

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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**THE DECADE  
FOR WOMEN IN  
LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**Background and prospects**



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## PREFACE

The year 1985 marks the end of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, proclaimed at the World Conference in Mexico. However, it may be said that consideration of the subject, far from having exhausted it, has only just begun. Since the beginning of the Decade, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has participated in the effort to tackle it systematically with a view to promoting the integration of women in development. The many developments in the region in this connection during the Decade include projects, meetings and seminars, support in the creation of national offices, progress in government action, the emergence of many non-governmental organizations devoted to problems faced by women, the creation of new currents of public opinion, the production of publications, and, finally, legislative changes, with regard to which one of the key achievements was the entry into force of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which was supported and ratified by the majority of countries of the region.

Clearly, the topic of the status of women in today's societies has come into its own. A set of theories in this respect is systematically emerging, and more is known about the situation of women in specific groups —those in the urban, low-income strata, rural women and women at the middle level is increasing; consideration is being given to their place in the labour market, their educational status, the ways in which they participate, their aspirations and needs and, finally, the status of young women, which is closely linked to the whole question of youth, is becoming a central issue.

This publication falls within the framework of these concerns. It contains studies carried out by professional staff in the ECLAC Social Development Division and by experts from the region, who, taking time out from a task in which much still remains to be done, have looked at the subject from various angles in an attempt to contribute to its study and to evaluate what has been achieved during the Decade. The document also includes an extensive, specialized bibliography, which is bound to be of interest to anyone studying these questions.\*

\*The bracketed numbers in the text refer to the bibliography.

## SUMMARY

Systematic studies on the status of women in Latin America and the Caribbean were undertaken within ECLAC on the basis of resolutions adopted at the fifteenth session of the Commission (Quito, 1973). Stress has been laid on base-line studies concerning the living conditions of women and also on the design and orientation of measures for overcoming discrimination at all levels. Since then many studies have been carried out and governmental, technical and academic meetings held, resulting in greater understanding of the issue and in proposals for action in connection with it.

This book is being published in response to ECLAC's concern with problems relating to the status of women. Although the three studies it contains were prepared for different governmental forums in the second half of the Decade for Women, their contents certainly transcend the needs for which they were prepared and constitute a contribution which will interest anyone concerned with this question. There are also two annexes, the first of which provides information on United Nations legislation in connection with the rights of women and its application in domestic law, while the second contains resolutions from recent regional meetings sponsored by the United Nations on the subject of women.

Part One, entitled "Women and their role in society today", attempts to provide a synopsis of the key ideas which have presided over the study of the status of Latin American women and to examine the progress made in examining this subject and steps which might be taken in future to view things in the longer term. The thinking and proposals it contains are structured along two main lines which meant that the subject is analysed from two inter-related points of view. On the one hand, consideration is given to the close relationship which exists between the status of women and the broader processes affecting the countries in which they live and the region as a whole and, on the other, to the cultural definition of the role assigned to women, which makes their central concern lie within the family unit and gives them a predominantly subordinate position in terms of social participation outside the home.

In the course of a long period of growth and modernization, the region has solved some of its development problems and created others, within a system characterized by significant dynamism but too few guiding policies. This process, which differs in intensity in the various countries of the region, has resulted in substantial changes in the social participation of women and has thus, to various degrees, affected the family. Although the standards of living of some of the population have risen somewhat, it would seem that the time is approaching when this process will have played itself out and there will be a need for special

policies aimed at preserving the most disadvantaged groups in the population. In this connection, women play a key role in the reformulations of the model, especially in aspects related to the satisfaction of basic needs and urban reorganization, which are of importance in the new options. A highly important element is the role which young women might be called upon to play, in view of the contradictions which exist between the training they have received and their expectations.

One essential element in understanding the ways in which women will be called upon to participate is the family, both their original family and the family which they and their partner reproduce, since to a large extent it determines the role of women in other areas of social involvement. From that point of view, the study describes the social role of women in paid and unpaid work, education and organizations. It also touches upon planning and legislation as global mechanisms designed to promote the actual establishment of families in the region and places emphasis on matters related to young women, since, as they constitute a group with new characteristics and expectations based on their potential, they will militate in favour of the restructuring of many established social relations. It is also suggested that there is a need for future options compatible with the welfare of individuals and on improvement in the quality of life, the satisfaction of basic needs and the actual participation of the population in the economic, social, cultural and human development process. Within this framework, the social options desired call not only for a higher rate of economic growth within the prevailing structure but also and primarily for the affirmation of a democratic system which makes it possible to improve the quality of life as part of a process of steady progress based on the participative experience itself. This process, which in practical terms takes the form of new systems of income distribution and higher employment based on increased production and expanded social and community services, makes it possible to predict what development models may be targeted in the future.

In Part Two, which deals with woman as a social actor in the past decade, an attempt is made to determine what has contributed to knowledge concerning rural women during this period, which aspects of this objective appear to have been adequately considered and where the situation with regard to women has changed as a result of changes in the global socioeconomic framework and in the agricultural sector in particular.

The five sections which constitute this part are devoted to the events in the world and in Latin America which led to the proclamation of the Decade for Women in light of the different types of agricultural economies which predominate in the region; rural women in Latin America; the rural family; women's demands and organizations and a few policy recommendations.

An attempt is made to classify the many different types of rural women by proceeding from the general to the particular and working from the point of view of the main branches which constitute the region's agricultural economy—the traditional branch, the modern branch and the agricultural frontier. Within the traditional branch, the most detailed attention is paid to the peasant economies because they make an important contribution to the production of food and because typically they incorporate the sector made up of the rural poor.



Another system of classification is based on the position held by women in peasant societies and on the kind of activities in which they are primarily engaged (craftswomen, merchants, traders or indigenous vendors, etc.).

Following the discussion of attempts to classify rural women of Latin America, the many roles of peasant women are reviewed, with consideration given to their domestic/reproductive role, activities carried out on their own account and wage-earning activities; the size of their incomes and the uses to which they are put are also discussed.

Particular attention is paid to the domestic role of women, i.e., their role in the reproduction of the labour force and in the daily tasks involved in ensuring its survival; the sexual differentiation of work; the role of women in agricultural production and variations on it depending on their role in society; other activities carried out by women in order to obtain income; the role of women in the survival strategies of peasant groups and the life cycle as a determinant of the kind and amount of work done by women. In carrying out these studies it was necessary in some cases to use special methodologies (such as schedules or work patterns in order to gauge the time spent by women in domestic tasks, agricultural production and other work); in other cases certain methodological drawbacks became obvious. The study successfully pinpoints the lacunae in the measurement of the female economically active population and of its rates of participation and indicates some changes which might be introduced in order to achieve correct measurements.

Some of the matters dealt with in this document have only just begun to be studied —the specific way in which women use the income obtained, which is very important to the family nucleus; the social and cultural role of women in communities and areas made up of small holdings and the proletarianization of women and the position they hold among wage earners, which, in spite of its importance, has not yet received the attention it merits. No measurements are available concerning the incorporation of women workers into the modern sector of agriculture, partly because they are employed on a seasonal basis. Nor has much progress been made in what is known about the changes their incorporation into the modern sector has made in household work, consumption, family relations, roles and cultural patterns in general.

The effects of the modernization of agriculture are analysed, especially where the rural family is concerned. In this connection, consideration is given to situations in which women function as head of household in cases where the male head of family has emigrated or abandoned the home (or in cases of failure to establish a family, as occurs in the English-speaking Caribbean); to situations in which manpower is sold; to breakdown and change in family structure (one-person families, incomplete families, failure to establish families, predominance of the nuclear family over the extended family), the fact that people marry later in life and the sharp reduction in birth rates. Attention is drawn to differences in types of family in different peasant classes and regions within the same country and to the impact of crop changes on family type and on the ways in which labour is hired.

Little information is available with regard to women's demands and organizations, and what there is approaches the subject by way of other topics. It is clear, however, that some apparent contradictions exist. There is, for instance,

the phenomenon of the non-verbal woman, who is incapable of expressing herself, does not make her demands public, is ashamed of her lack of training and is traumatized by motherhood. Another phenomenon is that of the woman capable of making decisions within the home but whose opinions are transmitted to the community through her husband, i.e., the house-bound woman who uses her husband as her intermediary with the public.

As for women's participation in organizations, the harm done by the idea that women take no part in productive life is made clear. At first glance women do in fact appear to be marginal to organizations, but only to organizations which regulate the use of productive resources of a physical nature (associations dealing with irrigation, drainage and grasslands management) and productive organizations in general (small-farm co-operatives, agrarian reform co-operatives and the like). On the other hand, they participate actively in all organizations or activities which have to do with public welfare, festivities and religious activities, the provision of services to the community, labour exchange and barter in merchandise. It is suggested in this study that their participation has failed to attract interest because attention has been directed almost exclusively towards what is most important in the eyes of some external agent — participation in productive organizations, trade unions and political organizations.

With regard to recommendations and policies, it is felt that official documents cover the basic aspects, in some cases in detail. What appears to be lacking is, in the first place, knowledge, in each situation (areas of the economy, types of women) of what distinguishes a poor rural woman from a poor rural man or child. In the second place, there is need to bring objectives into harmony. In the case of peasant women, such objectives would include the production of more foodstuffs, the performance of the domestic role, involvement in "other activities", training and participation in meetings; where the wage-earning farm woman is concerned, they would include the ability to perform a day's paid labour in addition to her domestic tasks, while at the same time participating in trade unions or other organizations. In the third place, attention should be paid to the distinction between the public and private domains where policies are concerned; greater consideration of this distinction would mean that the "human needs" of women could be met more effectively. Fourthly, if policies are to respond to felt needs, stress must be laid on the need to create mechanisms allowing women to be heard since no activity can prosper without the active support of those it is intended to benefit. Fifthly, there is a need to devise low-cost, simple alternative technologies for use both in production and the home, which would make work lighter and open possibilities for some leisure time. Sixthly, it is considered urgent to evaluate the many projects carried out by non-governmental bodies so that experiences can be assimilated and understood or, if necessary, rejected. This evaluation must go beyond what is being done at the moment, and its point of reference must be integral development. Finally, it is necessary to learn the results of the new methodologies used in social research, participative research and mass education and to support such methodologies if the results justify it.

Part Three, "The outlook for changing the status of women", enlarges upon other reports prepared by ECLAC as contributions to the study of the status

of women in Latin America and the Caribbean and as part of the attempt to provide direction for policies designed to improve their situation.

In it the main points relating to this subject in the region and the thrust of the mandates given in connection with it are reviewed. Special significance is attached to the contextual differences between the beginning of the United Nations Decade for Women and the present time, which have to do with the severe crisis through which the region is passing. However, since the Regional Plan of Action embraces the major social development objectives of Latin America and the Caribbean, its basic objectives are still valid and pertinent, although some new points may need to be raised and different priorities may need to be assigned to some of the other matters covered. In addition to the difficulties already encountered in previous documents with regard to the process of appraising the status of women, there are those which are due to the tremendous changes experienced by the region, which put it in a more complex situation.

The document contains a global study of the indicators available with regard to achievements in the incorporation of women into the labour force and education, their access to health care, the most important changes at the legal level and other governmental programmes of importance.

With regard to obstacles to the full integration of women, stress is laid on those due to traditional forms of socialization, i.e., to the ways in which women have access to education, social participation and the labour market. Consideration is also given to the progress made in this connection and to existing difficulties in determining the extent to which changes are due to the urbanization and modernization of society and to what degree they are due to the implementation of measures provided for in the Regional Plan of Action. A study is also made of some key aspects of planning and the social policy with regard to the status of women, and some observations are made with respect to events which might call for the updating of the Regional Plan of Action, with emphasis laid on the profound transformation which Latin America and the Caribbean have been experiencing in recent decades, the gravity of the crisis they are undergoing and the need for regional integration and solidarity as key elements in new strategies, in which organized groups of women are already taken into account.

In annex 1 consideration is given to the resolutions and mandates which have emerged from organisms in the United Nations system and have borne in particular on the legal status of Latin American and Caribbean women. These include both resolutions (conventions) in international law and resolutions and mandates which concern only action taken by governments.

The inventories and analyses used in preparing this annex were carried out on the basis of a master plan which made it possible to classify the information collected in terms of the following criteria: type of measure, forum or body from which it emerged, period, type of legislation, theoretical framework and operational context of the measure (84). The information gathered included treaties or conventions, resolutions, declarations of principle and lines of action of world and regional plans on women in the period 1946 to 1982, all of which comprises a set of norms at various levels which concern the legal status of women.

The data was systematically considered in three stages: partial analysis of each of the bodies surveyed; global analysis of international legislation and of resolutions and mandates which, while not constituting legislation refer to the legal status of women (by type of legislation and period) and, finally, consideration of this set of legal documents in the context of national legislation, the existing social situation and what is generally known concerning the problem of women in the region.

This study can serve as a theoretical framework in analysing the legal position assigned to the women of the region in the legislation of different countries and also in comparing national legislation with the international legislation (mandatory or otherwise) issuing out of the United Nations system. In addition, since law and policy are part of the same process, the legislative elements established could provide a basis for social policies aimed at raising the status of women and giving them greater legal, social, political and economic equality.

Annex 2 contains the resolutions of the second and third Regional Conferences on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America (Macuto, 1979 and Mexico City, 1983). It also includes the appraisal made of the Decade and concrete strategies and measures designed to further the advancement of women up to the year 2000 adopted at the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (Havana, 1984).

**Part One**

**WOMEN AND THEIR  
ROLE IN SOCIETY TODAY**

## Part One

### WOMEN AND THEIR ROLE IN SOCIETY TODAY

#### I. LATIN AMERICAN FAMILIES AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN

##### 1. General questions

The object of the present study is to fit the subject of women into the analysis of the family as one of the richest and most effective ways of understanding and appraising their living conditions. In the first place, it is hoped to deal in depth with some questions that seem of outstanding importance and at the same time to deduce generalizations which ratify such an approach inasmuch as they sketch out a frame of reference for future studies along these lines. Thus the chapter is constructed on the basis of a general framework formed by the conception of integrated development and of family functions compatible with that viewpoint, which will subsequently be compared with family situations in Latin America in order to assess their diversity and the contradictions between them and the framework proposed. In conclusion, some tentative reflections are put forward with the aim of establishing minimum future criteria for discussion of the subject.

The central assumption from which the present study starts, and which up to a point orients the entire document, is that the most important element in the social environment of women is their situation and participation in the structure and dynamics of the family. It is thence that a woman reaches out into other social environments (education, work, participation in organizations), always conditioned by her twofold family relation: at first by her stem family and then by her biological family. The problem of the relationship between women and the family is of crucial importance for a full understanding of the complex series of interconnections which make it possible to describe and explain their situations as the point of departure for drawing up strategies of change appropriately designed to step up their participation in development.

The overall framework for the proposal to locate the subject of women in the family environment is a development process whose ultimate goal is the welfare of human beings, and which includes concern for their affective needs and personal self-fulfilment. This process is based mainly on the following criteria: 1) Satisfaction of basic needs, which comprises the production of essential goods and services and their distribution and consumption throughout the

population; 2) *Work, considered in its two facers*: a) employment or paid work, envisaged not only as a means of earning income but also as the performance of social functions valued by society, which makes possible a broader relationship with the social order and facilitates the establishment of ties and links, meets psychological, personal and creational needs and confers the title of family prop; and b) unpaid domestic work, assigned primarily to women, which, in addition to tasks connected with the running and physical maintenance of the house, the preparation of food and kindred activities, comprises aspects relating to the affective and emotional areas, especially the socialization of the younger generations. In this category should also be included, in view of its social valuation, volunteer work connected with community development questions or with welfare services; 3) *Participation*. This signifies the possibility of intervening in the decision-making processes which take place at the various levels of society. Participation inculcates self-confidence in individuals and societies by demonstrating the potential of their capacities in the course of the exercise of responsibilities assumed through shared enterprise. From this point of view it is postulated that human development, the development of people as individuals and as social beings, can only grow up out of the human group itself, its natural environment and its own culture. The creativeness of the men and women of the group autonomously defines their development and life styles and makes them active rather than passive figures in social history.

## 2. The family and its functions in the framework of integrated development

In this context, the family can be envisaged as a place where activities are carried out that are essential for the development of human beings, as the first stage in their linkage with the world and the dominant influence in all their relations, as a social bridge between the personal development of individuals and the development of society as a whole. Despite the manifold forms it assumes and has assumed throughout the past, there are unquestionably two central pivots around which its unity is maintained and consolidated through time, in despite of cultural differences. One of these is the sexual and affective complementarity of men and women necessarily implicit in the constitution of the human couple, and the other is the long formative period which is required by human beings from their birth, during their childhood and throughout their youth, and which covers, *inter alia*, their affective and emotional needs.

The family unit, thus defined, and in the context of a development process such as that indicated above, must assume a number of functions directed primarily towards fulfilment of the various aspects of the development in question.

a) In relation to the *satisfaction of basic needs*, of paramount importance for its subsistence in physical terms, the family will have to devise a series of strategies aimed in the first place at getting a job that will result in income for the family unit, housing, education, health and access to a whole series of services which are linked to ways of life normal for the social group to which the family belongs, and which might comprise infrastructure, transport, recreation, etc. These strategies necessarily involve a distribution of roles among the various

members of the family group and it might be said, from a purely analytical and general viewpoint, that the distribution of functions within the family has tended on the whole to assign predominantly to men the main responsibility for earning income, and to women the tasks associated with the obtaining of services, preparation of food, and care and socialization of children. Nevertheless, and particularly as regards the satisfaction of basic needs, this function is strongly influenced by the size of the income earned and by the type and quality of the services to which the social group as a whole has access, these being factors that condition its possibilities of participating in the various aspects of development.

b) *Work*, understood as an element in development, not only as a source of income but also in terms of the rewarding sense of personal satisfaction that it must produce, as well as of its social valuation, logically transcends the economic dimension and appears under many and various guises in the corresponding family functions. In this setting, the kinds of work traditionally undertaken by the men of the family have been done outside the home, and social recognition has been established only through labour conquests and others of a public, non-family type. In contrast, where the women of the family are concerned, their social valuation and the distribution of functions have been especially associated with domestic work, including tasks of an affective nature. While they have been progressively tending to contribute monetary income to the upkeep of the family, and have often been the only breadwinners, social recognition and valuation of these efforts have been the exception rather than the rule.

Another type of work which is commonly regarded as a function proper to women, and on which society sets a value, is that connected with education, at either the pre-school or the school level. Activities in this area, as likewise in that of care of the sick or infirm, which is in a way an extension of traditional family roles, have been the most readily accepted socially, being undertaken sometimes for pay and at other times through voluntary organizations.

c) The family function linked to *participation* is more complex and its different levels might be systematized on the basis of its component elements.

i) In the first place, the family must fulfil the function of promoting the personal development of its members. This aspect is closely related to the rationalization of conduct and responsible freedom of choice.

The behaviour patterns transmitted by families emerge as part of the essential cultural manifestations of societies, and relate to the plurality options which these offer in global terms, and from which will derive personal decisions respecting the choice of different types of work, whether paid or unpaid, including domestic activities, as well as options with regard to the development of the society. Social participation proper is analysed in individual terms in another chapter; but it should be stressed here that it is within the family that such participation is made possible or hindered, both in the case of the couple and in that of the other members of the group, especially the children. In the last analysis it is the family that internalizes the socially appropriate or accepted behaviour patterns and distributes among its members the functions and responsibilities that permit not only the physical survival of the group but the attainment of targets that it has set up for itself.



ii) The socialization of children and young people is another family function closely linked to the one just described. As one of the permanent main stays of family unity in its various forms as time passes, the family trains the child from birth for its permanent and consistent participation in the group to which it belongs in the present by equipping it with tools for its future performance. Socialization comprises emotive and intellectual components that are not always separable. In practice the initial learning of the language, early childhood stimulation and all giving of information, especially in early childhood, embrace closely interrelated affective, intellectual and informational aspects.

Although emotive necessities are apparent all through life, in early childhood they are definitively inescapable and want of them irreversibly prevents the adequate personal development of the human individual. Although recognition of the needs of childhood and youth, and still more the emergence of concern for those age groups as such, are relatively new, they lay upon the family tasks in which it can hardly be replaced by any other social institution. Moreover, the family provides standards of behaviour, values and rules which make it possible to cope with the school, work and societal environment. Although requirements in respect of specialized pre-school education outside the family today enjoy widespread recognition, endorsed by practical experience and a cumulative body of theory, it is the family that gives training in terms of affective and emotional attitudes and maturity prior to pre-school education, alongside which it remains as a complementary factor. During school life and throughout the whole of the formative process undergone by young people, the family assumes manifold functions. In the first place, it continues to provide the affective and emotive sustenance essential for the harmonious growth of the individual, but it also furnishes information on the society concerned, encourages education as a form of social participation, proffers tentative vocational guidance and points the way to training opportunities. It also supplies models of sexual behaviour, assigning from the outset roles associated with the different sexes, either by example or through the type of information it offers. In a wider sphere, the family unit provides and processes a system of information on the possibilities of social change, on participation in organizations, on attitudes *vis-a-vis* the broader social structures, and on other channels of information that may be available. The socialization of children and youth, recognized as a group with specific needs, is one of the objects of social concern which at the level of the family is an essential pivot of its existence and establishes a whole gamut of functions to be fulfilled.

iii) Linked to the preceding function, reproduction not only comprises the biological process but also constitutes an option in which manifold social dimensions converge, interacting with broader phenomena, such as relations between the couple and their decision-making possibilities in relation to the prevailing systems of values, which will define, in the last analysis, the attitude adopted towards reproduction.

iv) The family functions described require a reformulation of the roles of the couple. If the relation between husband and wife is built up in an atmosphere of participation, with socially equivalent options in terms of work, and with less rigid requirements respecting the reproduction and care of children, accompanied by a reproduction option compatible with such care, they can

reassess their relationship and infuse into it new elements of complementarity and depth, and obviously also of conflict. Lastly, the quest for free consent in relations between the sexes also necessitates their ratification of legal precepts of equity.

### **3. Families in the Latin American environment: possibilities and constraints regarding the fulfilment of their functions**

The functions that should be fulfilled by the family in the framework of integrated development, deliberately outlined at an exclusively analytical level, look quite different in face of the social realities of Latin America. The approach proposed in the present study does not aim at replacing the analysis of overall social situations by the study of families in isolation, but, on the contrary, seeks to complement the analysis in question by showing how broader social processes have repercussions and are interrelated at the level of the family, which in the end more clearly reflects the problems and the structural contradictions of societies. It is therefore relevant to point out certain general features which prove important and enlightening in this connection.

A first aspect of the situation essential for understanding Latin American development in relation to the present subject has to do with the urbanization and tertiarization of the countries of the region. In the regional spectrum there are differences between countries whose urbanization process began early in a framework of development and modernization, and those in which urbanization was late in beginning or is only just starting. The different periods in which these processes have taken place and the varying stages reached by urbanization at present are of fundamental importance for the analysis and understanding of family patterns, especially in the middle and lower population strata of the various countries. For example, societies with a higher degree of urbanization will tend to attain higher rates of participation of women in the labour market, besides a probable expansion of their educational systems. In them the rural patterns of widely extended families will tend to be superseded by nuclear units consisting mainly of the couple and their children. There will be greater dissemination of information on options as to reproduction and on the rights of women and children, and alongside this a weakening of a system of support based on family relationships. In the more disadvantaged population groups this phenomenon makes family care of children more difficult unless social child-care services are provided.

The difficulties of family consolidation occurring where the level of women's education is higher lead to a clearer perception of the relation between family conditions and social structure, which generally finds expression in demands for participation in order to arrive at solutions for family fulfilment, these being often worked out and put into effect by women. Furthermore, implicit in this process of widespread urbanization and tertiarization are rates of social change which make for the emergence of a new type of family whose internal characteristics are apparently more democratic and participative.

Countries where urbanization started late, on the contrary, tend to keep up more traditional relations of kinship in which extended families predominate and there is a more strictly hierarchical allocation of roles to the members of the

family, which usually limits their self-expression as individual persons by relating them primarily with what they have to do as men, young women, etc.

A second aspect which influences and determines the way in which family functions find expression in the region and reinforces the existing heterogeneity relates to the various types of indigenous and negro cultures, which, although they are often linked to traditional rural patterns, transcend that distinctive form. The main indigenous groups have tried to retain a linguistic and cultural identity —irrespective of the impoverishment of such dimensions in consequence of their extreme deprivation— in which the family is the institution responsible for conservation and reproduction. Among them the position of women is strongly conditioned by this function —a circumstance which gives rise to a higher degree of indigenous monolingualism and a lack of women's education. Similarly, the type of insertion in the national society has segmentary characteristics which obstruct the participation of women in the positive dimensions of modernity.

The biggest problem is not the cultural difference *per se*, but the material and cultural poverty of the family groups in question and the discrimination of which they are the object. To improve their situation —especially as urbanization advances— these groups find themselves compelled to seek incorporation in the most disadvantageous material conditions and at the cost of renouncing their cultural identity.

Most of the indigenous groups whose family socialization has taken place in the mother tongue have to cope with its negation in the culture of the school, which in most cases does not accept it even as a language to provide cultural support for the transition to education in the country's predominant official tongue.

In addition to the intra-regional differences deriving from early or belated urbanization processes and those emanating from the diverse cultural patterns, it is relevant to draw attention to a third important aspect, namely the consequences of inter-country heterogeneity in degrees of development and intra-country heterogeneity in income distribution.

In the countries where the level of development is lowest and the concentration of income most intensive, both in the rural and in the marginal urban population incomplete family patterns survive in which men do not assume responsibility for fatherhood. Thus families where the head of the household is a woman are formed in conditions of extreme poverty. They are incapable of meeting their basic needs, or of dealing with the problems of socialization, so that a vicious circle of reproduction of poverty and social marginality is established. Another type of incomplete family found in such countries has its origin in rural poverty, either in the peasants' lack of land and of economic resources or in the modes of production of large rural enterprises; in this connection it should be pointed out that the availability of labour creates a circuit of temporary migrations to help with harvesting in which lodging conditions are too bad and wages too low for workers to move with their families. To these agrarian migratory movements are added seasonal migrations to urban centres, which mean that women have to do all the work, including the tasks of production, without proper training and at the cost of, *inter alia*, relegating the care of their children to a secondary place.

In the majority of the countries at medium stages of development there are other types of differentiation produced by the structure of income distribution among the groups forming the society concerned. This differentiation is ratified or strengthened by specific political models and associated with particular degrees of overall economic growth.

Differences can be noted in respect of income distribution and the quantum of income received on average by each social stratum. Thus, a distinction could be drawn between two main patterns of income concentration. In the first, of an élitist type, the increment in national income tends to be concentrated in the highest group, at the expense of the rest of the population; in the second, commonly termed mesocratic, increases in income chiefly benefit the groups immediately below the summit, at the expense of the highest stratum and of the lower-middle and low classes.

The two types of concentration determine the fairly marked differences in the strata to which families belong, clearly revealing the heterogeneity existing both in the region as a whole and within the countries.

These characteristics of the structure of income distribution shed light on the political models used, on the way in which power is distributed and, in the last analysis, on most of the development styles prevailing in the region. They constitute the inevitable framework for the situation of families as regards the satisfaction of basic needs, the availability of education and social services and the conditions governing social and political participation.

From what has just been said it can be seen not only that families living in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty are unable to fulfil the functions that are theoretically desirable and necessary for all families, but also that neither is it possible for women to enjoy human rights and their fulfilment as individual persons. Although problems exist that are common to all women in Latin American societies, the social polarization resulting from the development style in vogue obviously means that a change in the position of the women most debarred from human rights is inseparable from a change in the prevailing development style.

The overcoming of poverty and the establishment of a more equitable society necessitate changes in the power relations between social groups, directed towards a process of democratic participation.

Furthermore, the association between income distribution, political participation and specific degrees of development will influence the possibilities of organization open to the various sectors of the population and will determine many of the forms they will assume within families. In these circumstances, even with all the reservations that may be made as regards the problems of identification and definition of the various population sectors, it is relevant to consider the levels resulting from income distribution as providing sustenance for a more comprehensive analysis of the situation of Latin American families and their fulfilment.

The groupings proposed in the present study for the purposes of describing some characteristics of Latin American families are conventional approximations, and aim only establishing certain parameters whereby the study of the features in question can be approached more systematically and certain basic criteria for subsequent comparability can be determined. In accordance with

income distribution patterns such as those described, the main strata in both types of concentration styles would be the upper and upper-middle groups, which receive the top 20% of income; the middle or lower-middle groups, which obtain approximately the next 40% and constitute a somewhat vaguer category; and, lastly, the 40% below that would be the share of the popular sectors, the lowest 20% of which comprises the share of the poor.

While the living conditions of Latin American families do not in general allow them to fulfil completely the functions described above, the greater or lesser potential for doing so and the different priorities accorded to the various elements are more clearly reflected in the strata proposed.

Families in the upper or upper-middle groups have resolved the problem of satisfaction of their basic needs, in respect both of goods and of services. Situated at the summit of the income distribution structure, or immediately below it, they can count on plenty of resources and on a share of the power as a social group. In this sense, their position *vis-a-vis* work takes the form of a group or personal option, associated, especially in the case of women, with group ratification and acceptance. The insertion of the women from this group in the labour market is related especially to the sphere of artistic expression and to tasks that contribute to the image of the group, especially social activities. In this stratum women do not undertake domestic work directly, but supervise or manage it. There is a close interdependence between the patterns of participation of these families and their system of values and with cultural factors. They accord high priority to the personal development of the members of their family, attaching importance to higher education and to socialization with a view to forming a spirit of enterprise, not necessarily linked to instrumental factors. This stratum has access to the most comprehensive information system, which, however, is subordinated to the sanction of the group and of its values. Thus, for example, the rate of reproduction on these groups may be high as a result of their having opted in favour of the traditional concept of a numerous family. The complex structure of social services and functions in which these families lead their lives influences their affective relations, children being often brought up by people especially trained for the purpose.

The children's socialization through education is often effected in unofficial educational milieu. In the case of sons, this training increasingly tends to culminate in those professional qualifications which in each society are considered best fitted to leadership, whereas for daughters cultural education still plays an important role.

The diversity of models of family organization is very great and is consistent with the high degree of openness of these groups with regard to ideological options for social life and to the availability of material resources, as well as to values in the light of which to renovate and even periodically to replace models that are adopted as an option and not as a form of determinism or by way of imitation.

The fulfilment of family functions is different in the middle strata and much more influenced by the instrumental aspects of education. In these groups the basic aspects of the problem of the satisfaction of basic needs is resolved; nevertheless, there are differences between the types of goods and services to which they have access, and the social prestige associated with them is impor-

rant. Work, necessary in the first place as a source of income, often has to be undertaken by both members of the couple. Its social valuation and the personal rewards to be derived from it largely depend upon the country's degree of development and the professional or technical training that people have acquired. Domestic work is assigned primarily to women, who do it with or without regular or temporary help. In this stratum is grouped the highest relative percentage of housewives, engaged exclusively in domestic chores and the care of children. This category, which consists of a variety of groups differentiated in respect of material conditions and of cultural models, generally associates the socialization of children with success values, because the idea of competence is linked to the precariousness of the group's insertion in the class system. Future goals are generally envisaged in the light of a high degree of education which is not always compatible with real possibilities but offers the only hope for upward mobility or preservation of status in predominantly wage-earning sectors. These groups have access to a wide range of information which makes them more permeable to change, with the result that they more easily adopt modern urban behaviour patterns. The role of women in these families is sometimes ambivalent and contradictory. Under the pressure of necessity, they enter the world of work, keeping the home as the pivot of their personal performance. In this context, the image they have to project in each of the two worlds is different, a fact which hampers their sense of personal identity. The transmission of values to the new generations likewise varies a great deal and largely depends upon degrees of education and linkage with work.

With regard to the Latin American popular sectors, two points should be made clear beforehand: in the first place they constitute an even more heterogeneous conglomerate than the middle stratum, since they comprise, *inter alia*, the marginal urban population, the peasantry, indigenous groups, organized labour, and the lower middle strata. Secondly, families in this category are poorly prepared to fulfil the traditional functions, still less the new functions imposed by modern urban life. The highest — and in the majority of cases the only — priority of these families is the satisfaction of basic needs. Since income is hard to lay hands on, it often happens that several members of the group are engaged in earning it, and economic insecurity prevents the organization and regular maintenance of the other family functions. The socialization of children takes place in unsatisfactory conditions, generally without sanitary or educational support or information on early childhood stimulation; relations between adults and children are limited by lack of time and by the existence of men's traditional patterns of non-intervention in the upbringing of children. The allocation of roles to girls is reflected in the adoption, especially by elder daughters, of supposedly maternal roles, and in socialization preparatory for the performance of labour roles in domestic service. Dissimilarities in the functions of these families seem associated more with their rural or urban origin and their membership of differentiated culture groups than with the quality of life or with levels of well-being.

These groups preserve, in unequal degrees, traditional values that in some cases are at variance with real-life conditions and in others are inconsistent with the educational levels attained by women and their participation in the labour market.

In marital relations hierarchical structures are maintained, based on masculine authoritarianism. The information reaching these groups is scanty and selective, the medium with the widest diffusion being basic education in countries in which it has been generalized. A feature that deserves more attention in analysis of the functions of families in the lower strata is the importance within those families of the role of women, who assume functions essential to the survival of the family in a large number of fields, despite the traditional cultural connotation of the central position of men. The pressure exerted by women in a more or less organized manner, to obtain housing, health services, infrastructure and education for their children, is of essential significance, and their participation in the labour market, whether as heads of households or as contributors of secondary income, involves them in all sorts of tasks. This role becomes even more important when there is a rise in rates of unemployment which displaces men from the labour market and more jobs in the informal sector are taken on by "secondary" members of the family. In the rural environment, women's participation is of substantive value for the household unit, and, contradictory as it may seem, the cultural passivity explicit in their norms and values has no counterpart in the real life they have to lead.

#### 4. Some proposals

The concept of integrated development centring on the well-being of the population as its ultimate goal has been accompanied by methodological and instrumental quests from the prospective of various specialities for social diagnoses which will reflect this basic concern for the human being and his destiny. Similarity of thought emerges with respect to the family unit because, when viewed from this perspective it is recognized as being of key importance in the life of individual persons and of society as a whole. The proposals put forward below are aimed in this direction.

The many forms taken by family functions in the majority of the countries of the region warrant the contention that while their primary conditioning factor is their structural situation, this latter operates directly or indirectly through a set of values, beliefs, concepts and meanings which reinforce the action of socioeconomic determinants through a network of cultural phenomena by which everyday behaviour is guided. Among such phenomena special importance attaches to those which define the roles of the various members of the family, and which may consist in social and cultural practices, norms and manifestations relating to reproduction, the choice of a partner, forms of cohabitation, roles in upbringing, participation of women in the labour market, all this reflecting a definite internalized culture that structures the relationships of individual persons.

The generalization is admissible, even today, that the pivot of women's functions in families in any stratum is still their role in the family unit, encompassing, in addition to biological reproduction, responsibility for the care and upbringing of children, for domestic activities and often for the performance of a job that brings in income. On the other hand, despite the fact that the family unit continues in practice to discharge the functions of an economic unit, in

which the generation of monetary income is the special concern of the adult males and a multiplicity of roles is assigned to women, both in the family and in the community, the prestige attaching to women's domestic work is low, both from the social and from the personal point of view.

Again, it is in the home that decisions are adopted with respect to the allocation of jobs, distribution of resources and assignment of roles, indispensable for the satisfaction of basic needs. To this end, households devise specific strategies, which differ according to the socioeconomic strata in which the families belong, and whose components include unpaid work, activities outside the home, collective services and monetary income, in combinations that accord different priority to each element in the whole.

Notwithstanding the significant persistence of traditional patterns in the region, in practice signs of future change are now perceptible among the younger generations which make it a matter of urgency to prepare society for its reception. The change in the educational profile, the cultural homogeneization of the younger generations, especially in the case of women, when unaccompanied by a parallel change in social conditions, bring about situations of increasing tension and conflict in relation to the existing structure. The polarization of the labour market between the traditional sector and the modern tertiary sector; the urbanization process which will probably be completed before the end of the century, and which means that the younger generations will be predominantly urban and the fall in the birth rate due to more education and freer access to information are all factors that will mean that Latin American societies will have to confront changes which must necessarily be met with new options.

Concurrently, the structural changes that have taken place in the course of this century have crystallized in the present decade in new and more deeply-considered attitudes to childhood and its needs, with the result that concepts of affectivity, leisure, creativity have been reassessed as sanctioned human needs, and attempts have been made to seek them in order to re-establish harmony in the family unit, in which what might be termed the come-back of men is becoming increasingly visible. In these new attitudes the male whether as father or as husband, is becoming more approachable and has lost most of the authoritarianism which set him at a distance. Possibly the widespread education of women is not altogether unconnected with this change, in which the home appears as a meeting-place of equals and does not necessarily produce a permanent state of tension between subordinate and head. In this connection, it should be pointed out that when a democratizing position is adopted the more pluralist and more participative integration of autochthonous cultures, whether indigenous or black, must be a motive of concern in the formulation of policies.

If what Latin American societies want is the preservation of the family, as a central unit of society, a dispenser of affective relationships and an essential scenario for the learning of emotive behaviour, a response will have to be made to the objective needs resulting from the social and human development already achieved and to the requirements originating in the deeper cultural background of the rising generations. This means that the objective of social policies must be based on an ethical position linked to an integrated development which will



ensure equitable conditions for all the members of a society, whether men or women, or whatever the different subcultures or social strata to which they belong. This inevitably includes a search for more participative and democratic forms of society, in which there is real respect of the rights of individuals to develop as such and as members of family groups.

## II. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE REGION

In the preceding chapter it has been suggested that the social performance of women is powerfully conditioned by family dynamics, both in the stem family, where socialization mainly takes place, and in the biological family. With this as a frame of reference, the aim of the present chapter is to analyse this type of social performance as influenced by family functions, in the light of three essential components: work, education and participation in organizations. These are the contexts in which individuals lead their lives and test their capacities and potential as active members of society and not mere recipients of its impacts. This is not a matter of measuring the scale of these activities, which is dealt with in the supporting documents, but rather of taking a look at their forms and contents. No attempt is made to show how much women work or whether they work or not; the aim is to inquire into where, why and how they work. It is not a matter of calculating how many women study, but of determining the priority accorded to work in their lives, its content and its projections. The basic assumption must be that in practice men and women share the social tasks of their time defined in accordance with social and cultural patterns. Rather than discussing the magnitude or volume of women's contribution, which is the object of other studies, an attempt will be made here to assess the forms assumed by their contribution in relation to that of men, their complementarity, part of their content and the values that are set upon them in Latin American societies.

The assumptions which provide general guidelines for the following pages are two in number. The first is that most aspects of the social participation of women are related to their self-identification as members of a socioeconomic stratum. The second is that the sexual differentiation and its social implications are fundamental factors in the conditioning of women's participation.

In this study the concept of social participation makes human development a process related not merely with sectoral growth, or the expansion of education or of employment, but with a global social system. In this integrated development approach, participation constitutes an inseparable component of the entire process, an essential part of the development of the individual persons that it involves.

In the Latin American setting this process varies in accordance with the degrees of modernization of societies, the types of income concentration occurring in them, the prevailing political models and the predominant cultural patterns. Thus, there will be countries in which participation will be encouraged and others in which it is discouraged or even repudiated. Where the participation of women is concerned, it is important to pause to consider the predominant values existing in society with regard to their role, in addition to the other

elements mentioned. There may be cases in which levels of participation in education or in employment are high, without this necessarily ensuring a high level of participation in organizations, owing to obstructions originating in the prevailing political model or in the internalized system of values. At the other extreme, a high degree of women's participation in specific organizations may exist concurrently with a low rate of education and of participation in society as a whole. Lastly, between these two extremes other combinations may be found.

