UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

LIMITED

E/CEPAL/VP/M/196
July 1979

ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

C E P A L

Economic Commission for Latin America

# REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON THE IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL MODERNIZATION ON THE PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN */

Mexico City, October 1978

*/ Organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), with the collaboration of the Government of Mexico, through the National System for Integral Family Development (DIF).

79-7-1683

CONTENTS



/I. BACKGROUND

# I. BACKGROUND

The Regional Plan of Action on the Integration of Women in Economic and Social Development, and various resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, in particular resolution 31/133, give priority to the situation of poor rural women.

At its nineteenth Conference, FAO recommended that preferential attention should be paid to the question of the policies and measures needed to secure the full participation of women in decision-making, planning and implementation in the field of agrarian reform and rural development in general.

Pursuant to the above, the Workshop on the Impact of Agricultural Modernization on the Participation of Rural Women arose as an initiative on the part of FAO and CEPAL, in which the Government of Mexico participated from the outset through the National System for Integral Family Development (DIF). These three institutions were subsequently joined by UNICEF, given that agency's interest and experience in the subject of the Workshop (Resolution E/ICEF.1342).

The Workshop was a group idea and was planned, organized and carried out as a team effort. In this atmosphere of dialogue, it was found necessary to form an inter-institutional task force made up of Mexico-based staff of the three international bodies and representatives of the Mexican institution.

From March 1978 onwards the task-force met periodically to specify the objectives, define the methodology and select the participants to come from the six countries of Central America, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba, since the Workshop had been designed as a pilot project of a subregional nature.

Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Liliana de Riz was recruited to the post of Workshop Director and joined the task force. Initially, July 1978 was fixed as the date for holding the Workshop, but for a number of reasons suitable candidates were not available by then, and the decision was taken to postpone it until October.

/1. Planning

## 1. Planning and organization

The fundamental objectives of the Workshop were defined as follows:

(a) To specify the basic needs and the problems of rural women of low-income families;

(b) To identify courses of action as a first step towards the formulation of national or regional projects which effectively incorporate rural women in development; and

(c) To use the results of the Workshop as an input for the preparation of a document on the participation of women in rural development in Central America, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, which could be presented as the FAO world meeting on land reform and rural development to be held in 1979.

The Workshop was organized in such a way that, through the joint effort of the bodies involved and the active exchange of experience in the field, the objectives specified in points (a) and (b) above were achieved.

It was decided to adopt the technique of group dynamics most conducive to a fruitful exchange of the wealth of experience which it was hoped the participants would provide.

The Workshop Director was entrusted with the preparation of the basic documents. These were to act as a frame of reference and outline of work for the analysis of the impact which agricultural modernization (changes in the organization of production, in production technology, rural marketing conditions, etc.) has had on the participation of rural women in domestic, economic, social and political activities (see annex 1).

Within the land ownership systems which affect not only the organization of the domestic unit (particularly in low-income groups) but also the organization of production, it was considered desirable to introduce further variables into the analytical scheme, namely, technology and marketing, thus allowing a better analysis of the actual or potential role of rural women in development.

/The above

The above-mentioned documents were sent in advance to the selected candidates for study and as reference material to channel the dialogue.

2. Selection of participants

The Inter-institutional task force took into account three basic criteria in the selection of candidates (men or women) to attend the Workshop. The candidates should:

(a) Have experience in rural development programmes.

(b) Be interested in the problem of the participation of women in development.

(c) Preferably belong to rural organizations.

The participants would attend on a personal basis, but it was felt that they should as far as possible have links with their governments or other organizations through whose support the Workshop could be followed up effectively in future.

The Resident Representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were requested to seek candidates with the above characteristics. If none could be found, they were recommended to attempt to find candidates directly among persons participating in projects of UNDP or other insternational agencies or belonging to rural organizations. Despite the efforts made by UNDP, FAO, CEPAL, UNICEF and DIF in those countries, it was by no means easy to make up the group of participants. Thus the candidates formed a heterogeneous group, and two countries were not represented.

## II. THE WORKSHOP

### 1. Place and date

The Workshop was divided in two parts: the first was held in Mexico City at the headquarters of the DIF, from 23 to 26 October 1978, and the second in the former Solís Hacienda (INEIR/DIF/SOLIS/CODAGEM),1/ Temascalcingo, State of Mexico, from 27 to 30 October 1978.

### 2. Opening

The opening meeting was held in the Juárez Hall of the National System for Integral Family Development (DIF) at 4 p.m. on 23 October.

The Director General of DIF, Mr. Marco Vinicio Martínez Guerrero, welcomed the participants in the name of the Government of Mexico. He expressed the hope that the exchange of experience and the conclusions reached might contribute to the incorporation of women in the development process of the countries of the region.

On behalf of CEPAL, FAO and UNICEF, the Director of the Workshop, Mrs. Liliana de Riz, thanked the Government of Mexico for its hospitality and for the support it had provided in the preparation and holding of the meeting. She said that the Workshop was an experiment and represented a first step in laying the foundations for future projects designed to improve the living conditions of rural women and thus help to put an end to the situation of injustice and oppression they faced in Latin America.

