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**REPORT OF THE SECOND 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**

(Caracas, Venezuela, 26 May 1993)

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Mandate

1. The Second 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 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. The Regional Plan of Action mandates that "the secretariat of CEPAL will 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 Second 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 in Caracas, Venezuela, on 26 May 1993.

Attendance

3. Attending the Meeting were representatives of the following specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system: United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. Also represented were the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

Agenda

4. The participants adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Regional preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995)
3. Consideration of activities and priority tasks for regional inter-agency coordination
4. Other matters.

B. SUMMARY OF DEBATES

Regional preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and Consideration of activities and priority tasks for regional inter-agency coordination (agenda items 2 and 3)

5. The Chief of the Women and Development Unit of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) welcomed the participants and reported on preparations for the World Conference at the international level, and especially on the thirty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women and its regional mandates. She also gave a detailed analysis of resolution 37/7 of that Commission, "Preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace", in respect of the necessary preparations at the regional, subregional and national levels and the inclusion, in the future regional action programme, of the main issues set forth in the Platform for Action proposed by the Commission on the Status of Women.

6. The representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said that that agency had been invited, together with UNIFEM, to participate in a consultative group that would work with the general secretariat of the World Conference and would meet periodically until 1995. As part of the activities of its Gender and Development Programme, UNDP was launching a project, which it would carry out in conjunction with UNIFEM and for which funds were available, to help Governments prepare national reports to be presented at the Conference. Therefore, the Executive Director would ask national UNDP offices to collaborate with Governments in that process and establish a working group to that end. Moreover, UNDP was willing to provide technical and financial assistance to all preparatory activities carried out in the countries and to collaborate with ECLAC on a project to prepare for the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Buenos Aires) and the World Conference.

7. The representative of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) said that, pursuant to the agreement made at the previous meeting of specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, it had elaborated a proposal on training in gender-related issues. After submitting the proposal to ECLAC, to the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and to UNDP, asking them to comment on the proposal, UNIFEM had decided, together with INSTRAW, to discontinue working on the proposal, in order to avoid the duplication of efforts, since UNDP was giving it priority attention. The preparatory activities which UNIFEM planned to carry out for the World Conference included the organization of forums to bring together non-governmental organizations and Governments, the publication of books and manuals, mass media campaigns, video and essay competitions, workshops for journalists and the production of informative material. In reality, all the activities of the Fund were related to the World Conference, and it would be very important for men also to participate in the preparatory tasks.

8. The representative of the Pan American Health Organization said that, following the First Meeting of Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies of the United Nations System, held in September 1992, the Regional Programme for Women, Health and Development of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) had reported to the governing bodies of that organization on the inter-agency agreements adopted to support activities to prepare for the Regional Conference and the World Conference. The governing bodies of PAHO had recommended that the Regional Programme should carry out the proposed plan of work, in coordination with ECLAC, and that it should provide support to the countries. PAHO had begun to elaborate a diagnostic profile on women and health, which took into account the issue of violence, and the organization had made case studies on health and development in several countries of the region. Also, PAHO would collaborate with ECLAC in preparing the chapter of the diagnostic analysis concerning the health of women, which the secretariat would present to the Regional Conference, and in formulating proposals in that regard.

9. The representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said that the organization offered cooperation to national women's offices, with a view to strengthening them, and that the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean had requested the representatives in the countries of the region to encourage Governments to prepare the reports to be presented at the World Conference. UNICEF was providing technical and financial assistance to meetings of the Andean Parliament and the Central American Parliament, bodies that had adopted resolutions and taken decisions to support national activities to prepare for the World Conference. Moreover, a regional network of national offices on women had been established, comprised of a sub-network for Latin America and another one for Central America and the Caribbean, which would greatly facilitate the dissemination of information about the World Conference and the preparation of country reports.

10. The representative of ILO said that the three tripartite regional seminars carried out in recent months by the Organisation could provide important data for the elaboration of country reports. The first, on labour legislation, had analysed to what extent the de facto inequality of existing mechanisms could be overcome. The second seminar had dealt with the Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation (ILO Convention No. 111). The third had focused on the impact of changing production patterns and technological change on the employment and working conditions of women.

11. Several case studies were being carried out at the world level on important issues related to working women, within the framework of the interdepartmental project on equality in employment, which covered every region of the world. In 1994, ILO planned to organize an international forum in Geneva on the equality of women in a world in transition, which would be that organization's contribution to the preparations for the World Conference. The results of the case studies would be presented at that forum, along with informative materials and the guidelines that emerged from them.

12. The representative of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) said that that organization was carrying out activities in the following areas: research, orientation and adaption of policies and programmes; development of tools to integrate the gender perspective into agricultural and rural development projects and programmes; and support for rural women to facilitate their access to resources for production. She mentioned, in particular, a study done in Central America that covered four areas: a diagnostic analysis of the situation of women who grow food; agricultural policies; technology transfer; and marketing.

13. The representative of IICA said that a consultative group had been set up in Central America to define the position of the region for the 1994 Regional Conference. The group, which would meet in February 1994, had support from the Netherlands and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), was comprised of representatives of IICA, the UNDP office in Costa Rica, UNIFEM, UNICEF, ILO, World Conservation Union (IUCN), European Economic Community (EEC), Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, ANDAR and other non-governmental organizations. That group planned to prepare a document for the February 1994 meeting, which would analyse, *inter alia*, regional integration and structural adjustment; violence, human rights and democratization; poverty and the participation of women in the informal sector of the economy; and different family structures.

14. The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that the agency and its Executive Committee saw the situation of women refugees as particularly important and that instructions had been given to the four regional offices to give them special attention. In Latin America, a region in which the number of refugees was declining, UNHCR was also carrying out activities of protection and assistance, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations.