With regard to the subjects discussed below, it is necessary to give a new slant to the guiding principles around which the analysis is structured. The question of work has been approached first from the standpoint of the significance and recognition which society awards to the work of men and women, and secondly from that of the results in terms of human resources or contribution to economic growth. In analysing the subject of education stress has been laid on its contribution to the cultural formation of individuals and to training for participation, without detriment to its formal and instrumental aspects. In approaching the topic of participation emphasis has been placed on the relation between society and the State and on the way in which the national society is reflected in the State within the framework of a prospect of increasing democratization.

### 1. Participation of women in work (87 and 219)

Women's social participation in work is dealt with here on the basis of two ideas already adduced. The first of these is that one of the axes of the distribution of tasks effected in a society is sexual differentiation. The second idea relates to the influence which the family unit exerts on the social tasks undertaken by its members, in assigning them their roles, the exercise of which is conditioned by the family's relative position in the society concerned and the characteristics of that society. In this frame of reference, the concept of work may be analysed from two standpoints: its contribution to production, or its contribution in terms of welfare. In line with the first perspective, the analysis rests on considerations relating to human resources and their use and the nature of the labour market. From the second standpoint, an attempt is made to consider the relation existing between work, its material and symbolic rewards and its results in terms of family well-being and personal achievements. Looked at from this last angle, work comprises the whole set of activities carried on by individuals in a society structured to meet their needs. These needs are reflected in survival strategies and in action directed towards obtaining social recognition, towards creation and towards self-esteem. In such a context work ceases to be a means but an end, since in this dimension it can represent a satisfaction in itself, with a significance and relevance conferred by the environment.

From this point of view, a distinction can be drawn between work oriented towards earning and income and work whose aim is to fulfil other functions, both those within the family unit that are linked to the upkeep of the home and the care of individuals, and those outside the family that are directed towards the welfare of the community. Traditionally and historically, the division of social tasks between the sexes has primarily associated housekeeping and the care of persons with women and breadwinning with men. This situation, undoubtedly linked with motherhood, but also culturally endorsed, has meant that the

behaviour of women in relation to paid work is different from that of men. In practice, the work behaviour of men is homogeneous, whereas that of women varies enormously both from one country to another and within each individual country; in normal conditions, men enter the world of paid work and do not leave it until they retire, whereas many women enter and withdraw from the labour market several times over, their paid activity being discontinuous on account of changes in their life cycle. Furthermore, women's work outside the home is often part-time, temporary or is brought to a standstill altogether, because of the need to reconcile it with domestic tasks. In very broad outline it might be maintained that the work done by women in the course of their lives falls into three basic categories: bearing children and assuming the main responsibility for their care, running their households and providing food for the household and doing some kind of paid job (see tables 1-3).

The relative position held by paid labour in women's lives and its significant relation to unpaid domestic work have important consequences when an attempt is made to quantify its contribution to society. It must be borne in mind that the traditional way of measuring work consists in assessing it in terms of its economic contribution, and in particular its quantitative aspects which it has on production, the amount of investment required, distribution by sectors of production, etc. This leaves out of account a sizeable contingent of women whose work is unpaid, as well as most of the activities undertaken in family production units and the various forms of volunteer work.

Recent advances, both analytic and conceptual, make it possible to suggest some methodological measures which might improve existing information on the work done by women and will be sketched out at the end of the chapter. But, although accurate information is not available concerning the distribution of women among the various tasks assigned to them in a society, what can be identified and analysed are the conditions in which these tasks are performed and the trend observable in the region in this respect. It is important to point out that the performance by women of paid work outside the family is conditioned in all sorts of ways. The most comprehensive determinants of their behaviour are whether modernization and urbanization came early or late to their respective countries, the degree to which their countries are developed and the main cultural factors which affect the status of women in them. These general factors affect women unequally in the various social groups, but in any event it is important to note that the behaviour of women *vis-à-vis* work is determined by a highly complex dynamic in which cultural factors of a general character combine with the pressures that affect changing societies, with family demands and with the way in which women adapt to external changes.

As was pointed out earlier, in a large number of Latin American countries the work behaviour of women belonging to families in the upper or upper-middle strata is as a rule especially associated with the cultural values of their group, where personal reward is concerned. In this context, the extent to which they are incorporated in the labour market will largely depend on the degree of modernization of the society concerned in relation to the sort of opportunities which it can offer. Obviously, a modern urban society will hold out a wider range of possibilities than a traditional rural society. Group sanction will allow these women to do work connected in some way with the arts, or again, more recently,

Table 1

**LATIN AMERICA: RATES OF GLOBAL PARTICIPATION BY SEX AND COUNTRY,  
1950, 1960, 1970 AND 1980**

(Percentages)

Country	1950			1960			1970			1980		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>Total</b>	49.74	81.02	18.23	47.49	77.04	17.84	45.44	71.65	19.20	45.58	70.53	20.59
Argentina	51.36	79.14	21.71	50.18	77.69	21.78	48.36	72.59	23.98	48.16	71.28	25.30
Bolivia	71.94	84.78	59.33	50.42	79.08	22.56	47.29	75.09	20.59	46.75	73.17	21.61
Brazil	48.41	81.23	15.12	46.96	77.05	16.32	45.53	72.34	18.31	45.56	70.85	19.93
Colombia	48.81	81.05	17.50	45.93	74.49	17.29	44.89	68.49	21.69	46.01	68.36	23.87
Costa Rica	49.08	83.85	14.28	47.12	78.74	15.33	44.87	73.21	16.28	46.46	73.77	18.84
Chile	49.19	77.19	20.06	45.73	72.73	19.56	41.66	66.03	18.07	42.97	66.92	19.80
Ecuador	49.49	85.21	15.58	48.64	82.38	15.70	47.84	77.77	18.20	47.71	75.88	20.05
El Salvador	50.57	85.19	16.08	49.15	81.77	16.56	47.23	77.12	17.16	47.15	75.20	18.82
Guatemala	49.37	85.69	12.33	47.36	81.99	12.03	45.36	78.11	11.84	45.76	77.43	13.27
Honduras	49.42	86.72	11.64	48.18	84.19	11.93	45.88	78.72	12.98	45.45	75.36	15.46
Jamaica	57.78	77.03	39.78	54.09	72.35	37.92	50.96	64.77	38.06	48.20	59.95	36.49
Mexico	47.09	82.30	12.13	45.55	77.83	13.80	43.29	71.78	15.05	43.97	71.41	16.46
Nicaragua	49.58	85.82	13.83	48.17	80.79	16.19	46.29	75.69	18.30	47.04	74.56	20.36
Panama	49.31	77.81	19.48	48.37	74.51	20.98	49.76	72.19	26.27	50.30	71.04	28.74
Peru	56.82	80.16	34.65	51.54	73.91	29.72	47.21	68.14	26.47	46.72	66.69	26.80
Dominican Republic	50.09	80.35	17.65	48.97	76.39	20.54	47.12	69.63	24.09	46.49	68.10	24.52
Trinidad and Tobago	52.03	77.38	26.91	48.20	71.18	25.76	46.66	66.67	27.33	48.67	66.43	29.95
Uruguay	47.80	73.39	21.74	47.96	73.39	22.67	48.21	71.69	25.28	47.65	69.73	26.39
Venezuela	49.10	80.17	17.09	47.35	75.73	17.46	43.39	67.88	18.46	44.65	68.15	21.26

Source: PREALC/ILO. *Mercado de Trabajo en Cifras: 1950-1980*, 1982, p. 33.

Table 2

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION, BY BRANCH OF ACTIVITY, 1970-1980<sup>a</sup>

	Argentina		Brazil		Costa Rica		Chile		Ecuador	
	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980
Agriculture and hunting	4.2	3.1	20.8	14.2	4.3	6.4	3.4	2.8	13.3	12.6
Mines and quarries	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1
Manufacturing	19.8	16.9	18.4	18.6	16.6	20.3	19.4	15.7	21.7	15.5
Construction	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3
Electricity, gas and water	0.6	0.8	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.8
Commerce	15.2	18.8	8.0	12.5	16.3	20.6	16.4	23.6	16.7	18.5
Transport and storage	2.5	1.4	1.0	1.4	1.0	1.1	2.1	1.8	1.0	1.0
Finance	3.3	5.1	1.3	2.8	1.9	2.2	1.7	2.8	1.4	2.5
Services	54.0	53.4	50.1	49.4	59.4	48.7	55.9	52.6	45.0	48.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	(2 262 476)	(2 772 669)	(6 120 402)	(11 660 027)	(111 793)	(197 069)	(616 089)	(1 035 700)	(329 031)	(479 426)

Table 2 (conclusion)

	Guatemala		Paraguay		Panama		Peru		Venezuela	
	1973	1981	1970	1982	1970	1980	1972	1981	1971 <sup>b</sup>	1980 <sup>c</sup>
Agriculture and hunting	7.2	9.7	14.2	12.0	7.8	7.9	20.4	24.9	3.7	2.6
Mines and quarries	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4
Manufacturing	21.9	18.8	28.1	20.8	10.5	8.5	17.9	12.0	14.0	16.2
Construction	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.6
Electricity, gas and water	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.7	1.0	0.2	0.3	0.7	1.1
Commerce	20.7	21.9	15.4	15.6	17.2	17.4	17.6	20.2	11.5	21.1
Transport and storage	0.5	0.8	0.7	1.2	2.2	3.7	0.9	1.3	1.5	2.1
Finance	0.6	2.6	0.6	2.1	3.1	5.3	1.1	2.7	67.6	6.0
Services	48.9	45.3	40.8	48.0	58.0	55.2	41.6	38.1		49.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	(215 390)	(245 181)	(164 402)	(209 210)	(115 928)	(149 705)	(768 225)	(1 272 874)	(696 583)	(1 229 984)

Source: ECLAC, Social Development Division, prepared on the basis of censuses corrected by the Division of Statistics and Quantitative Analysis.

<sup>a</sup>The branches of activity are classified in accordance with ISIC 2. Account was taken of the economically active female population 10 year of age and older, and females seeking work for the first time were excluded.

<sup>b</sup>The classification by branch of activity for Venezuela in 1971 corresponds to ISIC 1. This difference in classification affects manufacturing, services and commerce primarily.

<sup>c</sup>Data derived from household surveys.

with certain liberal professions considered compatible with their role. The educational levels of women in these groups are high, and they are increasingly undertaking a range of non-manual occupations of superior status that have special links with the more modern sector of society. As regards unpaid work, while women supervise and are responsible for the running of their households, they seldom directly perform the corresponding tasks. They also occasionally undertake social welfare work on a volunteer basis.

The middle stratum of most Latin American societies is more heterogeneous and comprises a sizeable group of women whose only function is to do housework, with or without part-time help. In Latin America the incorporation of women from the middle strata into paid work has a special connotation, since it is associated with the very development of these groups. In this stratum the option to work, while involving elements of personal decision, is correlated on the one hand with collective perceptions of the consumption and services compatible with middle-class status, and, on the other, with the said groups' image of women in respect of culture, work performance and autonomy. This last may be interpreted as a guarantee for women that a symmetrical marital relationship can be established.

As regards the work done, there is a very pronounced concentration of the employment of women in business, in management and particularly in social and community services. Education is the leading branch of activity, and next, in proportions four or five times smaller, come health and social welfare. In the urban middle strata, women very often attain high levels of schooling, and in some countries seem better educated than men in the young age group. As in addition their insertion in the economically active population largely takes place in services —both traditional and modern— and to a lesser extent in industrial production, the concentration of women's employment in modern tertiary activities normally means that the average educational levels of women are higher than those of men.

Table 3

**ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE FEMALE POPULATION IN THE  
TERTIARY SECTOR, 1970-1980**

Country	Year	Percentage	Year	Percentage
Argentina	1970	75.0	1980	78.7
Brazil	1970	60.4	1980	66.1
Costa Rica	1973	78.6	1980	72.6
Chile	1970	76.1	1980	80.8
Ecuador	1974	64.1	1982	70.7
Guatemala	1973	70.7	1981	70.6
Panama	1970	80.5	1980	81.6
Paraguay	1970	57.5	1982	66.9
Peru	1972	61.2	1981	62.3
Venezuela	1970	80.6	1980	79.1

Source: Table 2.

The situation of women in the middle strata with respect to paid work might be summarized in terms of the following trends: first, the expansion of employment of women appears to be definitively linked to the modernization of society, since women's fields of action are to be found mainly in the social, community and professional services sector. It must be pointed out that the incorporation of women in employment in the modern social services sector has come about because these jobs are poorly paid and therefore cannot be held by those who have to contribute the bulk of the income of a family of middle-class status, as defined by the education of its members. A case in point is the feminization of the educational cadres of many countries of the region. Secondly, women's insertion in the labour market has to do with the expansion of the middle sectors and is tightly linked to the strategies established by these sectors to safeguard their position in the middle zone of the social stratification and their possibilities of climbing to higher levels. Thirdly, the insertion of women of this stratum in the labour market is directly related to their level of education. Lastly, the opportunities for paid employment open to women from this stratum are closely linked with the availability and cost of part- or full-time domestic help.

In the majority of the countries in the region, women in the low-income sector enter the labour market at an early age and in significant numbers, as part of their families' subsistence strategies. Their motivations are tied up with the earning of money, which is usually regarded as family, not personal, income. The way in which they enter employment is basically related to the degree of urbanization and modernization of the society concerned. A large number of persons in this stratum are to be found in traditional, tertiary sector occupations, especially domestic service, and as many again go in for farm work. Domestic service primarily absorbs girls and young women, between 10 and 24 years of age, normally with very low levels of education. Another services sector that provides employment for a good many women is petty commerce, which in some countries includes peddling and hawking, and in the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean includes inter-country itinerant trade. In countries with a predominantly indigenous population, another commercial activity carried out preeminently by women is the marketing of their wares.

While its size varies, the group comprising women operatives is also of some significance in the labour market. The insertion of such women depends upon urbanization and tertiarization in a two-fold sense. It depends first upon the degree and technological level of industrial development in the country concerned, and second on the historical juncture through which industry is passing. Certain activities, such as the textile industry and the assembly of electronic products, absorb a large volume of female labour, but generally speaking, the acceleration of technological progress tends to reduce the share of manual workers in the economically active population or creates a demand for levels of specialized training of a kind which only men receive regularly.

Whether they are or are not in full- or part-time paid employment, women in the popular sectors perform unpaid domestic work. In the case of women in rural areas, such work includes subsistence farming and the home processing of food.



The proposals put forward below cover two aspects of this issue: first, the methodological problems involved in studying this issue in greater breadth and depth and some simple suggestions for approaching it; and second, some ideas concerning the future of the relationship between unpaid domestic work and paid employment.

At the methodological level, attention has been drawn to the tension existing between the necessity of obtaining information that can be broadly applied both for analytical purposes and for the formulation of policies, and the need for detailed, specific and far-reaching information on the enormous number of situations which now exist. A start has recently been made on studies in which the aim is to bring the statistical instruments used into closer contact with anthropological studies carried out in greater depth, in an effort to ensure that the instruments in general use really reflect the findings of such research. Furthermore, minimum points of contact should be established between the methods used in household surveys and in censuses so as to fill in the gaps in existing information on women's work. Although these suggestions do not in themselves resolve the problem of unpaid domestic work, a more exhaustive study of the functions and tasks which women perform in the family unit will undoubtedly make it possible to enlarge the stock of information on the subject. It will also allow new veins to be explored in the study of this topic and other widespread cultural factors associated with it since in spite of the fact that the general definition of domestic work includes elements which seem similar, the many different Latin American family structures are obviously reflected in housework. It must also be borne in mind that the cultural connotation assigned to this activity puts it in an occupational category where social recognition depends upon the status of the individual concerned rather than upon the work to be done.

As regards the future, it would seem, from what has transpired so far, that for a large majority of women, employment in a paid job does not free them from domestic work or from home responsibilities. These responsibilities, which are often regarded as part and parcel of motherhood, make the incorporation of women in the labour market either an option or an economic necessity, but seldom as yet is it viewed as a normal obligation, as in the case of men. Accordingly, it is for the time being not enough to compare the two rates of participation without also calling attention to the fact that they differ both in social and in personal terms and studying their implications. Another interesting feature of the occupational profile of women in a large number of countries is its polarization. One extreme tends to attract women from the middle or upper strata, who are highly educated and often engaged in non-manual activities; at the other extreme, are the women of the low-income sectors, with low levels of education, who are employed mainly in the traditional tertiary section of the economy or in farm work, with some working in industry. This is an indication of income concentration and of a society whose population is unevenly distributed (see table 4). In general it would seem that in every stratum women are setting an increasingly high value on paid work, as a source of social significance and self-esteem. This, in combination with the modernization of society and the expansion of educational opportunities for women, will necessarily change the way they perceive their role in the family and will slowly but surely result in a restructuring of family relationships.

Table 4

**LATIN AMERICA (16 COUNTRIES<sup>a</sup>): EMPLOYMENT STRATA  
BY SEX, 1970**

*(Percentages weighted by the economically active  
population of each country)*

Employment strata	Men	Women
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>1. Middle and upper employment strata in secondary and tertiary occupations</b>	18.2	31.8
a) Employers in commerce, industry and services	2.3	1.6
b) Executive personnel in commerce, industry and services	1.7	1.5
c) Free-lance professionals and semi-professionals	0.6	0.8
d) Dependent professionals	2.4	11.1
e) Own-account commercial activities	3.4	3.2
f) Employers, salesmen and subsidiary personnel in industry, commerce and services	7.8	13.7
<b>2. Lower employment strata in secondary activities</b>	25.5	15.2
a) Wage-earners	19.8	8.2
b) Own-account and unpaid family workers	5.7	7.1
<b>3. Lower employment strata in tertiary activities</b>	3.9	27.4
a) Paid workers in services	3.4	25.5
b) Own-account and unpaid family workers in services	0.5	1.8
<b>4. Middle and upper employment strata in primary activities</b>	1.1	0.2
a) Employers in agricultural and extractive activities	1.1	0.2
<b>5. Lower employment strata in primary and extractive activities</b>	41.8	11.5
a) Rural wage-earners	15.6	2.8
b) Non-employed own-account workers and unpaid family workers	26.1	8.7
<b>6. Others</b>	9.5	14.0

Source: Prepared on the basis of data from ECLA/UNICEF Project on Social Stratification and Mobility in Latin America, 1960-1970, Santiago, Chile, 1975-1979, table 9; weighted by the economically active population of each country in *La educación y los problemas del empleo*, UNESCO/ECLA/UNDP Project on Development and Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, Final report No. 3.

<sup>a</sup>Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Venezuela.

## 2. Participation of women in education (210 and 208)

In the past three decades education in Latin America has expanded at a significant rate, and the quantitative achievements obtained in this connection constitute perhaps the most positive indicator of an improvement in social conditions in the region.

During this period, illiteracy, which used to be predominant among adults, has tended to become residual in a number of countries, although very high

figures are still recorded in societies with the largest populations in the region and in countries where there is a considerable proportion of rural and, in particular, indigenous population. Today a primary-school education is accessible to virtually all children, but it has not yet been possible to ensure a complete cycle of basic schooling for the whole of the population. Secondary education, which was formerly the prerogative of a minority, has become the normal formative background of vast urban sectors, and, lastly, higher education, to which only an élite had access, shows enrolment figures similar to those of European countries, which is an indication that in the future the region's cultural and human resources potential will be very considerable.

Despite these strides forward, it has not yet been possible to incorporate the whole population in a minimum cycle of basic education so that in Latin America the percentage of the population with only a primary education is comparable with that of European countries in the earliest decades of the present century, while the percentage of those with a university degree is comparable with that of 10 years ago in Europe. This has resulted in inequality, failure to initiate a shared approach to socialization, the perpetuation of an *unfair system of social stratification*, inadequate training of mass human resources and concentration of public resources in the financing of higher studies to the detriment of basic schooling.

The educational situation in the region may be viewed in terms of different groups of countries. The first group is made up of countries where the modernization of education took place early and primary schooling is now nearly universal and appropriate levels of secondary and higher education have been achieved. The second group comprises countries in which, in the space of a few years, the levels of education experienced what might be called a "mutation" that left one sector of the population with little or no access to primary education while at the same time the number of people enrolled in the higher levels expanded, making them the countries with the highest percentage of university students in the region. The third group is characterized by very unequal levels of educational development between rural and urban areas, or in different regions within the same country, where the expansion of education has depended on the degree of economic development achieved by the region or has followed the profile of income concentration. The fourth group is characterized by integrated planning of the educational process, with strong emphasis on pre-school and basic education and on literacy programmes for the deprived sectors, and the countries in it practice a policy aimed at the equalization of society through education and subsequently at the establishment of a manpower selection mechanism geared to the economic system and its estimated manpower requirements.

In the region as a whole, and particularly in the stated policies of the countries in it, the most recent appraisals of education restore its cultural function as basic to learning on the job, stress the importance of scientific training from primary schooling to university and support the positive role of education in cultural formation, participation in democratic life and the preparation which is indispensable for membership of a modern society.

From the standpoint of society, it should be stressed that the education sector is subject to much community demand, which, in most countries, is

channelled through the power system. The population sets a very high value on education, which it regards as being the way to integrate oneself into the national society and to achieve upward social mobility. An extremely positive sign in terms of social democracy is the fact that even marginal social groups feel they can gain access to the highest levels of education. But this results in an unremitting demand for education, with the material problems this produces. Demands for education stem from groups with unequal power and different ideas of what education means, and the products of a system which expands in accordance with the demands on it are as unlike as the groups making the demands. Thus, the rural and marginal urban sectors are responsible for the expansion of primary education, while, relatively speaking, more and better secondary and higher education is made available to the middle and upper strata.

The expansion of education has far exceeded the increase in the number of middle and upper-level jobs, giving rise to two interrelated phenomena: on the one hand, education as a whole has been "devalued" in that more years of education are now required to qualify for the same post. This is a universal phenomenon. However, in Latin America this devaluation of education has recently had an effect on the levels of education attained by the broad masses of the population, but not on that available to social groups which are at the top of the scale. The second phenomenon is that, aware of the democratizing pressure on education, those higher level groups are trying to restore its old élitist characteristics to education through the establishment of systems separate from the system in which the majority of the population is educated. These systems offer education from pre-school to university, and through them the members of the highest-income families receive an education qualitatively better than that available to the other groups, so that when they complete their studies, they are objectively superior (see table 5).

Two crucial problems will follow on the heels of the quantitative development of education in the future. The first is that of establishing a common basic education for the whole of the population by virtue of which it can be culturally homogenized and which contains the bases for intellectual and human development irrespective of the differences resulting from people's place of residence or their membership of stratified social groups. The second concerns a qualitative change in education. Its expansion has been accompanied by a striking decline in its quality, and in the reference period the various reforms concentrated on quantitative factors without tackling the major problem of all educational systems today, i.e., the incorporation of science in the whole cycle of schooling. This represents a serious challenge to the region at a time when the changes taking place in the developed countries call for the gradual penetration of science into production and social life.

Where the low-income sectors are concerned, the problem does not boil down to one of availability of services. The cultural model of educational systems and in particular of the primary school presupposes a homogeneous population based on the cultural values and standards of the middle and upper groups, which are those transmitted in the formal education system. This has resulted, on the one hand, in a denial of the cultural diversity of the region and, on the other hand, in the fostering of behaviour patterns which it is assumed the students will have acquired by the end of the educational process. In the past, in countries with

Table 5  
**LATIN AMERICA (16 COUNTRIES<sup>a</sup>): EDUCATIONAL LEVELS ACCORDING TO EMPLOYMENT STRATA, BY SEX, 1970<sup>b</sup>**  
*(Percentages)*

Employment strata	No education			1 to 3 years			4 to 6 years			7 to 9 years		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
1. Middle and upper strata in secondary and tertiary employment	10.13	11.15	9.67	8.66	10.12	7.64	24.74	26.31	24.47	15.88	15.03	17.11
a) Employers in commerce, industry and services	11.28	11.02	12.47	10.89	10.91	11.28	29.26	29.71	24.68	15.09	14.83	16.19
b) Executive personnel in commerce, industry and services	10.29	9.52	12.18	6.59	6.49	6.16	21.58	21.61	21.48	15.79	16.99	14.99
c) Free-lance professionals and semi-professional	7.52	6.45	9.81	6.35	6.76	3.93	14.12	12.91	17.31	8.02	6.73	12.40
d) Dependent professionals	6.05	6.58	5.30	2.81	3.60	1.50	11.93	12.31	11.34	10.27	9.45	11.40
e) Own-account commercial activities	17.40	16.02	21.11	20.33	20.27	19.44	34.43	34.90	33.17	12.84	13.20	12.40
f) Employees, salesmen and subordinate personnel in industry, commerce and services	8.90	8.75	9.23	6.59	8.06	3.59	27.42	27.93	25.76	20.51	20.08	21.37
2. Lower strata in secondary activities	17.19	16.13	21.93	21.90	20.84	18.04	39.59	37.79	37.58	12.06	10.90	13.34
a) Wage-earners	15.51	15.60	12.44	21.68	22.18	16.30	41.22	40.63	45.85	12.50	11.97	15.08
b) Own-account and unpaid family workers	22.81	17.92	32.36	21.93	22.84	18.93	35.32	38.23	28.86	11.89	11.59	11.43
3. Middle and upper strata in primary activities	22.24	17.00	24.33	24.96	20.86	26.93	34.62	36.40	33.55	9.16	13.23	7.69
a) Paid workers in services	21.01	16.92	23.68	25.08	20.39	27.32	35.07	36.53	34.17	9.87	13.40	7.43
b) Own-account and unpaid family workers in services	21.02	17.22	21.43	23.08	24.25	19.51	33.61	36.20	32.58	11.67	11.87	13.91
4. Middle and upper strata in primary activities	27.21	27.03	37.10	26.04	26.48	18.96	26.20	25.61	22.51	7.48	8.17	7.06
5. Lower strata in primary and extrative activities	43.43	43.39	48.77	29.89	30.18	24.67	18.94	18.95	17.20	3.28	3.17	2.96
a) Rural wage-earners	43.91	43.76	49.58	29.33	29.58	24.43	18.90	18.99	17.40	2.90	2.91	3.10
b) Non-employed own-account workers and unpaid family workers	42.83	42.58	49.99	29.90	30.32	24.11	19.04	19.17	16.52	3.88	3.80	2.95
6. Others (residual)	23.05	22.07	23.97	18.76	19.35	16.60	29.15	29.78	28.35	11.80	12.03	11.53

Table 5 (conclusion)

Employment strata	10 to 12 years			13 years and over			Undeclared		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
<b>1. Middle and upper strata in secondary and tertiary employment</b>	<b>15.32</b>	<b>13.13</b>	<b>15.28</b>	<b>12.44</b>	<b>13.55</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>12.83</b>	<b>10.74</b>	<b>17.50</b>
a) Employers in commerce, industry and services	10.53	10.33	11.27	10.41	11.00	7.77	12.54	12.20	16.34
b) Executive personnel in commerce, industry and services	15.80	15.59	16.98	17.08	18.22	12.41	12.97	11.58	15.80
c) Free-lance professionals and semi-professionals	9.42	7.62	15.91	45.93	53.62	25.06	8.64	5.91	15.56
d) Dependent professionals	23.20	16.77	29.83	27.98	41.88	19.18	17.76	9.41	22.35
e) Own-account commercial activities	5.08	5.58	3.86	1.98	2.20	1.31	7.94	7.83	8.71
f) Employees, salesman and subordinate personnel in industry, commerce and services	17.75	16.08	21.32	6.39	7.24	4.78	12.44	11.83	13.95
<b>2. Lower strata in secondary activities</b>	<b>2.40</b>	<b>6.58</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>1.93</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>6.40</b>	<b>5.83</b>	<b>6.48</b>
a) Wage-earners	2.68	2.58	2.61	0.45	0.46	0.29	5.96	6.58	7.43
b) Own-account and unpaid family workers	2.96	2.89	2.63	0.63	0.59	0.31	4.46	5.94	5.58
<b>3. Lower strata in tertiary activities</b>	<b>1.94</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>6.60</b>	<b>7.77</b>	<b>6.26</b>
a) Paid workers in services	1.87	3.77	0.96	0.46	1.06	0.14	6.64	7.93	6.30
b) Own-account and unpaid family workers in services	3.00	3.08	3.46	0.60	1.08	0.26	7.11	6.30	8.85
<b>4. Middle and upper strata in primary activities</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>7.48</b>	<b>2.74</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>6.45</b>	<b>6.41</b>	<b>6.11</b>
<b>5. Lower strata in primary and extractive activities</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>5.67</b>
a) Rural wage-earners	0.43	0.39	0.81	0.12	0.17	0.22	1.35	4.25	4.76
b) Non-employed own-account workers and unpaid family workers	0.52	0.53	0.51	0.14	0.15	0.09	3.69	3.45	5.83
<b>6. Others (residual)</b>	<b>5.41</b>	<b>5.17</b>	<b>6.34</b>	<b>2.72</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>9.11</b>	<b>8.83</b>	<b>10.58</b>

Source: *La educación y los problemas del empleo*. UNESCO/ECLA/UNDP Project on Development and Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, Final report No. 2.

\* Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Venezuela.

\*\* 100% of the universe of each stratum under "both sexes", "male" and "female" is established by adding the respective percentage at each educational level horizontally.

Table 6

**LATIN AMERICA (19 COUNTRIES): RATES OF ENROLMENT AT THE THREE LEVELS IN THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM, BY SEX, 1980**

(Percentages)

Country	Primary (first level)			Secondary (second level)			Higher or university (third level)		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Argentina <sup>1</sup>	116	116	116	59	54	63	23.6	21.7	25.7
Bolivia	77 <sup>a</sup>	82 <sup>a</sup>	72 <sup>a</sup>	16 <sup>a</sup>	18 <sup>a</sup>	14 <sup>a</sup>	11.9 <sup>2</sup>	...	...
Brazil	76 <sup>a</sup>	76 <sup>a</sup>	76 <sup>a</sup>	32	29	35 <sup>2</sup>	11.9	...	...
Chile	117	118	116	55	51	59	13.2	14.8	11.4
Colombia	128	127	130	46	43	49	10.9	...	...
Costa Rica	91 <sup>a</sup>	91 <sup>a</sup>	92 <sup>a</sup>	40 <sup>a</sup>	37 <sup>a</sup>	43 <sup>a</sup>	25.8	...	...
Cuba	98 <sup>a</sup>	98 <sup>a</sup>	97 <sup>a</sup>	73	71	76	19.5	19.8	19.3
Ecuador <sup>3</sup>	107	109	105	40	39	41	37.1	...	...
El Salvador	74	74	74	23	24	23	3.9	5.3	2.4
Guatemala	69	74	63	16	17	15	7.4 <sup>3</sup>	...	...
Honduras	76 <sup>a</sup>	76 <sup>a</sup>	75 <sup>a</sup>	30	29	30	8.2	10.2	6.2
Mexico	121	122	120	47	50	45	14.0	18.5	9.4
Nicaragua	75 <sup>a</sup>	74 <sup>a</sup>	76 <sup>a</sup>	23 <sup>a</sup>	21 <sup>a</sup>	26 <sup>a</sup>	14.1	...	...
Panama <sup>3</sup>	94 <sup>a</sup>	94 <sup>a</sup>	94 <sup>a</sup>	49 <sup>a</sup>	45 <sup>a</sup>	53 <sup>a</sup>	22.2	19.6	24.9
Paraguay <sup>2</sup>	86 <sup>a</sup>	88 <sup>a</sup>	84 <sup>a</sup>	21 <sup>a</sup>	20 <sup>a</sup>	20 <sup>a</sup>	7.2	8.1	6.3
Peru	112	116	108	57	62	52	19.0	24.3	13.6
Dominican Republic	106	...	...	40	...	...	...	...	...
Uruguay	105	107	104	58	54	61	15.9	14.8	17.0
Venezuela <sup>1</sup>	105	105	104	40	41	38	20.2	...	...

Source: UNESCO, *Statistical Yearbook*, 1982.

Note: When indicated beside the name of a country, applies to all data for that country; when indicated in one of the levels columns, applies only to that level.

<sup>1</sup>1981; <sup>2</sup>1978; <sup>3</sup>1979.

<sup>a</sup>A net school enrolment ratio, i.e., the share of people (children or young people) in the respective age group in the total number of people in that group. It is a ratio which excludes people who enter their level of education under or over the normal age.

indigenous populations, a blind eye was turned to the fact that pupils had a mother tongue different from the official language and in all countries recognition was denied to the cultural and linguistic patterns of the low-income sectors on the grounds that they were bearers of a non-culture. Nor was any attempt made to develop pedagogies appropriate to the education of children from illiterate or culturally deficient homes, with the result that even though the population with that background has access to education, it is unable to learn and fails in the attempt.

With respect to education the situation of women is very similar to that of men, with one major qualitative difference, which consists in the fact that during the period under review, equality of educational opportunities for the two sexes was secured at the primary and secondary levels, while at the tertiary level the participation of women rose from a very low share to about 40% of enrolment in higher education (see table 6). This reflects a democratization of opportunities for the female sex of immense significance for the future. What is more, it may be asserted that the change in the cultural patterns governing relations between the sexes will certainly result from the educational changes recorded, which in the next generation will have important effects on family relationships and on the socialization of the new generations.

In some countries the education of girls at the primary and secondary levels is beginning to outstrip that of boys. Girls from the lower population strata, because of their closer linkage with their mothers, do better in learning than boys; and to this is added an anticipatory socialization of girls in rural areas who study harder because they know that migration to the cities will be on a larger scale in their case than in that of boys. Similarly, the development of women's employment in the modern tertiary sector, especially in educational and community services, has had a positive effect on the increase in the education of girls, who by this means prepare themselves for their incorporation in the labour market. Where university education is concerned, there are still barriers between the sexes. Women are channelled towards careers with a lower social status and generally a slighter scientific and technical component. This is due to the internalization of constraints imposed by society on their entry into professions from which its leaders are recruited, and also women look for occupations which are compatible with their future family roles. They are oriented towards training for wage-earning activities with limited hours of work, such as, for example, teaching.

The problem of educational content is still of outstanding importance for the full participation of women. The images transmitted are both élitist (history is presented as determined by heroes and no mention is made of popular figures and of society as a whole) and male-oriented. It is notable that in school textbooks women are depicted exclusively in the roles of wife and mother and are confined to the affective dimension, while achievement and technical skill are presented as male characteristics. It is equally true that under the educational system girls are gradually conditioned to accept the performance of their traditional role as women. Lastly, educators, who are caught up in the existing cultural pattern, encourage a spirit of enterprise in boys while in girls they reward discipline.



### 3. Participation of women in organizations (81 and 90)

While there are as many definitions of participation as there are bodies of theory, for purposes of this chapter, the subject of participation is considered on the basis of the special links between the civil society and the State. One of the problems frequently affecting these links is the weakness of civil society, where women should participate more in the taking of essential decisions in conjunction with other social groups. The links between society and the State should go beyond decisions related to local topics, and channels should be opened up for the incorporation of groups, thereby facilitating the socialization of power with a view to forging a more intensive democracy.

This chapter is based on the following assumptions concerning the participation of women:

a) Women do not exist as a group which interacts effectively on a continuous basis, but under certain conditions they may constitute groups in their capacity as women.

b) Consideration should be given to the role which has always traditionally been assigned to women in the household and has isolated them from forms of participation outside that setting. Two lines of argument are based on this: i) that women were traditionally discouraged from participating because of legal restrictions, the internalization of the limited role assigned to them or other cultural, religious and educational factors, with the result that any change involves acting on those variables; and ii) that in the family environment, human values of solidarity, personal rights and priority attention to the satisfaction of basic and effective needs were maintained and developed; when women participate, these values become incorporated into macropolitics, providing a foundation on which an equitable and humane society may be constructed.

In this part of the chapter, the sole aim is to provide some examples of participation in women's organizations in the region, which seem to be of special significance in the low- and middle-income sectors.

In spite of the limited information available, there is no doubt that women are participating and have participated in social organizations, many of them as part of survival strategies of groups to which they belong, and others in ways which may appear to be extensions of their traditional roles. Any analysis of the participation of women should aim at including, as exhaustively as possible, the degree of modernization of the society in which the various groups covered are to be found, the types of income concentration in that society, the attitude towards such participation reflected in existing political models, the predominant cultural concept of the role of women and the stratum to which the women studied belong.

Particularly important in this respect is the participation of women from that sector which receives the lowest 40% of a society's income, their membership of that sector being in actual fact responsible for their participation in organizations in that they view such participation as the key to the satisfaction of their basic needs. In the lower strata the family setting appears to be the only one in which women are active, the role of economic provider and supreme family authority being reserved for men. This means that all activities connected with the dwelling, water supply and other normal services, education, etc., are areas in

which women perform. Outside of this broad spectrum, when partial or total unemployment is experienced, it is the women in the household who obtain the family income from informal activities (domestic service, street selling, etc.), so that in spite of traditional male dominance, in the end women carry out activities necessary for the family's survival and welfare, which call for their participation in various social areas. It should be noted, in this respect, that different patterns are followed in communities with a strong indigenous culture.

According to the findings of some studies, the participation of women of the lower sectors tends to occur at the organization level, often spontaneously, in particular in cases where: i) many women with the same immediate interests meet together in their place of work or dwelling; ii) some conjunctural development occurs which aggravates the problem and causes it to be perceived collectively; iii) a framework is provided by the existence of some local organization or iv) some external motivating factor is present.

However, when women are isolated, especially because of being primarily devoted to their household or of having to work both in a paid job and at home, they are unable to take on more work or to work on a more regular basis outside their job and homes, and this normally keeps them from participating in social or political organizations which function permanently as institutions.

Economic activity does not, in and of itself, motivate women. Their associations with the labour market are more negative, even than those of the men in the same group, often because child bearing, which affects them alone, puts them in greater danger of dismissal. In addition, their professional and technical training is usually inferior to that of the men in their groups, and their situation is aggravated by the fact that heads of household in these strata are frequently women. This combination of factors makes them more accessible to wage reduction pressures and more reluctant to strike or take other action which might jeopardize their precarious economic situation.

When female workers, limited as they are by the foregoing factors, participate in labour organizations, it is usually in connection with demands made in their capacity as workers rather than as women. Women workers can be mobilized to obtain support services, such as crèches, if they are politically socialized and have links with national political organizations.

Participation in organizations of housewives in the low-income sectors has been considerable in many countries of the region. It is they who normally fight to obtain infrastructure services, housing, health services, education or with a view to occupying land on which to erect makeshift dwellings. In such cases, women show considerable capacity for collective decision, which also frequently comes to the fore when they act in support of their husbands' or sons' trade union movements. In such circumstances they establish solidarity committees, take charge of catering services, arrange parades, go on hunger strikes, or, in cases of repression, band together to form human shields, sometimes enlisting members of their families in such efforts.

Just as in special circumstances they band together very readily they also disband with equal ease. Their identification with the role assigned to them and their day-to-day difficulties usually make them return to the household. According to some studies, if women belonging to low-income groups are to participate on a more regular basis, they must obtain access to certain services and basic

goods that would free them from domestic activities —assistance in the care of their children, training together with men, minimum community programmes, etc.

In the foregoing analysis, it is assumed that women participate first of all at moments of conflict and secondly when regular channels of participation are available. These two forms of participation constitute different models, the former being reflected in conflictive societies and the latter, in progressive democratic societies.

The participation of women in the middle-income sectors tends to differ considerably from that described above. Women in the housewife group normally lead their lives in isolation and have practically no opportunity for active participation. In this stratum, the very large group made up of teachers, the majority of them female, is perhaps the group which shows the greatest participation. It is traditionally active in connection with demands relating to education and working conditions at professional level. In respect of the participation of professional women, the degree of modernization of the society to which they belong and the cultural values related to their role in society are highly important, since it is basically through the channels provided by their work that they are able to participate. Another important factor, especially for those with high levels of education, is the degree of political openness of the prevailing model, since such women tend to participate relatively freely in political parties. The growing number of female middle-level and senior cadres in organizations and of female political leaders, particularly in parties which find their basic support in the middle classes, is recruited in the university professional sector.