### 3. Attendance

The Workshop was attended by the following participants:

- Amable Chávez and Gerardo Caripio of Costa Rica;
- Ana Luisa Expósito and Lidia Caridad Gil of Cuba;
- María Catalina Matamoros of El Salvador;

---

1/ National Institute for Rural Studies and Research (INEIR), of the National System for Integral Family Development (DIF) in the former Solís Hacienda, in co-ordination with the Agricultural Development Commission of the State of Mexico (CODAGEM).

/- Concepción Umanzor

- Concepción Umanzor, Vidalina Reyes and María Cristina Fuentes of Honduras;
- Cirila Sánchez, Jesús Baltazar Guerrero and María Guadalupe Paredes of Mexico;
- Gladys G.O. de González and Fermina María de Urriola of Panama;
- Argelia Reyes and Magaly Pineda of the Dominican Republic.

The organizers were represented by:

- Guadalupe Belloc Ybarra and Gloria María Valdéz Alcántara of the National System for Integral Family Development (DIF);
- Francisco Escobar and Virginia Lattes de Cásseres, of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO);
- Liliana Kusnir, Martha Maurás and Karen Schultzendorff, of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); and
- Liliana de Riz, Workshop Director, Susanne Aurelius and Lil de Tiburcio of the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL).

The following consultants also attended:

- Cynthia Hewitt de Alcántara and Lourdes Arizpe.

### 4. Organization of the working meetings

As was pointed out above, the Workshop was divided into two parts.

In the first, held at the headquarters of the National DIF, two groups of participants were formed, each with a co-ordinator whose responsibility it was to ensure that the pre-established (but flexible) outline of work was followed, and a rapporteur taking notes for submission subsequently at the plenary meetings.

The second part, held in Temascalcingo, combined this group work with a series of visits to integrated rural development projects being carried out in the State of Mexico.

## III. THE WORKING MEETINGS

At the first working meeting, the Director outlined the overall programme to the participants and stressed the Workshop's basic objectives and methodology. Results would be achieved by the work of each and every one of the participants, all of whom had something to learn and something to teach.

The Workshop participants were aware of their own diversity. They fell into three categories: those coming from rural organizations, government officials with direct experience in the field and international officials who, with the representatives of DIF, formed the supportive team for the work. They also said that through the Workshop they hoped to gain a broader knowledge of the problems of rural women and, on the basis of their experience, furnish information which would help in the formulation of courses of action for the integration of women in development. They expressed the wish that this type of meeting could be repeated in the future. This would help to ensure that projects were formulated with a broad knowledge of the real situation and thus improve the distribution of resources allocated to the field by government and private institutions and international organizations.

The working groups then began their work with an outline by each participant of the geographical location of the region where they had acquired their experience, and of its characteristics: major crops, land ownership systems, land distribution (size of plots), cultural groups, family composition, migration, etc.

As might be expected, the discussions gave rise to a very broad range of combinations of these variables, and the importance became clear of relating the role of rural women to the various aspects of organization of production and the cultural forms prevailing in each case.

The experience of most of the participants was in the traditional subsistence rural sector at the local, microregional or national level, although in some cases it was connected with a situation of transition under the impact of agricultural modernization policies at those levels. A description was also given of the process of change currently under way in Cuba.

/In the

In the light of their experience, the participants classified the families in the following way: (a) subsistence-farming families; (b) families of temporary migrants, where all members migrate to undertake agricultural work at specific seasons; (c) families where the woman goes out to work for wages, and (d) families where women stay behind as temporary heads of the family, while the husband leaves for seasonal work in some other place.

Within this general framework, the subsequent meetings tackled the agenda laid down in the outline of work as follows:

1. Participation of women in domestic activities

In connexion with the domestic role of rural women, it was stressed that the activities of women in the framework of the rural family unit were one of the basic forms of organization of production in the countryside, in all cases except Cuba.

Particular emphasis was placed, in this context, on the difficulty of the daily work of rural women. From the various kinds of experience of the participants, a picture was pieced together of the working day of rural women at the family level.

The domestic work of rural women involved very long working hours without any fixed timetable. In the absence of basic services for child care and education, excessive domestic work had a negative effect on the entire family unit. The parental division of labour was reproduced in the children: the girls shared in domestic chores from a very early age.

In almost all cases, with the exception of Cuba, it was also found that rural women did not attach value to their work in the home as the person with prime responsibility for feeding the family and educating the children.

It was also pointed out that society as a whole likewise fails to attach value to this productive work, which is seen as their duty, as it is by rural women themselves.

It was stressed that rural women had little or no participation in the economic decisions of the domestic unit, and that this bore no relation (with some exceptions) to their real economic and social contribution. The exceptions given were the Cuban case and the social organization of the Chatino indian community in the State of Oaxaca, Mexico.

/In all

In all cases, it was noted that the effort involved in household work was closely related with the socio-economic conditions in each situation: the existence of service infrastructure, land ownership, size and quality of plots, forms of production (technology used), etc.

It was emphasized that a very common feature of rural women's domestic work was to support, without pay, the productive activities of men: raising animals, working in the fields, marketing products and so forth.

In connexion with the above, the lack was stressed of suitable tachniques to lighten the burden of domestic chores for rural women (carrying water and fire wood, working tools, etc.).

Again, the need was stressed of providing basic services for health, education, nutrition, drinking water, housing, etc., and particularly of child-care centres (nurseries, schools) in rural communities, as a vital condition for improving the quality of family life.

The size and composition of the family (age and sex of children) were also considered important aspects to be taken into account when analysing the question of the domestic role of rural women. In almost all the cases analysed families were large, and their survival strategy was the direct result of those factors.