15. The representative of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme said that an inter-agency meeting was planned on women and the use and control of drugs, and that the results would be communicated to all agencies and bodies of the United Nations system.

16. A representative of the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC presented the outline of the regional programme of action prepared by ECLAC and said that a broad range of activities and proposals had been taken into account in preparing it. Referring to the main issues around which the strategic objectives of the programme were to be organized, she emphasized the elimination of factors that structure the subordination of women; their equal participation in the leadership and direction of society and in the production and distribution of the benefits of development; and the defence of their human rights. The scheme was not definitive, and it was being presented as a basis for collective thinking.

17. The representatives of several agencies agreed that the preparation of national reports would provide an opportunity to contribute to a national-level discussion and analysis and to highlight the role of women. The need to establish inter-agency groups in the countries, in order to provide support for the preparation of reports and create a space for dialogue, was also noted. According to the representative of UNIFEM, the most important element in preparing national reports was the coordination, communication and exchange of information between agencies and the countries. The representative of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) stressed that the reports should be a tool to orient national policies and strategies, and that they should be prepared on the basis of exchanges of views between Governments, non-governmental organizations and different social actors.

18. The representative of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) said that it would be helpful to identify the comparative advantages of the different agencies of the United Nations system, in order to achieve better coordination of activities to prepare for the Regional Conference and the World Conference and avoid duplications. In her judgement, better ways were needed to identify non-governmental agencies that could contribute to that process, and the preparatory activities of the agencies should not only produce a written report, but also support concrete tasks which the group considered important. The speaker also expressed her concern about the problem of convincing political leaders in the countries of the need to adopt a gender perspective.

19. The Chief of the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC outlined the methodology elaborated by ECLAC for preparing the diagnostic analysis of the situation of the women of Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1990s, to be presented by the secretariat at the Regional Conference in Buenos Aires and later at the World Conference. The document should be elaborated in the framework of the ECLAC proposal on changing production patterns with social equity and begin with a theoretical reflection on the 1980s, projections for the 1990s and the new proposals being made. The document should analyse issues such as employment, education and culture, civil rights, health care, the situation of women in some countries of the subregions, and the interrelations between the State and women, and between women and society.

C. AGREEMENTS

20. The participants arrived at the following agreements:

National agreements

1. To request the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system to grant priority to national-level activities to achieve the objectives of the 1995 World Conference on Women.
2. To call on Governments to establish, as soon as possible, national commissions composed of State institutions, non-governmental organizations, academic centres and grass-roots organizations that carry out activities or programmes for the advancement of women, and other bodies whose inclusion in the commissions would be deemed useful, to oversee all the technical and organizational aspects of the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. Also, to recommend that the national commissions establish their own organization, in order to ensure that activities to prepare for the Regional Conference (Buenos Aires, 1994) and the World Conference (Beijing, 1995) are carried out. Among other activities, plans should include forums, workshops, seminars and conventions to sensitize and mobilize Governments and civil society, particularly the mass media, with regard to women's issues, with special attention to the situation of women refugees. All these activities should reflect the cultural diversity of the region and the needs of the whole population, including different ethnic groups, minorities, refugees and displaced persons.
3. To provide support, through technical and financial assistance, to the national commissions, to enable them to fulfil their functions in respect of the 1995 World Conference and the 1994 Regional Conference in a satisfactory manner.
4. To suggest that inter-agency groups of international organizations be created in the countries, to support the national commissions, and that each such group designate a person to coordinate activities.
5. To recommend that a key output of national-level activities, conceived as part of a project to strengthen the protagonistic role of women, be national reports based on compiled data and on a wide-ranging discussion of relevant issues, technical seminars, campaigns, national meetings and forums.

Subregional activities

1. To take note of the organization of the subregional meeting for Central America proposed by the group composed of IICA, the UNDP office in Costa Rica, UNIFEM, UNICEF, ILO, World Conservation Union, EEC, Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, ANDAR and other non-governmental organizations, with the understanding that they might participate in that meeting, according to their work programmes and possibilities. ECLAC, in turn, would analyse the proposal on this meeting sent by the UNDP office in Costa Rica, once the Executive Secretary receives it, and would examine the possibility of broadening participation and providing support, in view of the interest that has been aroused by that initiative.
2. To assume the responsibility to report on all similar subregional activities which may be organized, in order to enhance coordination and mutual support. ECLAC would study on a case-by-case basis, all the proposals it receives for activities in relation to the World Conference on Women and the regional preparatory conference.
3. To ensure that, as a minimum, one inter-agency meeting is held to promote the World Conference in each subregion, at least in the Caribbean, Central America and the Andean subregion. The agenda for each meeting would be determined after analysing the proposals received and the activities scheduled which, pursuant to a decision of the First Meeting of Specialized Agencies, should relate to the following issues: gender equity, sustainable development and consolidation of democracy. Also, concrete topics should be related to the priority issues established by the mandates for the World Conference and the Regional Conference.

Regional agreements

1. To take note of the outline of the regional programme of action for the women of Latin America and the Caribbean and of the guidelines for analysing the situation of women, as well as background information on these issues prepared by ECLAC, and to continue to contribute substantially to the drafting of both documents.
2. To recommend that the regional action programme be closely linked to the Platform for Action that is being prepared by the Commission on the Status of Women and, at the same time, that it reflect the specific characteristics of Latin America and the Caribbean.
3. To disseminate information on the World Conference and its regional preparatory conference, by raising societal awareness and mobilizing community action through forums, publications and information campaigns.
4. In response to the information presented by the representative of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, to send her all available information concerning women and drugs.