In these groups there are also cases of participation organized on a shorter term basis to deal with events which are changing their position as a group or situations when they come up against global problems with affective causes of a personal nature. This sector plays an enormously important part in the leadership of the female cause, because it possesses the ability to take a global view of the problem of discrimination against women, the organization to act in face of the power system and the intellectual capacity to formulate plans for an egalitarian society in so far as the sexes are concerned.

Participation of women in the upper strata does not normally find expression in organizations; it is essentially different from that of the low-income groups whose sense of participation is expressed collectively, and it is mainly expressed in increased work at the artistic, information and cultural levels. A more active form of participation by women from these groups occurs in social situations where there is greater leeway than usual or results from a subjective reaction or reflects an ideological belief and often takes the form of a break with the original group in order to adopt ideologies contrary to the established order.

In short, it may be affirmed that the participation of women depends in the first place on the living conditions of the groups to which they belong, the motivation being different in each case. Accordingly, the participation of women in the lower strata is motivated by the wish to achieve improvements for their family group and must be expressed collectively. Women in the middle-income groups may be mobilized for more personal reasons related to politics or work or in support of the cause of women as such. Women in the upper groups scarcely

participate at all, tending to give more modern expression to their traditional roles instead, although small numbers of them do enter into conflict with the dominant values in their social milieu. Participation by women in their capacity as women in organizations seems to depend also, and perhaps more essentially, on their basic attitude, on the cultural values assigned to their role and on the amount of practice they have had in participation. It would in fact seem that this last factor in particular is a highly important one for women. Normally, they are given very little opportunity to participate throughout their lives; when they do join organizations, they gain new perspectives as to their own potential, and this will probably have a big impact on their subsequent activities.

In order to achieve more far-reaching changes, women should at least be imbued with the idea that no contradiction exists between their role as mothers and their role in the labour market or between the development of their identity as females and their potential for participating in decisions. The fact that doubt has always been cast on their ability to participate and the appropriateness of their participating tends to make their possibilities of participating on an equal footing with men in the taking of important decisions all the more remote. In this respect, changes are needed which, in addition to establishing objective conditions which facilitate the social performance of women, will bring about the cultural socialization of men and women, whose social roles will be reformulated on a shared and more democratic basis.

### III. THE STATE AND CENTRAL CHANNELS FOR RAISING THE STATUS OF WOMEN: PARTICIPATIVE PLANNING AND LEGISLATION (60, 126, 127, 128)

Although the major concern of this study is changes in social structure and culture (in the anthropological sense), planning and legislation are two social areas in which change may be accelerated by means of policies aimed at promoting the actual incorporation of women in development. Although planning and legislation occur in different dimensions of the social system and do not necessarily have the same objectives, they have both been a source of concern in relation to women, and they both offer possible channels for the incorporation of women.

Planning is considered in its participative and decentralizing aspects, where primary goal is integral development within a framework of essentially democratic societies. As regards legislation, even though by its mere existence it may *ipso facto* alter social relationships which have taken shape down through history, it periodically results in new ordinances or in values on which new forms of behaviour are based. Thus, the consistency between international legislation and its observance in the legal systems of States will be analysed. This chapter contains a review of the latest and most important ideas on these subjects and their potential for the future within the context of the inevitable heterogeneity prevailing in the region and within the countries themselves.

## 1. Women as a topic in planning

The idea of planning has been institutionally consolidated in Latin America in recent years, and practically all the countries have specialized bodies as an inherent part of their State apparatus. Nevertheless, although the social and political significance of planning is increasingly recognized, its role in the determination of development styles, and consequently the impact of national plans, differ considerably according to the specific political-economic models adopted by each country. Moreover, a number of difficulties have so far prevented the subject of women from being included in the context of global, regional or national development strategies and programmes. These difficulties have stemmed from the role actually played by planning in societies structured on the basis of the rules of the market and from pressures exerted by the various social sectors; the actual structure of planning bodies and policy formulation mechanisms and the role they play in a State's administrative apparatus and the scarcity of human and financial resources. Other difficulties have their origin in the type of criteria used, which tend to create a gap between the economic and social areas in order to maximize economic growth and fail to provide for a more far-reaching type of social planning in which economic, societal and cultural elements are combined.

Participatory planning constitutes an advance in this respect in that it tends to direct the development process towards social well-being. It comes into being when it is recognized that current planning models have shortcomings which are largely attributable to the fact that those models are not very representative. Such planning responds by promoting the establishment of a mechanism which offers marginal social groups greater organizational, participatory and decision-making possibilities and capacity, while at the same time bringing about geographical decentralization of the taking of decision by the actual organs of the State.

Participative planning may be of two kinds: the first of these is compensatory planning which aims at changing the social status of certain groups by means of specific programmes. This type of planning is based on the assumption that in the initial stages of implementation the social groups concerned are *operating at such a great disadvantage in terms of resources and power that they are unable to rise to high levels of organization on their own*, so that an additional external effort must be made to improve their levels of well-being and stimulate their ability to express their aspirations. The second kind of participatory planning has to do with the distribution or transfer of power to territorial communities either at the communal or the regional level. In recognition of the problems involved in the kind of centralization practised in the majority of the countries in the region, the process of regional planning is postulated in terms of the area concerned, which is viewed not as a statistical aggregate or an administrative district but rather as a group or sector of society capable of establishing a development project. This facilitates negotiation between the region and the central government since the region is established as having a guaranteed future and its own managerial capacity.

This position is based on the assumption that participation is a requisite for the achievement of higher levels of representativeness in the process. Since

situations vary from country to country, the basic problem with this approach to planning will in all probability revolve around distribution in that underlying the regional phenomenon there is an unequal level of economic development and compositional inequalities in terms of social stratification.

It should be borne in mind that in addition to its technical, administrative and methodological facets, the planning process has a political and social dimension within a set period of time and of varying scope, which in the initial phases is determined by a global national project or an accepted objective image. In this respect, it is suggested that a more democratic order requires that the relationship between the State and civil society should be founded on a real socialization of power. Since one of the problems of that relationship derives from the weakness of civil society, the strengthening of a process in which broader participation by all social groups is promoted will be more easily achieved when it includes, among other measures, the strengthening of civil society *vis-à-vis* the State and the establishment of flexible links among the social classes, accompanied by collective action in the areas of economic production and social distribution. In other words, the process requires a genuine democracy open to participation by the people for whom it is conceived and structured as a means of bringing about social changes for the benefit of the society with respect to which the participative process continues, intensifies and takes on new forms as the process gathers momentum.

Within a context such as that described above, the planning process is open to the whole of society and is linked organically with State activities and necessarily incorporates consideration of a broad spectrum of problems in the social, environmental, ecological, spatial, territorial, social welfare and quality of life areas. It is by definition a social subject, and practically no area of the social system can be unrelated to it. This requires, on the one hand, an increase in the areas of concern, which must be widely diversified, and on the other hand, a greater degree of specificity since the type of planning proposed includes concern for the physical medium in which the processes develop so that the action taken can be implemented in existing local communities.

The incorporation in the planning process of questions relating to the status and living conditions of Latin American women seems perfectly consistent within this frame of reference since these are among the questions which must be taken into consideration in connection with the problems and proposals involved in the process.

In addition to the fact that the topic of women is one which is inherently natural to the planning process at the conceptual and theoretical level, the operational forms and the various approaches advocated for this process play an important role in the analysis and promotion of their living conditions. In fact, representativeness is the crux of the problem, and it may be affirmed that proposals formulated locally in terms of a community's immediate and invisible needs are actually more likely to affect the women in the community, who are very much isolated on account of their role as traditionally defined. Basically, however, it should be noted that a decentralized approach would make it possible to consider the heterogeneity and practicalities of each area of society. This would exert pressure on women to participate in the efforts made to improve all the conditions which determine the quality of life of human settlements.

Another factor which further justifies the consideration of women within the context of a participative planning process is that the subject of women would cease to be viewed in isolation and would become interrelated and linked with other social topics, which would increase the possibilities for progress and give the subject more significance.

It is important to stress that although participative planning undoubtedly tends to strengthen the representativeness of women within the strategy of the groups to which they belong and also stimulates their capacity to participate in group interests, an analysis of the social standing of each individual in relation to other members of their group cannot be excluded. A global democratizing and participative concept of planning should bring about some changes in the cultural perception of the role of women. This does not, however, necessarily mean that these will be more extensive changes even in social situations where there is greater participation; there may be areas in which women are subordinate to the men in their groups, and this may in fact constitute an extension of their traditional role. This matter calls for specific attention in the formulation of planning measures. Finally, consideration should be given to the possible repercussions of substantially modifying the role of women in all other areas of the social system.

A final reflection may be made concerning the way in which this approach changes the task assigned to regional planners. If a concordant, or at least compatible, theoretical stance is adopted, the planner will have to deal with a far more complex situation than that traditionally perceived, which will, moreover, call for knowledge of the physical and quantitative characteristics of the places he has in mind, sensitivity in detecting and channelling needs, ability to compatibilize the various interests involved and adjustment to the fact that decisions are controlled by those they are intended to affect. Moreover, the diversity of situations which will be encountered along the way and their particular local characteristics prevent the use of time-tested formulas, so that there will probably be need for a variety of solutions and in all likelihood a number of ways of solving a single problem since a whole range of factors will be involved. A planner of the kind envisaged for this task should have a little of the researcher and a great deal of the politician in him.

Admittedly, the model proposed needs to be developed operationally in each specific case and must eventually be given a trial run for a reasonable length of time. However, the strong likelihood that it will foster integrated development of the kind in which participation is considered to be of key importance puts it in the forerun in terms of possibilities for promoting the status of Latin American women, especially those belonging to the more underprivileged groups.

## 2. Legislation

Legislation provides a legal framework for the incorporation of women in society and for their participation. All the laws in force in a society, do not, however, necessarily reflect the real progress made in the incorporation of women in social life. Frequently this is because legislation is often prepared by jurists who act in advance of their time, and the laws which embody it are aimed

at altering a social situation which is resistant to change. This may be seen, for example, in the equality expressly assigned to women in constitutions and legal codes in respect of political participation, whereas in fact their representation in political and governing bodies is and has always been, minimal.

Furthermore, laws are still in force which are no longer in keeping either with activities which women are actively performing or with a socially acceptable image of the situations dealt with. This is especially evident in the differences observed in the status of women in various laws. In many countries their rights with respect to the family (for example, jurisdiction over the children), are limited, while their rights as individuals are equal to those of men. Thus, for example, limitations on women as citizens are practically non-existent; officially they may vote for and be elected to the same offices as men. As regards labour, the legislation of some countries, for the stated purpose of protection give *de facto* responsibility for maternity to women exclusively and limit their real possibilities for work. In general, the labour limitations applied to women, which are linked expressly to maternity and personal safety, restrict their opportunities for work since although they are not objective limitations, they entail higher employment costs (crèches, nurseries, etc.). That is why the claims of working women, especially those in the Latin American and Caribbean region, seldom relate to maternity, since the women are justifiably afraid of losing their jobs. It is perhaps because of this that most international resolutions involving the ratification of national legislation refer to the status of working women.

Generally speaking, legislation covering women as individuals, stimulating their participation as workers and citizens and guaranteeing them civil rights similar to those of men, has made great strides as far as equality is concerned. The crux of the problem, however, seems to lie in family legislation which has changed more gradually so that in many cases the laws in force militate against the recognition of the rights of women as individuals.

As stated above, participation of women in the region is necessarily based on their incorporation within the family, which in fact influences their incorporation in society. It is within the family that the performance of adult women is questioned and, in fact, at every stage in their life cycle, the basic daughter-father relationship tends to repeat itself. The legal incapacity attributed to married women in the legislation of most countries as regards jurisdiction over their children and purchase and sale of goods and the discrimination against them where adultery is concerned suggest that married women are still viewed as minors. The number of households which are headed by women or are based on consensual relationships indicates that these laws may be perceived as opposing the status of the independent woman both at work and in civil life, and this seems particularly clear where the women in the low-income strata are concerned.

Although changing this type of legislation will undoubtedly do nothing to alter the way in which society views the role of women, nor will it effect an immediate change in the way that role is exercised. These laws are important since legal consideration of their full capacity under law is at least a first step in the right direction. Moreover, if women are not placed under the protection of others, they will be compelled to assume their own responsibilities.



Legislation which places women under the protection of men within the family deprives women not only of the rights proper to all human beings in societies seeking equity but also of the opportunity to exercise their obligations, and the freedom of citizens to exercise their obligations is the only real indication that progress is being made towards more egalitarian societies.

Laws do not necessarily reflect reality. However, they do provide one of the supports that are needed if reality is to adapt to the changes which affect the whole of society. In this study a stress has intentionally not been laid on other questions of a legal nature; the aim has been to concentrate four basic areas: legislation as a set of laws which do not necessarily reflect reality; laws governing individuals; family legislation and the need to bring legislation governing individuals into harmony with governing the family groups of which society is composed.

#### IV. YOUNG WOMEN

Separate consideration of the group made up of young women as one of the problems related to the status of Latin American women and their integration and development is relatively new to the studies being carried out in the Secretariat. This study is intended to initiate the consideration of the significant and complex question of the status of young women as being a matter of the greatest theoretical and practical importance for the immediate future.

It is enormously important for future projections of social reality that this topic should be studied and thoroughly understood. The societies of the future will be managed by the youth of today, and although in the past the future was fairly clearly perceived as the natural extension of the present, accelerated technological progress, scientific development and problems of economic and equality mean that models of the future are now full of uncertainty, and all the more so in Latin America, where development models have not crystallized and owing to certain aspects of dependency, cannot always be used independently to project the future of the region's society. Problems relating to young women are also important in view of the need of modern societies to prepare a coherent role for the young people within them, in keeping with the future image-object, in which they are viewed in the performance of social roles, especially those facilitating the practice of participative forms of democracy. It might be affirmed that if young people participate actively and fully in the society of their countries, they will gradually develop as individuals and subsequently will play the roles expected of them in the processes of social change and the search for more equitable development styles.

In short, young people constitute a very significant age group in Latin America, and demographic trends seem to confirm that this will continue to be true, at least in the present century. In the region, this group is characterized by considerable heterogeneity, which is due, in particular to the socioeconomic strata to which its members belong (which in turn objectively determines the possibilities for integration in the social structure) and to educational and cultural factors. Although educational progress is one of the most important achievements of the last few decades, access to services and cultural links at the

school level has been unequal, thus producing a new sociocultural gap. This is reflected, for example, in the fact that in countries which have recently progressed in the field of education, one out of every five people in the 20-to-24 year age group has had university training, one is virtually illiterate, and the other three have been educated to various levels between these two extremes. While this shows a considerable rise in the number of people of cultural levels formerly reserved for the élite, it also indicates that the younger generation is polarized to an alarming extent in terms of human resources, equality and the establishment of the shared cultural codes which are indispensable for building nations and democratic systems.

This gap is particularly wide in the case of rural youth and their contemporaries in large urban centres. The lack of education of the former makes it impossible to incorporate them in the modern sector of society where progress is being made in terms both of labour and of social issues, and this is reflected in the fact that rural youth are destined for a lower place in society as a high percentage of them will be compelled to migrate to cities.

Although young women share many of the problems and characteristics common to young men, especially those in their same stratum, they also confront a number of different problems stemming from their position in society and from the way in which their social role is defined. In this respect, it might be argued that the changes affecting young women at present are greater than those affecting young men, since in addition to quantitative social and educational changes, they have to face serious and seemingly insolvable contradictions in their social role. In the past 30 years, the educational levels of women have risen more rapidly than those of men, and their position in the employment market, particularly in the urban area, has also changed more radically.

In this respect, it must be borne in mind that although the family continues to be the dominant influence in their lives, the entry of many women from the working and middle strata of the population into modern systems of education increases the gap between their parents' generation and their own, making them accessible to more comprehensive forms of socialization. Family socialization is being carried out by mothers whose level of education is much lower than that of their daughters, which creates tension between family socialization and the socialization obtained in the educational process or socialization among people of the same age. This tension is aggravated by the diffusion of a different national culture and new patterns of consumption, behaviour and creation, and all of these things tend to change the life style traditionally regarded as acceptable.

Young women in the region do not always enjoy the same status; this is due in particular to differences in the degree of urbanization achieved in the various countries, in the extent to which the structure of employment has been modernized and in levels of development; to cultural differences and to differences in the status of the groups and families in which these women live out their lives.

In addition, differences between countries have a different effect on the different strata to which the young women belong. Thus, in general, the options open to young women in the upper middle and upper strata seem to be determined by the values of the particular group to which they belong. Those

from families with more modern life styles will in all probability look further afield in seeking employment, and the education they receive is likely to be increasingly comprehensive and of higher quality, although, in terms of academic degrees, not necessarily superior to that of the men of their group. The main differences between the women in this group today and those of previous generations have to do with the type of socialization they receive and the options this gives them in terms of independence from or centrality of the domestic role. It might be assumed that access to mass means of education, broad systems of information with new value contents and the opportunity to interrelate with members of other groups may result in much innovative behaviour which can be imitated by young women from other groups.

As their level of education rises, women in the middle strata will tend to seek employment for personal satisfaction, as a freer option and also at the same professional level as men. This will give rise to conflicts owing to the more restricted growth of the employment market in many of the Latin American countries. The expansion of employment for women in this stratum has taken place largely in connection with social and community services and within the public sector. Employment in the former cannot continue to increase as rapidly as in the past, and it would seem that jobs in the public sector will be severely limited as a direct result of the reduction being imposed on public expenditure in most countries of the region.

The new generations of women in the urban middle classes are being trained with this job market in view, and the new strata of educational young women are probably in for considerable disappointment. At the same time, young women in these groups are, like their male counterparts, molded by their academic education; the social communications media and student, religious, political and other organizations. Although some of the traditional values associated with their role are still held, young women in urban middle-class groups will have an educational profile which is similar or superior to that of the man in their group, and while this may not in itself be a determining factor in the adoption of options, there may at least be reason to expect that some of these women will exert increasing pressure to obtain employment and ensure that their status is equal to that of men. It may be assumed that there will be more conflict associated with their return to the household when they marry than in the case of previous generations, and this situation will be made more difficult by the fact that society views their central role as being within the domestic unit and sees them in terms of the centrality of their role within the domestic unit — a role which is supported by a social structure in which the whole basic responsibility for the care of children centres on the mother. In connection with the conflictive factors in the reformulation of the social role of young women, mention should be made of the diffusion of contraceptive methods, which will bring about marked changes in their sexual and reproductive behaviour, since maternity will frequently be regarded as an option rather than as the normal course to follow or as a requirement. Because of this, tremendous tension may be produced in this stratum when the family is viewed as a unit for effective fulfilment and work and participation as the areas of personal achievements.

The situation of young women in the lower sectors has its own characteristics. In the first place, since household functions are subordinated to

strategies for survival and satisfaction of basic needs, the options available have nothing to do with personal freedom. Secondly, the women in these groups bear more responsibility for the life of their family, either as heads of households or because of the contribution they make to group survival strategies, which are a big factor in determining the lives of young women. Although it may be argued that in absolute terms this group has been least affected by change, especially in the rural area, the situations which the young women in this stratum are likely to experience will be more conflictive than those faced by previous generations. This is due to the fact that, although the education they receive is limited, it is far superior to that formerly received by women of their social status; yet, despite the fact that it is achieved so painfully, it has lost some of its value owing to the high educational levels of the other social groups, with the result that the possibilities these women have of finding work are not much greater than those of the women in the preceding generation. Cultural homogenization and the generalization of cultural elements, which are not to be found in the social area, will cause severe tension among the women of these groups. The traditionalist attitude taken to the socialization of young women in the lower strata brings their values into permanent conflict with their actual living conditions. For example, from a very early age they must obtain employment, albeit in part-time or seasonal work, and this situation normally persists throughout their lives. In the course of their socialization, however, emphasis is placed on the importance of their domestic role. This obviously gives them feelings of failure to complete essential tasks and causes them to underestimate the worth of their activities; and when they have only domestic tasks to perform, they cannot do them in accordance with the theory they learned at school owing to a scarcity of material resources. In families of this type, the roles tend to be arranged in a strict hierarchy, with the males in authority; violence is often a possibility. In the performance of household tasks, the eldest daughter usually understudies her mother, both in domestic tasks and in caring for the children. The role of the elder daughters in the poorest strata has been the subject of a recent study, whose findings show how marginality is produced in family cycles.

In short the gaps between the strata noted above in respect of all their members is all the more apparent in the case of young women. It is noteworthy that the level of economic activity among young people is highest in the female sector of the labour force and that the most significant increase in the future will be attributable to young women. Thus, in the 20-24 year age group, the increase in economic activity derives almost exclusively from the increase in the rates of participation by women.

Another important factor whose significance and content differ from stratum to stratum is the increase in the number of young women entering paid labour markets. In the lower strata, in both rural and urban areas, this is due to family minimum survival strategies, while the search for paid employment by educated young women from the middle strata is probably more attributable to free choice and occurs at a later age since their opportunities for education are broader.

On the whole, however, it would seem that an increasing number of women are coming to view employment in positive terms, even in the lower strata. Some depth studies on the behaviour of families in poor urban groups

indicate that although young women still do not question their natural domestic role, they have accepted paid labour as a necessary part of their lives, although their access to it is limited for family reasons, especially those relating to their obligation to care for small children.

The main factor keeping young women from participating more fully will no doubt continue to be the type of socialization received in the families of origin.

In the near future, young people will have to live in societies which are substantially different from those which now exist, and rigorous training will have to be introduced in this connection. They will also constitute one of the largest groups in the region, and this will be a group which will be characterized by variety in its socioeconomic, cultural and structural aspects. However, in addition, this group will also be characterized by new factors of differentiation which may be important in the definition of social relationships in the future. It will be a mixed group in which differences in education will derive mainly from an individual's place in the social order rather than from his sex. It is a fact that in the middle strata young women are already rising to higher educational levels than men, and, although the same cannot be said of the lower strata, this trend may gather force if men begin to join the labour market earlier.

Employment, education and cultural change (where the way in which people view their role plays an essential part) are all important when it comes to dealing with problems concerning the incorporation of young people in social life. Nevertheless, creative new solutions based on fundamental values of democracy and solidarity are urgently needed if young people are to be effectively mobilized in processes of change aimed primarily at the achievement of equality.

## V. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. In the last few decades, the changing status of Latin American women and their families has been one of the great transformations which have been occurring, as a result, in particular, of the urbanization process, the development of skilled employment in the services sector and a radical shift in the population profile as the education system has expanded.

2. In most countries this has not been accompanied by important changes in the structure of the distribution of income or power or by substantial variations in their value systems. On the other hand, this stage of transition, which differed in intensity in the various countries of the region and differed radically as between urban and rural areas was characterized by considerable dynamism although there were large gaps in the policies governing the processes involved. Undoubtedly, one of the most important adjustment variables in this period was education, conceived both as a tool for national cultural integration and participation by the population and as an effective mechanism for social mobilization.

3. During this period the urbanization and modernization processes have undoubtedly brought about fundamental changes in the situation of Latin American women in their families. The central role of the women has, however, remained anchored to cultural factors which restrict their possibility for social participation and confine them mainly to tasks connected with the care of their

families. In fact, no attempt to revalue the social role of women was involved in any part of the process, and although education was the major achievement where they were concerned, the role it played was one of rural-urban adaptation and vocational training, no major changes being made in relation to the socialization of sexual roles.

4. It should also be noted that the changes occurring in the region have not affected all women equally, although they have all promoted social mobility by providing greater access to services, education, etc. In terms of well-being and higher standards of living, however, the changes were closely associated with the countries' levels of development and income distribution pattern, the urban-rural distribution of families and socioeconomic strata to which the women affected belong. In this connection, it must be emphasized that the highest priority should be given to problems facing women and families in underprivileged groups.

5. It would seem that, owing to international economic problems, this model is reaching a critical phase and that it needs considerable work if it is to retain its usefulness. Basically what is needed is the political will to bring about the necessary changes through international social and economic policies to guide the countries' development on the basis of a clear view of the future. It should also be taken into account that the urbanization process tends to be completed within a short time in the region and that factors which made the society of the past few decades dynamic will soon prove inadequate. It may be postulated that the demands of the future will be concerned more with a change in income distribution, to narrow the gap between groups, and in the power structure, which has scarcely been affected in this transition period, and with a reformulation of the cultural roles assigned to men and women.

6. The new problems facing the region as a whole call for effective measures for the preservation of the underprivileged groups. At this level, the present recession may be used, as other recessions have been used, as a platform in support of the creation of innovative new options and solutions. It should be noted that, as part of the process of change in the region, new social groups different from the traditional ones are emerging and may project images of a fundamentally innovative society. In this context young people and women play a starring role as social agents of a transformation, which in addition to its social and economic elements, involves a large amount of cultural change as an inherent part of the processes taking place.

7. During the transition period factors were introduced which stimulated the participation of all women, although not all to the same extent, whereas the current barriers to the model could mean a halt or even a loss of ground in the participation of women in society, especially in view of the following four developments which are expected to occur: a) the steady decrease in employment in the modern tertiary sector will necessarily leave a large number of women unemployed; b) the elimination in a large number of countries of subsidies for basic needs will worsen the situation of families in the lower income sectors in respect of their strategies for meeting their basic needs; c) growing male unemployment, which is reflected in the growth of female employment in the informal sector, will keep families from making any economic, social and cultural progress; and d) young women, who are better

educated than those in the generations preceding them, will swell the ranks of the unemployed or be enlisted in the more traditional branches of the services sector.

8. The models for dealing with current problems and future challenges in the region should not only contain the elements of change in quantitative terms but in essence should also be very explicit with respect to the ways in which these changes should be made.

In a context of development such as that proposed, this means that new positions based on democracy and participation must be formulated. Participation should be understood as a factor inherent in the development process which basically requires the co-operation and integration of men and women from the marginal urban or rural sectors, who have usually been absent from the process. All this means raising the levels of participation of civil society in essential decision-making processes within a relationship with the State which goes beyond decisions on local matters, opens channels for the incorporation of groups and thus facilitates a socialization of power which leads to the intensification of democracy.

9. In such a context, the family cannot be fulfilled unless it is supported both in meeting its basic needs and rising to higher standards of living and in securing the educational and cultural training it requires in order to participate in society and to reformulate the roles assigned to its members. The family may also actually constitute the basic group responsible for orienting global policies, since it reflects the structural problems of society and may participate in the formulation of the solutions proposed.

10. The action needed to strengthen the social participation of women should take into consideration their newly acquired potential for participation and organization. Some measures which may be regarded as being of priority importance are indicated below, by way of example:

a) The dissemination of the infrastructure designed to help women and families in low-income sectors to meet their basic needs, special emphasis being had on the care of pre-school children. This would not only provide freedom for women to do the work of their choice, but would help further the provision of more egalitarian and complete training for children from different socio-economic strata.

b) Equally high priority should be given to planning aimed at rationalizing domestic work under adequate conditions (support services such as accessible or communal laundries and cafeterias for workers and school children; proximity of home, school, work and supply centres). In this way domestic tasks would be simplified considerably, and their real cost would be more compatible with general social conditions. Additional economic costs may be incurred because of some of these measures, but these costs are within the economic capacity of most of the countries, especially if public expenditure can be redistributed between social objectives on the one hand and economic and military objectives on the other and if in the efforts to meet these social objectives, priority is assigned to the lowest income sectors, and policies are directed towards the family.

c) Recognition of maternity as a right and a social need. Such recognition should be expressed not only by providing basic child-care support services, but also by granting postnatal leave in acknowledgement of a child's need to have his

mother, father or both close to him for as long a period as possible. The costs of assistance in early infancy are higher when such assistance is provided by institutions than when the child is cared for at home.

d) The legal guarantee of *de facto* equality between men and women in every country and the enactment of laws making it obligatory to inform and educate the population concerning the meaning of the social laws in force. Although this in itself is no guarantee that recognition of equality will really increase, it does mean that in the future ways may be found to eliminate cases of blind discrimination.

The institution of all these policies would naturally call for adjustments in social values and in the way individuals are trained, and such adjustments should begin to be made in the process of educating men and women. Consideration should be given to the fact that people now live longer as a result of improvements in preventive and curative medicine. This means that although women may say that the rearing of children is their only activity, at most only one third of their lives is devoted to it. Thus, women could be reincorporated into the job market late in life, and for this reason retraining opportunities should be open to them in various fields, or they should be given partial training even while they are raising their children.

All of this also calls for a change in the mentality of women, who should begin to view their working life as a natural phenomenon rather than as an optional accessory. If women took a more serious attitude to their paid work, couples could give more thought to complementarity in the performance of domestic tasks. Although these proposals may seem very far-fetched, this is undeniably the surest path for new generations of young women and men to follow. Nor, in such a context, does it seem unrealistic for the work day to be aligned more closely to the pace of life of the people concerned rather than being based merely on the maintenance of continuity in the production effort.

11. There can be no doubt that proposals such as those put forward here by way of illustration call both for real thought and for the application of new methodologies oriented towards the reconsideration of aspects of social development which have so far been regarded as being impossible to change. However, periods of crisis make it necessary to take a new and long-term view of the situation in order to tackle problems more effectively. The objectives sought must include the preservation of the more underprivileged groups in society and the guaranteed development of a society in which action and participation will be more comprehensive and will be couched in a framework of equality.



**Part Two**

**THE RURAL WOMAN  
AS A SOCIAL ACTOR  
OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS**

## Part Two

### THE RURAL WOMAN AS A SOCIAL ACTOR OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS

#### I. BACKGROUND

##### 1. The importance of women as a topic in the international context

World concern for women in general, and more particularly for the problems confronting them in the urban and rural settings, did not begin to be noted until after the Second World War. As feminist movements in the developed countries, whose spokeswomen were urban women from medium- and high-income strata, emerged, people were made aware of the problems facing women. But it was certain situations that arose in the 1960s and 1970s that created a framework of world concern and brought women to the fore as a subject worthy of attention and concern.

The optimism which prevailed up to the 1970s was dispelled by a succession of prolonged natural catastrophes, including the droughts that brought famine to Bangladesh and the Sahel; the nutritional difficulties detected by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1962 and confirmed in 1974; the controversies on the Green Revolution, which later was to be extended to the "modernization" of agriculture as a whole, including the failure, apparent or real, of most agrarian reform experiments; the stagnation of what had been for 23 years an ever-increasing cereal production; and, finally, the oil crisis that took on the appearance of a major upheaval.

The worldwide concern engendered by these events meant that women and their situation were taken seriously, and later on special concern began to be shown for rural women. Recognizing that women constitute half the population and have presumably been ill-used as a resource, people see their participation might help to solve some of the problems that plague societies if they are "incorporated into development". Their conscious collaboration had been needed once before, when society as a whole was faced with the problem of "population explosion" and women were made the main target of the birth-control programmes directed particularly to the urban and rural low-income groups, and above all to the latter, which had the highest fertility indexes.

In this context the World Conference of International Women's Year was held in Mexico City in 1975, and subsequently the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, was proclaimed. At the Mexico City

Conference, the main considerations on women related to the discrimination and inequalities they had suffered in the past, their marginalization from active life, both economic and social, and "the loss implied in the underutilization of the potential of approximately 50% of the world adult population". Consequently, it was recommended that measures should be intensified to ensure the full integration of women into the global effort in favour of development, and that support should be given to projects designed "to utilize the maximum potential and to develop the self-reliance of rural women".(170)

With regard to rural women, it was recognized that in many countries they formed a large part of the agricultural work force, and played an important role in the preparation, processing and marketing of food, so that they constituted a substantial economic resource. It was also acknowledged that their status was doubly disadvantaged because of "the rural worker's lack of technical equipment, education and training".(170) At the same time, there seemed to be the implication that industrial development had not been sufficiently dynamic to absorb this migrant labour force.

In the *Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development* (1977), the considerations, recommendations and resolutions adopted at a more general level at the Mexico City Conference were made more specific. As regards rural women, the new element was the concern to seek ways of improving their situation, so as to restrain their emigration to the cities and the urban problems it entailed.(92) Thus, the problems caused by the rural exodus came to be of great concern.

Against this background, special attention was given to rural women. In 1977 a workshop was held in Mexico City, with the participation of ECLAC, FAO and UNICEF, on the impact of agricultural modernization on the participation of rural women. The workshop was based on the *Regional Plan of Action (RPA)* and on the resolutions of the United Nations Assembly (especially resolution 31/133) which give priority to the situation of impoverished rural women, and on the resolutions adopted at the nineteenth Conference of FAO, which recommended that attention should be given to the question of how to achieve the full participation of women in the adoption of decisions and the planning and execution of the Agrarian Reform and rural development. The workshop was prepared and organized with two aims in view. The first was to see how the modernization of agriculture had affected the situation of poor rural women in the different contexts of family and local circumstances. The second was to identify lines of action for incorporating women into development, once the basic needs and problems of women in low-income rural families had been ascertained and assessed.

The idea is to distinguish between different production situations that affect women: a traditional peasant subsistence sector, a transitional sector which shows the effect of modernization policies, and the agrarian reform experiments. Similarly, families are to be classified according to whether or not the head of the family migrates owing to his being hired as a wage-earning worker.

The *World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace* (Copenhagen, 1980) represented a great step forward in furthering the knowledge of rural problems, particularly those of women.

Among the questions addressed in the background document for the Conference, the following seems particularly important: What is the status of women in rural society and what new factors and circumstances tend to accentuate their special disadvantages? The arguments may be summarized as follows: a) Two-thirds of the women in developing countries live in rural areas; b) Rural development has been neglected in terms of low capital investment and few employment opportunities; investment in agriculture has been aimed at export and not at food production; there is little access to health, education and information; there is an obvious adverse effect of agricultural technology and an increase of peasants without land owing to its unequal distribution and the increasing pressure to acquire this resource; c) Poverty and the slow and unequal development of rural areas are factors which aggravate the particular disadvantages of women; d) Poverty and rural underdevelopment have a further negative effect in that they reinforce male domination, since in these circumstances what is involved is the unequal burden of poverty as between women and men. The conclusion reached is that what is needed is a strategy for dealing with the special problems of women in the context of the wider problems of rural poverty; underdevelopment and apathy are considered to be results of the lack of political power.

The resolutions of the Copenhagen Conference reflected the content of the background document. The importance of women in food production was recognized, and at the same time emphasis was laid on the need to increase food production at the family level. Hence it was recommended that women should be provided with the resources required for them to increase their productivity and thus ensure the supply of food for the family and the community. From this same standpoint, it was recommended that women should have access to other resources, such as instruction in appropriate technology, marketing practices, and food processing, as well as access to credit and financial mechanisms on an equal footing with men, and that they should be encouraged to take part in rural community organizations, such as co-operatives and others.

At the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, August 1983),<sup>(55)</sup> reference was made to the violence prevailing in the region as a threat to peace, and to the economic crisis which the Latin American countries were experiencing, which affects women, mainly through unemployment. It was proposed that the status of women should be examined in this context, since its improvement largely depended on the present situation's being improved.

## 2. The Latin American scene in the last three decades

The current situation of Latin American women can be better understood by referring to the main processes that have taken place in the region over the last thirty years.

Industrialization, as a response to the policy of import substitution, was one of the most important processes initiated in the 1950s. The fact of the growth of the manufacturing industry, whose share in the GDP ranged from 18

to 24%, is eloquent; the same is true of the increase in quantity and variety of exports: in 1950, 95% of these were primary products; while in 1960, the share of commodities was only 20%.(100)

After this stage there was an intensification of trade which lasted until 1974: the region raised its imports owing to the special facilities for external indebtedness, as a result of which the product has now fallen in many cases and there is serious external strangulation.

Meanwhile the population grew from 158 million to 352 million between 1950 and 1980, at a rate of 2.7% per year, one of the highest in the world. Coupled with this growth there are the well-known phenomena of urbanization and metropolitanization and the change from rural predominance (57% in 1950), to urban predominance in 1980, with 63% of the population living in urban areas. In 1950 only four countries were predominantly urban (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela); this now applies to 11 countries.(100)

This urbanization is reflected in the location of labour, which shows a major transfer from agricultural to non-agricultural activities. The agricultural EAP has decreased from 54% of the total EAP in 1950 to 30%, according to estimates for 1980. Since 1960, industry has not had the capacity to absorb rural migration; this explains the extent of urban poverty. The labour force has come to be concentrated in informal activities of low productivity. Thus there is a manifest narrowing of the gap between less skilled urban activities and agricultural wages which might be termed a slow but sustained transfer of rural poverty to the urban habitat.(100)

Another change that has caused important transformations in Latin American agriculture is the gradual integration of physical space. This greater integration —the result of the construction of a transport network— has made it possible to link territories that were previously isolated or had communication difficulties.

To the positive results of the industrial stage must be added the advances in basic services: electricity, gas, water, sanitation services and transport. In 1982 the share of services as a whole had risen to close on 57% of the GDP. The changes that have occurred in society as a whole, including metropolitanization and urbanization, industrialization, transnationalization, the development of financial markets and the expansion of the market economy and the consumer society present a very different picture in rural areas and agrarian structures.

The modernization of agriculture is part of the process of import substitution. Agriculture had to assume the role of providing cheap food and subsidizing industrial growth, as it were.<sup>1</sup> The effects of this transformation are felt at many levels. One of the most conspicuous is the disappearance of the *latifundium-minifundium* system, the former having been replaced by more modern enterprises. The *haciendas* made changes aimed at increasing their productivity and efficiency or at dealing with the threat which the agrarian reform posed to their production systems; this brought the expulsion of resident workers and their replacement by temporary workers living outside. As regards the *minifundios*, pressure on the land, the fall in price of peasant products and the lack of permanent employment led to an increase in the poverty of the peasantry and a growing incapacity to support the family on the basis of the farm produce of the family unit. Solutions were sought in two ways, i.e., emigration or the sale of temporary labour.

### 3. Predominant types of agricultural economies

In order to find out how these changes affect rural units and especially women, various attempts have been made to typify agricultural producer families; these will be discussed later on in this paper.

For the purposes of this study, it would seem best, for the time being, to address the problem in more general terms. We shall first define the various areas of agricultural economy and then try to describe the different types of families in each economy. For this purpose, broadly speaking, we may define three areas of agricultural economy in the region: the traditional, the modern, and the settlement economies. These are the categories that were proposed by FAO at the Round Table on Survival Strategies in Peasant Economies (Bogotá, November 1983).

#### a) *The traditional agricultural economy*

As a result of the changes that have occurred in the agricultural sector, there have now arisen new nuclei of *minifundistas*, semi-proletarianized peasants or families of migrant peasants. In this paper, however, this heading refers to traditional minifundia and indigenous communities, which include the different peasant strata, the internal processes of differentiation and the peasant economies.

The concern with peasant units is not new. The concept of the "peasant economy" proposed by Thorner in 1962, has been adopted officially in Latin America. The adoption of this concept, validated in particular by Chayanov, reflects a new approach to that which, in a less comprehensive way, was commonly called the family holding. The concept of the "peasant economy" emphasizes the functioning and rationality of the family holding and especially it underscores the fact that they are still valid and vital, by contrast with the schools of thought that saw the peasantry as being in process of extinction as an inevitable law of rural capitalism.

Without embarking on a polemic as to the future of the peasantry, it can be assumed that it will still be around for a long time, though in other forms, probably in the guise of rural semi-proletarians. At all events, and in terms of rural poverty and of the concern for rural women and families, it continues to be a focal point of concern in policy-making.

Thus, there has been a conceptual reassessment of the peasant economy, particularly because of what it represents in terms of: number of holdings, food production, commercial production for domestic and external markets, employed labour force and magnitude of population. It has been established that, during the 1970s, more than half the rural population (55%), that is, between 60 and 65 million persons, was composed of peasant families. Sixty-two per cent of rural households were poor households; 4.9 million families had units of under two hectares. Even so, their production supplied two-fifths of the domestic market of the region and one-third of the export market and they received 35% of the total agricultural revenue of the region.