Broadly speaking, it was also considered very important that rural women should have access to agrarian rights (land ownership, access to credit, access to agricultural training courses), as an essential condition for their being able to participate truly in economic life and benefit from the modernization processes in agriculture.

In the light of their experience, the participants also analysed in detail the various remunerated activities carried out by women within and outside the household unit in order to contribute to family subsistence.

Within the home, the specialization of women in domestic chores sometimes enabled them to extend their activities outside the family in services for which there is a certain market demand, such as sewing, mending clothes, outside washing and ironing, minding the children of other families, etc. In some cases this paid work represents a "surplus" and in others it represents underconsumption for the family in need of a minimum income.

This income supplements the man's earnings, or entirely replaces them.

/2. Participation

## 2. Participation of women in economic activity

On the basis of their experience, the participants analysed the various paid activities undertaken by women within the domestic unit to contribute to the family subsistence or improve its standard of living.

It was pointed out the in some cases agricultural modernization increased the gap between the modern and traditional rural sectors. In this process, the women of very poor families were forced to increase their independent production for the market (handicrafts, etc.) in conditions which did not enable them to compete with the products of a more sophisticated technology.

In connexion with paid activities of women outside the domestic circle, as wage earners, types of activity and also the conditions in which they were undertaken were discussed. In connexion with the former, the following were mentioned:

(a) Agricultural activity - picking coffee, tomatoes, cotton, preparing, weeding, etc. - are generally badly paid (minimum wages are not respected), have bad working conditions, and are of a temporary nature. In cases where they did not own land or owned only small plots of bad quality, the entire family would go out to work;

(b) Activities connected with agribusiness (selection, packaging, etc.) - in these activities minimum wages were again not respected;

(c) Industrial activities in factories, workshop, etc. When there were no employment opportunities in factories (usually textiles), piecework existed and usually legal minimum wages were not respected;

(d) Services, particularly in small shops and personal services such as domestic service.

In connexion with the necessary conditions for rural women of low-income families to participate in the labour market as wage-earners, it was pointed out that:

- Employment varied from a situation of unemployment to limited or heavy demand for female workers. Cases of heavy demand usually corresponded to temporary agribusiness work;
- The conditions of demand for rural women workers also varied widely; very often they called for migration on the part of the women;

/- Particular

- Particular attention was paid to domestic service as a source of work. There was also the case of prostitution as a survival option for rural women when emigrating to urban areas;
- Job opportunities were related to the family status of rural women. Young single women in general had the most opportunities for finding paid work. When they had children they left them in the care of the grandparents. Women with children, in the absence of basic child-care services, in most of the cases analysed, had less chances of entering the labour market and when they did it was as wage earners through personal services;
- The relationship was also noted between the degree of training and the possibilities of entering the market; in general, female labour is not skilled;
- When rural women were skilled, they usually carried out so-called "feminine" work (nurses, secretaries, salesgirls, etc.). This helps to reproduce the sexual division of labour in the community;
- Attention was drawn to the sharp differences in the labour market between organized and non-organized women. In the first case, their activity has greater benefits since they not only earn an income but also take part in decision-making within the production process.

### 3. Participation of women in social activity

There was consensus on the need for rural women to organize within the community in order to solve their problems, demand their rights and obtain resources.

It was pointed out that it was easier to organize rural women when the men were already organized. Women's groups supported the work of men and were considered as a step towards a more human and equal relationship between men and women.

It was stressed that organization should characteristically be controlled by the women themselves and respond to their interests both as women and as members of the rural population. Some opinions were also given as to the importance of having any kind of organization whatsoever, on the grounds that organization was valuable in itself, even when the objectives were not sufficiently clear at the outset.

/It was

It was stated that organization is a means for rural women to emerge from their isolation and gain skills for new employment possibilities, through co-operatives and other kinds of collective organization.

It was stressed that organization is almost a necessary condition for grass-roots participation in the formulation of rural development programmes.

It was also pointed out that social workers for community development had to be organized and trained so as to orient the action of rural women towards the satisfaction of their most urgent needs and the solution, through joint efforts of the problems faced by rural families and women, since individual solutions had negative consequences such as the disintegration of the family and the community, migration, the waste of resources in the region and the drain of labour.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS ON COURSES OF ACTION

In the working meetings covering the agenda items, the participants identified the courses of action which they considered urgent to meet the basic needs of rural women.

Broadly speaking, it was agreed that agricultural modernization has not benefited broad sectors of low-income rural families. Efforts aimed at improving the quality of life of rural families and the participation of women in such changes have been very limited, since it is only recently that account has begun to be taken of the important role women can play in rural development. Usually, the countries do not have definite policies to incorporate women in rural development and organizations of rural women, when they exist, are very weak.

Each participant outlined the courses of action they felt would best answer the needs of women in the zone of their experience. After an analysis of the various outlines, it was recommended that the desired results should be specified in greater detail, taking into account technical and political feasibility.

A summary is given below of the courses of action suggested by the participants. Although they were originally presented in a general context, they have been grouped by subject for greater clarity.

/1. Courses

1. Courses of action of a general nature

(a) To set up child-care systems and centres so that rural women can participate effectively in economic activity and social life.

