmes which promote the advancement of women, governments (particularly those of donor countries) and international and non-governmental organizations should be urged to allocate greater resources to those bodies and agencies.

51. The governments of the countries of the region, donor countries and international technical co-operation agencies should be asked to allocate resources for the implementation of strategies for the advancement of women in both their integration and their specific programmes and projects.

52. In 1988, half-way to the year 2000, if the International Women's Year (1975) is taken as the point of departure, everybody agrees that the advancement of women is a matter not only for women but for the entire society. It has been accepted that equality is a right and that in real and concrete terms it is a necessity for the progress of all. That conviction must be maintained, and one of the goals set for the year 2000 must be to act on it resolutely with a view to building a world of equality, development and peace.