For purposes of comparison, it should be mentioned that medium-sized farmers represented 28% of the agricultural population and obtained 43% of the agricultural income. The large landowners represented 2% of the rural

population and received 22% of the income of the sector. According to PREALC data, 35% of the agricultural labour force of the region was employed by entrepreneurial agriculture and 65% by peasant agriculture.(156)

Nevertheless, this peasant sector is developing in conditions of increasing poverty. Standardized estimates have been obtained for 12 countries, around 1980, which distinguish between rural households living in indigence and those living in poverty. In two countries, poverty extends to almost the whole of the rural population (Bolivia and Haiti); in another five (Brazil, Colombia, Honduras, Paraguay and Venezuela), it affects around two-thirds of rural households; in four (Chile, Ecuador, Jamaica and Panama) it extends to close on half the families in the rural area and in only one (Grenada), to a quarter of the population. The conditions of indigence are more serious in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Panama than in the rest of the countries.(101)

Poverty has led families to devise what some call survival strategies and others, reproduction strategies. These expressions indicate the way in which the family organizes and mobilizes its resources to satisfy its basic needs and ensure the reproduction of its living conditions. In pursuing this objective, the peasant unit forms itself around the family as a unit of production and reproduction; in it, the woman plays a central role. All the members of the family are involved and the activities of each of them are related to those of the others. The internal functioning of this family unit has been conceptualized, and the fact that it acquires rationality in face of external changes has been shown. It is said that, in order to accomplish its aims, the peasant unit applies certain reproductive patterns (age of union, number and spacing of children, etc.); it develops norms on the handling of income; it handles the daily schedule of its members; it develops norms on disposal of the family income (who, how and for what), and so forth.

The studies show how the peasant unit functions on the basis of a gender-based division (or sexual division, as it has been called hitherto) of labour. The examples of a working day and of its gender-based division are numerous.

Mention has already been made of the role of peasant economies in food production and how they help supply cheap foods which have made possible urban and rural growth. Nonetheless, it must also be noted that the deterioration caused by this imbalance in the interchange of resources has provoked an economic crisis and disintegration in the peasant economies. This situation has compelled the various members of the family unit increasingly to join the labour force as semi-proletarians and proletarians; this implies, on the one hand, a subsidy to the costs of reproduction of the manpower employed by the capitalist sector, both agricultural and industrial, and, on the other hand, a weakening of the bargaining power of this sector with respect to the demands made on the State by other sectors of the population.(120) This very fact may explain in part the persistence of peasant economies, inasmuch as they are functional in the context of the production rationale of capitalist enterprises. This form of functioning has been extensively analysed in different cases of agrarian structures in the region. The following statement gives an example of what happens in semi-proletarianization: "In social terms, this phenomenon leads to the establishment of semi-proletarianization of the peasantry as the specific form

which the exploitation of the work force takes on at this stage of capitalist agrarian development... capitalists and large landowners do not want the final de-peasantization of their potential manpower, for both economic and for political reasons".(160) This has also made it possible to say that the peasant is not in a state of transition nor is he marginalized from the system.

Emphasis has been placed on the importance of land to the traditional peasant economies; hence the increasing trends towards the reconcentration of farms into large *latifundia* and towards the atomization of *parcelas* imply the destruction of the traditional peasant way of life, with the disintegration of the forms of reciprocity in production and in community social organizations.(120)

It is likewise necessary to consider the particular stage at which the peasant economies find themselves within the dynamic processes of change, since this is what determines how they are articulated in the market and makes it possible to point out certain aspects pertaining to women.

The articulation of peasant economies with commercial export agriculture has worsened the situation of the food-producing peasant woman and has attracted young female workers of peasant origin to the modern agro-industrial sector, where they are hired with generally unfavourable working conditions and social benefits. The mechanization of agriculture has reduced requirements for manpower in general and for male workers in particular, but has also reduced employment opportunities of women in some situations.

Pressure on the land, the exhaustion of productive resources, and lack of local or regional employment opportunities force the population to migrate either temporarily or permanently. Young women are the first to migrate; the cohorts of 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 years of age predominate among the age groups. Their departure is in line with family strategies in which the first to leave is the eldest daughter, who sends home contributions to the upkeep of the younger children until it becomes necessary for a second or third child to leave. This process has been studied by Arizpe (1980), in a study which has become a classic in Latin America.(7) The higher proportion of female migration is shown by the figures of 100 women to every 85 men recorded in the rural-urban emigration in the region during the past three decades.(120) The intensity of the rural exodus, provoked by the lack of paid and permanent labour, violence in the countryside and the lack or inadequacy of basic services, has pulled young peasant women away from their communities without offering them adequate opportunities for social and economic integration, especially in the large cities.

The growth of poverty in the traditional peasant economy has prevented families from continuing to support elderly women, widows, and single or separated women. This situation is acknowledged in all countries where poverty is prevalent. In an ILO document published in 1981, attention is drawn to this fact in similar terms: The stereotyped concept of family solidarity is another dangerous myth. Poverty increasingly compels large families to abandon women in difficulties (widowed or separated, and women with children) who have to seek employment outside the home(1) or are reduced to begging.



b) *The modern agricultural economy*

In Latin America, the development of capitalist agriculture is concentrated in the branches of production that are associated with export markets or with domestic markets which are usually favoured by State action.

i) *Main features of modernization.* The transformation of the *hacienda* into a modern agricultural enterprise abruptly prevented the peasant unit from gaining access to land; it broke traditional ties, uprooting the peasant unit and casting it into an imperfect labour market. The cost to society of this process has been violence, disintegration and migration.

Generally speaking, capitalist agriculture is specialized and highly capitalized and operates by means of interrelated technical elements which raise labour productivity. This type of agriculture profits from public, as well as private, investment. (120)

Capitalist agriculture generates little permanent employment, using temporary labour instead. The demand for temporary manpower is confined to certain periods of the year and generates employment for short periods, the rest of the year being "dead time" as regards the demand for labour.

The modern sector uses a variety of machinery and a very high proportion of industrial inputs, causing the technological gap between modern and peasant economies to widen. There are very marked differences between both the yields and the incomes of the two types of economic organization. In addition, the technological pattern followed has increased external dependence in respect of agricultural machinery and inputs.

ii) *Rural villages, new settlements for farm labour.* One of the side effects of the modernization of agriculture has been the emergence of small, makeshift human settlements in river valleys, on roadsides, in small places with natural shelters or nooks in valleys, on the banks of gullies or the slopes of hills, and so forth. Some of them are *inquilinos*, *huasipungueros*, *colonos* and others forced to leave *haciendas* and *latifundia*. Also included in these groups are the poor of the countryside —the landless peasants, recently uprooted from areas formerly occupied by small holdings. This type of habitat includes communities made up of forest women, who constitute a unique human group in areas of timber exploitation or forestry plantations. Since the men are employed in very remote areas and are away for months at a time, it is better for the women and children to remain in rural or urban centres where means of communication are available. Landless peasants and new members of the proletariat are also settling on the periphery of villages and towns where there is a demand for agricultural manpower, generally in agroindustrial establishments. This is where the most unstable segment of the agricultural labour force (the *botas frias* of Brazil, as well as certain sectors of the labour force in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and other nations) has established itself. Sometimes Andean settlements serve as bedroom communities for the labour force.

c) *Areas of expansion of the agricultural frontier*

In some countries policies promoting the expansion of the agricultural frontier through either directed or spontaneous colonization are still applied. Expansion of the agricultural frontier has been used as a means of reducing pressure on land or of spreading capitalism in the countryside by granting

concessions to national or transnational enterprises. The most notable examples of colonization at present are found in Brazil (Amazonia), Paraguay, eastern Bolivia, the mountains of Peru and the coast of Ecuador, and also in Guatemala, in Central America. Settlement as a form of modernization, strongly endorsed by the State, is very common in Brazil, particularly in the Amazon region. This area has witnessed growing penetration by large transnational and national conglomerates, and access to the land is controlled by a minority. Settlement has sharpened the contrast where exploitation and progress, semi-slavery and large-scale capital, violence and economic growth do not separate like water and oil but blend together to make possible the "cleaning up" of the frontier.(29)

In such conditions, when there are no large towns in the area being developed which is, in fact, a frontier area, there are special ways of hiring labour. On the one hand there are tenant farm systems like those used in other periods (for example on coffee plantations in Colombia in the mid-nineteenth century), as a means of tying the workers to the land by granting them a piece of land for subsistence farming. Under such a system a poor smallholder produces his own sustenance, and the enterprise concerned is able to use his labour at a very reduced cost.

In other situations, the work is done by seasonal labourers who are hired by intermediaries, such as "gatoes" or contractors; the labour of an entire family, including women and children, is covered by the contract. Data from the 1970 Agricultural Census in Brazil show that there were 2 900 000 children under 14 working in agricultural establishments; this figure represents 30% of the population between the ages of 10 and 14.(29)

Moreover, the extensiveness of the occupation of Amazonia, whose population almost trebled in three decades (from 1940 to 1970), rising from 1 400 000 to 3 600 000, indicates that an enormous number of family problems must have arisen as a result of the cultural change brought about by the technologies used, the new environment, crops, responsibilities and work both inside and outside the family unit.

In the case of unplanned settlements, peasants occupy land of their own accord, and this produces a type of settlement with the rather unstructured features of a nascent "community".

Different types of settlement create different forms of peasant economies: unplanned settlements tend to generate traditional peasant economies of a highly unstable, subsistence type; in directed settlements, the economy has a less precarious structure and develops more dynamically. As regards the treatment of domestic chores in peasant subsistence strategies, common patterns were found in the peasant economies existing in both types of settlement in respect of the enormous amount of time spent by children on household tasks (housework, preparation of food, etc.).(120)

As regards productive tasks, there are certain differences. In areas of directed settlement, women tend to take a greater part in productive labour since the more profitable crops require the intensive use of family labour and consequently of female labour, depending on the technology used. In spontaneous settlements, manual labour is used; in directed settlements, machinery is used.

The factors that influence female labour have to do with the physical conditions of the area of settlement. For example, wooded areas must be cleared

by selling trees and burning off brush; this work is labour intensive, and women play a very important part in it.

Settlements generally consist of young married or consensual couples, in which the women participate very intensively in the tasks of production up to the time when some of their tasks can be undertaken by the children.

The insecurity accompanying the process of spontaneous settlement sometimes gives rise to the establishment of disorganized family units (incomplete families). In such cases, the productive work of the women involved is necessarily very intense.

A greater amount of background data on the subject of settlement would be needed in order to give some idea of what the most outstanding problems of the future will be. This is certainly a matter on which not enough information is available, and what is available must be systematized to cover several headings, i.e., conditions of work and contracts; types of family being established and their problems; reproductive patterns; manpower and the effect on labour of the tendency to turn extensive areas over to livestock farming; the effects in some areas (in Paraguay, for example) of a rapid subdivision of the plots provided for under projects aimed at forming a medium-sized farm sector; depredation of soils due to the application of cultivation systems which require an immense amount of experience and care, such as the "clear, fell and burn" system generally practiced as a form of itinerant farming to permit the regeneration of the soil and the effects of large-scale deforestation, especially in Amazonia, known as the "green lung" of the world.

## II. RURAL WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA

By examining official documents of world and regional conferences, meetings, workshops and round tables (which in their turn are based on the collection and interpretation of secondary data, government documents and research and studies conducted by ECLAC),<sup>2</sup> the results of research carried out in the region and the discussion and conclusions of symposia and seminars on subjects relating specifically to rural women, it is possible to obtain a good idea of the progress made in this field and also of the gaps and errors that still persist.

So far it has been possible to make sufficient progress in the study, clarification, description and evaluation of several aspects of this problem. These include the domestic role of women or their role in the daily and generational reproduction of the labour force; the gender-based (or sexual) division of labour; the use of "time budgeting" and now of "pattern of activities" methodologies; the productive role of women in agriculture and variations on that role according to their place in society; "other" income-earning activities carried out by women; the measurement of the EAP (propounded basically as a methodological problem); the sale of labour; the role of women in the survival strategies of peasant groups; the amount and type of activities performed by women as determined by the stage they have reached in their life cycle and the social and cultural role of women in their communities.

The knowledge acquired allows us to make certain observations of a general nature. The first of these is that women have been defined as a "group of

individuals characterized by their class and by the social roles assigned to them on the basis of the biological fact of their sex". In the second place, the unit of analysis currently in use is the family unit; this means that after a variety of attempts, some clarity of thought has been achieved and a position has been taken. Thirdly, it has become necessary at this stage to disaggregate the members of peasant units according to gender,<sup>3</sup> position in the family nucleus and age, in order to study their specific contributions, needs and problems. Fourth, the topics dealt with up to now in research show a strong economic bias in that they are concerned with the productive or "economic" woman; they correspond to the stage when emphasis was placed on the participation of women since a number of documents had taken the position that their role was marginal. Fifth, in recent years there has been a qualitative change in the interpretation of the roles assigned to rural women; whereas in 1975 those roles were described as the preparation, storage and marketing of food, women are now recognized as playing a supremely important role in food production.

Despite the emphasis placed on the economic role of women and the consideration that has been given to the specific status of women, sufficient stress has not been laid on the impact on women and the family of phenomena such as the polarization of men and the migratory process which have been extensively studied at the producer level. It has not been shown why the proletarianization of men generally leads to the proletarianization of women or how the emigration of the husband or father changes the life of the women in the family and the family in general in that women become heads of households, families break down, the number of nuclear families increases and extended families decrease, there are more one-person households, fertility rates fall, and the age of union or marriage is deferred or families fail to be formed.

In addition to the conventional approach to research analysed above, there is another method which involves consciousness-raising workshops, the use of case histories or testimonies and participative research. These methods are aimed at promoting knowledge of a woman as a person (her conflicts, her perception of herself, of her roles, of her environment, of society; her needs and aspirations, etc.). Only a few results obtained by following this approach are available, and they will be analysed in due course. At this point, it can be said that it is worthwhile pursuing such research, which complements the more familiar type of research.

### 1. Attempts to type rural women

Documents on rural women show that it is very worthwhile to study them within specific situations. They show that women are defined first of all in terms of the head of the family to which they belong, whether he is their husband, father or brother. These attempts at typing women began in 1978 at the workshop on the impact of agricultural modernization on the participation of rural women (Mexico, 1978), mentioned previously in this paper. There attention was drawn to different family situations in families with subsistence status, families characterized by temporary migration, families with a wage-earning woman in them and families headed by women whose husbands have migrated.

A 1979 study shows how different aspects of the lives of poor rural women (structural aspects, aspects relating to production, etc.) are affected by agricultural modernization. An account is given of how women live in closed peasant communities and open *mestizo* communities (in Central America in both cases), in situations linked with export production, in situations affected by urban-rural migration, in situations where capitalist agriculture prevails, in situations affected by agrarian reform and in contexts of capitalism and socialism (Cuba). (143)

Various documents produced in 1982 and 1983 represented more systematic attempts to differentiate between peasant strata. In a 1982 study, an analysis is made of different material relating to education and health indicators, migratory patterns, activities engaged in by families and family composition by age groups and strata or classes. Three classes of women are defined: the wives of agricultural wage-earners, the wives of small agricultural producers and the wives of medium-sized agricultural producers. An attempt is also made to penetrate cultural patterns through an analysis of family relationships: those of the couple on the one hand and mother-child relations on the other.

In another document issued in 1982, a similar attempt at typing, in which families (both rural and urban), are typed not only on the basis of class but also on the basis of location. Thus, a distinction is drawn between rural families, the families of the small agricultural producers, the families of seasonal wage-earners in the plantation sector, families living in the Bolivian *altiplano* and Caribbean families. (17 and 28)

Another method of classification is based on the use of census data: Poor women are classified on the basis of the point at which their residence variables (urban or rural) intersect the data showing their economic sector in the labour market (not incorporated, agricultural sector, secondary sector and tertiary sector). In this way, eight categories of rural and urban women are established. For rural women, these categories include peasant housewife and farm worker and two categories of women of rural origin working in an urban environment: indigenous vendor and domestic servant. (10)

To these categories might be added those of women in areas of settlement, either spontaneous or directed, who set up family enterprises or take up work on large *haciendas* or in commercial units; forest women; craftswomen and others not yet adequately typed. In other words, women may be classified according to predominant types of economy, systems of crop cultivation, activities and major geographical areas of a country, i.e., in the Andean countries, the *altiplano*, the *sierra* and the coast; in Chile, the rain-fed and the irrigated regions, the coastal mountain range and the central valley.

These attempts to type rural women show that they fit into more than one category and that not much is known concerning the different types of women to be found in concrete situations in countries and regions.

We shall now discuss the status accorded to women in peasant economies, taking internal social stratification into account. We shall then consider women in light of their main activities, i.e., crafts, selling and other activities, treating agricultural wage-earners as a special case. No study has as yet been made of women in different geographical areas within each country.

## 2. Women in peasant units

### a) *The role of women in peasant economies: Reproduction of the labour force*

Of the many roles performed by women, the one most in evidence is their *domestic role*, i.e., the reproduction of the labour force and the daily effort required to ensure its survival.

Progress has been made in the conceptualization and description of this function of women. It has been pointed out, in the first place, that not only is the family or family unit "the nucleus which generates and transmits the values, norms and attitudes which orient the individual and collective conduct of the members of a society" and "the mediating institution between the individual and the social group", but that, as a special unit, it is responsible for reproduction; i.e., the reproduction of the overall population is the responsibility of the family unit and of women in particular, which they fulfil through their daily domestic work.

It has also been pointed out that housework is a social act, and people have been made to see the contradiction between this fact and the contempt in which housework is held and the fact that at least some aspects of housework are not socialized.

It is evident that in different class situations, different survival strategies are brought into play which involve differences in the division of labour by sex and by age and in the participation of family members in paid economic activities. In the lowest strata, seasonal or permanent migration is practiced and children are brought into the labour market at an early age.

It has been noted that women's work is a dynamic process, in which many tasks overlap throughout the day and that this is why the work day is sometimes as long as 16 to 18 hours. Rural women work in different material conditions, often without running water or electricity, and on difficult terrain. The variety of chores performed by women is not appreciated because little value is placed on occupations which do not bring in income. This is corroborated by the women themselves who, when asked if they work invariably say "no".

In one of the aforementioned studies, it is pointed out that society assigns to domestic units the responsibility of producing, reproducing and maintaining the life of the population and to women the responsibility of operating these units, while at the same time belittling women's social role. It is also stated that the work of peasant women cannot be separated from that performed by the rest of the family since the total income of a family is regarded as resulting from the work of all its members, in both the productive and the reproductive spheres. Hence, a woman's work should be regarded as productive even though it does not generate income directly but rather enables the unit to reproduce itself.(17)

### b) *The problem of measuring a woman's work*

It is now recognized that the participation of women is very important in agricultural production; however, it is difficult to assess their participation. FAO indicated in 1983 that, according to the most conservative statistics found in agricultural censuses, 19% of the women in Latin America and 54% of the women in the Caribbean participate in the agricultural labour force.(120) These two figures reflect the way the data were obtained. In the Caribbean, the persons

interviewed were questioned regarding a period of from six months to one year, while, in the rest of the region, in general they were questioned only concerning the week prior to the survey.

The problem of the underestimation of the participation of women in census data was noted as long ago as 1958 by Gertrude Bancroft. In 1981, Wainerman and Recchini de Lattes carried out a study in which they attempted to evaluate the quality of census information.(219)

There are a number of reasons why the participation of women is underestimated and relate to the way in which census questions are asked and how much encouragement is given by the inquirer and his own stereotypes concerning work. The most important problem, however, concerns the period covered by the survey. Frequently, the questionnaire relates to the week before the census, which means that the seasonality of agricultural work is not taken into account. In order to take this factor into account, the reference period should be one of 12 months. (Some countries do use relatively long periods; for example, Haiti, six months; Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Barbados, one year.) Another problem with this type of measurement is the time required for a person to be regarded as active or inactive. Countries adopt different criteria in this respect.

Household surveys and demographic surveys, which are carried out on the basis of population samples, give better and more accurate information on the number of women in the EAP because the aims of such surveys are different; greater accuracy is sought and the inquirers are specifically trained. Some comparisons between the results of censuses and those of household surveys show significant differences. In Panama, the conceptual definitions of the EAP are similar in both cases; however, the census inquired only once about alternatives to economic activity and collected information relating to only one day. In the household survey people were questioned repeatedly about activities throughout the course of the year. The difference between female participation rates in the two types of measurements was over 10% and even reached 40% in some cases. The household survey conducted in Sao Paulo shows that the census underestimated the number of active women by between 14 and 33%, and the number of active men by between 2 and 6%. In Bolivia, the survey results showed between 33 and 48% more active women than the census. In the case of rural women aged between 20 and 39, this figure was higher than 50%.

More exact measurements are needed in order to visualize the participation of women correctly. If their present role in production is not adequately assessed, they may suffer serious disadvantages in, for example, agricultural programmes. Clearly, in view of the domestic and agricultural technologies available to them, rural women may be regarded as being unable to produce more, as they are fully occupied by their share of the work in household tasks and farming and by other activities to which reference will be made further on. Hence, as Marshall Wolfe said, in this context, exhortations to play a greater part in the labour force border on the ironical.(223)

c) *The contribution of women to work in agricultural production*

It is now known that women take part in most of the agricultural tasks of the peasant unit, usually those which are done manually or which require only small tools. They work mainly in clearance or weeding and in harvesting; i.e.,

Table 7

**PERU (CAJAMARCA): PARTICIPATION OF FAMILY LABOUR BY  
SEX AND SIZE OF HOLDING MEASURED ON THE BASIS  
OF THE NUMBER OF DAYS WORKED IN FARM  
PRODUCTION**

Type of peasants	Percent- age of units	Manpower (percentages)		Total
		Female	Male	
Landless peasants (less than 0.25 ha)	0.3	35.0	65.0	100
Small holders (0.25 to 3.50 ha)	71.3	26.9	73.1	100
Medium-sized holders (3.51 to 30.0 ha or more)	18.5	20.8	79.2	100

Source: C.D. Deere, *La división por sexo del trabajo agrícola: un estudio de la Sierra Norte del Perú*, Lima, Peru, 1978.

they break maize, cut peas and beans, dig potatoes and reap wheat. They also sow, plant nurseries, transplant and water. It is evident that women are not excluded from any type of cultivation for reasons of a cultural nature and that their participation is determined by the real need that exists on the farm for their labour.(4)

Women are kept from using heavy machinery and tools. This is due both to cultural factors and the assumptions of government and international agencies which regard projects as being the domain of men. They are also kept from using modern aids such as insecticides and fertilizers. Nor do they know anything about special farming techniques, such as pruning and grafting.

i) *Participation in cultivation according to headship of household and peasant stratification.* Women are heads of household in 15%, on average, of the family units in Latin America and in an average of 20% of those in Central America (with great variations within each country and from country to country. For instance, the figure is 37% in Ojopoi, a settlement area in Paraguay). Headship of household increases the amount of farming they do (which is concentrated on subsistence crops). In Colombia, coffee plantations of less than one hectare are generally managed by women, while the men in their families migrate in search of employment on plantations of between one and five hectares. Women take part in the selection and harvesting process on plantations of over five hectares, whose peasant owners are regarded as rich. The wives of the owners do not work in connection with the crop, since labour is hired for that purpose.(152)

In the *sierra* in northern Peru (Cajamarca), Carmen Deere studied the participation of family labour according to sex and size of holding. Her conclusions are shown in table 7.

In the low-income strata, 84.3% of the women surveyed were working directly on the land.(25) Deere links the volume of work done with the type of crop farmed and the use of tools. The greater the poverty, the greater the



participation in tasks which require the hoe (71.0%) and in the growing of potatoes (63%), while in the higher strata only 50% of the women use the hoe, and only 39% grow potatoes. (108) In Mexico (Oaxaca), Kate Young, working in a community which produces coffee, noted a marked difference between the work done by poor women (holdings of up to 1 ha), women from the middle strata (holdings of less than 5 ha) and rich women (holdings of more than 5 ha). The poor women worked on the family farm and sold their labour, often to pay debts for food bought by the men in the family on credit in times of famine by committing the women to work in the peak coffee growing period. In the case of peasants with medium-sized holdings (who were coffee growers), the women constituted the unpaid family labour force during coffee harvest. They also worked on the farms of relatives under a system of labour exchange. Women in the wealthy strata did no farming. They organized the workers at harvest time and worked in small family businesses (shops, mills, restaurants, etc.). (226)

During the harvest, which lasts three months, peasant women from the medium-sized holdings worked up to 17 hours a day, for 8 of which they picked coffee; the rest of the time they attended to their household chores and helped to wash, depulp, dry and sort the coffee beans.

In Chile, the participation of women in farming activities increases in the higher strata, where crops and tasks are more diverse and farms are larger. In stock-raising too, the more poultry and milk cows owned, the more work there is to be done. (4)

In addition to performing the above mentioned tasks, women in the middle and upper strata also prepare meals for hired hands; family workers and people working in payment for labour loaned under the *minga* system or working under some other type of reciprocal arrangement.

Carmen Deere noted that work in the kitchen raises women's share in the total number of days worked in farm activities by 38%.

The peak period of demand for women workers in all strata is always harvest, whether they work in the family unit or sell their labour.

ii) *Participation in stock-raising.* Women are generally excluded from cattle raising. Such tasks as the moving of cattle to new pastures and branding, castrating and inoculating them are regarded as men's work. On the other hand, women are responsible for the smaller animals (poultry, pigs, sheep and goats). The type of animal varies according to region and economic stratum. In Chile, for example, goats are raised in the poor sectors of the north and centre of the country; the Mapuche communities in the south raise sheep. In central Chile, peasant women raise pigs and poultry, and in the upper strata, cows. In the Andean regions of Chile, Peru and Bolivia, women herd sheep and llamas. It is their job to feed the animals or take them to pasture. They milk goats and make cheese; they spin and weave the wool from sheep and llamas; they milk cows and make cheese and butter.

#### d) *Other activities*

In order to supplement the family income, women engage in a large number of activities in addition to their household and farm tasks. The chief of these are trade, handicrafts and the sale of services. Women usually perform two or three different activities; this has been termed "female multi-employment".

i) *Women in trade.* Trade is practiced by women in many ways and involves many categories of goods. The most common form of trade is street selling although women also maintain stands in outdoor and covered markets. This type of selling is so common in the Andean countries, Mexico and some countries of Central America that it has been proposed as a special category of poor rural woman.(10) The products sold include small amounts of surplus farm produce, generally from market gardens or leftovers after the harvest of major crops; prepared meals; *chicha* (a beverage); eggs; poultry; meat; clothing and handicrafts. In the central sierra of Peru, 61.4% of the women devote themselves to trade.(25) In a study of four regions of Peru, Villalobos found that the main activity varies. In one case on the *sierra*, trade was the main activity for 44% of the women; in another case, also on the *sierra*, that figure was 84.5%.(216) Surprisingly little value is attached to household tasks, which are shown in second or, in cases where the men move away temporarily, even third place, which would seem to indicate that, as far as the women are concerned, housework can easily give way to another activity, according to their needs and the way their family is structured.

ii) *Craftswomen.* In most of the rural sectors of Mexico and Central America, as well as in the Andean countries, handicrafts play a large part in supplementing family income. It has been said that in practically all the rural towns of less than 10 000 inhabitants in Mexico, three quarters of the population make handicrafts. Cotton cloth, fiber hammocks, embroidery for blouses and dresses and basket work are the main articles produced by craftswomen in Mexico, Central America, Colombia and Ecuador. In the Andes of Peru and Bolivia, the most common products include wool yarn, woven clothing, blankets and rugs and hats. Handicrafts become less important, in the Southern Cone and on the Atlantic coast of Latin America, the best known articles being the woolen textiles produced by the Mapuches and the crocheted work found in central Chile, the textiles of Uruguay and embroidery and crochet work in Brazil.

With regard to handicrafts, opposing forces are at work. There are instances in Peru where the traditional cottage industries are said to have disappeared because of the need to produce for the market.(216) On the other hand, the introduction of some modern devices (such as mills to grind maize) has given women more free time, which they have devoted to handicrafts. In the maize growing region of Yucatán, around 70% of the women and children are producing handicrafts.

In many cases, handicrafts are marketed by middlemen and are produced at home and paid for by the piece. The earnings are minimal; it has been estimated that a craftswoman earns the same in a week as a man receives for a day's work out of town. Moreover, the incorporation of women and children into the process of obtaining a monetary income has made household economy more dependent on the market.

State intervention in various projects in order to avoid intermediation and improve prices has failed because the State lacks the financial and commercial capacity to regulate the supply of finished goods and to purchase a significant proportion of them locally.(221)

There are two types of handicrafts in terms of origin and marketing —traditional handicrafts, which are produced at the same time as household

tasks are performed, in order to supplement the family income, and modern handicrafts, the production of which becomes the primary activity, the crafts produced being sold to middlemen who turn the activity into a home industry operated on a piece-work basis, with the disadvantages pointed out by Warman.

An experiment that is being conducted in Chile suggests that the most recommendable procedure is that in which craftswomen work in what is truly their spare time and continue to regard handicrafts as a secondary activity; in which any State or non-governmental programme includes handicrafts among its projects relating to women and in which the problem of marketing is dealt with by external agents. Thus conceived, handicrafts projects could become "growth" projects for women which would enable them to acquire knowledge and training in new fields (ranging from accounting to health). At the same time, such projects would enable women to set up their own organizations, to operate in different environments and to maintain relations with the outside world through exhibitions and fairs, to mention only a few possibilities.(5)

#### e) *Factors which determine participation by women*

The degree of participation by women in each of the activities mentioned is determined by a number of factors which have been reported on in detail elsewhere.(121) These factors are access to land and size of holding (which to some extent is apparent from the crop produced); the stage reached in the family cycle, which depends mainly on the number, sex and age of the children; family composition; the technology used and cultural conditions or what a woman "can" or "should" do under the cultural patterns which prevail.

### 3. The proletarianization of rural women

The modernization of agriculture, which results in the expulsion of peasants from old *haciendas*; the switch in some sectors to crops which are less labour intensive and the breakdown of the peasantry in areas made up of small holdings or communities have had two basic effects: migration and proletarianization. Hitherto, this process was more visible in the case of men, but it can now be said that it applies equally to women in the lower peasant strata and to women working on farms.

In general, the different systems used by capital to attach workers to the land have always included female labour, e.g., *inquilinaje* in Chile, *concertaje* or *compañía* in Colombia, *colonato* in Brazil, *huasipungaje* in Ecuador, as well as share-cropping contracts or labour by agreement. It is the man who is hired, but it is assumed that the arrangement includes his wife and children,<sup>4</sup> especially in the case of crops that require a high seasonal intensity of labour such as coffee, tobacco, tea and cotton.

Reference has already been made to the effects on women of migration and the potential sale of male labour. Special emphasis has been placed on the situations that can arise when women are semi-proletarianized within their home (through what are termed "other activities"); when they sell their labour locally (to agroindustries, for example) and when they are proletarianized and migrate, whether or not the men in their families are also involved in these

processes. Attention has been directed to the effects of the double work day, of increased participation in agriculture, of assuming the headship of households and of migration by women.(120)

In this study reference will be made to the ways in which women earn wages in agriculture by selling their labour on an occasional basis to farms where traditional crops are grown or to establishments engaged in commercial farming or agroindustry.

a) *Semi-proletarianization on farms*

Women may be hired to farm crops belonging to members of the higher strata of the peasant sector; in such cases, the situation is generally one in which a lower than legal wage is paid and family relationships are involved. The women are accompanied by their children and sometimes whole family groups are hired. The status of rural wage-earner is one of the most difficult for women to accept owing to its negative connotation in an environment where everyone is assumed to have peer or equal status as a peasant.

b) *Proletarianization on commercial farms and in packing stations*

The incorporation of women into agroindustrial employment depends not only on internal factors governing the family economy but also on the capacity of the system to create jobs and absorb surplus rural labour. Male labour is usually replaced by female labour in times of crisis or when temporary help is needed because women accept less pay for the same work; both society and women themselves have always thought of women's wages as supplementing those earned by men.

On commercial farms, there is a tendency to replace male labour by female labour. In the long run, however, there is a decline in employment in respect of both sexes. As capital and technology become more important in agriculture, less labour is used, and when labour is reduced, women are the first to go. Nonetheless, in certain activities, preference is given to female labour, the result being a genuine sexual division of labour. This generally occurs in the handling of fruit (selection, packaging, binding, trimming and other jobs) and in working with flowers and vegetables for export.

In studying such women wage-earners, it would seem necessary to take into account such variables as place of residence, of both semi-proletarians who live in rural areas and farm workers who are real proletarians and live in urban areas, such as the outskirts of towns; marital status and whether or not the women concerned are mothers. Finally, consideration should be given to the differences between work in the open and the work performed in packing and processing plants.

i) *Sale of labour in crop growing.* The cultivation of export crops usually gives rise to a demand for female labour. In such activities as the flower industry in Colombia, fruit farming in Chile and market farming in Mexico, the women hired are very young —between 14 and 24 years of age— or middle-aged (over 35). Mothers join the wage-earning labour force when they have at least one child old enough to take care of the rest. Criteria as to the age at which children are able to do this vary, ranging from 6 (Colombia) to 12 (Chile).

Farm work, in addition to being very hard, affects women adversely because of an image problem: farm hands are very low on the peasant scale; only domestic servants rank lower.

The various jobs range in duration from two to six months. In Chile, tasks relating to fruit crops take up little time —from 20 days to slightly over 1 month per year. Several jobs are given to the same person in order to lengthen the periods of work, so that people work on average for three months and five days per year. Coffee picking may take from one to two months. In the case of coffee grown without shade, the period may be even shorter. In the case of other tasks, such as the harvesting of industrial crops in Paraguay and Brazil, whole families move for several months to the farms where these crops are grown. Generally such work is done on a piece-work basis, by the job, which makes it very exhausting.

The best example of women in paid farm labour is provided by the *volantes* found near Sao Paulo, Brazil. These women are urban residents and live on the periphery of the small towns in the interior of Sao Paulo. (111) Seventy-five per cent of them have a rural background, and their first job was an unpaid farm job, generally in the coffee growing sector. Sixty per cent of them went to work at the age of 12. They move from place to place depending on the need for labour. When there is no agricultural work, they hire themselves out as domestic servants in the city; in other words, they combine agricultural and urban work in order to gain a steady income throughout the year. Another type of female agricultural wage-worker is the *moradora*. *Moradoras* are still peasants and live on *haciendas*. More than half of them enter the labour force at the age of 11 as unpaid family workers on coffee plantations.

Over the past 30 years, the use of contractors to mobilize labour has become more widespread. The use of these middlemen weakens the link between worker and employer, exempting the latter from the payment of social benefits. Moreover, the labour force becomes very sensitive to wage variations. In the cities it becomes part of the urban labour market and its wages have to cover the cost of survival in cities which is higher than that of residing in rural areas. At the present time, children are also hired, but a minimum age limit of 14 is respected.

ii) *Age at which women are hired.* Enterprises hire women who are either very young or mature. In the latter case, they are hired when it is assumed that their reproductive cycle has ended, so as to reduce the costs of mandatory maternity benefits. Preference is also shown for women who either have no children or say they have none.

This entrepreneurial strategy, in which preference is shown for women who are not likely to become mothers or are apparently childless, is comparable to that of mother who wait until one of their children is old enough to be entrusted with the care of the others.

### c) *Relationship between assumption of wage-labour and smaller families*

It has been suggested that incompatibility between the role of mother and that of worker depends on the number, as well as the ages, of the children a woman has and that this is reflected in a reduction in the size of families. While this contention was not denied at the Round Table on Survival Strategies in

Peasant Economies, it was suggested that some activities are compatible with the duties of motherhood.

This problem was dealt with in a study conducted in Chile in which a separate analysis was made of the situation of mothers and that of women without children. The data obtained showed that the entry of mothers into the labour market had no effect either on the number of children a woman had or on how long they lived at home. It showed that 75.1% of the mothers were between 21 and 40 years of age; they had an average of three children aged between 2 and 16.5 years. These households showed high levels of fertility (with 4.9 children born alive) and a high percentage (89%) of children living at home.

This study revealed that a mother's working outside the home does not mean that she will have fewer children or that the children will be forced to migrate at an early age. On the contrary, the percentages are higher in these cases than in those of peasant households.(4)

In Suesca, Colombia, in one of the flower industries which prefer to hire women, 70% of the women hired were middle-aged (33, on average) and had an average of five children. The study carried out in the region of Sao Paulo, Brazil, showed that the families of *volantes* and *moradoras* averaged 6.5 persons.

#### d) *Opinions on work*

Opinions vary, depending on who expresses them. First, there are the wage-earning women themselves, among whom one must distinguish between childless women and mothers; then there are women who have studied the subject, who analyse the insertion of women into wage-earning work under conditions of marked inequality.

Wage-earning women in the flower industry of Colombia believe that the advantages of their new status as wage-earners include the fact that they work on a fixed schedule (in certain tasks); that they earn a wage equal to that a man would earn in the region; that they are not at the beck and call of the mistress of a house; that they are able to run their own lives and that they can go home at the end of the day. These opinions were expressed by women formerly employed as domestic servants who are now wage-earners in the agricultural sector.(204) Mothers working in the fruit-growing industry in Chile do not like to work outside the home. They say that they work because they must, in order to buy groceries for the winter and school supplies for their children and to pay for home repairs. As many as 66.7% prefer housework; they feel as if they were letting their home go, running around all day, neglecting their children, etc. Young single women without children, on the other hand, take a positive view of their work situations. They do not mind working in packing plants, especially since they see and meet people there, earn money to buy clothes and to help out at home and contribute to the schooling of their younger brothers and sisters. However, they do not like to be "ordered about" and prefer "clean" inside jobs to farm work. The dream of all of them is to become a secretary.(4)

The specific disadvantages of wage work for women are the double work day and the failure of employers to comply with labour legislation and, on traditional farms, to pay the minimum wage. In large enterprises, the disadvantages are that they are selected on the basis of age and that employers refuse to accept pregnant women; there are no nurseries for children; sanitary services are

minimal; wage discrimination and discrimination in the assignment of tasks involving responsibility are practiced and manual dexterity is not recognized as a specialized skill.

On farms and in agroindustries, both men and women work in unfavourable conditions in so far as problems of environmental health and the provision of medical care on the job are concerned. Environmental problems are caused by such practices as heavy use of insecticides on farms and in packing plants, and the high level of noise which accompanies the work (owing, for example, to the use of pressure hammers and staplers and other tools); excessive heat in medium-sized plants because they are built with such components as zinc roofs and lack of ventilation; temperature changes between packing sheds and refrigeration areas and periods of work often lasting as long as 16 hours, which, although paid as overtime, are excessive.

The main contributor to the study of the significance of the performance of wage work by women is M. Roldan. (197) She discusses the capitalist view that it is through work that women are incorporated into development and the feminist view that work is a liberating force. Her study refers specifically to a plant for exporting vegetables in North Eastern Mexico, where more than 90 000 women work as wage-earners in temporary jobs.

Enterprises take advantage of the gender-based subordination that women have accepted as natural and use it to maintain differential profit margins; i.e., they give them the lower paid jobs. These jobs are less stable, and do not require much skill, offer no legal protection and offer little or no opportunity for promotion. In other words, according to Roldan, they are the meanest positions within a hierarchical structure of capitalist labour. The reasons for this situation have to do with qualitative differences which have already been mentioned: women are more careful, more punctual, gentler, more submissive, more efficient, more accustomed to comply and obey, all of which is the result of a social process of "invisible training", which is gender-based. Supervisory tasks are performed by men, thus transferring the division of labour found in the home and in society to the place of employment. Women are thus proletarianized, and the burden of preexistent, gender-based subordination is added to the burdens of their class situation and reinforced at work.

Nonetheless, the entry of women into the labour market marks a break with traditional norms. The receipt of an independent income helps to create a position of strength, both in the case of daughters in relation to their parents and of wives in relation to their husbands.