(b) To encourage the holding of periodic meetings similar to the Workshop as a means of exchange of experience and knowledge among persons working directly in the field, government bodies responsible for formulating rural development programmes and international organizations which finance or collaborate with such projects.

(c) To promote efforts for integrated land reform so that the land is used on a community basis in a scientific and technical manner.

(d) To formulate rural development projects taking into consideration the opinion of rural women in order to ensure that they really respond to their needs and expectations.

(e) To design production development projects in such a way that they become self-sufficient both in financing and in production and marketing.

(f) To support the creation of consumer co-operatives in order to increase the purchasing power of low-income families.

(g) To introduce suitable technology into rural communities to alleviate domestic chores.

(h) To create sources of employment for migrant rural women in cities.

(i) To set up programmes to prevent and combat alcoholism, in view of its negative effects on rural families.

(j) To promote housing improvement programmes.

2. Courses of action aimed at education

(a) To set up rural schools where adult men and women can receive an integrated education.

(b) To set up radiophonic schools and extent the coverage of existing ones to broadcast courses for learning Spanish (in native zones), literacy, agricultural extension, etc.

(c) To promote the establishmnet of mobile integrated education centres to service sparsely-populated areas.

(d) To furnish rural zones with the teaching materials and equipment in keeping with their needs.

/(e) To

(e) To set up machinery to orient the consumption habits of the rural population.

(f) The participants suggested that the adults (men and women) of rural zones should receive courses on the following subjects:

General aspects of rural development:

- Knowledge of land laws;
- Community development and political participation;
- Formulation and administration of development programmes;
- Conservation of the environment (reafforestation, rational use of forests, pollution, etc.);
- Family life education (home economics, time planning, etc.).

Increasing production, such as:

- Agricultural extension;
- Programming supply in relation to demand, marketing and distribution of products;
- Preservation and diversification of food products;
- Handicrafts, dressmaking.

3. Courses of action aimed at production

(a) To stimulate collective action in production.

(b) To set up machinery to find and protect markets.

(c) To undertake projects to generate employment with community backing, to provide permanent incomes for rural families.

(d) To set up agribusiness for the direct use of local production.

(e) To encourage the exploitation of family plots of land to supplement collective work (market gardening, raising chickens or rabbits, nurseries for seedlings etc.).

4. Courses of action to support basic services

(a) To quantify the demand for and programme the supply of basic services (health, education, food, housing, drinking water, sewerage, electricity, communications, etc.).

(b) To provide communities with the basic services they lack and improve and extend existing ones by means of continuous programmes.

/(c) To

(c) To ensure that basic services are preferably undertaken by staff of the community, combining voluntary and paid work.

(d) To set up centres for washing and ironing and for making bread and tortillas, and so forth to allow women free time.

(e) To build and service civic and leisure centres.

5. Courses of action in research

(a) To study the situation of rural women as regards: working conditions, wages, social security coverage, level of skills.

(b) To hold workshops with a view to finding possible means of providing better care for children in the absence of their mothers.

(c) To determine the feasibility of each project and the problems which might obstruct it.

(d) To study distribution and marketing channels and market features (costs, variety and quality of the products to be marketed, etc.).

6. Courses of action in organization

(a) To promote organization at the community level as a step towards setting up organization of rural women at the regional level.

(b) To orient and create awareness, permanently and systematically, of the desirability of collective work and the need for solidarity in activities or projects undertaken by the community.

(c) To group families in order to facilitate the provision of technical assistance.

(d) To organize rural women so that they can break free from paternalist arrangements and achieve full participation in rural development.

7. Courses of action on legislation

(a) To formulate and implement labour legislation whose provisions respect and attach due value to the work of rural women.

(b) To review land laws and reform them so that rural women have the same rights as men.

/8. Courses

### 8. Courses of action on financing

(a) To furnish communities and families with the initial capital to carry out their basic projects.

(b) To allow rural women access to credit.

## V. EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP

Being a pilot project, it was considered important to evaluate the Workshop from the standpoint both of the participants and of the members of the Inter-institutional task force.

### 1. Questionnaire for participants

The opinions of the participants were obtained through a questionnaire focusing on four points:

- Objectives of the Workshop;
- Methodology of work;
- Results; and
- Atmosphere of the meeting (see annex 2).

### 2. Answers of the participants

The answers were on the whole favourable. The most positive aspects were found to be:

- The freedom with which participants could express their experience and concern;
- The abundant exchange of experience which enabled them to extend their knowledge, gain a deeper insight into the problems faced by rural women in Latin America and analyse possible solutions;
- The information they were able to gain on the situation of rural women in a political, social and economic system other than the one prevailing in their region; and
- The working procedure employed and the atmosphere in which the Workshop was held.

/Some participants

Some participants expressed a certain degree of disagreement with the basic documents on the grounds that they were not very clear. Others pointed out that they had not received them sufficiently in advance of the meeting, and lacked the necessary time to go into details in the formulation of possible courses of action; and finally some participants pointed out the limited usefulness of visits to intergrated rural development projects which concerned programmes that could not be applied to their own zones.

3. Evaluation by the Inter-institutional task force

On balance, the Inter-institutional task force unanimously found the Workshop satisfactory from the standpoint both of its proceedings and of its results.

As pointed out above, the group of participants was very heterogeneous due to the difficulty in finding candidates with the characteristics required to attain the Workshop's objectives.

