



**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES
OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ON FUTURE ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE
THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN
DEVELOPMENT, IN PREPARATION FOR THE 1995
WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN**

(Santiago, Chile, 3 and 4 September 1992)

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraph</u>	<u>Page</u>
A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK	1-4	1
Mandate	1	1
Place and date	2	1
Attendance	3	1
Agenda	4	2
B. SUMMARY OF DEBATES	5-42	2
Evaluation of the main United Nations activities to promote women's integration into development since 1975 (agenda item 2)	8-23	3
Proposed priority issues and activities for Latin America and the Caribbean after 1995 (agenda item 3)	24-32	5
Measures and mechanisms to coordinate activities relating to women in Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda item 4)	33-39	6
The current situation of Latin America and the Caribbean, the ECLAC proposal on changing production patterns with social equity, and gender analysis (agenda item 5)	40-42	8

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Mandate

1. The Meeting of Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies of the United Nations System on Future Activities to Promote the Integration of Women into Latin American and Caribbean Development, in preparation for the 1995 World Conference on Women, was convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) pursuant to the mandates assigned to it by its member States on the topic of women in the Latin American and Caribbean region, and contained in the Regional Plan of Action adopted at the First Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Havana, Cuba, in 1977. Among the duties assigned to the ECLAC secretariat under the Plan is the stipulation that it shall "consult with the United Nations specialized agencies which have programmes on women's integration in development".

Place and date

2. In fulfilment of the aforementioned mandates, the Meeting of Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies of the United Nations System on Future Activities to Promote the Integration of Women into Latin American and Caribbean Development, in preparation for the 1995 World Conference on Women, was held on 3 and 4 September 1992 at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile.

Attendance

3. Attending the Meeting were representatives of the following specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system: the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Food Programme (WFP). Also represented was the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Agenda

4. The participants adopted the following agenda:
 1. Adoption of the agenda
 2. Evaluation of the main United Nations activities to promote women's integration into development since 1975
 3. Proposed priority issues and activities for Latin America and the Caribbean after 1995
 4. Measures and mechanisms to coordinate activities relating to women in Latin America and the Caribbean
 5. The current situation of Latin America and the Caribbean, the ECLAC proposal on changing production patterns with social equity, and gender analysis

B. SUMMARY OF DEBATES

5. Following the opening of the Meeting, the Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) welcomed the participating representatives of specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system. After affirming the Commission's interest in coordinating the activities being conducted on the topic of women, to avoid any duplication of effort, he thanked the participating agencies and organizations for their prompt and effective response to requests for information on the subject.
6. He recalled that the Meeting constituted the first stage of the regional preparatory process for the 1995 World Conference on Women, and provided an opportunity for the participating entities to unite their efforts and to answer the growing need for a common, informed regional position. Moreover, the Meeting represented an attempt to systematize the cooperation and formal and informal consultations among specialized agencies carrying out activities on women's integration into development in the region. The aim was to form a general idea of each agency's potential contribution and to pinpoint deficiencies and determine ways of redressing them.
7. Ms. Marta Maurás, the new UNICEF Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, said that the topic of women was enormously important and relevant to UNICEF; of particular interest at the current time were issues such as family structure, the relations between women and families, and sexuality, as well as the specific situation of girls in various societies, which had received increasing attention in recent years. She stressed the need to formulate a common conception of the issue of women, from a gender perspective, within the United Nations family. Also important were the objective of gender equity and the urgent need for operational coordination.

Evaluation of the main United Nations activities to promote women's integration into development since 1975 (agenda item 2)