#### 4. Income: amount, administration and destination

FAO estimates indicate that women's earnings account for 50% or more of the family income. Not only is their contribution sizeable, it is also qualitatively important.

In the first place, it has been recognized that by adding the wife's earnings to those contributed by other members of the family (e.g., children), indigence has been avoided between 9 and 15% of the time. Equally, between 20 and 35% of rural households have managed to stay above the critical poverty line thanks to this income. It should be made clear that these figures are based on low estimates.

The most important consideration in this connection is the use to which women put their money; i.e., they spend it primarily on food. Child nutrition is much more closely linked with an increase in the mother's earnings than with an increase in overall family income.(119)

a) *Income generated in the peasant unit*

A very thorough report on the use and destination of earnings has been made for Peru. According to this report, after harvesting a crop, the husband and wife divide the yield into three portions —one for seed, another for sale and the third for family consumption. The latter two portions are administered by the wife. The report also states that in some cases the husband turns all his earnings over to his wife for her to administer; in other cases, she administers about half his earnings. In any case, it is clear that women play an important role both in the management of the harvest and in the income received from it.

In practice, the wife is responsible for the daily maintenance of her family group; this means she must ensure the provision of the daily meals, and to this end she dedicates all her energy. Not only must she organize her daily and weekly time in such a way that she is able to carry out the large number of tasks in her expanded domestic routine, but, if she is a trader, she must also go out to sell small quantities of produce with which to purchase odds and ends. The other activities mentioned above, such as the production of handicrafts, the preparation of meals and the sale of services, are carried out for the same purpose, as are the sale she makes at home of eggs, poultry, bred, milk and cheese. All she does is done for the purpose of subsistence and must be carried out on a grand scale if she is to achieve her goal. When, in writings about the peasantry, such women are described as being submissive, relegated to the background and outside of the life of their community, it must be borne in mind that, within their families, it is they who have the highest responsibilities.

The earnings of the women in the peasant unit are typically stable and are realized day by day. Those of the men are realized once a year, at harvest time, or two or three times a year if they sell cattle. If the husband is a temporary or migrant worker, the money will reach home when he does, or he will send remittances for the children's school supplies and for religious festivals once a year.

When the man is at home, he manages his money (i.e., the income from the harvest and the sale of animals), but the income derived from his wife's activities is for her use only. In addition to spending it on food, she allocates it to clothing for the children and to their education (enrolment fees, parent's contributions, supplies, daily transport costs, etc.).

b) *Income derived from wage-earning labour*

Women earn wages for seasonal work during the harvest and processing season. These wages usually represent substantial amounts by peasant standards since they are equivalent to industrial wages and are often supplemented by overtime pay. In some regions and countries, they may be equal to or even higher than the wages earned by men, if the women must work overtime. Work in industrial plants is generally performed on the basis of a fixed number of tasks,



and extra pay is also earned for any work in excess of those tasks. Extra pay may be as high as US\$ 180 per month. Married women use this money, as described above, to ensure subsistence during the slack months of the year, especially the winter months, when belts must be tightened since there is no demand then for the labour of either men or women. With this money women buy non-perishables such as flour, sugar, tea, spaghetti and some preserves. They also allot a special amount for covering the costs of educating and clothing their children. They hardly ever buy anything for themselves.

It is interesting to note that the money earned by single women is used for the same purposes as that earned by mothers. In a very few cases, single women hand all their money over to their mother; other women keep some of it to cover their own expenses, and the rest is used for household costs and the cost of educating their younger brothers and sisters. In Mexico, single women spoke of a pool to which all the unmarried daughters contribute without their mothers' knowing exactly how much comes from each one. (226) It is agreed that this pool should be managed by the mother. Data obtained on Peru and most of the cases studied in Chile indicate that this system is also practiced in these countries. Detailed information on other countries is not available.

### III. THE RURAL FAMILY

Several studies have referred, specifically or indirectly, to the rural family. Information drawn from these studies indicates that the rural family is being changed by a variety of factors and that there is need to bring the material available on the subject up to date and to revise stereotypes such as that of the extended family whose members marry early, have a high level of fertility and stay together for long periods, under the authority of the *paterfamilias*. Today there appears to be a trend towards an increase in the number of nuclear families and a decrease in the number of extended families, an increase in the number of one-person and incomplete families, a reduction in the number of marriages and deferred marriages, a notable decline in the birth rate and an increase in the number of female heads of household, in the proletarianization of women, in the number of absentee fathers and in the instances of migration.

#### 1. Nuclear families, extended families and incomplete families

As regards the predominant types of families (nuclear, extended, composite and incomplete), it seems evident that the nuclear family is predominant and is becoming more and more important.

There are, moreover, some documents of a regional nature which maintain that it is wrong to assume the prevalence of extended families. (137) Data which attest to the error of such an assumption have been brought to light simultaneously in studies carried out in Chile, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and Brazil. The trend away from the extended family follows a different pattern in different strata and geographical areas.

It has been observed that types of family, periods in the family cycle, the economic status of producers and regional differences are all interrelated.

In a comparison made in Chile between families of Greater Santiago and families in four rural localities in the central region, it was found that extended families were more numerous in Santiago than in the rural areas.(124)

It has been suggested that rural families with ties to the labour market tend to be nuclear families, whereas those that produce for consumption absorb labour, especially family labour, the result being composite or extended families. It appears that, when land becomes scarce on small properties and large properties no longer maintain a resident population (hiring only temporary workers), the younger members of a population tend to migrate. When a son marries, he forms his nuclear family apart from his original family. If he becomes a proletarian, his separation from the extended family is reinforced as he moves closer to labour sources.(108) In the middle and upper strata, where a stable labour force is required, men are incorporated, and extended or composite families are thus formed.

In many cases, it has become difficult to separate nuclear families from their extended family, and it has been argued that they cannot be considered as being outside the family cycle.(116, 177 and 182) New families are often formed within the original family, and when he is around 30, a son will leave with his own children, setting up a new nuclear family.

It has been observed in Mexico and Peru that a high proportion of the families in communities are extended families. Strong reciprocal relations, the *ayni* system and the practice of lending labour for housework for one's relatives and of preparing common meals all weaken the boundaries between the nuclear and the extended family. Nordaam reports that in Bolivia, when brothers inherit land, they build their houses on the same plot, with communicating rooms. They have their meals together and share the care of their children and their work, so that it can be said that family relations are of the extended family type, although the households are nuclear.(177)

The nuclear family predominates in the Andean region of Colombia (59% of the total). There are more women than men in the 25-40 year age group because of a high rate of male migration. Thirteen per cent of the nuclear households in this area are headed by women.(182)

In two public settlement projects in Paraguay, where the aim was to establish an agricultural sector made up of medium-sized farm owners, the plots began to be subdivided when their original owners passed them on to their progeny. New families were formed on the same farms, but as far as the work is concerned, they have continued to act in conjunction with the original family, exchanging labour under the *minga* and mutual aid systems. When men who form new families are forced to migrate in order to survive, they usually send their children to be cared for by their grand parents, thereby converting the original families into extended families. A third of the families in these settlements are of this type.(120)

In connection with the relevance of regional variations to types of family, marked differences have also been noted in Bolivia. Nuclear families are found above all in the rural areas of the *altiplano*, where the percentage of composite households is very low. What is happening is that family members are being forced to leave the area since land is being subdivided to such an extent that the redistribution of poverty has resulted in the relocation of some of the area's

young people in the monetarized labour market.(177) In the tropical plains, where commercial farming is practiced and settlement areas exist, there is a low percentage of nuclear households and a larger number of composite households; this reflects a greater capacity to absorb labour and establish communities of labourers.

Campaña also observed that in Peru poor families living on the *sierra* are structured in the nuclear family mode.(25)

Ordóñez observed the same predominance of the nuclear family in Colombia but also found marked regional variations. The lowest percentage of nuclear families is found on the Atlantic coast; this is due to the type of land occupation, which is based on an itinerant form of agriculture which entails long absences for the men, thereby creating unstable relationships. Family stability depends on the women; they establish families after living in free unions and are supported by community mechanisms, which are often confused with the extended family.(182)

Extended families constitute a third of the families in Colombia but are also unequally distributed regionally.

In almost all known cases, differences were also found within the various regions or areas. Two examples will suffice. In Chile, a study conducted in a valley showed a predominance of nuclear families and old families.(4) However, the distribution of this type of family varied according to strata. In the rural semi-proletarian group (group I), nuclear families were as prevalent as incomplete families, but as regards age there was an absolute predominance (82.9%) of young families. Among the poor peasant (group II), incomplete families were predominant; unlike the families in group I, they were mainly old families. In group III (peasants as such), young nuclear families predominated, followed by extended and composite families. In group IV (peasants in the middle level), nuclear families were in the majority, followed by incomplete families, with old families predominating. In El Espinal, in Colombia, a clear correlation was found between peasant stratum and family type. In the lowest strata (I and II), the nuclear family predominated, with the extended family in second place. In stratum III, the extended family, including domestic servants, predominated. Generally speaking, the nuclear family appears to be predominant in areas of subproletarianization and proletarianization.

It should be noted that there is a high frequency of incomplete families (not based on the couple relationship). These families consist of single brothers and sisters who live together, or unmarried adult children who live with a widow parent, generally the mother. In one case study in Chile, the single state was related to size of holding, and it was found that 41.7% of single men were owners of less than 2.5 hectares of land; in other words, they belonged to the proletarian and poor peasant strata. It would thus seem that, among those interviewed, failure to form a new family is mainly explained by a low economic level.(4)

Another fact worthy of note is the incidence of one-person families in some countries. In a study conducted in Chile, a comparison was made between Santiago and four rural areas. It was found that the percentage of one-person family households was twice as high in the rural communities as in Greater Santiago and that the number of persons who do not form new families was

higher in rural families.(124) This was also found to be true in Peru and Bolivia. In the latter country, 17% of the families studied were one-person families.

Note was also taken of young couples with long established relationships who continued to live separately in the homes of their parents. In many such cases, one or two children had been born of these relationships, but not even this had induced such couples to live together under the same roof.

In the Andean *sierra*, a unique situation has been noted:(25 and 177) the maintenance of *dual residences* by married men from agricultural communities. Because they work outside the area from which they come, men leave their homes and families and live in a second home near their place of work. The older children usually go to their father's second home to attend school, while their mother remains behind and is in charge of her own sustenance and that of the couple's younger children.

Finally, there appears to be a general tendency in all countries to defer the age at which both men and women form unions. The deferment of unions has been associated with the changing expectations of agricultural wage-earners and with the achievement of higher levels of education (Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Colombia). Widespread impoverishment is another factor since, when a couple cannot live in their parent's home, it becomes necessary to have a steady job or two seasonal jobs in order to form a family.

## 2. Headship of households

In considering the constitution of families, it is important to take the *headship of households* by women into account. The frequency with which women head households depends directly on the degree to which married men leave their village or community to look for work outside. In such cases, men tend to be away longer than in cases when they are hired for seasonal agricultural jobs. Here we are referring to cases where men are employed as miners, builders or labourers in public works or manufacturing, etc., and their wives become *de facto* heads of household and must bear all the material and emotional responsibilities toward their children that this entails, while at the same time enduring all the other hardships of having an absentee husband.

Another type of headship of household by women occurs in free, consensual unions or in unstable concubinage relationships (Colombia, Paraguay, Brazil, Jamaica and Central America in general). Sometimes various unions of this type occur in succession, and the children from them are the sole responsibility of the women. In such cases, women generally become proletarianized, performing various activities during the year; in addition, they also have a larger number of children than women in other types of unions.

## 3. The decline in fertility

The problems noted above (loss of land, difficulty in finding work, jobs that require people to migrate) occurring in combination with the deferment of unions, failure to form couples and families and access to knowledge of methods of contraception have caused a notable decline in fertility indexes in all countries. At the same time, in some cases, the reproductive period has been reduced to around 16.5 years in all.(111)

The decline in fertility at country level can be seen in table 8. Numbers of children decreased significantly between the period 1960-1965 and the period 1975-1980 for the region as a whole and for all the countries studied, without exception. There are striking differences in fertility rates between the countries of the Southern Cone and the other countries. In Central America, there was a dramatic decrease in Costa Rica and Cuba; in the Andean countries, there was a significant decline in Colombia and Venezuela. In the northern Atlantic sector, there was a notable decrease in Brazil and a less significant drop in Paraguay.

Large families were the rule during periods in history when certain crops (such as coffee and peanuts) required a great deal of manpower. In settlement areas in Brazil, for example, families with more than five members were rewarded or had all their installation costs paid. Now that families have little or no land they tend to be smaller. This has been true in general of the Bolivian *altiplano* and the Peruvian *sierra*. On the Bolivian *altiplano*, rural families are smaller than urban families;(177) it has been observed that in areas made up of

Table 8

**LATIN AMERICA: GLOBAL FERTILITY RATES EXPRESSED  
IN NUMBER OF CHILDREN**

	1960-1965	1965-1970	1970-1975	1975-1980
<b>Southern Cone countries</b>				
Chile	5.0	4.1	3.3	3.1
Argentina	3.1	3.0	3.0	2.9
Uruguay	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.9
<b>Andean countries</b>				
Peru	6.9	6.6	5.8	5.5
Bolivia	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.4
Ecuador	7.0	6.8	6.5	6.3
Colombia	6.7	6.0	4.8	4.3
Venezuela	6.7	6.0	5.2	4.7
<b>North Atlantic</b>				
Brazil	6.2	5.7	5.1	4.5
Paraguay	6.6	6.4	5.7	5.2
<b>Central America and Mexico</b>				
Mexico	6.8	6.7	6.2	5.4
Guatemala	6.9	6.4	6.2	5.7
Honduras	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.1
El Salvador	6.9	6.6	6.3	6.0
Nicaragua	7.3	7.1	6.9	6.6
Costa Rica	7.0	5.8	4.3	3.6
Panama	5.7	5.4	4.8	4.1
Cuba	4.7	4.3	3.5	2.2
Haiti	6.2	6.2	6.1	5.9
Dominican Republic	7.5	7.1	6.2	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>4.6</b>

Source: ECLAC, *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America, 1981*.

old small holdings, sometimes families are not formed or one-person families are found. All these new characteristics shown by the rural family are, like migration, the result of internal control or some kind of strategy for contending with poverty.

Certain research findings illustrate these declines. In the first place, a study on Brazil showed a very clear difference in the number of children between women of 35 to 40 years of age and those over 40. In the first group, the number of children is much lower than in the second group. Although the women in the first group are still at child-bearing age, they are not likely to have more children. Women between 35 and 40 have had 4.1 children on average, 3.7 of whom have survived. Women over 40 have 9.8 children on average, of whom 7.8 have survived.(103)

In Colombia, in view of the changes in the structure of coffee growing due to overpopulation, the closing of the territorial coffee frontier and proletarianization, the large family concept is being abandoned. The Federation of Coffee Growers is promoting birth control programmes.(186) Data collected by García Rovira show that the idea of having a large family is being rejected. The stratum showing the smallest number of children is the poorest stratum (4.34 children on average).

In Brazil, *moradoras* (rural) have 3.7 children born alive and *volantes* have 3.3. They have their last child when they are around 36 or 37; thus, their reproductive period has been reduced to approximately 16.5 years. They continue to breast feed for a period of up to 5 years in order not to become pregnant again.(111)

In Chile, women over 40 have 7.0 children on average, while women under 40 have 1.8 children on average.(3)

However, some students of the problem feel that the decline in fertility among agricultural wage-earners is not so clear. It has been observed in Colombia that the peasantry has a higher fertility rate than the rural proletariat since the wage-earners are on average younger, they reside in semi-urban locations and their jobs are unstable, in addition to other factors. In Chile, on the other hand, proletarian families with urban residences have a larger number of children than subproletarian families with rural residences. At present, there is no conclusive indication of what the trend will be.

In contrast, a very clear relationship is observable between *educational level and number of children*: the higher the educational level, the smaller the number of children. Many data from different countries support the existence of this relationship. Table 9 illustrates this situation in Mexico.

#### IV. WOMEN'S DEMANDS AND ORGANIZATIONS: SOME REFLECTIONS

Despite the fact that in almost all the official documents, reference is made to the need for women to participate in the discussion of local, regional and national affairs, to state their demands and to do so through their own organizations, little progress has been made, and hardly any information is available in this regard.

Table 9

**MEXICO: AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN ALIVE TO MARRIED WOMEN AND WOMEN LIVING IN CONSENSUAL UNION ACCORDING TO PLACE OF RESIDENCE (RURAL-SEMIURBAN) AND LEVEL OF SCHOOLING<sup>a</sup>**

Age of groups	Number of illiterates	Primary level			Secondary level and higher	Total	
		1st, 2nd and 3rd grades	4th and 5th grades	6th grade			
<b>Rural without urban influence Sector II</b>							
15-29	3.3 (181)	3.4 (239)	2.5 (67)	2.2 (20)	- <sup>c</sup> (5)	3.2 (512)	
30-49	7.6 (301)	7.4 (254)	7.6 (49)	7.9 (10)	- <sup>c</sup> (5)	7.5 (619)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.0</b> (482)	<b>5.5</b> (493)	<b>4.7</b> (116)	<b>4.1</b> (30)	<b>3.5</b> (10)	<b>5.6</b> (1 131)	
<b>Standardized total<sup>b</sup></b>	5.6	5.6	5.3	5.3	2.5	5.5	
<b>Rural with urban influence Sector I</b>							
15-29	2.0 (25)	3.2 (59)	3.1 (21)	1.4 (15)	- <sup>c</sup> (7)	2.6 (127)	
30-49	8.1 (63)	6.7 (60)	7.5 (16)	- <sup>c</sup> (3)	- <sup>c</sup> (3)	7.4 (145)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.4</b> (88)	<b>5.0</b> (119)	<b>5.0</b> (37)	<b>2.4</b> (18)	<b>1.6</b> (10)	<b>5.2</b> (272)	
<b>Standardized total<sup>b</sup></b>	5.3	5.1	5.5	4.6	2.2	5.2	
<b>Semiurban Sector III</b>							
15-29	3.0 (68)	2.7 (95)	2.8 (44)	1.9 (42)	1.6 (26)	2.6 (276)	2.9 (915)
30-49	7.1 (113)	7.0 (108)	6.7 (53)	5.2 (29)	4.5 (21)	6.8 (326)	7.3 (1 090)
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.6</b> (183)	<b>5.0</b> (203)	<b>4.9</b> (97)	<b>3.2</b> (71)	<b>2.8</b> (47)	<b>4.9</b> (602)	<b>5.3</b> (2 005)
<b>Standardized total<sup>b</sup></b>	5.2	5.0	4.9	3.7	3.1	4.9	

Source: Catalina Gaugain: "Influencias de la escolaridad sobre la fecundidad en los medios rural y semiurbano de México", *La fecundidad rural en México*. El Colegio de México, México City, 1983.

<sup>a</sup>Failures to reply excluded. <sup>b</sup>Standardization makes it possible to discount the possible difference in age structure between sectors, so that they can be compared. <sup>c</sup>Less than 10 cases.

Several points should be emphasized in this connection. In the first place, it bears repeating that women are great organizers of their time, as is evidenced by the way they perform their expanded household chores and their independent activities. In the second place, women do not express themselves well verbally, but their opinion is important and is expressed through their husbands. In the third place, women perform certain social and cultural roles which may not be appreciated by or known to external agents. Fourth, women participate in organizations, but not in those covered by publications about rural society.

The first point has already been dealt with in other sections of this paper. Regarding the second, it should be noted that the conclusions of the Seminar on Andean Research and various studies indicated that women are responsible for important decisions and that the poorer the stratum to which they belong, the greater their participation in decision-making. The Seminar on Andean Research found that the idea that women are taking no part in decision-making within their family and community is a myth. It is true, however, that women do not know how to express themselves and are often unable to conceptualize their feelings. They are inarticulate and cannot express their demands. Cultural patterns are partly to blame for this, it being held that, in a couple, the man should be the one who speaks in public. Moreover, women consider themselves unprepared; they feel they are uneducated and are ashamed that they are not equipped for public participation. They themselves feel that child-bearing has demeaned them. In some experiments carried out in personal development workshops in Chile, women have asked to be taught how to speak, and in fact there can be no doubt that women must be trained —through workshops, women's groups, special meetings or other methods— to formulate their aspirations and demands.

Regarding the third point, which relates to the playing of important social and cultural roles by rural women, FAO has drawn attention to the large number of activities that are carried out by women to maintain and further the communications, fellowship and sensitivity to the needs of others that makes social life possible. In peasant communities, responsibility for these functions falls almost exclusively on the women and involves tasks ranging from the organization of ceremonies (baptisms, weddings, etc.) and the promotion of co-operation and good will within families or among neighbours to the arranging of services, exchanges of work and barter activities.

The time that women devote to these activities goes unnoticed, and it is not taken into account in calculating the time worked. The extent to which women must perform such activities can affect the time available for other productive tasks. If they fail to perform their social and cultural role as a result of increased participation in either unpaid or paid agricultural work, community relations and fellowship will deteriorate.(120)

With regard to the organizations to which women belong, it must be said that they provide for a great number of activities, some of them very different from those in which men participate. In general, women are excluded from organizations relating to production which are traditionally confined to men. Such organizations include associations concerned with irrigation and with the use made of slopes and pastures owned by the community and producer co-operatives. They have also been excluded from organizations responsible for the



administration of agrarian reform. Under the process of agrarian reform, they were not regarded as members of such organizations, nor have they been brought into them subsequently. This is in line with the stereotype that women have no part in production.

Nevertheless, they are active participants in everything that directly relates to the well-being of their family, i.e., in everything they regard as useful and necessary. Thus, they are to be found on all committees responsible for the provision of services in such areas as potable water, electric lighting, polyclinics, mini-markets, schools, roads, transport improvements, etc. They participate actively as they see fit in arranging raffles, preparing meals and sweets to sell at soccer matches, organizing dances, etc.(5) They are also well-disciplined and co-operative participants in centres for parents and guardians, although in such settings they do not express their views.

Women play an important part in religious festivals, as members of women's clubs or dance groups; in the celebration held on the feast of the patron saint of their town or community and in church activities such as catechism classes and missions.

In Chile, the Mothers' Centres (Centros de Madres) are a special type of organization. They were organized by the State 20 years ago, and there are now 350 of them in the central valley alone; they have over 10 000 members.(185) Experience has shown that when peasant women organize themselves, they are not seeking a public role at national level, but rather are looking for an area in which they can be active. They want to get out of the house, to learn to speak or to add the production of a handicraft to their daily routine in order to earn some income.

A large number of projects for women are supported by the Catholic Church and by foreign organizations. There are two types of projects—production-oriented projects and training-oriented projects—and almost all of them are best carried out in small groups of around 15 persons. Some information is available on projects involving the formation of discussion and training groups, housewives' clubs, health centres and monitor training centres; on small production projects and others. These data are incomplete, however, and no evaluation studies are available in this respect except for the findings of some preliminary research carried out in Chile.(113)

In rural areas, the degree to which women participate in various types of organization is often influenced by the fact that women have very little leisure time and very few opportunities for recreation as a result not only of the many tasks and responsibilities mentioned in other sections of this paper but also of certain cultural factors, including the view that woman's place is in the home and the fact that their right to rest and recreation is not recognized either by them or by anybody else and that it has never occurred to anyone that they might actually have interests to share with other women in clubs, social groups, centres and the like.

These factors help to explain why women are reluctant to take part in meetings or activities which are not fully justified by themselves and also by other people, especially their husbands. In order to live up to her own self-image, a woman must not waste time, must always be busy and must not be seen on the street.

The ideal male peasant, on the other hand, differs markedly from his female counterpart in that he is a public figure. His place is in the street. He must establish links with the outside world. During the week, his domain is the street, the street corner where he meets his friends and talks, and various centres of community life such as the irrigation board, the co-operative, the labour union headquarters and the warehouse. On Sundays and holidays, he is to be found at the football field, in bars and at fairs. Kate Young observed this kind of situation in Mexico. Another aspect of life in which men's rights and women's rights differ markedly is that men can and do spend what they earn (and what their wife earns) on a variety of activities involving personal consumption such as smoking, drinking or supporting two families. Indeed, on any feast day or market day, men will be found drinking in bars with their male relatives and friends, while their wives are at the market or engaged in household activities.

Consequently, if women are to increase their participation, their traditional image will have to change. Some spare time should be available to them; they should be able to get out of the house (as they now do for purposes of trade); they should have their own interests and meet with other women in public to discuss their problems or those of their community and express their needs; and in order to do these things, they must be trained and organized. If women are to participate in social and economic life, this is the way to go about it. Furthermore, these are the aspirations which are held by women themselves as is evident in the continued existence of the Mothers' Centres and in their demand for the right to speak, for additional education and for social centres.(5)

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES

In this connection, we wish to stress and endorse some of the views expressed at the round table entitled "Survival strategies in peasant economies: The role of women", where reference was made to rural development programmes in which it is customary to distinguish between production-oriented programmes designed for men and social programmes designed for women. This approach perpetuates a distinction between fields of activity which in practice are not separate and should not be separated. Reference was also made to the lack of critical thinking about the cultural patterns underlying the existing division of labour; the disregard for the role of women reflected in the survival strategies of peasant economies; the view that reproduction is an individual problem in which policies have no part and other issues. In addition recommendations were made in which women are explicitly recognized as subjects of rural development; the need to view women as agents of production, as well as of reproduction, is acknowledged; the productive work performed by women is promoted so that any surplus produced by them is left in their hands, thereby raising their status within the domestic unit, and recognition is given to the need to consider whether the social processes and various programmes which are underway are perpetuating or changing the traditional role of women.

The following observations should be added to the considerations and recommendations referred to above:

a) In the recommendations contained in official documents, it is clear that there are two areas of concern in regard to rural women, one of which relates to

women as producers of agricultural products, chiefly food, while the other relates to integral development and the retention of women in rural areas. The situation is complicated by the fact that peasant women play two different roles —the role of housewife and that of farmer. Peasant women in the process of proletarianization also play two roles —the role of housewife and that of agricultural wage-earner. The question is how to implement policies which will reconcile both concerns and both roles without adding further to the burden of responsibility and work already borne by women.

b) In policies, a *de facto* division has been created between the public and private spheres. Because women are regarded as being in the "private" sphere, they are generally left out of policies which relate to the "public" sphere. This means that no studies are carried out on relationships within the family (couple relations, socialization, subordination, the real existence of a patriarchal system and how it is manifested, relations with the outside world and similar issues). However, this idea of what is "public" and what is "private" is, to say the least, very confused. There is nothing more private than conception, and yet it has been the target of public policies for over 20 years. Certain activities, needs or rights of women that are not taken into account in the measurement of production and economic progress are labeled "private" which gives a distorted picture of many aspects of the situation of women.

c) It has become clear that, contrary to what had previously been thought, the conditions in which peasant women live are extremely changeable. Peasant women are constantly and simultaneously involved in two processes: peasant stratification and the family cycle. An additional factor in this regard is the type of agricultural economy in which they live. We mention this in order to draw attention to the dynamism and complexity of the situations which policies must take into account.

d) Another highly useful exercise is to consider, in each situation, case and country, the difference there is between the life of a poor rural woman and that of a poor rural man and child in similar circumstances. This would ensure that policies did not unnecessarily exclude the other members of the family group.

e) In view of the economic crisis affecting the region and the outlook for an increase in rural poverty, solutions must be found at the local level, and organizing women both to articulate their demands and to look for solutions based on their own resources should play a pivotal role in this connection. It is important that the technical and financial aid supplied should support the mass of accumulated knowledge that peasant women possess (household management, farm techniques, folk medicine, production of handicrafts, etc.) and strengthen their self-image in a different model of rural development, in which the contribution they are really able to make to their own development can be taken into account.

f) With regard to the matter of compatibility between the different tasks a rural woman performs and the need to lighten her current and future workload, a set of simple technologies or simple solutions should be sought that would help to lighten those tasks that require an excessive amount of energy and time and to improve the conditions in which families live. In this connection, mention should be made of the fetching of water and firewood, the making of bread and the washing of clothes. For these tasks, simple domestic appliances could be manufactured, the use of clean and cheap forms of energy (e.g., increasing the

use of solar energy in order to make hot water available) encouraged, sanitary services provided, etc.

Furthermore, a set of alternative technologies should be sought which would increase and enrich the variety of food products. In this connection, mention should be made of the recovery of lost and forgotten vegetable species of high nutritive value, such as *quinoa*; the introduction of organic vegetable gardens and the promotion of techniques for preserving newly harvested crops.

g) Few studies deal with the effect of the communications media on rural women, although it is known that the media generally transmit information that is irrelevant to the conditions in which these women actually live and thus do not help to increase their awareness or to change their situation for the better. Women's organizations could make a worthwhile contribution by fostering horizontal communications media; i.e., they could develop alternative means of communication that would enhance the value of their own culture and resources and increase their own potential as an agent of change.

h) An important issue that must be dealt with in future policies is that of the proletarianization of rural women. The research done to date has dealt sufficiently with the status of women in peasant economies, but not enough attention has been given to the question of rural proletarianization. Women in forest villages, for example, are proletarianized but have no work, agricultural or otherwise, and it is not known what their position is with respect to the urban market. All the studies carried out so far have concentrated either on women living in rural areas, with all the differences that are to be found there, and women living in urban areas. However, the situation of women in the process of becoming proletarianized, who are not yet inserted into the towns and live either on their outskirts or in villages, rural communities or unstable settlements, has not yet been considered in any study.

i) The research carried out so far has resulted in specific policy recommendations only in regard to short-term situations and problems. Moreover, both official and non-governmental agencies accept the solutions suggested by technicians and research findings which, although very significant, usually reflect outside views. This points up the need to supplement such data with information supplied by rural women themselves and to give more support to different types of research designed to complement the traditional methods. Thus, it is important to support and analyse experiments in participative research and mass education in an attempt to penetrate more deeply into the situation of rural women, or, in other words, to know the situation in order to change it. In this regard, it would be very useful to compile and systematize the numerous experiments that are being carried out by various groups in Latin America in such techniques as group discussion, case studies, personal testimony and dramatization. The challenge now is to use these new methodologies as research techniques. In this respect, Arriagada points out that the chief shortcomings of these methodologies boil down to the difficulties encountered in establishing two criteria, identifying preconceived ideas on the part of researchers and formulating ideas for general application.(8)

j) It is becoming clear that there is a need to devise a system for classifying rural women and the changes they are experiencing. By proceeding from the general to the particular, it would be possible to form an objective view of the

problems of rural women in Latin America. This system should function as a data base containing information by subregion, including the most important research findings, documents and theories relating to women in the region. By studying the different situations in which women find themselves, it would be possible to understand them better, to design policies on a firmer foundation and to help women to learn more about themselves. Something similar has been proposed with regard to the compilation and organization of information on women, in what has been termed "a basic information model".(25)

k) Finally, it would be advisable to make an assessment of the numerous action projects, most of which are financed by non-governmental agencies. A great number of these are devoted to women, but their results have not been appraised in terms of their impact on women and their environment, the integration of family and locality, the possibility of extending them to other places, their potential for self-support and other equally important factors.

**Part Three**

**THE OUTLOOK FOR  
CHANGE IN THE STATUS  
OF WOMEN**

### Part Three

## THE OUTLOOK FOR CHANGE IN THE STATUS OF WOMEN

### I. FRAME OF REFERENCE

In other documents attention has been drawn to factors which make it highly difficult to appraise the progress made in connection with the integration of women in development, and a detailed analysis has been made of the difficulties relating to the kind of resources available for measuring their living conditions.<sup>(82)</sup> Without repeating the arguments used, it would be a good idea to draw attention to problems which have been added to or have aggravated problems which were already present in connection with the possibilities for making a more exhaustive appraisal. In the first place, there is a much wider variety of national situations due to the interaction of differences in basic contexts, differences in size and economic potential and differences in respect of the time in which the different development processes have been in effect. Actually, generalizations on Latin American change are becoming less and less relevant and harder and harder to uphold, and the task involved in making a comparative analysis of very diverse national situations is becoming difficult. National situations are growing increasingly complex, and relations among social groups and between them and the State are increasingly less clear and more diversified.

Finally, generalizations concerning the region are equally affected by the problem of unknown quantities presented nowadays by the process of transformation and the political economies of the great industrial centres and hence of the form which relations between them and the Latin American centres might take in the future. This does not detract from the importance of the task of working on the basis of assumptions and alternative medium- and long-term scenarios and of advancing on the basis of a consensus concerning the design of a new development pattern.

In addition, in spite of the fact that the big structural changes made in the region are now nearly 30-years old, the context in which the United Nations Decade for Women began and the context in which it is ending are outstandingly different. Actually, when the Regional Plan of Action was adopted in Havana in 1977, there were still signs of optimism and growth in the region, and this is no longer the case. It is therefore assumed:

a) That, in a context in which resources were relatively abundant, governments and bilateral and multilateral assistance bodies would have been interested in supporting populations in their attempts to meet their basic needs and in the gradual incorporation of marginated groups of the society, which, in some cases, included women and low-income groups.

b) That with a certain amount of political will on the part of the governments, these intentions would be reflected in plans, programmes and projects and in the political measures needed in order to implement them.

c) That the objectives adopted with respect to greater participation by women in the development process would be reflected in a series of concrete measures in favour of their participation in different areas and sectors.

d) That, in view of the fact that for many years our economies were fortunate enough to enjoy sustained growth, social expenditure on programmes which indirectly favour the participation of women, such as programmes designed in support of the family, children and youth, would continue to rise.

However, even then, there was some concern as regards the following circumstances:

a) The lack of adequate information, as a result both of a faulty approach to the collection of statistical data and of a lack of rigorous research.

b) The organizational and administrative difficulties of the institutions responsible for the implementation of recent social programmes.

c) The lack of continuity of many of the initiatives taken with respect to the groups which benefit from the policies, which results in a loss of experience and of know-how concerning the complex processes of social intervention.

d) The lack of understanding at that time concerning the importance of attitudes and values, the patterns of behaviour and the cultural motivations and processes inherent in the development process.

e) The lack of foresight concerning the depth and extension of the crisis which would strike the Latin American and Caribbean region.

However, although structural obstacles have now arisen which are more dramatic and difficult to control than anything which could have been foreseen at the beginning of the Decade, the regional action programme was directed toward the solution of the main problems identified as being of a structural nature, and although there may have been changes in emphasis and new issues may have arisen, basically the objectives of integrating women into economic and social development laid down at that time seem still to be in force. It is likely that the problems of equity, in view of the deterioration in the living conditions of large social sectors, is now more relevant than before and also that there is greater critical awareness concerning the problems relating to the subordination of women.

Thus, this study is built around two main themes: on the one hand, the crisis, as an overall setting which involves all the processes, and, on the other, the search for key ideas for the establishment of new plans and orientations with respect to the development of the region.

The study is set up within the framework of the crisis, as one of the main landmarks of the second half of the Decade. Actually, although the present crisis has its roots in the first half of the 1970s and in the petroleum crisis, it cannot be denied that it became more severe around the beginning of the 1980s, when it



took on dimensions the like of which had not been seen since the 1930s. This crisis, which is linked to internal factors is, for its part, closely linked to external factors whose origin lies in the behaviour of the economies of the industrialized countries. The extension of the crisis (in varying degrees of severity in each of the countries of the region) and its duration are responsible for a significant economic contraction in real terms, some destruction or underutilization of accumulated capital and substantial setbacks in social progress.

As the crisis has deepened, a feeling of instability, confusion and uncertainty concerning the way in which events will develop and what policies should be adopted to contain and overcome its pernicious effects has become widespread. The negotiations carried out and arrangements made with respect to external indebtedness and to debt servicing have not succeeded in stabilizing the situation, and in some cases the problems really cannot be overcome by conventional methods and formulas.

These crisis-related developments have differed in both absolute and relative intensity in different national settings, from one country to another, depending on the economic and demographic size of the country concerned, its degree of external openness, the nature and depth of State intervention in the management of the economic policy and the participation of the State as an economic agent, the availability of resources and the degree of industrialization and diversification of production and technology.

In addition, the way in which the countries of the region have moved from the period of economic boom to the present crisis has not been the same either. In this respect, it should be borne in mind, for example, that the petroleum-exporting countries have not developed in the same way as the non-petroleum-exporting countries and that the development of the countries with high growth rates has been different from that of the larger group of countries which traditionally have shown less dynamism.

The crisis has intensified the deterioration of social conditions in the Latin American countries, and one of the groups which has undoubtedly been most affected has been the women in the urban low-income sectors and rural sectors of the region. On the one hand, the adjustment programmes have primarily affected those sectors, especially with respect to the reduction of social policies directed to education, health and housing and have led to a weakening in the social welfare system. On the other hand, although the women in these strata have had to engage more heavily in paid employment, they have entered those jobs with lower wages, mostly in the informal sector, working a double workday. Similarly, it is very likely that the crisis has had negative effects on the employment of workers from other strata since the labour market has had to contract. In general, the crisis creates a climate of stagnation and recession, in which social tension and instability are greater.

In this context, it is important to bear in mind that the theoretical framework in which development policies should be placed in the future must first of all take into consideration the effects of the crisis and secondly the need to rethink certain aspects which seem to be most relevant in the development process. In an analysis of this type, the socioeconomic aspects must be taken in combination with a valid ethical and cultural view of society. In this respect it is worthwhile drawing attention to that part of the Quito Declaration in which it is

stated that development must be seen as an integral process characterized by the achievement of economic and social objectives and goals which ensure the actual participation of the population in the development process and in its benefits, for which reason it becomes necessary to make profound structural changes in this setting as a prerequisite to the establishment of the type of integral development sought. For the achievement of this objective, the integral participation of women at a level of economic, political and cultural equality is considered indispensable.

From this perspective, development should aim at least three objectives: greater efficiency in the economy, greater equity in the distribution of the fruits of growth and more autonomy in the processes of development. Other central themes should include the modernization of the State, which should support the objectives of social policies more emphatically; emphasis on planning and the formulation of social policies aiming at greater equity.

## II. EVALUATING THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

This study is based on a comprehensive review of the available indicators concerning achievements in the area of incorporation into the work force and access to education, health and other government programmes which directly or indirectly promote women, in the framework of the guidelines set forth in the Regional Plan of Action; it also relates to changes of a legal nature. However, despite repeated recommendations, available information is still scarce and limited, for which reason it is nearly impossible to make an evaluation in the traditional way, i.e., category by category, objective or goal, by viewing each normative principle in the light of the actual situation expressed in data or in analytical categories that are comparable in time and space.

Because of this limitation, it is advisable to complete the comprehensive view of the problem with two qualitative elements which illustrate women's situation more specifically: a brief analysis of the family as the object of social policy and an attempt to construct a typology of women, based on their socio-economic level.

### A. THE IMPACT OF SECTORAL POLICIES

The first evaluation carried out by the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Development of Latin America (Macuto, Venezuela, 1979) showed that the economic expansion which had occurred in the region had not managed to create all the employment necessary to absorb the growing labour force, so that the open unemployment rates continued to be relatively high, that is, above 6%. This figure, however, represents an impressive effort to create new urban jobs, many of which are concentrated in the tertiary sector of the economy.

Furthermore, the information available at that time indicated a contraction in the labour market, with open unemployment rates of around 8% and in some Latin American cities, much higher. Therefore, the stagnation had had an influence on the expansion of employment and on the level and quality of life of the population.

The consequences of this situation were serious: an increase in the population of the poor sectors, deterioration of the real wage of those who were still working, a drop in family consumption and therefore in effective demand, regressive income distribution and a difficult situation for young people and women who had recently joined the work force.

Available data indicated that the average rate of participation by women remained at around 20% for the region, a figure which was much lower than that in other regions; in other words, the potential for incorporation had been affected by the economic stagnation and the crisis.

It is a well-known fact that during recessive phases, employers tend to lay off women and young people first; there also tends to be a rise in household employment including manual labour and cottage industries practised in the home for commercial purposes with a view to improving the family's income. Therefore, despite the progress achieved in certain countries, increasing the employment of women will continue to be an objective for the Decade.