The chosen participants worked with great enthusiasm and contributed very valuable knowledge stemming from real and specific experience, whether observed or lived in the field.

It was noted, however, that the language used in the drafting of the outline and work guidelines, and in the proceedings of the Workshop itself, was in some cases not very clear. This was found during the Workshop, in particular, through the overall tendency to identify the term "modernization" with "mechanization". It was therefore necessary to devote a considerable amount of time to explaining in detail the objectives of the Workshop and specifying the kind of intervention and contributions which were expected.

It was also found that the participants were unable to define and limit themselves to the framework of the socio-political and economic limitations of their experience. While this framework was unchangeable for them in practice, in a theoretical exercise such as the formulation of recommendations they should have taken account of it in some way.

It was found that in meetings of this kind the co-ordinators of the working groups play an extremely important role. It is therefore desirable that they should not only be experts in the subject under consideration but should also have experience in group leadership and maintain constant, well-planned co-ordination with the Workshop Director.

/In addition,

In addition, some members of the Inter-institutional task force suggested that as far as possible the co-ordinators should attend on a full-time basis.

4. Recommendations for future workshops

In order to draw greater advantage in future from meetings such as the Workshop, it seems worthwhile to point out that the methodology prepared for it should be carried into practice more strictly.

What is meant here is that the participants should be chosen in accordance with the basic criteria used in the determination of the types of family which is to constitute the axis of the study of the impact of agricultural modernization on the participation of rural women. The typology should envisage a variety of situations which, both at the country and inter-country levels, makes it possible to monitor the effects of changes in specific variables on the behaviour of rural women.

It is recommended that the choice should be in line with the categories indicated (or whatever other categories may be developed) and to that end should be made directly on the basis of information from the area from which the candidates come, through different channels which are considered to be relevant. The practical and financial difficulties of achieving this, however, are evident.

It would also be desirable to prepare specific questionnaires which focus on the target situation, thus avoiding the difficulties which the reading of more general documents on the problem involves for this kind of participant.

This methodology would allow a more precise evaluation of the impact of modernization on agriculture.

In future workshops based on these guidelines, it would be very desirable to submit the basic document to a pilot test using assumed or probable participants so as to shed light on communication between the group formulating the document and the recipients.

Likewise, with regard to the basic agenda, it is suggested that the analysis of the recommendations made should be extended to the formulation of strategies to make the contents of the recommendations feasible.

/Annex 1

Annex 1

LIMITED
TPMR/1

September 1978

WORKSHOP ON THE IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL MODERNIZATION ON THE PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN

Mexico City, 23-30 October 1978

# GUIDELINES FOR ANALYSING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The general objective of the Workshop on the Impact of Agricultural Modernization on the Participation of Rural Women, to be held in Mexico City from 23 to 30 October 1978 is to get to know and analyse the different experiences in this regard which have been observed in the countries of Central America, in the Caribbean and in Mexico, so as to acquire bases on which to formulate national and regional projects which will contribute to solving the problems facing rural women in their participation in social development.

The guidelines given below are based on the central idea that the impact of agricultural modernization on the participation of women in development should be analysed within the broader framework of its consequences on the low-income rural family. These considerations are of a general nature, and should not be taken as substitutes for descriptions and analyses of particular situations. On the contrary, it will be endeavoured during the Workshop, through the analysis of specific situations, to discover the basic needs of rural women and what problems they face at the present time. The discussion and exchange of experiences among the participants constitutes the first significant step towards appreciating the consequences of the modernization of agriculture on the participation of rural women.

## I. GENERAL CONCEPTS

This section will endeavour to define some of the concepts on which the discussions of the Workshop will be based.

### 1. The participation of women

From the feminist movements which postulate the equality of social opportunities for women in relation to men, to those which propose a better utilization of the human resources available to overcome the obstacles in the way of economic development, by way of the assertions that increased participation of women in the labour force will contribute to controlling the population explosion, particularly in rural areas, all the approaches agree that it is necessary to increase the "participation of women". The term "participation", however, has a wide range of meanings.

It would seem important to establish clearly what forms of participation are advocated and what the objectives are in each case. This will only be feasible starting from an analysis of the specific situations (economic, social, cultural and political) in which women are to be found, i.e., by knowing what forms the effective participation of women takes (their economic activities inside and outside the household, their community and political activities) and the problems they face in each case. This would seem to be the most appropriate means of appraising the alternatives for change which will be discussed at the Workshop, both in terms of their viability and the social costs they imply.

The effective contribution of rural women and their potential participation in social development cannot be analysed in an abstract form, isolated from the broader problem of social inequality and its specific forms in each particular situation. The effects of agricultural modernization on the levels and quality of the low-income rural family must first be studied.

## 2. The rural family

Within the rural family, the role of women is marked out and their basic needs, aspirations, attitudes and behaviour identified. The participation of rural women should be studied in the light of the restrictions and alternatives arising in the family unit. Woman's role within the rural family structure and the preponderance of the family and the rural community in the working world of rural women must be analysed in terms of their specificity.

Agricultural modernization, i.e., the changes in the organization and technologies of production, and the changes in the terms of marketing of products in rural areas, is not innocuous from the point of view of the participation of rural women in production. The division of labour within the family is redefined, and therefore the activities of women in the household and on the land are also redefined, as well as the forms of their participation in decision-making. The range of production, services and consumption activities changes: How do these changes affect the situation of rural women? For example, what changes take place in the

their sources of income, in their share in decision-making, in their work, in the household, in their share in the labour market, in their participation in organizations, in the image which rural women have of themselves?