8. On agenda item 2, the participants agreed to exchange basic information on the agencies' current activities and mandates. By way of introduction, the representative of the ECLAC Women and Development Unit described the strategies for action generally agreed upon, on the basis of information provided by the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies, and analysed how they could be linked to the ECLAC proposal for changing production patterns with social equity. Those strategies alone could not guarantee the emergence of a model society characterized by gender equity, but the actions they recommended could establish a firm foundation for ending the inter-generational transmission of poverty, meeting women's basic needs, giving them access to production resources and enhancing their training so that they could become integrated into the labour market on equitable terms.
9. She then suggested some priorities for future action to integrate changes in the balance of power between men and women into the development process, and referred to the activities already being conducted by the agencies in related areas, such as the integration of a gender perspective into all activities; the reform of educational systems; the strengthening of women's social and political leadership; access to production resources and participation in production, including human resources development; support for vulnerable groups; and ongoing research and monitoring.
10. The representative of the International Fund for Agricultural Development said that the Fund's projects were designed to directly benefit the poorest and most vulnerable groups in developing countries, including women in rural areas, who represented one of the most marginalized sectors of society. All projects for the region with financing from the Fund considered the general situation of women and, in particular, how it might be affected by the projects. The Fund had a division in charge of Latin America and the Caribbean at its headquarters, but no representatives in the countries themselves; instead, it carried out projects through cooperating institutions. The exchange of information with other agencies was therefore vitally important to the Fund to enable it to keep its activities from becoming stop-gap solutions.
11. The representative of the Pan American Health Organization said that PAHO, an inter-American organization that also served as a regional office of the World Health Organization, had received in 1987 a mandate relating to women that was more policy-oriented than technical in nature. Accordingly, its Women, Health and Development Programme had no resources of its own and had to work with other divisions in carrying out activities in its area of interest. Nevertheless, the topic of women was still marginalized, to the extent that a problem of such magnitude as AIDS had yet to be considered from the viewpoint of women. Therefore, the execution of a regional programme with the participation of various agencies would help to strengthen PAHO activities in that area.
12. The representative of UNESCO spoke of the broad spectrum of activities which her agency carried out in the region, including civic education for women, efforts to eliminate biased portrayals of the sexes in textbooks and literacy training for girls. However, UNESCO had no coordinating mechanism to concentrate and channel the agency's many activities in Latin America and the Caribbean.
13. The representative of UNICEF said that the Fund was fulfilling its mandate, which focused on the situation of children and the poor, by establishing specific lines of action for the 1990s on three priority topics: reduction of the burden of household work, family violence, and women and the environment. In all of those areas, UNICEF provided advisory services that entailed ongoing negotiations with the

region's Governments; in recent years, it had also worked with legislators at the subregional level, the Catholic Church and networks of offices for women in Central and South America and the English-speaking Caribbean. UNICEF had one regional office and 11 country offices in Latin America, and worked in close coordination with PAHO, FAO and UNESCO.

14. The representative of the International Labour Organisation said that ILO had a decentralized structure broken down by spheres of activity and regions; each of its departments had a focal point for women in the area concerned. ILO also had a regional adviser for women, whose role consisted of "diffusing", or incorporating the gender dimension at all levels. The right to work had always been the focus of the agency's activities relating to women. Within that context, its interest in protecting working women had evolved into the promotion of their full integration into the world of employment. Other priorities included the employment of minors, structural adjustment and women's equality in employment.

15. The representative of the World Food Programme (WFP) said that 42 countries, equally divided between developed and recipient countries, were represented in the agency's governing body. WFP had a director of operations in each of those countries, but no regional offices. Although it did not conduct activities specifically relating to women, it did include the gender component in all of its projects, and one member of its headquarters staff was assigned to cover that area. WFP worked with various specialized agencies in carrying out projects, cooperating at the operational level with IFAD, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), depending on the nature of each project. Currently, WFP was giving highest priority to displaced populations.

16. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) said that the FAO Plan of Action for Integration of Women in Development, which had been adopted by the FAO Council in 1988, comprised four spheres of action: the legal, economic and social status of women, and decision-making. Each of those spheres required its own strategy for improving women's status at all levels of society. A number of divisions which specifically addressed problems concerning women had been created within FAO, the most important of which was the Women in Agricultural Production and Rural Development Service. In addition, each of the FAO regional offices had a staff member who dealt with the situation of rural women. Notable actions in that regard included a workshop in support of activities by rural women in Central America, and the training on gender analysis currently provided to all FAO staff.

17. The representative of the United Nations Population Fund said that since women's overall status had an evident impact on demographic variables, its improvement was of primary importance to UNFPA. The Fund's general spheres of action included efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and to promote technical cooperation among developing countries; in its projects aimed exclusively at women, it concentrated on income-generating activities, and was currently conducting a large-scale evaluation of those projects at the global level, since they had not yielded the expected results.

18. The representative of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women said that INSTRAW was not an operational organization; its main objective was to ensure that women were taken into account in the substantive activities of all United Nations bodies, and to generate an awareness of their situation. Since the Institute was funded solely through voluntary contributions, it had to carry out activities jointly with United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and regional commissions. Of particular interest was the Institute's participation in reviewing the system of national accounts.