Furthermore, problems persist concerning discriminatory treatment in the area of wages and types of jobs for women, more in private activity than the public sector, in which, in several countries, women have been holding important supervisory positions for many years.

With regard to recognition of work performed at home, interesting research has been carried out in some countries on the value of that work and the possibility of incorporating it into national accounts, but it has not yet been possible to develop a unified approach to this subject.

In the area of education, the majority of the countries have made substantial progress in decreasing illiteracy and increasing rates of school attendance.

Despite the progress achieved, however, the situation continues to be critical in the relatively less developed countries, where illiteracy rates higher than 30% of the population still exist. Women and the rural population in general have traditionally been affected by this problem, despite the changes; this phenomenon persists independently of the level of development of a country.

Figures show that the incorporation of girls and young women into the educational system is growing. Rates of school attendance by sex indicate progress in that area. Between 1970 and 1980, in 16 of the 25 countries for which primary level information is available, female rates tended to approach or equal male rates; in Argentina and Venezuela, for example, there was no difference between the two figures. In Colombia, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Trinidad and Tobago, the female rate exceeded the male rate. This trend has been confirmed at the intermediate level, except in Mexico and Bolivia (see table 10).

The growing incorporation of girls into primary and elementary education might reflect a substantial change in the attitudes and values of parents regarding the education of women in those countries of the region in which it had traditionally been considered that women needed less formal education since their role as mothers, wives and homemakers could be performed without a substantial amount of education. Since men were the breadwinners of their family, they had to acquire the skills they needed in order to be able to take their place subsequently in the labour market.

Table 10

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PROPORTION OF  
WOMEN IN TOTAL TEACHING STAFF AND STUDENT  
ENROLLED BY COUNTRY, 1970-1980**

Country	Year	Women/ students enrolled			Women/ teaching staff		
		Level			Level		
		1st.	2nd.	3rd.	1st.	2nd.	3rd.
Antigua and Barbuda	1970	48	-	-	83	-	-
	1975	49	52 (76)	-	85	63	-
	1980	49 (78)	42 (77)	-	86 (78)	-	-
Barbados	1970	49	-	46	-	-	-
	1975	50	52	-	-	-	-
	1980	50	53 (81)	54	-	-	28
Bermuda	1970	50	54	-	85	52	-
	1975	48	-	53 (78)	-	-	-
	1980	49	50 (79)	51	88	-	33
Cayman Islands	1970	53 (71)	-	-	-	-	-
	1975	49	53	-	84	52	-
	1980	49	48	-	85	55	-
Costa Rica	1970	49	51	44	75	47	-
	1975	49	52	-	-	-	-
	1980	49	53	-	78 (81)	54 (81)	-
Cuba	1970	49	-	39	-	-	-
	1975	48	49	-	72	47	-
	1980	48	50	48	77 (81)	48	-
Dominica	1970	48	-	-	-	-	-
	1975	48	59	-	71	-	-
	1980	49 (78)	59 (78)	51	69 (78)	-	54
El Salvador	1970	48	47	-	70	32	17
	1975	48	44	34	68	-	23
	1980	50	52 (81)	31	67 (81)	27	23
Grenada	1970	49	46	-	58	44	-
	1975	48	-	50 (78)	-	-	52 (78)
	1980	48	-	60 (75)	71 (79)	-	25 (79)
Guatemala	1970	44	41	19	65	32	-
	1975	45	46	23	62	38	-
	1980	45	45	27 (78)	-	-	-
Haiti	1970	-	-	-	57 (71)	-	-
	1975	46 (78)	-	24	-	-	12
	1980	46	-	23 (78)	49	-	10 (78)
Honduras	1970	50	47	-	-	-	-
	1975	49	-	34	-	-	-
	1980	50	50	38	74	48	3
Jamaica	1970	50	-	-	-	-	-
	1975	50	54	-	-	-	-
	1980	50	53	-	87	-	-

Table 10 (conclusion)

Mexico	1970	48	39	20	61	-	-
	1975	48	39	-	62	33	-
	1980	49	47	34 (81)	-	-	-
Nicaragua	1970	50	47	32	79	-	-
	1975	51	50	34	-	-	-
	1980	51	54	47 (82)	79 (81)	-	-
Panama	1970	48	52	43	80	56	21
	1975	48	52	50	81	55	-
	1980	48	52	55	80	53	30 (81)
St. Lucia	1970	52	47	-	-	-	-
	1975	49	-	41 (78)	83 (78)	-	-
	1980	51	55	-	80	-	-
St. Vincent	1970	49	50	-	47	-	-
	1975	49	59	88 (78)	43	43	59 (78)
	1980	49	59 (81)	78 (79)	62 (81)	-	63 (79)
Argentina	1970	49	53	43	92	32	61
	1975	49	52	48	92	63	39
	1980	49 (81)	53 (81)	47 (82)	92	64 (78)	56 (82)
Bolivia	1970	41	-	-	-	-	-
	1975	44	-	-	-	-	-
	1980	47	46 (81)	-	48	-	-
Brazil	1970	50 (71)	51	38	84 (71)	53	21
	1975	49	53	-	85	-	-
	1980	49 (79)	54 (78)	-	87 (79)	53 (78)	-
Chile	1970	50	53	38	69	-	-
	1975	49	53	45	74	50	-
	1980	49	53	43	74 (79)	52 (79)	-
Colombia	1970	50	49	27	77	-	-
	1975	51	50	-	-	-	14
	1980	50	53 (81)	45 (81)	79	42	21 (81)
Ecuador	1970	48	45	30	64	33	7
	1975	49	48	-	65	36	-
	1980	49	49 (79)	35 (78)	66 (79)	37 (79)	-
Guyana	1970	49	51	20	55	46	-
	1975	49	51	36	69	-	30 (78)
	1980	49	-	42 (79)	70	-	-
Paraguay	1970	47	50	42	-	58	-
	1975	47	50	-	-	-	-
	1980	48 (79)	-	43 (78)	-	-	-
Peru	1970	46	43	34	-	-	15
	1975	-	-	32	-	-	14
	1980	48	46	-	60	-	-
Suriname	1970	48	54	-	62	47	-
	1975	48	55	12	65	50	3 (77)
	1980	48	52 (78)	35 (77)	76 (78)	54 (78)	-
Uruguay	1970	48	53	-	-	-	-
	1975	49	53	-	-	-	23
	1980	49	53	56 (82)	-	-	30
Venezuela	1970	50	51	41	86	39	18
	1975	49	53	-	-	-	-
	1980	49 (81)	48 (81)	-	83 (81)	50 (79)	-

Source: UNESCO, *Statistical Yearbook*, 1983.

Like all processes of change, this incorporation of women into education exhibits limitations which are especially noticeable at the third level, to which a smaller number of women than men have access and then only in a selective way, with a high concentration in areas of study that are considered to be "feminine", such as educational sciences, social sciences and health sciences, which over the years have been increasingly taken over by women. The enrolment of women in fields such as medicine has increased substantially in several countries in the region. Although the enrolment of women has increased in engineering and the basic sciences, the number of women enrolled in these fields is considerably lower than the number of men.

With regard to the relationship between work and education, the data available through the mid-1970s reflect a rise in the educational level of the work force, both male and female. Women have been incorporated into the tertiary sector of the economy, in areas where vocational training does not necessarily require completion of the formal educational cycle; thus a high number of young people complete their education after leaving school by participating in the "parasytem" and in correspondence courses or adult education.

Increased education and professional training of women not only gives them more opportunity to join the labour market, but also brings about far-reaching psychosocial changes; for instance, it gives them the security of possessing skills which enable them to generate the resources necessary to maintain a family, no longer by earning supplementary wages but as contributors of the main income. In many households this has changed the traditional relationship of subordination of the wife to the husband for economic reasons.

Many factors are responsible for the incorporation of women in education and work. By no means the least important of these factors has been the change of attitude brought about by the increase in information concerning society as a whole, which is the result of forces such as the influence of communications media, transculturation, urbanization and the implementation of social policies which have improved the welfare of the different groups making up society.

Policies which appear to have the most influence on the performance of women in society include the present welfare-oriented health policy, which is aimed at the extension of social security coverage, nutritional programmes directed towards low-income families in different countries, family planning programmes, mother-child care programmes and programmes in which services related to early infancy are provided.

As for the services suggested in various documents as means of facilitating the participation of women, the reduction of spending in the social area has limited the expansion of interesting experiments in the area of nurseries, day-care centres, pre-school education and mother-child care. If this trend continues, the result may be a loss of human capital which could be of significance for Latin America since the physical and intellectual development of an entire generation is threatened by the restrictions to which adjustment programmes give rise.

One final thought with regard to the income distribution problem, which is central to any equitable development policy, is that the development plans of the majority of the Latin American countries emphasize the fact that economic growth has not always been accompanied by a fair distribution of the wealth

created. This regressive phenomenon has chiefly affected the rural population, the marginal urban population and a fairly substantial proportion of the middle-income strata, which are today finding it difficult to satisfy their basic needs. This means that in the current situation, the process of regression is becoming increasingly pronounced.

The plans designed at the end of the 1970s incorporated several means of attacking this problem into the strategies outlined in them; the majority involved traditional proposals —proposals for generating stable, well-paid employment on the one hand, and for both expanding the coverage and raising the quality of services, on the other. In some cases, direct action was proposed involving State transfers to low-income groups through vouchers, coupons or stamps; other plans provided for the financing of programmes under which groups received new resources derived from changes in or additions to the tax system. Other plans retained traditional subsidies to consumption and to prices of goods and public services.

The direct beneficiaries of many of these programmes are families, and in the face of the crisis and in view of the kind of adjustment programmes which were adopted, the first budget reductions took place in those programmes and affected the compensations aimed at correcting the regressive distribution process. This, in addition to the marked deterioration in the living conditions of the so-called middle classes (salaried workers, young professionals, retirees and others), has increased social tensions, creating a situation in which women, because of their role in the family, usually have to confront increasingly conflictive situations.

If the foregoing is true, to what point are the policies conceived and designed in the context of the guidelines of the Plan of Action responsible for the changes which have occurred in the position of women in society? or, to ask this question in another way, does the planner really intervene in social process, or would the changes have occurred if the guidelines had never been drawn up? It would seem that the changes are a product of a comprehensive effort, in other words, they derive from the development process as a whole. The State has intervened in this process in order to stimulate growth and progress and, in the 1970s, imposed its own ideology in order to resolve the problem of sectors not benefiting from growth. Thus, the situation of women has indirectly benefited from the expansion of social expenditure and the growth of the productive apparatus, although plans and policies have not necessarily been designed and formulated in such a way that the strategy focuses on women, as suggested by the guidelines. However, the individual changes which have taken place in recent years in groups and institutions are due in good measure to the awareness promoted by the Plan of Action.

## **B. THE FAMILY AS A SUBJECT OF SOCIAL POLICIES**

The Regional Plan of Action attaches special importance to the family, considering it to be "the mediating institution between the individual and the social group"; for this reason it must be taken into account in defining policies aimed at improving the conditions in which women are incorporated into development.

The implementation of this instrument cannot, however, be evaluated without considering first the influence on family life of the social environment in which family members participate in economic activities and, second the psychological and socio-cultural aspects of the life of each family. In other words, the family develops in a social environment whose features and vitality tend to have an influence on the way the family is structured and develops.

### 1. The family and the processes of change

The following are some of the processes of change noted in the region which have an influence on the family:

a) The decline in mortality, the increase in life expectancy at birth and the relative stability of fertility in some sectors are tending to cause an increase in the average number of members in a family group.

b) These trends appear to affect urban and rural families differently. The significant rural-urban migration process noted in the region in the last two decades has brought greater pressure to bear on the poor urban family, whose stability and subsistence mechanisms have clearly been affected. The rural family, on the other hand, has been deprived of its most productive agents: young people of both sexes and adult males.

c) On the other hand, because the members of the middle-income urban strata have greater access to information and education, they have been able to control their fertility and "have attained families with an average number of members that is similar to that of some developed countries" (ECLAC, 1979).

d) The gradual process of agrarian modernization, in a situation of internal migration, affects the population pyramid of places of origin and destination, the levels of income and the living conditions of rural and poor urban families, the division of labour by sex and the exercise of authority within family units.

e) Industrialization has had a significant effect on the people's life style, particularly in sectors which have neither the training nor the capital to incorporate themselves into the process and make up the "poverty belts" of the majority of the region's cities.

f) Domestic work, basically the responsibility of women, has also become differentiated in terms of forms and conditions. In rural zones, women's contribution to subsistence farming is considered to be an extension of domestic work and is therefore, unpaid, unrecognized and unprotected by labour legislation as such. In urban zones, women in families in low-income sectors (i.e., poor families) who need to join the labour market must do so in conditions that are obviously disadvantageous —low levels of training and pay, lack of stability, little social protection, lack of help to perform the household tasks they have abandoned temporarily and double work load. Women from families in middle- and high-income strata in urban zones are in a very different situation. Since they have an income which makes the goods and services necessary to family life available to them, their problems basically relate to traditional concepts of the role of women and to attitudes and values in process of change, often endangering the stability of the family itself.

Thus, two variables are of key importance in studying the situation of a family in the region: its designation as a rural or as an urban family and its



position in the pyramid of income distribution. Despite the scarcity of data for use in making quantitative evaluations of family situations in Latin America and the Caribbean, some general observations may be made in this connection:

i) The average size of households is, in general, higher than it is in developed countries, and there are marked differences between urban and rural families and among families at different income levels. There is an inverse ratio between degree of urbanization and household size, with smaller households in the more highly urbanized zones. There is also an inverse ratio between the size and income of households, the lowest income households having the largest number of members, on average.

ii) The predominant type of household in the region is the nuclear household made up of parents and their children; however, the real structure of the family appears to be closely linked to income stratum and location (rural or urban). Households headed by males tend to be nuclear households, particularly in urban areas and middle- and high-income strata. The marriage rate is highest among such households. The structure of poor urban households varies because of the many factors noted above. When their male head is away from home, they are often headed by women or by a close male relative (brother, father, uncle, son) of the women of the household. Extended-family households, households headed by women and, in some cases, matriarchal households, are also common in this sector. Despite the increase in the marriage rate, *de facto* or consensual unions usually predominate in these households. As a result of the high migration rate, households headed by women with children and older people under their responsibility are common in rural areas. In those areas the marriage rate is lower than in urban areas, and young people join the labour market earlier.

iii) The degree of access to the social communications media is another variable that is important to modern family life. Access to up-to-date information on medical, economic and other topics, is also concentrated in urban families, and among the urban families, those in the middle- and upper-income strata.

## 2. The family and development programmes

Despite the diversity of factors influencing family life, the different models of family relationships and structures which are being established and the variety of programmes aimed in principle at the family, the development process in the region has not permitted the family to be considered as a social unit.

Several factors are responsible for this situation:

a) The majority of programmes and policies are aimed at specific family members (minors, women, young people or older people).

b) When programmes are aimed at the family group, they are usually based on a stereotyped, one-sided notion of family in which the nuances and differences noted above are not taken into account, the programmes being based on an ideal type of complete nuclear family.

c) The fact that it is assumed that the problems faced by different types of families can be attacked by similar means considerably reduces the efficiency and effectiveness of these programmes.

It would appear, therefore, that a welfare-oriented approach predominates in the region. This approach is characterized by temporary action aimed at individual members of a family group and often taken inconsistently and unsystematically. Very infrequently are plans carried out within a social policy, and even less often is the important relationship between the latter and the global development strategy made explicit.

### C. TYPES OF WOMEN

In view of the information provided above in respect of the situation of Latin American women and families, it seems appropriate to devote a few paragraphs to the women of today since many of their characteristics are the result of the various circumstances already discussed, and during the past decade, these women have, in one way or another, been the object of public policies aimed at improving their social situation in general.

In order to facilitate this task, the following categories have been used for classification purposes: spatial location, income level, sexual stereotypes, domestic work, participation in the labour market, family size, type of union, socialization, education and access to means of social communication.

The information presented here has been obtained from a number of studies published in recent years on Latin American and Caribbean families. It is only an analytical paradigm for systematizing the observations which have been made with respect to the situation under study.

For purposes of classification, the term "spatial location" is used to refer to location (whether urban or rural); "income level" relates to earned income or revenue; "sexual stereotypes" refers to culturally conditioned division of roles or tasks; "domestic work" is work performed to meet the needs of the family group; "participation in the labour market" refers to employment or tasks for which monetary remuneration is received; "family size" means the average number of family members; "type of union" relates to legally recognized marriages, consensual unions or common law marriages; "socialization" is divided into traditional socialization and modern socialization; "education" refers to the number of years of formal education received and "access to mass media" relates to the hours of exposure to the various media.

Experience shows that social stratification has a strong influence on classification; the various socioeconomic strata will therefore be used as a point of reference for this typology, and an attempt will be made to describe the behaviour of the various categories of women in terms of this variable. The initial division will be made on the basis of a nominal classification into low, middle and upper strata.

#### 1. Women in the low socioeconomic stratum

On the basis of spatial location, there are two types of women within this category: poor rural women and poor urban women. Each of these types is subject to further subdivision. In this case, we will consider peasant women in tropical zones, women from the Andean highlands, women from marginal urban groups who have recently migrated to urban areas, and the traditional category of poor urban women.

a) *Peasant women in tropical zones*

These women are members of family groups whose way of life is based on the cultivation of small plots of land and whose monetary earnings from the goods produced fall below the critical poverty line established by each society. In their lives, the effect of the division of roles and tasks by sex is clear. Women work full time, performing domestic chores and tasks relating to reproduction; their workday is uninterrupted, without a moment's rest. They participate in the labour market on an irregular basis as paid day labourers or, if they are very young, as domestic workers. Once these women marry (in most cases, their marriages are stable), their chances of participating in activities other than those of the home are lessened and, on average, they have more than five children. Their educational level continues to be low (one or two years of formal education, if any) and their socialization is of the traditional sort: submission to husbands, little initiative and capacity for risk. Subject to the level of development of the country in which they live, they have limited access to most media, but high exposure to radio.

b) *Peasant women in the Andean highlands*

The peasant women in the Andean highlands share many of the characteristics of peasant women in tropical zones. Nonetheless, because of their cultural tradition and socio-historic background, special emphasis should be placed on the difficulties they face with respect to their integration into society as a result of language barriers which limit their access to formal education and the rigid stereotypes which relegate them to a secondary role within the family group despite the fact that they efficiently perform their role as commercial agent in selling the various agricultural goods or crafts produced by the group. The roles they are expected to play emerge clearly in the socialization process; they marry early (between the ages of 13 and 22), their marriages are very stable, and they have a large number of children. The educational level is low, and there is greater resistance than in other groups to educating girls. Access to information and exposure to mass media are limited to radio programmes.

c) *Women from marginal groups, who have recently migrated*

The rural origins of women who migrate to urban areas profoundly affect their position within the network of linkages between industry and services found in urban centres in Latin America. When they come to the city, their limited experience, knowledge and skills leave them to enter the informal sector of the labour market; they are employed as domestic workers with few, if any, social security benefits or are employed on their own account. Excellent studies have been conducted on the marginal economy made up of vendors of food, coffee, trinkets, lottery tickets and other articles that provide them with an income far below the established minimum; this income, when combined with other earnings, allows them to support their family group on a hand-to-mouth basis. Housing and health conditions are inadequate. Once a (fairly unstable)

consensual union has been formed, families with over five children are not uncommon due to the couple's low educational level and lack of access to information. In most cases, the woman is the head of the household. Women in this position experience the greatest degree of contrast between their socialization and the stereotypes characteristic of their place in the social setting from which they sprang and their daily experience, in that they are now living in a highly competitive society involving totally different patterns and ways of life. In some instances, the adaptation process may take over a generation.

d) *Poor women of urban background*

These women are second- or third-generation urban dwellers whose vertical social mobility has been obstructed by various factors, one of which is the slow growth of overall wealth. Their living conditions are usually better, and they generally live in stable neighbourhoods where most services are available. Perhaps the most important factor is that, although they are more highly educated and better informed, they continue to have few skills; this hinders their access to stable and better-paid jobs and, as a result, they work in the manufacturing industry (textiles and garments, specially), in the services sector and in trade. They are more often legally married, than women in the group described above, and their marriages are more stable, their socialization has been urban, and, like the women in the preceding group, they are strongly influenced by mass media, in this case television and printed matter with mass distribution. They are much better informed and are capable of launching movements for community rights. In democratic societies, they participate openly in the electoral process. Their relationships with their husband or male partner are based on criteria of much greater equality than those of women in the groups described above.

In recent years, the women described here have been the object of various public policies relating to basic health care, increased school enrolment, technical assistance and, in some cases, even integral development programmes, such as those directed at agrarian reform or urban development. Thus, their place in society has been the object of profound changes in the social structure.

Thus, the results obtained with respect to the status of women have varied from one society to another. In some societies, women may be better educated; in others, they may have greater access to mass media; in still others, they may have greater mobility. Nevertheless, many of the factors discussed above continued to be obstacles which must be eliminated. All these women also experience some degree of hardship with respect to their living standards and quality of life, the very limited amount of free time at their disposal and socio-cultural deprivation. Their level of participation continues to be low, with the exception with those living in societies that are undergoing rapid social change, where collective mobilization efforts soon result in improvements in the behaviour of some of the variables discussed. Special mention should be made of the complications which arise in urban settings as a result of the diversity of roles played by women. Such difficulties are encountered in all social strata, although their complexity may vary, and they constitute a social policy problem which has still not been satisfactorily resolved.

## 2. Women in the middle socioeconomic stratum

This category includes the various types of women who make up the so-called middle class in Latin America; three categories of women will be described here—small- and medium-scale rural producers, urban wage-earners and young professional women.

### a) *Small- and medium-scale rural producers*

As in the preceding case, account will be taken of physical location: there are women living in rural areas who are wives and daughters of highly productive medium- and small-scale landowners whose position as such provides them with a sufficient income for them to be considered as members of the rural middle class. This group's level of education, access to information and exposure to mass media are substantially greater than those of the peasant women described above. However, the influence of tradition on their socialization and the stereotypes relating to their roles and tasks may pose a considerable obstacle to their participation in the administration and management of farms or estates, in external business relations and in the performance of certain tasks which the men in the family consider to be a male prerogative. The most serious conflicts between generations—between fathers and their daughters—arise in this regard. In terms of the various socio-historic contexts involved, there was a certain degree of reticence until recently about providing girls with the education which is so closely linked to vertical social mobility, and preference was given to boys. The families in this group are stable, legally-constituted and made up of three or four members.

### b) *Urban wage-earners*

If they are able to compete and fit into their surroundings, these women must necessarily be better educated and more highly qualified and have specific skills. This makes it possible for them to participate in the formal labour market as skilled labourers, office workers and employees in services and businesses. Such jobs provide them with a stable income, which gives them independence, causes them to delay marriage, allows them to study and obtain training and permits those who are heads of their household to assume their responsibility with greater confidence. Their higher income makes it possible for them to find adequate housing and to acquire home appliances which make housework easier; in addition, the question of use of spare time arises. In their marriages, and especially in those of the younger generations, tasks and responsibilities are shared, decisions are no longer taken only by the husband and the economic burden of supporting the household is also shared, which gives rise to new rights and duties. This points to changes in both stereotypes and socialization. The nuclear family with two or three children becomes subject to the pressures of a consumer society, which may lead to problems and to the dissolution of the marriage. Problems arising from stagnation, inflation and the loss of a feeling of progress are much more obvious in this socioeconomic class because, since its members are better educated and informed and their exposure to the various media is greater, their expectations and needs are many and varied, and they look

for short- or medium-term solutions. Frustrations may therefore lead to conflict, and women's capacity for organization and mobilization may play an important role in fostering change. Other problems for women in this stratum can be job and wage discrimination and the need to provide for young children increases where there is no family support in the form of grandmothers or aunts to watch them. This often makes it necessary for women to withdraw from the labour force temporarily until the children start to go to school.

c) *Young professional women*

The women in this category are perhaps the clearest evidence of the changes which have taken place in our societies over the past 20 years. They are independent young women, free from family supervision, responsible for their own sexual and emotional lives in a way hitherto unknown in the Latin American context and represent a permanent source of conflict between the generations. This group breaks with the traditional schemes of socialization, division of labour and stereotypes more than the other groups. The fact that they hold a university degree or its equivalent allows its members —so long as there is economic growth— to obtain better paid jobs, which open up new possibilities in so far as their relationship with their husband or partner is concerned. Marriage is not regarded as a prerequisite for happiness and emotional stability; indeed, single mothers are socially accepted. The increased knowledge and information at their disposal allows the women in this group to organize their time better, to have leisure time and to take an active role in various groups and associations. Despite their liberation, however, they are still subject to job and wage discrimination.

The types described do not exhaust the possible combinations of variables used for analysis. The descriptions, do, however, contain elements which all women in the urban middle class have in common. The first of these is that their incorporation into the labour market depends on a combination of factors: economic growth, skills and changes in society's attitudes so that they may be accepted without discrimination. The second element is that their aspirations and expectations —which are the result of increased exposure to the mass media, and education and information— are often manipulated by publicity, advertising and fashion. The third element they have in common is that the family as such is constantly subject to tension due to differences between the level of education and income of the couple; the new roles that women may wish to play, which may run counter to their traditional roles, or the system's inability to respond promptly to their many expectations. Finally, the education and care of children and the aged becomes a source of varying degrees of worry, guilt and conflict within contemporary urban society.

### 3. Women in the upper socioeconomic stratum

No clear distinction will be drawn here between urban and rural areas because membership of this stratum bestows traits which are both different and similar. In most cases, for example, large-scale rural land owners and their families live in urban centres at least part, if not all, of the time. A different kind of lifestyle is therefore not involved, as it was in the cases discussed previously. Moreover, the

members of this class are not the object of focused or specific public policies.

Either because they have a source of unearned income or because they are highly paid for their professional services or activities in business or industry, the women belonging to the upper socioeconomic stratum form a much smaller group than the women in categories described above, owing to the region's regressive pattern of income distribution. The concerns of these women are not of a material nature.

Some significant changes have been observed among housewives who have decided to return to university life as adults. In most cases, these women had abandoned their studies 10 or 15 years previously when, according to their socialization, family tradition and class, the only role they were called upon to play was that of housewife. After playing this role, they may decide to return to school in order to complete their professional training in response to pressure from those around them. The results are surprising: an extremely good academic performance, as well as active participation and concern with the changes taking place in society, which in some cases leads them to adopt radical positions in opposition to their class; these positions may even lead them to end their marriages.

At other times, these changes have caused women to become interested in professional endeavours and to involvement in public activities as members of deliberative bodies which play an active role in defending just causes (environmental protection, community services, volunteer work, participation in welfare or cultural institutions and organizations, etc.).

Behaviour patterns, couple relationships and the education of children have been revolutionized basically as a result of the education received in the individual progress made by the type of woman described in this section, the result being the building of a more egalitarian and democratic society.

### Conclusion

The types described are not ideal types; categories have been combined in order to account for a multitude of subjects and objects of policies. Therefore, when an appeal is made to the region in the Plan of Action to take action in respect to the situation of women, the complexity of this entire area cannot be overlooked. It is extremely difficult to assess the progress made since the material examined does not really reveal to what extent the guidelines take into account the various aspects of the subject of women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### D. CHANGES IN LEGISLATION

At the outset of the Decade, law was one of the areas where the existence of complex forms of discrimination against women could be seen most clearly.

In the Plan of Action it was considered necessary to eliminate these inequalities, it being recognized that although legal measures in and of themselves are not enough to bring about equality, they do at least provide an important indication of the relationships which should exist in society and the steps to be taken in eliminating *de facto* discrimination.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1979 and entered into effect on 3 September 1981, establishes compulsory legal norms for those States acceding to it and provides guiding principles aimed at fostering a heightened awareness of the problem on the part of those governments which were not party to the Convention.

The principles of equality are recognized in all the constitutions of the region as indispensable to an ideal society. In the real world, however, it has been demonstrated that the formation of egalitarian relations is a long and difficult process which is yet to run its full course.

In order to assess the actual legislative situation in the region, the status of Latin American and Caribbean women has been analysed in relation to the exercise of political, civil, labour and penal rights, so that it has been possible to observe the impact which the recommendations made for the Decade have had within this legal framework.

### 1. Political rights

Political rights are recognized in the region without discrimination between men and women, despite the fact that some constitutions may not contain any express statement which openly refers to this matter. In such cases, the universally accepted principle that "where the law makes no distinction, neither should those interpreting it" is applied.

#### a) *The right to vote*

As a result of untiring effort, the right to vote had already become a reality by the 1970s. It is nonetheless important to point out that this victory was won only gradually over a period of more than 50 years, the first country to give women the vote having done so in 1929.

In the Caribbean countries, suffrage was obtained before independence; in those territories which are not independent, the right to vote is exercised without discrimination between the sexes.

By way of example, some figures indicating the percentage of women casting votes in the region and based on information compiled by the competent electoral bodies can be reviewed. The proportion of the female population which appears on the electoral rolls is much higher than that which actually participates:

Bolivia (urban population)	(1980)	80%
Chile	(1970)	65%/70%
Ecuador	(1979)	70%
Guatemala		30.7%
Honduras		41%
Panama	(1983)	85%
Venezuela	(1978)	92.7%

*Acquisition of the right to vote has certainly been an important victory, but it is not equivalent to the true exercise of political rights or to active participation in the decision-making process.*



It has been hypothesized that the democratic processes of voter mobilization contribute to the incorporation of women; but their incorporation also depends on education and cultural factors which play a role in the awakening of expectations as well as in the acceptance of their participation.

## b) *Citizenship*

Natural citizenship of a country is a recognized right for both men and women on an equal basis if they were born within that country's territory or if their mother or father were citizens. Legal citizenship entails fulfilling the requirements of the constitution of the country concerned. Countries differ in their treatment of married persons. The right to extend their own citizenship to their foreign spouses is conferred equally upon both women and men by the constitutions of five countries. Four constitutions make no mention of this, and another six recognize this right only for men. This method of acquiring citizenship is not provided for in the legislation of another four countries.

Recent illegal migrations on a massive level, confrontation and social instability create difficult situations and pose problems with respect to nationality and citizenship; women and children are the most affected by and least protected in such cases. In such circumstances it becomes necessary to attempt to establish a closer relationship between principles of equality and complex social conditions if equity is really to serve as a hallmark for development and peace.

## 2. Civil rights

Family law is a key element in relation to women since marriage often affects the legal standing of women, both individually and in their relations with their children, as well as in connection with the administration of assets, etc.

In Articles 15 and 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, men and women are recognized as having equal civil capacity before the law and equal opportunities for exercising that capacity, especially in so far as their marriage and descendants are concerned.

Economic changes, social developments and technological innovations are reflected in the family so that the status relating to this dynamic element of society must be adapted to the actual situation in which it acts. Within the legislative framework, new legal instruments have been introduced both for legally constituted and *de facto* marriages, such as common law marriages, which are known as consensual or *de facto* unions or as free conjugal unions or *de facto* conjugal unions.

Children born to parents who are not united in marriage are given the same rights as enjoyed by those born in wedlock; the freedom to recognize children born of extra-marital unions is established as a basic principle of justice; and it is recognized that it is of primary importance for a person's development to be able to identify his or her progenitors. The Convention set forth a series of guiding principles and specific criteria relating to the elimination of discrimination based solely on marital status.

The influence of Roman law and the Napoleonic Code made itself felt in the Latin American region until well into the twentieth century. Interestingly enough, most of the constitutions provide for equal rights and the elimination of

all types of discrimination based on sex, race or religion. Legislation has not necessarily developed in tandem with these principles, however, and conflicting situations continue to exist in this area.

The Anglo-Saxon influence is also felt in the region, especially in the Caribbean, where customary law reflects Western society's vision of an ideal family and where the revolution in social rights has progressively led to the incorporation of principles of equality in relation to the status of wives and the authority of husbands, even though discrimination among ethnic or religious groups persists.

Despite the progress made during the Decade, instances of discrimination and inconsistencies remain; these problems will be discussed below.

a) *Husband's authority over his wife*

For cultural reasons, in customary law women have the right to add their husband's surname to their own; they should not be sanctioned for not doing so, however. This is a right, not an obligation, and it ceases to exist upon dissolution of the marriage. The laws of nine countries do not make it compulsory for women to use their husband's surname, but in another eight countries women continue to be obliged to do so. It is important to point out, however, that women usually continue to use their maiden name, as a means of maintaining continuity in their professional work and academic endeavours.

The authority of husbands over their wife is maintained in the legislation of five countries in the sense that the authorization of the husband is required for women to incur civil obligations, whereas another six countries have amended their legislation to give men and women equal civil capacity.

b) *Domicile*

The legislation of most of the Spanish-American countries recognizes the right of both parties to establish a couple's domicile by mutual consent; in the case of a conflict, however, they usually either give preference to the husband's choice or do not make any clear provision in that regard. Choice by mutual agreement is provided for in the legislation of seven countries in the region.

c) *Parental responsibility*

Women's rights with respect to the person and goods of their children are one of most sensitive areas where discrimination is concerned or at least one of the areas which gives rise to the greatest conflict. The concept of *patria potestas* has its origin in Roman law, and its meaning is very specific; it is the power conferred upon the *paterfamilias*, which entails more rights than obligations. The granting of greater rights to minors and the taking of a more active role by women have led to changes in what was once an unquestionable right, which remains in the form of the authority shared by the father and mother. The influence of this social change on legal norms has resulted in the incorporation of this provision into the legislation of seven countries.

In another seven countries, *patria potestas* is exercised exclusively by the father, and the mother may exercise that power only in the absence of the father or for compelling reasons.

The major problem arises in the case of children born out of wedlock in relation to the ability of married women and men to recognize children born prior to marriage or during a marriage which has been dissolved. Another variation of this problem relates to the difference between children born of an adulterous relationship and natural children and their recognition. Neither voluntary recognition nor an investigation into the child's maternity is usually allowed when it is a case of attributing a child to a married woman. This provision is determined by the fact that the laws of Latin American countries are derived from Roman law, which provided that "*mater semper certa est, pateris est quen nuptiae demonstrant*" (maternity is certainty, paternity must be demonstrated on evidence of union with the mother).

The traditional forms of classifying children have now been eliminated in nearly all the countries of the region; a very important factor in this connection has been the growing recognition of the unjust situation in which the system placed the younger children. Nonetheless, some forms of discrimination remain, one example being provisions which allow a married father, but not a married mother, to recognize a child born out of wedlock. A maternity inquiry in the case of a married woman is tacitly prohibited in four countries. Adultery is regarded as a crime in most penal codes, and the child constitutes irrefutable proof of that offense. Thus, recognition detracts from the right of children to know and be recognized by their father.

Moreover, in countries where the father retains *patria potestas*, the mother often prefers that recognition be withheld so that she will not lose the child; i.e., she chooses to remain the child's sole guide and guardian. This is quite common in situations where the mother is the only permanent parent, and there are a number of temporary fathers.

As previously noted, this is one of the most controversial areas with respect to the issue of equal rights; although the general principle is that responsibility for the children should be shared, the inconsistencies are obvious.

The provisions, although some of them are no more than the unconstructive results of traditional attitudes, clearly illustrate how hard it is for women to accede to their civil capacity.

#### d) *Contesting paternity or maternity*

In five countries, the paternity of a child can only be challenged by the man. Scientific progress in this field has given rise to significant changes. For example, one country's civil code states that the husband cannot disavow a child by claiming impotency, unless his condition is manifest and permanent. Even then failure to recognize a child is not allowed when conception has taken place by means of the artificial insemination of the woman with her husband's authorization. Nor can a husband disclaim a child by contending and proving that his wife has committed adultery, unless adultery occurred during the period when the child was conceived, and he can also prove other facts and circumstances which together provide credible evidence that excludes his paternity.

Artificial insemination is dealt with in the legislation of three countries on the basis of the principle that the woman is the centre of protection and prevention in all matters relating to maternity. Although it is not possible to get

ahead of the future, it is possible to keep pace with it. The first successful experiment with test tube babies was conducted in England in 1978, and as of 1982, only 3% of the experiments conducted have been successful.

e) *Guardianship*

Most countries recognize the ability of men and women to act as guardians on an equal basis. Some differences do exist, however, which warrant discussion. In one country, male children become the guardians of their father or mother in the absence of the other spouse, but this is not the case for female children.

In another country, a single woman can refuse to act as guardian solely on the basis of her sex, and a married woman must have her husband's authorization in order to act as a guardian; such authorization is not necessary, however, in the case of children which the two have had together.

In another body of legislation, exemplary behaviour is cited as one of the conditions for acting as a guardian; therefore a woman divorced on grounds of adultery is not allowed to serve in this capacity. In yet another country, a woman cannot agree to serve as a guardian unless her husband consents.

If rights are to be made equal, authorization should also be required in the case of married men and older children, and this requirement should be waived in the event of remarriage. Not only do the new laws contain provisions in this respect, they even place the paternal and maternal grandparents on an equal footing. Because in nearly all cases it has gradually been established that people legally come of age at 18, new complications have arisen in connection with these problems so that the establishment of equal rights cannot be postponed.

f) *De facto union*

*De facto* unions have been very widespread in the region and have commonly been referred to in the laws of countries of the region, and such unions have been accorded legal status. Illiteracy, rural isolation and the scarcity of economic resources are some of the factors which increased such unions or at least do nothing to decrease them. Denying their existence or failing to take them into account is damaging, particularly to children and women who lack legal protection and material resources.

The constitutions of five countries make *de facto* union equal to legal marriage, subject to its duration, the amount of recognition it received and whether or not offspring are produced. Two countries established this principle in the recent reforms of their respective civil codes by referring to family protection in the broad sense.

g) *Dissolution of marriage*

Marriage is dissolved by separation, divorce or death. Divorce which leaves the spouses free to remarry, exists in all but three countries of the region; in one other nation, where marriage in the Catholic Church has legal effect, only those who have contracted civil marriage may obtain a divorce. The Catholic Church may annul a marriage in very specific cases, without reference to civil law.

One striking fact is the presence in the legislation of all the countries considered of a set of clauses stating the conditions in which life together is

impossible. Mutual consent has not been readily accepted as grounds for dissolving the bonds of marriage; however, a separation of three years or more is beginning to be regarded as substantial grounds for resolving an irregular situation.

Discrimination is more often discernible in the application of laws than in their wording. For example, adultery on the part of the women is grounds for separation or divorce in four countries, but in the case of men, only if they live openly with a woman not their wife and the situation creates a scandal. Many of these provisions are difficult to apply because of traditional permissive attitudes towards men in most of the region's societies. A significant fact which demonstrates the impact had by the Decade was the repeal in 1978, of an article in the civil code of one country which provided that a woman would forfeit her share of community property if it were proved that she had committed adultery; the proofs of adultery were defined in the same way for both spouses. There is still a certain amount of discrimination against women, who receive alimony only if not responsible for the divorce.

The consequences of divorce, which most affect women are problems relating to minor children and to jointly held property. In so far as minor children are concerned, the guardianship of children under seven years of age is usually awarded to the mother. The problem arises in relation to *patria potestas*, as has already been discussed. The sharing of *patria potestas* on an equal basis has had a very healthy effect, in that it removes the issue of the children and their welfare from the context of the divorce and removes the couple in their role of father and mother from the problems which exist between husband and wife.

There are serious information difficulties with respect to the laws governing property held by a couple in common and a shortage of the legal studies needed to make a comparative analysis. The laws governing jointly held property are those which regulate property interests between the spouses and between the couple and third parties.

In legal systems in which these regulations tend to be more fair the concept of a system of deferred co-ownership may be found. This system functions like a system of separate ownership, but the property is disposed of as though if it were jointly held. Property may be administered and disposed of separately (mutual consent is required under the legislation of some countries) under a deed drawn up for that purpose. Joint property is split between the spouses or their heirs. One country has used this system since 1888. In 1968, another country established a system of shared property, but the husband administers goods whose origin cannot be easily determined. During the period 1946-1982, other countries set up similar systems.