### 3. Agricultural modernization

The term agricultural modernization will be used in a restricted sense; it will refer to changes in the organization and technologies of production and in the terms of marketing of products in rural areas. This concept is not used here to designate a process of wider scope implying social, cultural or political modernization. The discussion is, moreover, not based on the assumption that social, cultural or political modernization is the obvious consequence of the modernization of agriculture and automatically associated with it.

## II. GUIDELINES FOR THE WORKSHOP

As has already been said, the Workshop will analyse and discuss the impacts of the modernization of agriculture on the low-income rural family and its effects on the participation of rural women in domestic output, economic activity (production, marketing, etc.) and social and political life. Account must therefore be taken of the definitions of concepts presented in the previous chapter. In the next few pages, some general guidelines are given for making this analysis.

### 1. Background

The impact of agricultural modernization on the participation of rural women has not been specifically analysed to date. Such observations as exist have hardly been systematized as yet and only permit a very imprecise approach to the problem.

A first necessary step towards preparing projects which will constitute real alternatives to existing problems is to progress in the analysis and comparison of specific and empirically variable situations.

The effects of the various technical improvements known as the "green revolution" show, except when certain official measures are taken to prevent it, that the concentration of wealth has become accentuated and

that the inequality in the distribution of agricultural income is becoming increasingly pronounced. Moreover, in areas in which there has been an intensive modernization of agriculture (reforms in the land-holding system, introduction of modern production technologies, changes in the terms of marketing of the products), it is accompanied by the phenomena of relatively open unemployment and migration towards urban centres or towards more advanced agricultural areas in search of seasonal employment, according to the different seasons for sowing and harvesting.

The rural family, as a unit of production and consumption, and in its expanded form as a basic institution of organization and support, becomes transformed in both its structure and its functions. Within it, the activities carried out by women change.

In analysing the impact which the various processes involved in the modernization of agriculture have had on the participation of rural women, the information available, although insufficient, provides grounds for concluding that these processes have benefited men to a greater extent than women, and even indicates that agricultural modernization may increase the social discrimination against rural women where measures are not adopted to prevent it.

(a) Technological changes

The introduction of modern production technologies accompanying these changes does not seem to have really improved working conditions for women. Rural women continue to use traditional implements, or their own hands, in the tasks they perform.

Undoubtedly, this is a complex process which depends on society's conception of work by women and the concept of women themselves concerning their actual contribution to production. It is interesting to note, in these observations, that technological modernization may intensify the adverse effect of social and cultural factors on the situation of women in rural areas.

(b) Agrarian reforms

Although most of the legislation on agrarian reform makes no distinction as to sex between those benefiting from it, the assignment of land ownership falls, by tradition and custom, on men. This process leads

to a deterioration of the relative position of rural women: socially, men are considered to be producers; commercial agriculture is considered an essentially male activity. Women are confined to the domestic area and to subsistence crops for consumption by the family unit. In that space, their actual contribution to production and the reproduction of the labour force appears as a "disguised occupation", either because they are excluded from national statistics for economically active female population, or because their direct contribution to production is regarded only as unpaid agricultural work and is therefore not measurable according to the criteria of a monetary economy.

The changes in the system of land tenure - taking into account that the farms which pass into the hands of those benefited by agrarian reform are generally quite small - and the increasing investment in agricultural activities, with forms of technology typical of an industrial society, have a strong impact on the existing socio-economic structures. It would have to be determined in what manner these changes modify the participation of women.

(c) Participation of women in decision-making

A factor which should be taken into account in studying the effect of these changes is the possible loss of participation by women in the adoption of decisions concerning production, to which they nevertheless contribute directly or indirectly through their work. Much of their influence on production and the benefits obtained from it are probably diminished.

Little is known about the decision-making process in the rural household and the part women play in it. It would be useful to know how decisions are adopted in specific situations and how far they have been affected by the modernization of agriculture.

The objectives of national development plans, hitherto at least, have seldom included the potential participation of women in terms of their real contribution to social development. Training courses for women and the preoccupation about such aspects as lack of access to credit and fertilizers represent some progress towards solving the problems of rural women. It is not sufficient, however, if the specific repercussions of

the changes inherent in the modernization of agriculture on the real and potential participation of women are not analysed. Such a study is an indispensable basis for suggesting ways of helping to improve their participation in the transformation of the existing living conditions of the low-income rural family.

Moreover, the transformation of the living conditions of the rural family depends on the degree to which agricultural modernization affects the living and working conditions of rural women.

From a different standpoint, it would seem important for the specific forms of real and potential participation of rural women in social development to be considered within the context of the study of the different repercussions of agricultural modernization on the various categories of low-income rural family units. For this purpose, an operational definition of what are called "low-income rural families" should be taken as a basis, and will make it possible to identify the various situations covered by this concept, even if only in a very general and approximate manner.

## 2. Frame of reference for analysing experiences as regards the participation of women in development

It should be possible to place the experiences analysed at the Workshop, even if only roughly, in some of the categories of low-income rural families. The participants should therefore endeavour to present their experiences in terms of the criterion-guides referred to later in this study, so that the participation of women may be analysed within specific contexts.