19. The representative of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, who also spoke on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme, referred to the role of UNDP as coordinator for the activities of all United Nations bodies; the programmatic approach it had introduced recently should facilitate that task. The new Gender and Development Programme, which replaced the Division for Women in Development, was responsible for activities in that area in all regions.

20. UNIFEM carried out a wide range of activities concerning various sectors of the economy, gender training and violence against women. It focused mainly on the poorest women, i.e., women in rural areas, women working in the informal sector, indigenous women and displaced women, among others. Since its primary goal was to improve the situation of women, UNIFEM was interested not in dominating any given project, but in establishing relations of coordination with other agencies and funds.

21. The representative of the International Organization for Migration said that IOM was currently concentrating on such areas as selective emigration, humanitarian concerns and coordinated migrations, and that its activities were aimed at specific groups without distinction as to sex. However, IOM had conducted special programmes for women in response to specific requests from some Governments, and was carrying out important research on the situation of women, such as a study on remittances which household employees sent to their country of origin after emigrating from the region.

22. The representative of the Inter-American Development Bank said that IDB had adopted in 1987 an operational policy on women and development to provide incentives for women's participation in its programmes and to ensure that they shared in the benefits thereof. Those were priority objectives for the period 1990-1993. In recent years, IDB had helped women obtain access to credit, education and health, and had supported activities for the advancement of women carried out by public and private institutions in the region. IDB was considering the possibility of financing a preparatory meeting for the 1995 Conference in the region.

23. The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said that the work of UNHCR, which exclusively concerned refugees, included the provision of protection and assistance to women. Moreover, UNHCR had organized regional forums for refugee women, the latest of which had taken place in Guatemala in early 1992.

Proposed priority issues and activities for Latin America and the Caribbean after 1995 (agenda item 3)

24. Participants discussed the change in the regional backdrop and its effects on the situation of women in various spheres of action, as well as the need to adjust United Nations activities accordingly. Reference was made to the change in the relation between the State and the citizenry by virtue of the State's new role, the privatization of many activities, and the gaps which had often been left in the countries in the process, all of which had strongly affected the situation of women.

25. In addition, those changes had altered the agents to whom the United Nations system directed its messages.

26. There was general consensus on the need to formulate a coherent message on the issue of women, to be projected by the entire United Nations system. It was proposed, and unanimously agreed, that the integration of gender analysis into policy formulation should be promoted as a guiding principle.

27. It was also agreed that the main thrust of future activities should be defined by the integration of the topic of women into global processes, for which purpose it would be important to quantify women's contribution to those processes.
28. To that end, it was essential to ensure women's participation at all levels of decision-making. During the Meeting, emphasis was placed on the need to strengthen women's social and political leadership to achieve gender equity. International organizations could support that process through training, research and the dissemination of educational materials and information through workshops, seminars and the press, and by promoting networks and community organizations of women, especially in rural areas.
29. With regard to training, it was agreed that, to complement the activities carried out in the countries, the specialized agencies and other bodies of the system should give priority to in-house gender training. If those institutions did not create an awareness of gender among their own staff, they would have difficulty promoting social change in that direction.
30. Also emphasized was the need to analyse the family from the perspective of women.
31. On the subject of sectoral issues, the agencies reported on priorities relating to women under their respective mandates. Thus, UNICEF was working on the topics of family, girls and the minimum age at marriage; PAHO, on the gender perspective in relation to health and the promotion of women's autonomy in matters concerning health; and FAO, in general, on women's legal, economic and social status and participation in decision-making; and, more specifically, on organization, training and technologies for rural women to enhance their performance in production and domestic activities. UNIFEM, for its part, stressed the need to explore the topic of women and education with respect to women's advocacy —i.e., their capacity to promote their causes and defend their interests. Also mentioned was the area of women and poverty, which required a plan involving all of the agencies.
32. One topic which was considered essential at the Meeting was education. Men and boys, as well as girls and young women, must be mobilized and sensitized if effective changes were to be made through education.