The significance of this approach is that it provides equal facilities for exercising property rights and an equal share in the property to be disposed of.

Once the marriage bond has been dissolved, mutual assistance and understanding are sought as ideals in dealing with the frustrations of a divorce. One country provides for assistance between the former spouses according to their ability. In four other countries, the guilty spouse is responsible for supporting the innocent one. In another country, the spouse who is incapable of self-support is entitled to one fifth of the other spouse's property, provided that the former was not responsible for the divorce and even then if he or she is suffering from a serious illness.

In one country, women who are declared to be innocent are entitled to alimony as long as they live "honourably" and do not remarry. If a woman is guilty and her spouse is indigent she must support him (the law does not specify what is meant by an "honourable" life). In this case, the concept of "honourability" refers to fidelity, i.e., lifetime fidelity to someone to whom one is no longer married since the marriage bonds have been dissolved, in most cases through no fault of the wife.

In three countries, no distinctions are drawn on the basis of sex; the laws of these countries confine themselves to noting the need for mutual aid when means of support are lacking. It should be pointed out that it is fair for such obligations to cease upon remarriage and that no discrimination is involved. This is not, however, true in respect of requirements of proof that an ex-wife is leading an honourable life since cultural variables usually make social conduct a subjective matter.

One of the major problems involved in the dissolution of a marriage relates to the protection and support of the children. The laws of most Latin American and Caribbean countries provide for support for children who are under age. This obligation is often not complied with voluntarily, however. Resorting to the courts for its enforcement creates conflicts for women, since their former husbands often use the child support payments to bargain for the affection of the children and to interfere in the organization of family life. Often, women consider the possibility of being the sole breadwinner for the family so that they can avoid any contact with their former husbands. In both cases, the resulting insecurity and ambiguity have an adverse effect on the women and their children.

### 3. Labour laws

The 1979 Convention refers extensively to the elimination of any sort of discrimination against women in relation to their inalienable right to work. It stresses the need to foster conditions in which work enables people to live with dignity and the right to social security is recognized.

Motherhood is of special concern since, while it relates directly to women, it affects society in general.

When women began to work, they worked primarily in agricultural or domestic activities, but in the nineteenth century, they entered the field of industrial labour, along with children under seven years of age.

In the twentieth century since women have access to jobs in both the services sector and industry, their share in the total labour force is increasing, especially in the more highly developed countries and it is estimated that by the year 2000 it will amount to 35%. However, the division of male and female labour into separate categories had an impact on legislation in that differences were established with regard to promotion and training and cultural barriers were erected on the basis of what was felt to be an irreconcilable dichotomy between home and work.

It is now recognized in the legislation of every country that women who work outside the home have the same rights as all other workers.

a) *Labour contracts*

The right to work has gradually come to be regulated by public laws which contain provisions relating to public workers, i.e., not subject to the will of the parties and impossible to renounce either unilaterally or bilaterally. Once a woman has reached legal age, she has full legal powers to enter into an employment contract; minors enter into such contracts through their legal representatives. In some countries a woman must have her husband's authorization in order to exercise her right to work. This requirement was repealed in 1981 in one country, at which time it was established that all women, whatever their marital status, could exercise that right.

The legislation governing environmental conditions tends to exclude women from work involving physical effort and unhealthy conditions. One example in this respect is the "chair law" promulgated in one country in 1918, which made it mandatory to have a given number of chairs so that female employees could rest whenever their duties allowed them to do so. This law was later extended to include men.

Night work for women was banned in some labour codes in 1949. This provision has been regarded as anachronistic and discriminatory by many women inasmuch as it limits their job and promotion opportunities.

The legislation of most countries retains provisions relating to the protection of women while working at night. This results in labour discrimination since it keeps women from receiving the additional compensation paid for this type of work and from being considered for promotion in their jobs.

In relation to economic conditions, women's rights to equal opportunities and equal pay are set forth in such international agreements as the Preamble to the United Nations Charter, the ILO Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation (1958), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

A survey conducted by ILO in 1977 showed that in the development countries women are paid between 50% and 80% of what men receive for the same work. Discrimination is associated with delays in professional promotion and with women's ignorance concerning laws designed to assist them. Moreover, the wages earned by women are still regarded as a contribution to the family budget rather than a specific amount which is owed for work done. This casual attitude extends to hours of work, vacations, welfare benefits and dismissal.

b) *Protection for mothers*

In most countries of the region, the law protects pregnant women by prohibiting their dismissal and providing for a paid rest period before and after having a baby.

Although it cannot be denied that Latin American countries have made an effort in this respect and have progressed, it should be noted that such protection is accorded only to women in organized work.

The protection provided includes a period of time for nursing the child and the establishment of day-care centres near the place of employment so that it is possible to care for the child as well as to sustain the necessary mother-child emotional relationship.

All women entitled to the benefits provided by social security institutions have the right to free medical care during pregnancy, the birth itself and during the time when they are nursing the child. There are many such women in all the countries because, in addition to women workers, the wives of workers and employees are also insured.

Dismissals of women because they become pregnant continue to occur in the region according to the offices in charge of matters relating to women and children in the various ministries of labour. It is difficult to demonstrate this with statistics, however, because such figures do not provide a picture of the real situation and because employers often use unjustified grounds for dismissal or psychological threats in order to accomplish the same thing. Moreover, because women do not know their rights, they do not report such occurrences at the proper time and so cannot avail themselves of the legal protection to which they are entitled.

In addition to being an acquired right, the protection of mothers is in the interest of everybody inasmuch as it represents the united support of society for human life.

Since the birth process should not be considered as an illness, legislative measures constitute only a few of the measures taken to protect mothers. It will never be possible to provide protection for all aspects of motherhood despite the claims made in this regard.

In actual fact, there is some reticence about hiring women workers and professionals of childbearing age even if the possibilities of their becoming mothers is not adduced; fortuitous factors, such as the absence of vacancies or other factors relating to the job sought being used to justify the refusal to hire them.

In most countries of the region, pressure groups, usually composed of women, are demanding that the amount of paid time-off after childbirth should be extended. This is a complicated problem which must be viewed as a whole; although, on the one hand, the emotional relationship between mothers and their children would benefit by such a measure, on the other hand, it might mean women would be excluded from the labour market in order to avoid added expense and attendant problems. Perhaps this is a case more for social security than for legislation; in any case, it depends on employment conditions which vary from country to country.

With respect to mother-child care, the legislation of a number of countries requires companies to provide day-care centres and nurseries if they have a minimum of between 30 and 50 women employees. This has contributed to the development of such services, albeit at a slow pace; on the other hand, however, this legal requirement can be evaded simply by employing fewer women. Moreover, as a result of urban mobility, women often do not exert steady pressure in this respect because they prefer to work close to home.

The real need to demand such services has made itself felt, and most benefit clauses in collective contracts recognize that need; it is also provided for in certain ILO agreements.



Social dynamics have dictated that this is a need not only for working women but for working families, the family being the unit responsible for bringing up children. Such services should therefore be seen as improving the situation of working families rather than solely as a benefit for women workers. In one country, the adoption of this global approach has been behind the creation of special funds for children under six years of age.

In its application of laws to protect mothers, the region has shown respect for women and families since these laws are perhaps more stringently enforced than other laws, probably because of their specificity and clarity. Nevertheless, in some countries such protection is still lacking for women farm hands and domestic workers, who often perform hard labour throughout their pregnancy and recommence such work only a few days after child birth. It is difficult to enforce the law in these sectors, where women often work by the job, are unaware of the protection to which they, as mothers, are entitled by law and lack the economic resources to seek legal assistance.

c) *"Juris tantum" situation*

A large group of unprotected women workers is made up of women who work at home and domestic workers.

i) *Women who work at home.* Work at home is carried out by women who are housewives and cannot leave their homes. For some countries it is advantageous from an economic point of view to supply the worker with no more than the necessary raw materials while she herself bears the cost of machinery, maintenance, paid rest periods and vacations, sick leave and medical care.

In this type of work, which is known as the "putting out system" or "domestic out-work", the legally existing contractual work relationship tends to be disguised so that the worker appears to be an independent, small business woman working on her own, but if this situation is analysed in detail it may be seen that since job dependence does exist and there is therefore a contract and even when there is no document, there is a tacit disciplinary and legal obligation and, moreover, an obligation in respect of social security. The same thing applies to women who do piecework in the rural sector.

ii) *Domestic workers.* Their services are employed in caring for someone else's home. They have a long history in Latin America and the Caribbean. There are many of them and they work at a disadvantage. They have been neglected in labour legislation and only occasionally are they given guarantees, and then of a very limited nature.

The fact that they are incorporated into the life of the family has an influence on the relationship created by the contract and on the grounds for its dissolution. In particular, it is very difficult to define "improper conduct" as grounds for dismissal without compensation. However, substantial progress has been made in that the payment of social benefits is increasingly required and vacations are mandatory. This labour sector is made up mostly of workers with little training and heavy family responsibilities. Emphasis must be placed on the need to grant greater professional status to "domestic service" and to provide those engaged in it with social security and retirement benefits, since from any legal point of view, a labour contract relationship does exist.

d) *Organization of women workers*

At the ILO Regional Conference held in Medellín in 1979, mention was made of the failure of women to participate in trade union activities, and this was named as one of the factors which limited their integration into economic life.

Legislation in the area of professional associations covers all workers equally and makes no distinction between the members of such groups on the basis of sex. Participation in trade unions is difficult for women, first because they must add their union activities to their domestic work and second because of the difficulties they encounter in performing executive roles. During the decade, promotional efforts have been carried out by the ILO and other bodies.

e) *Economic value of housework*

The tasks performed by the housewife are broad and complex and would be legally protected if they were carried out by third parties. There are few references to this work in labour legislation. Civil legislation recognizes domestic work as a family asset. Some developed countries have raised the need to extend social security to housewives in the form of family allowances or supplementary allocations. Obviously a housewife's situation depends enormously on her social stratum, but no one can deny that the work done by women in the home is a social resource.

One matter which has not yet been considered in the region is the right of the working family to recreation. There are institutions which promote recreational activities, but they are limited and no provision is made for them under law.

Many of the social clauses in collective contracts raise the need for the promotion and retraining of workers. In the case of women, this is crucial, since they usually leave the job market in the years when they are having children and caring for them and re-enter it at a disadvantage as regards training. There are many training centres in the region, but this is not the result of any real policy for granting women incentives or for improving their lot in this area.

#### 4. Penal law

In Article 2(g) of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the signatory countries undertake to repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

Laws relating to violence are usually applied indiscriminately to men and women. Differences arise specifically in the concept of women as victims, especially where rape, kidnapping, infidelity and abortion are concerned.

In cases, of physical abuse, which occur frequently within families, defense of ones honour and emotional responses in the face of an attack on one's prestige and trustworthiness are usually considered to be attenuating factors. The response of society is weak regarding the victimizer, the problem being failure to denounce the offence since the "dishonoured" woman has the weight of public opinion against her.

With regard to rape, it has generally been said that only women can be victims, but the reality is that men too can be subjected to sexual violence. Some

penal codes use the term "differentiated carnal violence" applying it equitably to both sexes.

Adultery and murder in response to adultery still have very powerful attenuating factors favourable to men associated with them. Thus, a man who kills his spouse because of infidelity may hope to be released without substantial problems, but a women in the same situation cannot entertain the same hopes. This is supported by the tradition that infidelity in men is a natural act or is at least condonable by society.

Prostitution is also of interest because of the cultural connotations still associated with it. In the majority of countries it is prohibited and punished under law, and therefore definite rules are laid down with regard to the women who practice it, but none with respect to the client or the person who incites to prostitution. Few bodies of law suggest ways of rehabilitating prostitutes. That aspect of prostitution upon which the greatest emphasis is laid is perhaps the examination to which those practicing the profession must submit.

Legislation is very vague as regards procuring or the corruption of minors, and here again, nothing is said about policies or actions designed to rehabilitate offenders and prevent behaviour of this kind.

In the case of infanticide, explicit reference is made to the mother, but at no time is the father, who might be indirectly responsible for the crime, linked to it.

The legislation of some countries provides for reductions of sentence in cases where "honour" may be involved.

Induced abortion is regarded as a criminal and therefore punishable act under law. Therapeutic abortion is only accepted when necessary in order to save the mother's life, and eugenic abortion when pregnancy results from rape. Nowhere in the legislation of Latin America and the Caribbean is abortion dealt with as a method of birth control. Without doubt this has been one of the most controversial areas during the Decade. Ethical, social and religious considerations and the fact that little systematic research has been carried out in this area mean that pronouncements made with regard to this problem tend to be extreme. It should be noted that single women of low educational and economic level are the most affected.

No provision is made in the legislation of any country for abandonment of a pregnant woman, which is generally a powerful contributor to induced abortion.

In the legislation of Latin American and Caribbean countries, abortion is classified as a crime, with sentences varying from one to four years.

Some codes explicitly regulate situations involving abuse of authority and make reference to situations of aggravated rape, especially against persons in the custody or under the vigilance of the offender.

#### a) *Punishment of women*

The need to take account of the fact that a woman is pregnant or a mother is recognized in the legislation of few countries. Most of these countries maintain special institutions for women, but the provisions made for mothers leave a lot to be desired. In some of these institutions small children can be lodged near or even with their mothers up to the age of four. In addition, women usually bear a double burden since social pressure causes their own family to reject them, and

their children behave similarly. Rarely do we see a man move near a prison where his spouse or girl friend is being held in order to offer her permanent support, as women frequently do. Social rehabilitation is still a problem not tackled in all its complexity.

b) *Evaluation*

There is no doubt that the *de jure* and the *de facto* treatment of women are two different matters. In general, the legislative progress achieved in the region has been made in the search to establish equitable relations between men and women. However, experience shows that the laws are inadequate except as a means of expressing an ideal.

At the end of the decade it was agreed *inter alia*, that:

- i) No one shall deprive a woman of her right to vote, and in countries where it is obligatory to vote, any attempt to impede the exercise of that right may be penalized.
- ii) The age of majority shall be the same for both sexes and the same rights and responsibilities shall be conferred when it is attained.
- iii) No one shall attempt to prevent a woman from exercising her profession or occupation.
- iv) Legislative changes shall be aimed increasingly at equalizing responsibilities with regard to parental authority over children, administration of the family's assets and the establishment of the domicile or household.
- v) Patriarchal authority shall be replaced by parental authority.
- vi) Equality of labour rights shall apply throughout the region; however, its applicability shall depend on an educational and informational process at all levels, both for employers and employees.
- vii) Protection of mothers shall be guaranteed by legislation throughout the region; however, the equation of giving birth to illness, which is still practised, makes it difficult to implement existing regulations and contractual clauses.
- viii) Since with regard to the preceding points the situation of urban women appears to be better than that of rural women, a substantial effort should be made to develop egalitarian activities both within the family and at institutional level.

A curious fact which invites speculation is that laws have been an important instrument of change, or at least reflect the existence of certain levels of awareness and sensitivity to the problem of women's rights but that if women do not assume responsibility for the application of those laws, they will remain inoperative, at least in so far as the majority of women is concerned.

## E. SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

An ECLAC publication (36) contains a number of overall guidelines concerning public policies, which should be adopted by governments in order to raise the status of women. In support of what has been presented above and on the basis of an analysis of this document, its main conclusions may be summarized as follows:

1. Up to the middle of the 1970s, progress was made in respect of the behaviour of the social indicators. From that time on, the situation has tended to stagnate and in some cases, such as that of the incorporation of women into paid labour, there has been a clear regression.

2. With regard to education, health and other welfare programmes, the goals established for the Decade have been partially achieved in that there has been significant progress in the participation of children and young people in middle and higher education and also in the parasystem and in extension courses. With regard to health, an important effort has been made in the extension of coverage, rural sanitation and improvements in mother-child nutrition. In some countries, the institutional network provided in support of mothers and children, including such services as day nurseries, home care centres, institutions providing care for children of pre-school age and family orientation schemes, has been strengthened.

3. Urban development, rural-urban migration, industrialization and the incorporation of women into the labour force have affected family composition, structure and integration. Thus, these factors may serve as a reference in identifying different types of families in a society.

4. In addition, the rise in the level of information, education and urban development of the societies considered is reflected in considerable drops in fertility. This has resulted in social change and transformation in family structure which are still not reflected in official statistics.

5. With regard to policies for the redistribution of wealth, it may be said that although the emphasis has been traditional in the majority of cases, note should be taken of the existence of some innovative experiments with income distribution, the results of which indicate that social policies should aim in two directions: first, at the expansion of family consumption and second, at the betterment of human resources.

6. With regard to the proposals put forth in the Plan of Action, in the revised documents it may be noted that in nearly all the countries, the suggestions made have been partially implemented. However, the experience acquired at national level seems to have been in educational or health programmes and does not seem to have been so widespread in programmes specifically directed to women, the action taken having been on an experimental level in the majority of cases.

7. One of the recommendations in the Plan of Action—that which refers to the need for information—is still valid since the statistics available do not measure the majority of factors relative to discrimination on grounds of sex. In addition, much of the data are supplied in aggregate form, which prevents the effective measurement of the progress obtained in this area.

8. Significant progress has been made in the participation of women in new fields of activity, and in particular in the organization and management of small enterprises and in culture, the armed forces, finance, the institutionalization of community life and means of communication, among others. However, in spite of the democratic tradition of some of the countries considered, the role of women in the leadership of political parties, in parliament and in trade union affairs is limited.

9. Some of the experiences reported indicate not only that the processes of change promoted through training and generation of employment contribute to

a rise in income but also that the status of women is benefited by the kind of self-fulfilment which leads to changes in the value put on the productive and reproductive role of the family. Changes have also been noted in the traditional patterns of decision-taking and in family dynamics.

10. In spite of the changes recorded, some obstacles remain; and these have different impacts depending on the position of women in the social structure. These differences lie in such areas as socialization, access to education and information, incorporation into the labour market, the type of family set up and the age at which women are integrated into that family, the value assigned to domestic work and the level of participation by women.

11. Note was taken of concrete experiments carried out in the various countries to eliminate these obstacles. The presence of women in production, community support for the care of children, organized protest against the high cost of living and the application of pressure for the exercise of citizens' rights and respect for freedom and democracy is an indication of the action they take in their social context.

12. Programmes aimed at transforming the rural environment by changing the technology used in production have had effects which are not altogether positive for the rural women considered. Although women are incorporated in the labour market as wage-earners, their participation in the decision-making process of production units is minimal, whereas their burden of work is increasing substantially since they must play their traditional role in the reproduction of the labour force while at the same time participating actively in the search for the supplementary monetary income needed for the survival of their family. There is evidence that traditional patterns of living persist in spite of changes in the structure of production and in the kind of work done by women.

13. The dynamics of change in the Caribbean shows the importance of a socio-cultural context in which family, institutions, State, life-style and the status of women have characteristics which are the result of a mingling of cultures. This provides specificity for the application of public policies, which is not always recognized in the studies made in this connection.

14. The importance of women in the Caribbean family is still reflected in the many roles they play. In particular, attention should be drawn to the survival strategy, in which close relations within the family group, the neighbourhood, the wider community and the intermediate organizations are largely responsible for the flexibility shown by women in their struggle to survive amid economic hardship.

15. Another factor which must be regarded as a reflection of change is the gradual transformation in the laws relating to women and children. Since 1975 a number of countries have introduced reforms in their civil codes to ensure equality of rights between men and women, have changed their laws relating to adoption of minors and guardianship and have recognized the status of women at work.

16. These changes often signal a shift in the attitudes and values of society and are sometimes promoted by organized groups of women, who exert pressure until they bring them about. It is possible that the existence of the Plan of Action and the fact that its declaration makes the problems faced by women a timely subject have been instrumental in bringing about the changes achieved in the legal order.

Table 11  
**LATIN AMERICA: RATES OF OPEN UNEMPLOYMENT  
 IN URBAN AREAS**

(Percentages)

Country	1970	1980	1982
Argentina <sup>a</sup>	4.9	2.3	5.7
Bolivia <sup>b</sup>	-	5.8	-
Brazil <sup>c</sup>	6.5	6.2	7.7
Colombia <sup>d</sup>	10.6	9.7	9.3
Costa Rica <sup>e</sup>	3.5	6.0	10.4
Chile <sup>f</sup>	4.1	11.7	20.1
Mexico <sup>g</sup>	7.0	4.5	3.7
Panama <sup>h</sup>	10.3	9.8	-
Paraguay <sup>i</sup>	-	3.9	-
Peru <sup>j</sup>	6.9	7.1	-
Uruguay <sup>k</sup>	7.5	7.4	11.0
Venezuela <sup>l</sup>	7.8	6.6	8.2
Latin America <sup>m</sup>	6.6	5.8	7.4

Source: PREALC, *Empleo y salarios*, 1983, table 5, p. 10.

<sup>a</sup> Greater Buenos Aires. April-October average; 1982: April. <sup>b</sup> National. <sup>c</sup> National Employment Survey Metropolitan Areas of Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre, Salvador and Recife; 1980: June-December average; 1981, average: 12 months; 1982: January-May average. <sup>d</sup> Four cities: Barranquilla, Cali, Medellín and Bogotá. 1978: March, June and December average; 1979, 1980 and 1981: March, June, September and December average; 1982: March-June average. <sup>e</sup> National urban. 1978 to 1981: March-July and November average; 1982: March. <sup>f</sup> Greater Santiago, INE. Four quarters average. 1982: January-October average. <sup>g</sup> Metropolitan areas of Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey. Four quarters average; 1982: first quarter. <sup>h</sup> National non-agricultural, with exception of 1978 and 1979 which correspond to urban sector. 1978 and 1979: August; 1980: urban, advance population census 1980; 1981: urban metropolitan region. <sup>i</sup> Asunción, Fernando de la Mora, Lambaré and urban areas of Luque and San Lorenzo. <sup>j</sup> Metropolitan Lima. 1970: August-September; 1978: July-August; 1979: August-September; 1980: April, 1981: June. <sup>k</sup> Montevideo. Average two half years except for 1982: first half. <sup>l</sup> National urban. 1970: January-May, May-September, September-December average; 1978 to 1981: average to half years; 1982: first quarter. <sup>m</sup> Includes only countries for which information is available for all years.

17. Finally, it cannot be denied that the growth, stability and maturity of political systems are reflected in the real and objective advancement of women.

In the document cited at the beginning of this section, various suggestions are made in connection with a "minimum core of measures", which should be adopted to improve the social status of families and of women in particular.

These measures include: a) the provision of stable employment, with an adequate minimum income and a place of work close to the family unit for the head of the household (male or female); b) programmes of health, housing, education and basic infrastructure services (electricity, water, etc.); c) programmes of mass family education, specially designed to raise the level of information and communication of the members of nuclear units and to combat sexual stereotypes; d) programmes to organize families in neighbourhood or community associations; e) adoption of legislative measures to support the objectives of the above programmes.

The findings presented do not necessarily cover everything done in connection with the suggestions made in the publication cited above; however, some of the findings deserve additional comment.

The global policies applied by various countries have not helped to generate employment; on the contrary, in many cases, the combination of external crisis and application of restrictive measures has led to an increase in open unemployment and in underemployment (see table 11).

The absorption capacity of the informal sectors, in which a large share of the female heads of household in urban areas are employed has decreased, affecting family income.

Unemployment and the high cost of living have made income distribution more backward and have eroded the standard of living of broad segments of the population (see tables 12, 13 and 14).

Women in the urban middle class have experienced a decline in the expectations given them by advertising and publicity in respect of employment and the purchase of housing and other consumer goods.

The reduction of government spending and the increase in public utility rates have had a dual effect —a deterioration in the quality of such services as

Table 12

**LATIN AMERICA: NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE**

	1970	1980	2000
<b>Number of people (millions)</b>			
Argentina	1.9	2.2	2.3
Brazil	46.7	52.6	65.6
Colombia	9.4	11.1	15.6
Costa Rica	0.4	0.5	0.7
Chile	1.6	1.8	2.1
Honduras	1.7	2.4	4.5
Mexico	17.4	20.2	24.3
Panama	0.6	0.7	0.9
Peru	6.7	8.6	14.7
Venezuela	2.8	3.7	6.3
<b>Total Latin America</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Percentage of population</b>			
Argentina	8	8	7
Brazil	49	43	35
Colombia	45	43	41
Costa Rica	24	22	19
Chile	17	16	14
Honduras	65	64	64
Mexico	34	29	21
Panama	39	37	32
Peru	50	49	48
Venezuela	25	24	23
<b>Total Latin America</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>

Source: ECLAC/UNDP/UNICEF, *La superación de la pobreza: una tarea urgente y posible* (E/CEPAL/G.1308). May 1984, p. 33.



Table 13

## LATIN AMERICA: URBAN POVERTY

	1970	1980	2000
<b>Number of people (millions)</b>			
Argentina	1.0	1.3	1.4
Brazil	19.1	25.2	40.0
Colombia	5.0	6.7	11.2
Costa Rica	0.1	0.2	0.3
Chile	1.0	1.2	1.6
Honduras	0.4	0.6	1.5
Mexico	6.8	9.3	14.8
Panama	0.2	0.3	0.7
Peru	2.5	3.4	6.3
Venezuela	1.6	2.3	4.4
<b>Total Latin America</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Share of poor people in total urban population (percentage)</b>			
Argentina	54	57	59
Brazil	41	48	61
Colombia	53	60	72
Costa Rica	26	31	38
Chile	62	67	76
Honduras	22	27	33
Mexico	39	46	61
Panama	36	44	75
Peru	37	40	43
Venezuela	57	61	70
<b>Total Latin America</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>60</b>

Source: ECLAC/UNDP/UNICEF, *La superación de la pobreza: una tarea urgente y posible* (E/CEPAL/G.1308), May 1984, p. 34.

water, electricity, urban sanitation and security; and a reduction in family spending capacity due to higher service costs.

The limitations set by adjustment programmes on investment and public spending have prevented new investment in basic infrastructure, which affects the development of water pipes, sewers and drains, schools, health, cultural, sports and recreation centres, etc.

The ceilings imposed on social spending will keep some experimental programmes in connection with family education and changing attitudes in stereotypes from being implemented on a general basis. As frequently happens in social intervention, this would result in a lack of continuity and failure to take advantage of institutional apprenticeship.

The foregoing comments make it possible to appreciate the kind of difficulties encountered. However, experience has shown a capacity for struggle and organization which should be used to its fullest to surmount the crisis and keep living conditions from deteriorating.

There are various examples of this capacity in each national situation: e.g., the will to associate at local level and the many community organizations and interest groups which have shown women's ability to demand concrete solutions to specific problems relating to their neighbourhood, environmental deterioration, personal security, citizens' rights, etc.

Moreover, it is obvious that, as a result of the action suggested in the Plan, organizational measures have been taken in the public administration of each country. Today in some form or another there are ministries of State, offices at the level of the President or Prime Minister and departments in ministries, whose main responsibility is to deal with matters relating to women.

There has been a change in the attitude and will of governments as to the role of women in public life. In the past five years the countries of the region have seen more women in high positions than in the preceding 50 years.

The content of the message conveyed by some mass-media, especially media in the form of widely circulated printed matter has changed in terms of the stereotypes transmitted. Little by little, the message is changing, and women are depicted in a less submissive and more combative light.

Table 14

**LATIN AMERICA: RURAL POVERTY**

	1970	1980	2000
<b>Number of people (millions)</b>			
Argentina	0.9	0.9	0.9
Brazil	27.6	27.4	25.6
Colombia	4.4	4.4	4.4
Costa Rica	0.3	0.3	0.4
Chile	0.6	0.6	0.5
Honduras	1.3	1.8	3.0
Mexico	10.6	10.9	9.5
Panama	0.4	0.4	0.2
Peru	4.2	5.2	8.4
Venezuela	1.2	1.4	1.9
<b>Total Latin America</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Share of poor people in total rural population (percentage)</b>			
Argentina	46	43	41
Brazil	59	52	39
Colombia	47	40	28
Costa Rica	74	69	62
Chile	38	33	24
Honduras	78	73	67
Mexico	61	54	39
Panama	64	56	25
Peru	63	60	57
Venezuela	43	39	30
<b>Total Latin America</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>40</b>

Source: ECLAC/UNDP/UNICEF, *La superación de la pobreza: una tarea urgente y posible* (E/CEPAL/G.1308), May 1984, p. 35.

Finally, we should not lose sight of the role played by women in the democratization and structural transformation of some of our societies. Here, the traditional stereotypes have fallen apart, and the models which are emerging are oriented towards equal rights and the sharing of responsibilities between the sexes. Thus, in spite of the crisis and its impact on the standard of living, it seems that the quantitative transformations which have occurred with regard to the status of women are so profound that they will not be eradicated as a result of the present situation.

### III. THE OUTLOOK

#### A. PROBABLE FUTURE

This section will contain some considerations concerning the future, which is becoming increasingly difficult to forecast in the framework of the present circumstances which are bound to affect the way in which the region will probably develop.

As has already been noted, the present unfavourable foreign trade situation, which has affected the majority of the Latin American and Caribbean countries since 1985 and is aggravated by the burden of service and amortization payments on the external debt and by the stringency of the adjustment programmes suggested by the International Monetary Fund, invariably gives rise to questions as to how to overcome the present macroeconomic maladjustments in the short term. In many cases the repercussions of these measures in the medium and long term are overlooked.

Overcoming the imbalances depends on factors outside the region's control, such as the recovery of international trade; the performance of interest rates in the leading financial markets, and in particular in the United States of America; the expansion of the industrial economies and an increase in the understanding and good political sense which must prevail in North-South relations since there can be no doubt that problems such as external indebtedness are no longer exclusively economic in nature but have become political issues of great impact for the peace and development of the region.

The climate described has an effect on any exercise relating to the future performance of the economy and society of Latin America and the Caribbean. A recent publication of the Inter-American Development Bank contains projections based on two hypotheses of economic growth. In one the possibility is envisaged of stopping the present trend towards the deterioration of per capita consumption, and in the other, an increase in the number of unemployed is avoided.

The scenarios are completed by taking a look at the possible performance of exports in the period 1984-1990. Based on assumptions concerning the behaviour of income under the economic activity of the industrialized countries, which absorbed two thirds of the merchandise exported by the region, and the competitiveness of the goods exported in light of the impact of relative prices and the capacity of supply to respond to changes in external markets. The findings show less growth of exports, and of manufactures in particular, than that shown in the 1970s; a rise in the relative prices of primary products from

Latin America, by comparison with those from other sources, which would partially explain the lower growth rate of Latin American commodity exports in relation with the growth of world demand; the heavy pressure exerted by the recovery of international trade on the demand for Latin American exports, which shows the importance of the existence of protectionist barriers and other restrictions applied by the developed countries against exports from the third world.

However, the figures show that the growth rate of exports is slightly higher than the interest rate forecast for external credit, so that there is only partial relief from the burden of interest paid on exports.

Projections show that exports will not grow as fast as in previous decades and the burden of the existing debt will be a serious strain on foreign currency earnings in the next five years. In order to ensure moderate growth and halt the rise in the rates of unemployment, it will be necessary to reverse the trend in consumption and investment, and to do this, new external resources will be needed at the end of the 1980s. This means a rise in debt servicing and a substantial outflow of capital resources from the region to the rest of the world. Therefore, vigilance and control over external accounts, and in particular over the use of external resources, will be an indispensable requisite for governmental authorities.

The projections considered suggest that hard and difficult times lie immediately ahead and that the reduction observed in government spending, the limitations placed on investment and the burden of the debt have drastically changed the style and quality of life of the population of the region.

It therefore seems that it may be necessary to make an effort to change the present trend since the political and social stability of the region is at stake.

## B. PLANNING AND SOCIAL POLICIES

The present crisis has shown more clearly than ever before the weaknesses and imperfections in the theories and also in the methodologies applied in our present planning systems.

In recent years there has been frequent criticism of the so-called normative approach devised by ECLAC in the mid-1950s, which served as a guide for the implementation of the various planning systems now in operation. In 30 years, there has been a substantial accumulation of experience, which has led to the natural adaptation of the principles formulated back in the 1950s; however, the effort made in this direction seems to have been insufficient for meeting the challenge now faced by Latin American society.

Among the positive factors of the normative approach, attention should be drawn, in particular, to the legitimization of the planning function, especially with regard to medium-term planning; the efforts made to rationalize the machinery for resource allocation by adopting programme budgeting and pre-investment; the gradual introduction of the spatial physical dimension and of regional planning; and the increase in the concern shown for the population at the various levels of the process. Limiting factors include the inability to articulate short-term and medium- and long-term problems; slowness in the design and formulation of strategies really aimed at overcoming the structural

conditioners of development; the lack of consistency between general plans and practical approaches for solving the problem identified; the use of partial diagnoses to interpret an increasingly complex situation and the fact that social and economic planning is still regarded as two separate fields when in fact society has a role to play in the whole process.

Thus, there is need to rethink the role played by planning, the contents of strategies and policies and the institutional arrangements of today and to re-examine the role of the State. In view of the high cost of the adjustment programmes implemented in recent years, the State must take the responsibility for ensuring that the content of strategies and policies is fair and well balanced. Therefore, in order to keep the situation from deteriorating still further and to get back on the path to growth and development, planning must promote the changes needed in the economic, social, political and cultural structure in order to achieve in the medium-term conditions favourable to the expansion of employment and well-being by using truly participative and democratic mechanisms.

A number of recent publications have analysed the scope and limitations of social planning in the region.<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of this analysis, it should be borne in mind that the coverage of the social aspects of planning has been marginal; the greatest effort made in respect of the formulation of plans has been concentrated on their economic and financial aspects.

Social planning began with the systematization of ideas relating to education, health and social welfare, fields in which, for various reasons, a certain amount of data and organizational experience had already been acquired.

Population growth, urban development and the generation of employment made it necessary to design population policies and arouse interest in physical planning, which are fields of interest shared by traditional economic planners and by social planners.

As a result of OECD thinking concerning human resources and their relationship to productivity and the growth of the product, in the mid-1970s human resources programming was introduced, and later on it was suggested that there might be a relationship between the training of human resources, scientific and technological development and the problems of management and administration.

When theories of well-being and human capital became fashionable in academic circles in the mid-1970s, expression was given to the concern for inequity, critical poverty, marginality and problems relating to human rights became explicit.

In this context social planning acquired some relevance at the level of theory and justified its existence as an instrument for combating poverty and marginality, but always in a secondary role. New fields have gradually been incorporated, including the study of problems relating to women and their integration into development, which emerged in mid-1970s as a category in its own right and as a topic to which planning could be applied.

Because of the methodology used (global, sectoral and medium-term), from the beginning there was a separation—a problem still not totally solved—between the economic realm, on the one hand, and the social and cultural realms, on the other. For a number of years, the only link between them was the financial link, i.e., the amount of resources needed to cover the cost of the expansion of

services and their implications in the table of resources and uses of funds. As the social and cultural sectors were usually weak, they were regarded as residual and bore the brunt of the cuts and adjustments made.

On many occasions what actually happened bore little relationship to what was contained in the normative plan for the reasons cited at the beginning of this study and because of the lack of a clear global concept of the role assigned to what are known as "social policies" in development strategies. The first limitation is that the process as a whole is a social process so that this kind of distinction cannot be drawn. Development is first and foremost an equitable distribution of the benefits of growth; thus, its central objective is a social objective, and to achieve it, it is necessary to formulate programmes and projects whose ultimate goal is the construction of a more just society.

Thus, social policy viewed in the light of the crisis must take responsibility for its central objective, clearly define its role and act on economic policy so as to ensure that appropriate priority is given to equity and justice. This calls for the management of theoretical categories which are not orthodox but are realistic and in line with the structural characteristics of Latin American societies, which should generate and implement their own solutions.

### C. THE TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN SOCIAL POLICIES

In the context described above, the inclusion of women as a subject of public policy is fully justified. Thus, after many decades, recognition is given to their objective position of inequality and to the need to correct it by subjecting their treatment to the rationale of the Plan.

It may be said that, depending on the level of development and socio-historic context of each country, the subject of women has historically been approached in three different ways:

a) *The assistance approach.* Women are viewed as a social problem, an object of public policies; emphasis is placed on their reproductive function. In this approach, there is no clear policy for the integration of women into development. The focus is on solving health and education problems of the mother-child binomial, which results in the implementation of mother-child and other programmes in such areas as pre- and post-natal care, medical attention in early infancy, environmental enhancement and health education. This approach results in a considerable reduction in infant mortality rates.

b) *The participative approach.* This approach is taken in the framework of public policies oriented towards integral development through the incorporation of all sectors of the population into production and the distribution of wealth. Consideration is given to women in plans and ideas of a global nature; there is no specificity in the definition of strategies and policies although there is greater consistency in their design and formulation. Not only is action directed towards women in their reproductive role, but provision is made for their participation in the labour force, and they are regarded as beneficiaries of all sectoral programming which has an impact on the quality of life, housing, education, recreation and other areas.

c) *The integrationalist approach.* The status of women is seen from three angles: as a crucial variable in the long- and medium-term development strategy; as a social factor in sectoral strategy and as an area to be focused upon when the family, childhood and youth are under consideration. When this approach is taken, it is assumed that organizational and ideological obstacles have been overcome. The goal sought is to bring about a change in the status of women, the main thrust being on the elimination of social injustice and on economic growth. The action is preferably directed towards groups living in extreme poverty, the most vulnerable members of the family group and situations where women suffer from inequality of opportunity and of participation.

As things now stand in the region, these three types of approach coexist. There are countries which are still at the assistance stage, others in the participative stage, and a few have made efforts in the direction aimed at in the third stage. If an integral approach to the subject is to be taken throughout the region, there is need to adopt a different concept of planning and, in particular, of social policy; social policy should no longer be regarded as marginal and instrumental and should begin to play a leading role in building the future.

The documents introduced by ECLAC at the Second Conference on Women, which was held at Macuto in 1979\* discussed possibilities for public policies relating to the integration of women in development. The suggestions made seem as valid now as at the time the documents were issued. However, it is worth considering the difficulties encountered in putting into practice the valuable ideas contained in them. These difficulties are of three types. First, there are ideological difficulties associated with the view which countries take concerning their respective national projects, in some of which the status of women does not seem to be a focal point; the second type of difficulty is of an institutional nature and has to do with the absence, weakness or impermanence of the machinery established to implement these decisions and to monitor and follow up on the public policies established with regard to them. The third type of difficulty is related to limitations of a financial nature, which have made it necessary to review the commitments made with respect to programmes and projects with a social content.

#### IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR PLANNING

On the basis of the information analysed, it may be concluded that socioeconomic achievements in the region are to a certain extent independent of the existence of the regional plan of action since progress in education, health and welfare result from action taken before the Plan became official.

However, for decades interest groups, international bodies, governments and various institutions exerted pressure to obtain recognition of the concern shown for the status of women issue. As a result the issue gradually gained acceptance and was later treated as a planning category and became a social policy issue.

\*See E/CEPAL/CRM.2/L.2 and E/CEPAL/CRM.2/L.3.

The Plan of Action represented an increase in the region's awareness, in which ideas and suggestions were consolidated and new possibilities opened up for action by groups and governments in favour of the integration of women into development.

Their integration has been gradual. Different levels of complexity in dealing with the issue can be identified on the basis of the degree of evolution of different societies and planning systems. Since in some cases this type of experience has been acquired only recently, it is difficult to be sure that the changes which have occurred are a result of the action planned or would have occurred even without the Plan.

For these changes to reach the various segments of society, it will be necessary to devise new forms of planning which will respond to the criticism levied; to apply development policy which truly provides for social concerns; to give full recognition to the status of women; to establish a more participatory and democratic society and to achieve a certain degree of international consensus that the maintenance of peace, while necessary for development, is not all that is needed.

In order to bring about a gradual change in the methods and systems applied in the area of planning, it will be necessary to replace the traditional normative approaches with a dynamic view that is more in keeping with the complex situation which exists in the region today. To do this, it may be necessary to incorporate elements of situational planning or strategical planning or to adopt approaches now under study with a view to establishing the link between planner and policy and between theory and practice, thereby doing away with the traditional differences among the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions on the one hand, and the short, medium- and long-term on the other.