It would thus be possible to avoid rather too abstract generalizations regarding the situation of rural women and to identify some of the diverse aspects and implications of the problems faced by rural women in the rural family setting. This working strategy constitutes a first step towards defining alternative possibilities of structural, organizational and behavioural changes which, in each specific situation, may satisfy the basic needs of rural women. The discussion of transformation options forms part of the work of seeking the necessary bases for formulating specific projects and suggesting policies. This task is the second central objective of the Workshop.

The context suggested here for the exchange of ideas and experiences among the participants is based on a more general assumption: it is necessary to know what kind of role is actually played by rural women in the stuggles and efforts to improve the existing living conditions of the rural family. Only on the basis of a fuller knowledge of their real contribution is it possible to suggest projects envisaging their potential contribution towards social development.

So far the struggles and efforts of women to achieve a substantial improvement in their living and working conditions have basically been led by women of the middle- and upper-income urban strata. Hence the importance of "hearing" rural women so as to learn their specific basic needs, their attitudes and behaviour, and the possibilities of change they envisage.

(a) The low-income rural family

Women's work in the home as wives, mothers and housekeepers, their economic activity on the family plot as an unpaid agricultural worker, and their participation in the regional or national labour market and in the community and political life will vary according to factors such as the size of the holding and the quality of the land (with or without irrigation) in use. It must be taken into account, for example, that there are economically viable holdings (which provide a living for the family unit) and economically non-viable holdings. In the former, the women's work may constitute a production input. In the latter, women are obliged to seek sources of income outside the family plot (cottage industries, seasonal work in other agricultural areas, emigration to the cities in search of work in the services sector, etc.). The new strategies for ensuring a living will in their turn depend upon other factors such as marital status, number and age of children, etc.

It is common knowledge that the impact of agricultural modernization, and specifically of technological innovations, is largely determined by the distribution of land ownership. This in turn is linked with access to other economic resources (basically credit, technical advisory assistance, capacity to influence the factor market, etc.) and to non-economic factors (political power).

As a frame of reference for analysing the various repercussions of agricultural modernization and its implications on specific forms of real and potential participation of rural women, it will be necessary to establish an initial category of rural families on the basis of an operational definition of a low-income rural family.

With this end in view, some basic criteria are presented here as a guide for the discussions on the participants' experiences. Although, as noted above, the impact of agricultural modernization on the participation of women tends to vary considerably according to the national and local contexts in which it occurs, these criteria would permit a minimum of comparability. Such comparability could exist between different types of low-income rural families in a specific national situation, or between rural families of the same type in different national situations.

(i) Basic criteria for defining a low-income rural family. A first criterion-guide for defining a low-income rural family would be the various sources of income that provide a living for the family unit. Thus, it is possible to identify rural families which obtain their income from:

(1) Paid agricultural work (in plantations or agro-industries);

(2) Work on the family plot and a combination of activities, whether or not on a wage-earning basis, such as: paid agricultural work; artisanal and/or commercial-level activities; urban activities in which some members of the family are engaged (construction, services, etc.), and

(3) Work exclusively on the family plot.

In the first category, it would be interesting to determine whether the work is on a permanent or seasonal basis, on capitalist or non-capitalist units. In the second category (work on the family plot and in other activities), a distinction would have to be made between (a) infra-subsistence holdings or holdings which do not provide a living (producing less than one minimum wage and employing less than one man per working year) and (b) sub-family holdings (producing less than two minimum wages and employing less than two men per working year).

The third category (work exclusively on the family plot) covers family holdings which produce between two and four minimum wages and employ between two and four men per working year.

The system of land tenure - sharecropping, on lease, private ownership, individual ejido, collective ejido, communal land, or a combination of these systems - should also be specified when indicating the type of rural family considered, since it is interesting to know how it affects the structure of land tenure, the living conditions of rural families and, therefore, the role of rural women.

(ii) Definition. The minimum and maximum limits for defining a low-income rural family are sub-family holdings (producing less than one minimum wage) in the former case, and family holdings (producing between two and four minimum wages) in the latter.

(b) Other criteria to be considered

(i) Technologies used. The specification of technologies - cutting, burning and felling; hoeing unirrigated land; ploughing unirrigated land; non-mechanized cultivation of irrigated land; mechanized cultivation - will make it possible to determine more precisely the family context of the experiences presented at the Workshop. For example, it would be useful to establish those cases in which the rural family increases its income as a result of technological innovations, and how that additional monetary income is spent (is it reflected in greater social well-being for the family?)

On the basis of the criterion-guide to the various strategies for ensuring a living, as noted earlier, three basic sources of family income may be distinguished. This criterion, combined with the capacity of the holdings to provide employment, enables them to be classified as infra-subsistence, sub-family and family plots. Through a combination of these two criteria it is a simple matter to clasify "low-income rural families". At the same time, the system of land tenure, technologies used and ethnic and community characteristics make it possible to define the categories of low-income rural families which will serve as a reference for the specific analysis of the participation of rural women.

(ii) Other factors. In addition to the most important empirically variable factors and characteristics, others also affecting the participation of rural women should be analysed, such as: size of family, age and sex of children, patterns of division of labour among its members, health and nutrition conditions, educational and technical training opportunities,

use of female labour during the agricultural cycle, employment opportunities outside the holding, opportunities for the diversification of economic activity within the holding, access to credit, predominant attitudes and values of women in the family and in the rural community, participation of women in social and cultural organizations and their political participation.