Measures and mechanisms to coordinate activities relating to women in Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda item 4)

33. By way of introduction to agenda item 4, the ILO Special Adviser for Women Workers' Questions presented a brief report on the sixteenth special meeting on women, held in Vienna in March 1992 with the participation of 28 specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system. At that meeting, it had been agreed that the Department of Public Information (DPI) at United Nations Headquarters should take primary responsibility for the public information and sensitization campaign for the 1995 Conference, though all United Nations institutions would contribute systematically to that task and would suitably channel the materials produced by DPI. The participating agencies and organizations had decided to focus on the impact of the issue of women on general topics, to make that issue an important element of their work and to identify the points where their activities converged. It had also been recommended that the regional commissions should take responsibility for facilitating inter-agency coordination in preparation for the Conference, since they could define clear lines of action for countries in each region. Their work at the regional level should lead to the adoption of a clear, effective methodology at the international level.

34. New forms of cooperation and coordination among agencies should be explored, both in activities designed to attack the structural causes of women's current situation and in areas linked to each entity's mandates. While there were some topics on which those mandates overlapped, there were others that constituted a veritable "no man's land". It was agreed that the dynamic in that area was very different from what it had been ten years earlier.

35. The representative of UNIFEM proposed the elaboration of a plan for 1993-1995 that would provide for the distribution of roles among the various agencies and the conduct of a "trainers' training" programme. Both initiatives would represent contributions to the 1995 World Conference.

36. At the end of the debates, participants arrived at a number of agreements. First, they formed a working group consisting of the representatives of INSTRAW and UNIFEM to take charge of compiling information on gender training activities under way in the region; such an inventory would help to identify the elements of gender analysis. The initial results of that research would be presented at the November 1993 meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference, to be held in Santiago, Chile.

37. A second agreement was reached to prepare a joint publication for the 1994 Regional Conference on the progress made towards gender equity in the region in various areas affecting women. The first chapter of the publication, to be drafted by the ECLAC Women and Development Unit, would serve as an introduction and would discuss the status of research on the theory of gender analysis. In addition, each specialized agency and participating organization would prepare a substantive sectoral chapter on its own field of action. As a first step, ECLAC would distribute a draft of the first chapter and suggestions for the preparation of the sectoral chapters. The initial draft would be presented for discussion at the meeting of the Presiding Officers to be held in Caracas in May or June 1993.

38. Third, and also as part of the preparatory activities for the 1994 Regional Conference and the 1995 World Conference on Women, it was agreed to organize seminars in each country to analyse the first draft of the document prepared by the specialized agencies and other bodies of the system. UNICEF would be chiefly responsible for the organization of those seminars, and would coordinate its activities with UNDP country offices. In addition to fostering gender equity at the regional level, the seminars should provide an opportunity to update available information on the situation of women in the countries for inclusion in the final version of the joint document.

39. The representative of the ECLAC secretariat invited all the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system carrying out programmes relating to women in the region to attend the meetings of the Presiding Officers, at which inter-institutional consultations and informal meetings could be held.

The current situation of Latin America and the Caribbean, the ECLAC proposal on changing production patterns with social equity, and gender analysis (agenda item 5)

40. The Deputy Secretary of ECLAC outlined the proposal for changing production patterns with social equity which ECLAC had begun to formulate in 1990 and to which it had since added two new dimensions: environmental sustainability and education and knowledge. The ECLAC proposal represented a change of approach in response to the changes observed in Latin America and the Caribbean in the last two decades, during which only a few countries had achieved dynamic development with a concomitant improvement in social equity. However, that period, which was often called a "lost decade", could also be considered a period of painful lessons whose positive aspects included growing democratization, an end to civil wars, recognition of the importance of human rights, reduction of the fiscal deficit and the evolution of social equity from an exclusively ethical and political concern into an economically logical goal. Changing production patterns with social equity required increasing absorption of technical progress to achieve genuine competitiveness based on higher intellectual added value. For that reason, the ECLAC approach gave priority to education and knowledge.

41. He stressed that the ECLAC proposal was not an ideological statement, but rather a product of systematic observation of the current situation at the regional and global levels, and that it should be regarded not as a model proposed for adoption, but as a lesson based on experience.

42. Observations on the ECLAC proposal for changing production patterns with social equity concerned the need to strengthen consideration and analysis of the proposal and to incorporate the idea of gender equity. Reference was also made in that regard to the concept of "human development" proposed by UNDP. Lastly, participants stressed the need for careful examination of the advantages and disadvantages of the new scenario emerging in the countries of the region.