In all the cases analysed it will also be important to obtain information about the ethnic characteristics of the population under study (indigenous and mixed-blood) and the type of community in which the experience analysed occurs.

Annex 2

LIMITED
TPMR/2

September 1978

WORKSHOP ON THE IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL MODERNIZATION ON THE PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN

Mexico City, 23-30 October 1978

# WORKING GUIDE FOR ANALYSING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT

The aim of this short document is to provide a guide for the Workshop discussions on rural women under the impact of the modernization of agriculture.

The following basic topics and sub-topics proposed for discussion are based on the guidelines for the activity of the Workshop contained in document TPMR/1.1/

## 1. The role of rural women

### (a) In domestic output

This topic is included first of all because the analysis of the domestic activities of rural women is indispensable to a study of their participation in economic activity. Only after considering the participation of rural women in domestic (their indirect contribution to production) and other productive activities can their participation in the different sectors or organization of the market economy be analysed.

The activities within the rural family unit constitute one of the fundamental forms of productive organization in rural areas. These activities, linked to the consumption of the family unit, cover a wide range of tasks: production and collection of raw materials, their transformation into objects of consumption (preparation of meals, making of clothes, materials, etc.); provision of diverse personal services (care and education of the children, keeping the clothes and the house clean, medical and religious services, etc.) as well as the carrying of water and wood, the grinding and preservation of cereals and foodstuffs and other activities.

The Workshop should endeavour to identify the role of rural women in the domestic unit as the main persons responsible for the activities carried out within the consumer unit (the family): how do they distribute their time among the different tasks for which they are responsible? What time is given to what task and how much energy is consumed in the process? Did the modernization of agriculture produce changes in the working conditions of women at the domestic level? What important changes may be mentioned?

---

1/ Guidelines for the analysis of the participation of women from a rural environment (TPMR/1), September 1978.

Once the role of rural women in the domestic context and the changes which took place as a consequence of agricultural modernization are analysed, the Workshop should go on to study the forms in which domestic activity is linked to other productive activities.

(b) Economic activity

A first outline to guide the discussion would include the following topics:

(i) The division of labour in the rural family as a unit of production and consumption. An analysis would be made of the economic activities carried out by women during the agricultural cycle as an unpaid worker and the economic activities they perform through the market (paid activities). This study, and that of the topics listed below, should be restricted to the specific categories of low-income rural families.2/

(ii) The differences in the economic participation of rural women (paid and unpaid) according to the different categories of low-income rural families. The paid work (domestic and other) of rural women: Is this a strategy of "liberation" for rural women or an essential need for their survival?

(iii) The economic alternatives presented to rural women as a consequence of the modernization of agriculture in specific contexts. The emigration of rural women. The independent production of goods, e.g., the development of home handicraft production; small-scale itinerant or non-itinerant trade; production and marketing through co-operative organizations; the phenomena of social disorganization (prostitution, etc.).

(iv) Aspects determining the productive activity of rural women. What role is played by factors such as: size of the family; age and sex of the children; structure of the division of labour among the members (the contribution of each to production); conditions of health and nutrition; number of pregnancies; level of qualification of the female labour force; educational level of women; opportunities for work (agricultural and non-agricultural) off the land?

---

2/ Guidelines for the analysis of the participation of women from a rural environment, op.cit.

(v) Analysis of the economic activities which women could potentially perform. Presentation of experiments in this respect, either carried out individually or through women's organizations.

(vi) The predominant system of values as regards rural women and work. The weight of the rural community as a residential group and main frame of reference for defining the role of women. The weight of the values of urban-industrial society in defining the role of women. The image which rural women have of themselves and their effective contribution to production. Their attitudes and behaviour as regards work, sex, children, etc.

(c) Social and political life

Discussion on this topic would endeavour to identify the forms of organization of women as regards:

- Organization for production (corporate associations, e.g. handicraft co-operatives, etc.);
- Organizations for distribution and consumption;
- Mothers' associations (their demands to obtain schools, health centres, etc.);
- Other forms of organization, their characteristics and goals;
- Forms of political participation (the role of women in rural dwellers' movements);
- Forms of organization of paid female agricultural workers (in plantations for export, in agroindustries, etc.)

In analysing the forms of social and political organization and participation of rural women, it would be particularly important to mention the changes resulting from agricultural modernization. For example, what impact have the agrarian reforms had on the development of co-operative organizations? What effects have the organizations for community development produced (changes in the image of the role of women or reinforcement of traditional stereotypes) the introduction of modern technologies and their consequences for the role of women (technical training plans, etc.), introduction of basic social services, and forms of response of rural women and others?

## 2. Alternatives for change in order to meet the basic needs of rural women (bases for preparing specific projects and suggestions for influencing policy formulation)

The discussion of the alternatives for change which could arise out of the specific situations considered in the Workshop could be organized around three basic points:

(i) Structural alternatives (economic changes). Land-holding system, granting of credits; introduction of technologies suited to the basic needs of rural women (e.g., technologies for the transport of water, storage of cereals, conservation of meals); marketing systems.

(ii) Alternatives for organization (social changes). Changes in social, government and non-government institutions; community development programmes, goals and implementation; basic services infrastructure.

(iii) Alternatives for behaviour. Changes in the image which rural women have of themselves and in the social values which define their role. Responses to such changes.