Given the nature of its objectives, development strategy must be social: development is understood to be an ordered and rational process of changing the structures of society, and if this society clearly displays symptoms of injustice and inequality, planning will consist of rational intervention aimed at correcting the situation through policies, programmes and projects. As a result, the central aim of the strategy will be to resolve the negative economic situation while ensuring that the measures proposed are equitable and just.

The egalitarian concept of development approaches the full range of the new planning categories, in which the situation of women has an important place. Incorporating a new category involves overcoming various types of obstacles, including limitations in diagnostic studies (in the case of women, lack of information on their place in society, their class position and related factors keeping them from full insertion into the development process); theoretical limitations in interpreting the complex demographic and psychosocial relationships to the productive process; practical limitations in making plans viable and limited human and organizational resources for implementing efficient and timely solutions.

In a democratic society, development calls for aware and voluntary participation; the State must therefore assume its various roles of planner, promoter, distributor, investor, entrepreneur, regulator and financial agent, always taking care that there is due participation. This will also make it necessary to change



institutions, such as the family, the churches, political parties and labour unions, among others.

To extend this idea to a new dimension, we should point out that a change will also be required in international relations in the form of a new North-South dialogue, which will promote true participation by the developing countries and changes in the structure of multilateral co-operation.

In the analysis of the situation of Latin American women and their families upon which this paper is based, we have seen clearly the effects of some variables (such as urbanization, industrialization, rural-urban migration, information and education, family planning and legal changes) on the status of women, taking the following three diagnostic elements into account: the type of social group made up by women; the structural relationship between domestic work, predominantly done by women, and productive work; and the nature of sexual stereotypes and their discriminatory effects, which are in general negative for the status of women.

In crisis situations such as that experienced by the region, intense and contradictory social pressures arise and influence the diagnostic categories mentioned above in different ways.

The family, in its various forms (according to its location in the class hierarchy and the type of society in which it is set) continues to fulfil its many functions, among which are: i) reproduction of the species; ii) productive functions through its participation in the labour force and in the creation of wealth; iii) socialization of its new members; iv) consumption, savings and investment and v) mobilization of its components and their participation in intermediate groups and entities established for the purpose of transforming society. The crisis may accelerate, delay or phase out these functions peculiar to the family group which make it an object of specific policies designed to strengthen it and, in doing so, bring about changes in the assignment of roles and the distribution of domestic tasks and result in greater participation of women in the work force and new ways of managing the family budget.

Because the general situation has deteriorated, progress in the area of incorporating women into the work force is no longer being made, and in some cases ground is being lost. A tendency to regress in the area of distribution makes the lives of poor urban and rural women more difficult. The loss of the purchasing power of the real wage as a result of inflation affects the growing expectations of middle class women; the increase in the number of unemployed and underemployed has an effect on the psychosocial balance of couple relationships, and separations and divorces may increase. Imbalances in family structure may affect some of the family's basic functions, such as socialization, and have a negative influence on the future performance of its members, in areas such as education, communication and interpersonal relationships.

The negative effects of crisis situations may lead to the organized mobilization of women in defence of their rights and perhaps even to conflicts between women and the structures which they feel are acting against their aspirations. It is therefore important to formulate coherent global, sectoral and target-group policies, particularly in the areas of family, children and youth, in order to achieve the type of adjustment which truly favours development.

There can be no doubt that women and family must play a very important role in any future development strategy. In 1985 the female population of the region will be close to 198 million; of these women, 115 million will be between the ages of 15 and 64. On the one hand, women will represent a significant force in the orientation of individual and family consumption. Their capacity for saving can create the financial resources necessary for investment. Rationalization of their spending can affect the behaviour of imports. Their active participation in defence of the family budget can serve as an excellent weapon in the fight against inflation. More efficient use of public services can help to make them more effective, thereby reducing the fiscal deficit. On the other hand, with regard to the components of global supply, a substantial portion of the female population will enter the labour force and will therefore act directly on the production of goods and services, in addition to contributing to the development of the economy in general through domestic work, which is still not recognized in national accounts. In the experience of a number of countries, the production of handicrafts in co-operatives has also proved viable for increasing and diversifying exports.

In order to achieve the true integration and participation of women in the processes described above, the importance of women and the family must be recognized in the global strategy; sectoral support policies must be maintained and strengthened by expanding their scope, changing their assistance content and correcting difficulties relating to management and low levels of participation; and an integral policy which encompasses the target groups —family, children and youth— must be designed according to the specific features of each society.

In the short term, it might be necessary to protect the income of women and families with low socioeconomic status through job creation and maintenance programmes and by providing them with access to certain commodities at reasonable prices and organizing communities to receive and lend voluntary services. Action aimed at raising the standard of living (construction of social infrastructure, raising the retention capacity of the educational system, increasing the coverage of the primary health care network, providing easier access to culture and studying the communications with a view to changing the sexual stereotypes common in the lowest strata of society) should not be neglected. With regard to the so-called middle classes, the most important objective will be to avoid deterioration in their lifestyle. To this end, it might be necessary to enlist housewives in consumers co-operatives established for the purpose of reporting incidents of speculation to the competent authorities, rationalizing the consumption of goods and services and forming a community of interests through which women's demands can be articulated. All of this should be done with a view to reducing the effect of price increases on the real wage.

After short-term problems have been resolved, medium- and long-term efforts should be directed towards development as defined herein. This calls for stable and well-paid employment, expansion of services, more education and better health facilities, training of female workers, greater access to the decision-making level in organizations and political parties and greater participation in action aimed at changing the status of women. To this end, the programmes and

projects formulated should incorporate past experiences in order to respond practically to the desires and aspirations of women with a view to giving them and the society in which they live the right to fair treatment and greater opportunities for development.

## V. SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The profound changes noted in the region in the past three decades have affected the entire population, but their effects on different social groups and on young people and women, in particular, have not been the same.

Changes in the status of women, when they have occurred, have been tied more closely to global change than to policies or action directed specifically at women. An example of this is the access of women to education due to the expansion of the educational systems. (This is true primarily of the lower and middle levels since there are still differences as regards access to higher and technical education.)

In some cases technology can be related with raising the status of women by giving them access to higher levels of monetary income. However, this has not always resulted in a better lifestyle, and, where many groups of women are concerned, it has led to gradual proletarianization.

There have also been profound changes in the countryside-city relationship in the region, including the emergence of a monetized rural middle class, which cultivates special crops yielding high profits. As a result of the gradual proletarianization of large groups, some members of rural families have left their homes in search of wage-earning work in the urban centres or on other farms. As a consequence, women have had to assume an increasingly important role in the socialization of the rural family and in the family production system.

In the city, another significant change has occurred: more than one generation has been born since the migratory flows which took place in the 1960s and 1970s. The women in the second generation differ from those in the first generation in that they have access to education, the urban labour market and means of communication; there are also differences in the values they have adopted in respect of family and couple relationships, which is one of the most significant cultural changes to have occurred in the region.

The big population movements, whether within countries or among them, have had an impact on the structure and composition of the labour force and on the production apparatus. In this process, women have demonstrated their great ability to adapt and participate.

Public policies aimed at women have been characterized by focal or experimental activity, the content of which has been traditional in respect to the role of women; this is reflected in the fact that public policies have had only a slight impact in respect of the action taken by women and their significance as agents of change.

In some countries the laws relating to the family and women have been substantially changed on the basis of two principles: equality of the woman within the couple and equality of children, regardless of the nature of the union of the parents. Human rights as well as social rights have begun to be taken into account. Policies for the integration of women have run up against conceptual

controversies and structural problems in that people associate such policies with the socio-political structures of a particular system and different structures produce different systems. Terms such as "integration", "development" and "egalitarian participation" have different meanings and values in each context. However, there are two structures which set the tone of policies related to women: governments, which take note of the demands and aspirations of social groups and design policies to satisfy them, and social organizations, which deal with problems in their own specific realm. In the case of Latin America, government action does not appear to have undergone any tremendous process of modernization to raise the status of women and to promote their active participation as a prerequisite of development. The alternatives for the future still lie within the framework of modernization, although new challenges are now arising.

The subjects touched upon herein are important points of reference in connection with the near future which will be characterized by options derived from the crisis to which reference has been made throughout this study.

The first of these options is to continue applying the economic growth and distribution model which characterized the past three decades and which, as has been seen, has not responded to the social demands of the majority of the population. The kind of growth it fosters is not viable because of the financial and other limitations already referred to.

The second option is to adopt a new concept of the State, which will enable the citizenry to develop on an egalitarian basis. This calls for a State in which organized groups take part in determining the rules of the game, in which shared values facilitate the kind of participation which spurs the citizenry on to action and in which socialization through the family becomes a real strategy of democratization.

If this option is adopted, the transformation of the roles played by young people, and especially by young women, could provide a prime incentive to a *rapprochement* between the public and the private sectors and between the small and big decisions of daily life, thus helping to create stronger links between the citizenry and the State, which could revitalize the role of young people as a primary object of political action. At present patterns of communication between different social groups have been seen to emerge, so that they become allies as a result of the crisis. Moreover, the younger generations are showing a tendency to let their immediate concerns overshadow their long-term possibilities.

If this approach were followed, the family would acquire new dimensions. Interpersonal relationships would not depend so much on the sex, age and role of family members; the family would stop being a recipient of services and would become a unit generating decisions and the specific characteristics of each type of family would be taken into account when policies were formulated.

Women would play different roles depending on their age. Older women, who have received the initial impact of the changes made, would have the hardest time of it. The preservation of the double and the triple work-day would appear to be unavoidable, but their contribution would be their experience and internalization of these inconsistencies, which would be surmounted by socializing the younger generations.

Young women would play the leading role in realizing the possibilities for future change. In their value systems, the concept of unilateral authority would have to be replaced by a concept of solidarity, which would make it possible to put social relationships on a more human basis. Their participation in the body politic would consist in a more active leadership in the search for solutions rather than merely in playing the role of critic. By demanding concrete solutions to the problem of the quality of life, they would become an important force in the orientation of social expenditure and this could give rise to conflict if their expectations exceeded the capacity of the prevailing model in use.

The changes suggested are possible in the framework of the type of democratic society which can be brought into being by taking different options based on the principle of participation and the kind of mechanisms which make democracy possible. It is in the process of participation that the civil and political elements of society come into contact, and the result can be the emergence of new types of negotiation for equal status for women.

However, participation should preferably take place in the context of a civil society with a territorial base and not only in political organizations under State influence, as has been the trend in recent decades.

A propitious climate for the strengthening of a democratic society is a climate of peace. Today peace is threatened by various phenomena including the growth of nationalism, which tends to foster border disputes; the indebtedness of some countries as a result of the military expenditure incurred in spite of the express opposition of the region to the arms race and the conflicts taking place in some sectors because of the inability of the model now in use to meet the expectations generated.

Regional integration and solidarity are key elements of the new strategy. The action being taken by organized groups of women who have met the political and ideological problem in a spirit of solidarity, ethically and as defenders of human rights, is an example of the possibilities open to women in this field. This was borne out by the *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* (Argentina), who as mothers and grandmothers systematically demanded the right to life under a régime in which that right was denied and in doing so gained the support of the whole region. Thus, a common search for solutions to common problems would be carried out in a spirit of solidarity. In a sensitive and vulnerable situation, complementarity would be sought through reciprocal concessions made in the realms both of ideas and of tactics, thereby limiting the practice of hegemony by the State or by States and opening the way to different kinds of integration in the social structure. Stress would be laid on the need for conscience-raising concerning the evils of war by favouring negotiation over warfare, and integration and peace would be promoted by ensuring that the region's problems were solved within the region, with maximum reliance on its own potential. In all these tasks, the role of women would be of crucial importance.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>This does not mean that sufficient food has been supplied by agriculture. Every day imports of foodstuffs increase, and this has now developed into a food security problem.

<sup>2</sup>World Conferences held in Mexico City (1975) and Copenhagen (1980); regional Conferences held in Havana (1977), Macuto (1979) and Mexico City (1983); workshop on the impact of the modernization of agriculture on the participation of rural women (Mexico City, 1978); round-table on survival strategies in peasant economies and the role of the woman, Bogotá, 1983; experts meeting on the participation of women in the production of foodstuffs (Rome, December 1983); and meetings relating specifically to women, including the meeting in Rio de Janeiro on women in the labour force in Latin America, 1978; the seminar on female and family participation (CLACSO), Montevideo, 1979; the first Latin American congress on research on women, San José, Costa Rica, 1981; the seminar on study programmes on women, Rio de Janeiro, 1981; the congress on research on women in the Andean region, Lima, 1982; the compendium prepared by CEDES, Buenos Aires, on research on women; the compendium prepared by ACEP (Colombia), in 1982, on women workers in agriculture and other publications (see the bibliography).

<sup>3</sup>Now it is considered preferable to speak of differences in gender rather than sexual difference. The former puts a social construction on the statement, while the latter refers only to a biological difference.

<sup>4</sup>This concept is expressed very clearly in the *Manual del hacendado chileno*, written by Manuel José Balmaceda in 1875.

<sup>5</sup>Ramón Piñango and Mercedes Pulido de Briceño, "La política social de la democracia venezolana", *Revista CIC*, Vol. XLII, No. 419, November 1979, Caracas, Venezuela; Rolando Franco, "Planificación social: problemas y perspectivas", *Revista Interamericana de Planificación*, No. 68, December 1983; Pedro Demo, "Indagaciones críticas sobre la teoría y la práctica de la planificación social", *Revista Interamericana de Planificación*, No. 68; Maritza Izaguirre Porras, "Las políticas sociales: el caso venezolano", CENDES, Caracas, 1984 (mimeographed version).

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## **Annex**

## Annex 1

### WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN UNITED NATIONS LEGISLATION\*

#### I. THE LEGAL SITUATION OF WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN DEFINED ACCORDING TO THE RESOLUTIONS AND MANDATES ARISING FROM THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

The United Nations is committed to attaining equality of rights between men and women, the integration of women into social and economic development and their participation in the struggle for peace and against all forms of racism, colonialism and foreign domination. The system has therefore devoted itself to securing the universal recognition of the rights of women before the law and to guaranteeing the full exercise of those rights.

Concern for women's rights has a long history within the Organization. Both the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed equality of rights of all human beings, and article 2 of the Declaration states: "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedom set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".

Most of the resolutions approved by the different bodies and agencies of the United Nations system from its creation through 1970, referred in their clauses to the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to the conventions and resolutions on slavery, racial discrimination, and religious intolerance. These resolutions were based on violations of fundamental human rights, and discrimination against women was considered to be an offense against the respect and dignity of the human person.

During the first twenty years of the Organization the problem of women falls within this view. During that period, from 1946 to 1970 approximately, there was a concern for the situation of women, although it held a marginal position compared with other topics of higher priority, such as the abolition of

\*Extract from the document entitled "The legal situation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean defined according to the resolutions and mandates arising from the United Nations system" (E/CEPAL/CRM.3/L.5 and Add.1).

slavery, racial discrimination, the needs of the survivors of the Second World War and the problems represented by the colonized territories and peoples, among others.

That concern for the situation of women, treated as one of the social, cultural and humanitarian questions of the system, found its highest expression in the promotion of a series of women's rights during the period in question. The rights proclaimed were the following: the right to suffrage and the right to be elected and have access to public office; the right of the married woman to keep, acquire or change her nationality; the right to equal opportunity and treatment in work and to equal pay for equal work; maternity protection and protection against night work and underground work and other occupations which are dangerous to health; the right to education without discrimination in the area of education; the right to a minimum age for marriage and free consent to marriage; the abolition of ancient practices (such as ritual operations) and laws which cancelled women's basic rights; the right of married women to administer property, exercise an independent profession and have an independent residence; the right not to be subjected to discrimination in penal matters; the right of working women to free association, paid educational leave, equality in social security and travel in search of employment, etc.

The creation in 1946 of a functional subcommission of the Economic and Social Council (subsequently converted into a commission), for dealing with the situation of women marks the beginning of the process through which the examination of this issue begins to acquire specificity and relevance within the system. When the Commission on the Status of Women was established, with its mandate of reporting to the Commission on Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council was beginning to show special concern for women and devote special efforts to them, although those efforts were limited to the legal sphere.

The specific mandates of the Commission were designed to improve the social and legal condition of women with respect to nationality, race, language and religion and to place them at a level of equality with men in all fields of human endeavour, eliminating all discrimination in the legislation of the member States, in respect of political, civil, labour, education, social and economic rights. The work of the Commission, conducted through its biennial sessions, produced, if not all, the great majority of the measures designed to improve the legal situation of women. These measures, submitted as draft resolution to the Economic and Social Council by the Commission, were subsequently approved by the General Assembly, which in turn added some topics to them and requested the specialized agencies (ILO, FAO, UNESCO), to collaborate on the question of women when it felt this to be necessary.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of the rights proclaimed during this stage were based on conventions and agreements, that is, international instruments which impose legal obligations on the States which have ratified or acceded to them.

Many of these rights were promoted through 28 conventions and agreements arising from three fora: the General Assembly, the ILO and UNESCO. The 28 conventions and agreements may be divided into two groups, focal and non-focal, according to whether women have been the central topic of the convention or agreement or whether they were part of other topics or groups.

Those which focused on women were the following, in chronological order:

- 1) ILO, Convention No. 3 (1919), Maternity Protection.
- 2) ILO, Convention No. 4 (1919), Night Work (Women).
- 3) ILO, Convention No. 41 (1934), Night Work (Women). (This convention was superseded by Convention No. 89.)
- 4) ILO, Convention No. 45 (1935), Underground Work (Women).
- 5) General Assembly, resolution 126 (II) (1947), Transfer to the United Nations of the Functions and Power Exercised by the League of Nations under the International Convention of 30 September 1921 on Traffic in Women and Children; the Convention of 11 October 1933 on Traffic in Women of Full Age, and the Convention of 12 September 1923 on Traffic in Obscene Publications.
- 6) ILO, Convention No. 89 (1948), Night Work (Women).
- 7) General Assembly, resolution 317 (IV) (1949), Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.
- 8) ILO, Convention No. 100 (1951), Equal Remuneration.
- 9) ILO, Convention No. 103 (1952), Maternity Protection.
- 10) General Assembly, resolution 640 (VII) (1952), Convention on the Political Rights of Women.
- 11) General Assembly, resolution 1040 (XI) (1957), Convention on the Nationality of Married Women.
- 12) General Assembly, resolution 1763 (XVII) (1962), Convention and Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages.

The remaining 16 conventions and agreements were non-focal, that is, they referred to the situation of women as part of more general topics. Among them the following should be mentioned: Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery;<sup>2</sup> UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960); and a group of ILO conventions and agreements which went from general topics, such as the elimination of all discrimination in employment and occupation, social and employment policies and social security to specific topics such as pensions, work on plantations, and dangerous working conditions. (ILO Conventions Nos. 13, 81, 87, 97, 102, 110, 111, 117, 122, 127, 128, 136 and 140.) The instruments in the second group had a common feature in that discrimination against women was indicated as part of a set of discriminations, on the basis of sex, religion, race, nationality and political opinion, or, in that women were merely a subgroup within the entire group affected by the convention; for example, women within a convention intended for plantation workers, women within a convention on social security intended for all workers, etc.

Besides the above-mentioned classification of focal and non-focal conventions and agreements, two other categories were established for the instruments: those which protected women (protective legislation) and those which promoted women (promotional legislation).

In accordance with the preceding categories, it may be observed that during this period, protective legislation was predominant, since there were 15

conventions of this type out of a total of 28, or 54%; while promotional legislation constituted 46% (13 conventions out of 28). Similarly, non-focal legislation prevailed over that specifically directed towards women (57% and 43%, respectively). Even more important is the fact that of the 13 promotional agreements, 69% were directed towards promoting "equality" of rights between men and women, that is, they were not specifically directed towards improving the legal situation of women.

However, it should be pointed out that, even with the limitations noted above, the promotional agreements of this period caused legal instruments of vital importance for the improvement of the situation of women, both in terms of rights and with regard to social and economic life, to be elaborated and enter into force. The Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952), the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1957) and the Convention and Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1962), enacted by the General Assembly; the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention (1951); and the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960), constituted an important part of the legal and social base which was beginning to appear within the United Nations system for the improvement and promotion of women.

In summary, the majority of the conventions and agreements of the period were protective and non-focal, emphasizing maternity protection, protection from work considered to be dangerous and from the traffic in persons and the exploitation of the prostitution of others. The promotional conventions were oriented towards obtaining more egalitarian conditions for women in the areas of political participation, nationality of married women and marriage, equality in the workplace with respect to wages and the elimination of sex discrimination in education. The importance of labour legislation during this stage is obvious; the ILO played a predominant role in this area, maintaining the policy of protecting the rights of women in the areas of maternity and dangerous work through focal conventions, and of promoting the rights of women in the areas of employment and occupation, professional training, freedom of association, etc., through conventions on behalf of all workers.<sup>3</sup>

The other significant fact in the first stage was the proclamation of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly, resolution 2263 (XXII)), since it condensed the set of rights which had been proclaimed during the first twenty years.

The Declaration is a milestone in United Nations work on the promotion of women. When it approved the Declaration, the General Assembly created a single instrument containing all the rights proclaimed for women and reflecting the concerns, studies and activities carried out by the Commission on the Legal and Social Status of Women from its creation.

The preamble of the Declaration states that discrimination against women is incompatible with human dignity and with the welfare of the family and of society. The Declaration requests that all measures, including legislative ones, should be adopted in order to guarantee the principle of equal rights of men and women. It proclaims equality of rights in the area of acquiring, changing or retaining nationality and grants women the same rights as men in civil law, and in particular, equality of rights in marriage. It also states that all provisions of

penal codes which constitute discrimination against women should be repealed, that measures should be taken to combat prostitution and the traffic in women, and that equal rights in education, free choice of employment and equal remuneration for work of equal value should be ensured to women. The Declaration also makes reference to the need for its principles to be implemented when it states that "Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals are urged to do all in their power to promote the implementation of the principles contained in this Declaration" (article 11).

The Declaration did not create obligations for the member States of the United Nations. The Commission on the Status of Women compiled information on the implementation of the instrument and observed that there was a general trend among the States towards giving effect to the principles laid down in the Declaration.

The Declaration ended a stage in the process begun within the United Nations system in 1945, when the Charter of the United Nations was adopted, reaffirming "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women...".

During the first twenty years, the question of women was examined from the exclusive perspective of making women equal to men in legal terms, discrimination being considered as an offense against human dignity and respect. Practically up to 1975, the situation of women was treated as one of the humanitarian, social and cultural questions which the system generally dealt with through its joint fora.

From the 1970s onwards, although the resolutions and mandates did not disregard concern for human rights, they situated the problems of women in a new perspective by proposing that women be integrated into development and the struggles for international peace and co-operation.

The objectives of equality, development and peace, which the United Nations established in the mid-1970s, summarized the new principles; that is, equality was possible only within the context of development and peace.

This new focus recognized the need to integrate women fully into development—conceived as a totalizing process, related to all aspects of life—and with struggles for peace, disarmament and the building of a new international economic order. In this way, the definition of the problem of women was transformed and a dynamic-structural focus adopted enabling it to be placed within the social, economic and political context which had created it.

As the process described above was taking place, the question of women was gaining specificity and relevance. Over the years, the analysis of women's rights and condition of discrimination gradually became separated from the general field of human rights and acquired its own dynamic. During the 1970s, and especially in 1975, the topic of women began to occupy a separate and significant position within the United Nations system; the work outlined in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was continued; the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1975-1985) and the International Women's Year (1975) were proclaimed; specialized bodies<sup>4</sup> and fora were established for examining the topic, with two world conferences held, and within the sphere of ECLAC, two regional conferences; international action plans and programmes were formulated; spe-

cial programmes and projects were designed and executed; a periodic examination and evaluation was established of the progress and obstacles in the implementation of the mechanisms for the promotion of women, in world, regional and national spheres.

From the 1970s onwards, then, the question of women became the subject of concerted international action, which was clearly expressed in a change of the rights proclaimed and granted in conventions subsequent to 1975.

During the most recent five-year period (1975-1980) political rights were proclaimed in terms of actual participation and association, as a contribution to the process of development and a condition for attaining it, and the formalist scheme laid down by the right to vote of the previous stage was discarded. Similarly, the rights of the family were proclaimed, with special emphasis on the rights of single mothers, the status of persons born out of wedlock, domestic violence and family planning. There was substantial progress in public law with the proclamation of the rights of migrant women, those affected by *apartheid*, by armed conflicts and by all forms of foreign domination; the rights of displaced, refugee and disappeared women and of women who live in those countries where human rights are constantly being violated.

In the matter of penal law, more specific proposals were made (conditions of detention, for example; Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/41); labour legislation was enacted in respect of social security (resolution 13 of the World Conference of 1975; Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/1) and equality of opportunity and treatment for workers and especially workers with family responsibilities (ILO Convention 156); similarly, equal access to education was reaffirmed.

The rights proclaimed during the first half of the United Nations Decade for Women were based on the achievements of the previous stage, but constituted one step further; from the vote to actual political participation; from marriage to the rights of unmarried women and their children; from labour protection to promotion; from attention to basic women's rights to the rights of groups of women in critical situations closely linked to political and social economic events; from the family as an institution to its internal problems such as domestic violence and family planning; and from equality in education to equality of access to education, including technical training, professional training, adult education and continuing education. However, the majority of the rights proclaimed were not given practical expression in conventions, being limited themselves to providing orientations for governments, in the form of resolutions, recommendations or action plans.

In this period six conventions were approved, one by the General Assembly and the five remaining ones by the ILO; only one of these conventions is intended exclusively for women, Convention No. 156, of 1981, on Equal Opportunities and Treatment.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, approved by the General Assembly through resolution A/34/180 of 18 December 1979, is a natural and more standardized continuation of the Declaration of the same name approved in 1967. Discrimination is defined as any "distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition,



enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field" (article 1). The Convention, which contains 30 articles and entered into force on 3 September 1981, promulgates, in legally obligatory form, universally accepted principles and measures for obtaining the enjoyment of equal rights by women everywhere. The instrument urges that discrimination should be eliminated in the various spheres of social life, especially those affecting rural women; it indicates that all types of measures should be adopted, including temporary special measures, aimed at accelerating the *de facto* equality between men and women, and also contains provisions for modifying the socio-cultural patterns which perpetuate discrimination. The Convention also requests that protective laws should be discontinued once their objectives have been achieved (article 4). The Convention, therefore, is based upon the Declaration of the same name and gives a level of obligatoriness to the rights proclaimed in that instrument. It constitutes the highest achievement by women in terms of concerted rights and is an international instrument designed for promoting the equality of women.

The importance of the Convention is made all the more obvious by the inclusion, among its provisions, of the creation of a Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, consisting of 23 experts elected by the States parties to the Convention from among their nationals, who serve in their personal capacity (article 17). The basic function of the Committee consists of considering the progress made in the implementation of the Convention, including reports by the States parties on the legislative, judicial, and administrative measures which have been adopted to give effect to its provisions.

Six Latin American and Caribbean countries are represented on the Committee: Cuba, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay.

As previously stated, six conventions were approved during the period under review, one of which was the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The other five conventions were approved by the ILO; all were of the promotional type, but only one focused on women: Convention No. 156, on Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities.

The Convention applies to all branches of economic activity and all categories of workers with family responsibilities (articles 1 and 2), and is intended to create effective equality between men and women workers, enabling those with family responsibilities to exercise their right to engage in employment without being subject to discrimination and without conflict between their employment and family responsibilities (article 3). The Convention is complemented by ILO Recommendation 165 (1981) of the same name.

Besides Convention No. 156, the ILO approved four others intended for all workers, that is, non-focal with respect to women. They are: Convention No. 151 (1975) on Rural Workers' Organizations; Convention No. 142 (1975) on Human Resources Development; Convention No. 143 (1975) on Migrant Workers; and Convention No. 149 (1977) on Nursing Personnel. These instruments affirm the need for guaranteeing the participation of rural workers by promoting organizations of rural workers, without discrimination of any kind; the need for human resources policies and programmes (vocational guidance

and vocational training) to be available to all persons, without any discrimination whatsoever; equality of opportunity and treatment for migrant workers without any distinction whatsoever among them or in relation to other workers; and finally, equality of conditions for nursing personnel with no distinctions among them or in relation to the workers of the country. The ILO conventions of this period are characterized by being of the promotional type and principally oriented towards treating the problems of workers in general, with no distinction by sex.

In summary, during the period which began in the 1970s, six conventions and agreements on women were approved, all of the promotional type; in four of them the question of women is dealt with within agreements referring to men and women. The only two conventions referring specifically to women constitute, in their respective fields, the most important achievements in the legal sphere to have been attained in the United Nations: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and ILO Convention No. 156 on Equality of Opportunities and treatment between Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities (1981).

Furthermore, the rights elaborated in the conventions of this period encompass all spheres of human activity, with the exception of penal matters; the conventions also reaffirm the rights proclaimed during the preceding period, make them more specific and improve them. It should be pointed out, however, that in the current period, the greatest progress in terms of types of rights and level of specificity are found in the resolutions, recommendations and mandates which do not constitute international legislation, and which are solely directed towards orienting the actions of governments and, in a few cases, of non-governmental organizations.

Among these mandates, recommendations and resolutions, those which treat the following subjects should be mentioned:

1) *Conditions of detention*: Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/41.

2) *The family, married women without children, family planning*: Economic and Social Council resolution 1942 (LVIII); resolution 17 of the 1975 World Conference; resolution 1 of the 1980 World Conference.

3) *The family, abandonment and violence*: resolutions 17 and 5 of the 1980 World Conference.

4) *Women refugees and displaced women*: General Assembly resolution 35/135 and resolution 12 of the 1980 World Conference.

5) *Improvement of the status of women in education and in the economic and social fields*: General Assembly resolutions 33/134; and 33/184; resolution 24 of the 1975 World Conference; resolution IV of the 1979 FAO World Conference; and UNESCO resolution 13, 1978.

6) *Social security*: Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/1; resolution 13 of the 1975 World Conference.

7) *Women in rural areas*: General Assembly resolution 3523 (XXX), 1975; Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/1; resolution 21 of the 1975 World Conference; resolution 44 of the 1980 World Conference.

8) *Women's participation in the strengthening of international peace and security*: General Assembly resolution 3519 (XXX); Economic and Social Council

cil resolution 1980/36; resolution 29 of the 1975 World Conference; resolution 11 of the 1980 World Conference.

9) *Discrimination based on race*: resolution 31 of the 1980 World Conference.

10) *Effects of apartheid on women*: Economic and Social Council resolution 1978/33; resolution 3 of the 1975 World Conference; resolution 45 of the 1980 World Conference.

11) *Situation of women in countries where human rights are violated*: resolutions 32 and 34 of the 1975 World Conference; resolutions 18 and 19 of the 1980 World Conference.

12) *Political and social participation, integration of women in the development process*: resolutions 18 and 20 of the 1975 World Conference; resolution IV of the 1979 FAO World Conference.

13) *Migrant women*: resolution 3 of the 1980 World Conference.

14) *Research on population and the integration of women in development*: resolution 11 of the 1975 World Conference.

15) *Disappeared women*: resolution 23 of the 1980 World Conference.

16) *Prostitution*: resolution 7 of the 1975 World Conference; and resolution 43 of the 1980 World Conference.

The fact that there are, during this period, a great many more resolutions which do not constitute international legislation than conventions which do, indicates a possible undeveloped field of rights which could be given practical expression in new conventions in the future.

The proceedings of the United Nations system in connection with the legal situation of women during the last decade, and especially in the last five years, are characterized by having gone beyond fundamental rights and freedoms to propose effective integration and participation together with formal rights, and by focusing on promotion rather than protection of women and orientation of the action of governments rather than generation of international obligations.

The achievements of this time period are the most advanced of the century in terms of women's rights, but many of them lose force when analysed at their level of implementation. The majority of the mandates do not constitute international legislation and the most important conventions have been approved recently, which makes it difficult to determine at this point what their final level of ratification will be.<sup>5</sup>

In summary, it may be stated that the period from 1946 to 1981 produced a far-reaching transformation in the set of resolutions and mandates arising from the United Nations system on the legal situation of women. In the first twenty years, the question of women was approached from a liberal and legalistic perspective, in that legislation was considered to be the main factor in eliminating inequalities and discriminations. The legalistic approach was oriented towards women in general and was protective with respect to legal matters. Agreeing upon and proclaiming these rights was effected through conventions emanating from the joint fora of the system, conventions which focused on formal rights, with very limited generation of measures and mechanisms for their implementation and evaluation, and through specific programmes and projects within the organization and at the national level.

From 1970 onwards, and basically since the International Women's Year in 1975, a dynamic focus was adopted, in which the situation of women was approached in terms of integration into development. Legislative measures became subordinate to certain integrated planning strategies which contained, together with legislation—which was at that time also considered to be a planning instrument—the promotion of the association and organization of women, the adoption of continuing education programmes, the development of research programmes, and the adoption of temporary strategies and measures. Within this context, legislative measures were defined as factors facilitating the elimination of discrimination against women, but which could not in themselves provide an answer to the problem. A transition thus took place, from a legalistic position to an integrated system of planning which took into account the structural factors affecting the female population.

## II. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE LEGAL SITUATION OF WOMEN

The preceding diagnostic analysis of the body of laws produced by the United Nations in connection with the situation of women, and which includes both conventions and resolutions and mandates which do not constitute international legislation, needs to be complemented with the information contained in volume II of the present study, which contains the textual transcription of the resolutions and mandates since 1946, organized by forum and in chronological order.

On the basis of this diagnostic, it is of interest to point out a few aspects which go beyond the limits of this work and which may give rise to future research.

a) *The importance granted to the legal situation of women within the action plans concerning women at the world and regional levels*

In all these spheres, there is a need indicated for ratifying the international instruments in force; revising and modifying both the international instruments and the national bodies of legislation for the purpose of eliminating discrimination against women. The plans also envisage measures in the following fields of law: political rights; civil law, with special emphasis on family law; public law, in particular with respect to prostitution and drugs; penal law; the economic, social and cultural areas of law. Similarly, reference is made to the elimination of all discrimination against women and to the adoption of measures for improving their legal status, such as governments' transmitting of information on legislation and national mechanisms, studies on international instruments, legal counselling programmes for women and programmes of education and dissemination of information for the entire population.

b) *The fields of law which are unevolved at the international level and could give rise to future conventions, resolutions and recommendations*

*Political rights.* Reaffirmation of the effective participation of women in public office, national movements, unions, women's organizations, professional associations, international and other bodies.

*Family law.* Legislation through conventions and resolutions on those aspects which have been disregarded or not sufficiently developed, such as violence in the home, the distribution of domestic work within the family, and administration of property. Reaffirmation of those aspects which continue to be critical areas in national legislation parental authority, guardianship of children in cases of separation, the legal situation of unmarried mothers.

*Public law.* Legislation through conventions on the protection of women and children during armed conflicts and against all violence as a result of racism, *apartheid*, colonialism or foreign domination, political or religious differences, especially with respect to women, youths and children who have been tortured or have disappeared; measures for reuniting families and for rehabilitation and socio-cultural integration.

*Penal law.* Legislation through conventions on conditions of detention and protection of pregnant detained women and of children born in prison. The right of the detained woman to an education, and to work and occupy her free time. Elimination of all sex discrimination in the area of penal law. To date there are only a few resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the Second Regional Conference of ECLAC (1979), and one provision in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1967).

*Labour law.* Legislation through conventions on special groups of workers:

i) *Elderly workers.* To date there is only one ILO recommendation (recommendation No. 162, of 1980) intended for all elderly workers, which proposes equality of opportunity and treatment, protection and preparation for and access to retirement, and recommends that the ILO prepare a convention. The World Conference of the International Women's Year (1975), in its resolution 13 on social security, states that in this connection, particular consideration and special studies should be devoted to elderly women. Furthermore, the 1980 World Conference dealt with this theme in its resolution 4, requesting that special attention should be given to the problem of elderly women, data should be collected and that a comparative study on the social security of elderly women should be prepared, together with other provisions connected with the World Assembly on Aging (1982). It also recommends that, on the basis of the studies, the General Assembly should elaborate a convention or resolutions on social security and full participation in social life by elderly women, so that these concerns will not be confined to age-group programmes, which are highly discriminatory.

ii) *Women domestic workers and salaried workers working in the home.* In neither case are there conventions regulating the work, for which reason it appears necessary to elaborate conventions on this type of women worker, especially those working in developing countries with a concentration of industries which employ women workers for work in their own homes (textile, leather and footwear), with no legal protection whatsoever.

iii) *Rural women workers.* For this group, effect should be given to the resolutions and recommendations in force designed to encourage the extension of the international conventions, especially the labour conventions, to the rural sector.

iv) *Young women workers.* It would also appear necessary to enact legislation for this group of workers, through provisions promoting equality of access opportunities and treatment.

c) ***Level at which the body of laws emanating from the United Nations in connection with the legal situation of women is reflected and implemented in national legislation***

One indicator of this level of reflection is constituted by the degree of ratification or accession to the conventions, which, nevertheless, does not provide data on the level of implementation of the norm or the extent to which the recommendations and resolutions actually orient governments' actions. This is an area which merits an up-to-date study, following research on the legal situation prevailing in the countries.

With regard to the level of ratification or accession, the following data exist concerning some of the conventions:

- 1) Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949)  
*States parties:* 53  
*Countries of the region:* Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Haiti, Mexico, Venezuela.
- 2) ILO Convention 100, Equal Remuneration Convention (1951)  
*State parties:* 94  
*Countries of the region:* Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru.
- 3) Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952)  
*States parties:* 90  
*Countries of the region:* Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago.
- 4) Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956)  
*State parties:* 96  
*Countries of the region:* Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.
- 5) Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1957)  
*States parties:* 54  
*Countries of the region:* Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago.
- 6) ILO Recommendation No. 111, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Recommendation (1958)  
*States parties:* 96  
*Countries of the region:* Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

- 7) UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)  
*States parties:* 62  
*Countries of the region:* Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Chile, Panama, Peru and Venezuela.
- 8) Convention and Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1962)  
*States parties:* 31  
*Countries of the region:* Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago.
- 9) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)  
*States parties:* 39  
*Countries of the region:* Barbados, Colombia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Uruguay.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, out of a total of 151 ILO conventions up to 1 June 1980, addressed to all workers, seven of which refer to women directly and 18 indirectly, the Latin American and Caribbean States have ratified various conventions as indicated below:

<i>Country</i>	<i>No. of conventions ratified</i>
Argentina	60
Barbados	33
Bolivia	39
Brazil	54
Colombia	45
Costa Rica	33
Cuba	80
Chile	40
Dominican Republic	26
Ecuador	49
El Salvador	4
Guatemala	39
Guyana	28
Haiti	22
Honduras	16
Jamaica	23
Mexico	59
Nicaragua	42
Panama	69
Paraguay	33
Peru	61
Trinidad and Tobago	12
Uruguay	79
Venezuela	26

The data presented give an indication of the low ratification level of the majority of the countries of the region in respect of international conventions relating to women, and even to labour conventions of a general nature.

*Countries with a ratification rate of more than 50%*

Cuba (53%) and Uruguay (52%)

*Countries with a ratification rate of 40% to 50%*

Panama (46%), Argentina (40%) and Peru (40%)

*Countries with a ratification rate of 30% to 40%*

Mexico (39%), Brazil (36%), Ecuador (32%) and Colombia (30%)

*Countries with a ratification rate of 20% to 30%*

Nicaragua (28%), Chile (27%), Bolivia (26%), Guatemala (26%), Barbados 22%), Costa Rica (22%) and Paraguay (22%)

*Countries with a ratification rate of less than 20%*

Guyana (19%), Dominican Republic (17%), Venezuela (17%), Haiti (15%), Jamaica (15%), Honduras (11%), Trinidad and Tobago (8%) and El Salvador (3%).

In connection with this topic and given its crucial importance, it is necessary to: a) maintain up-to-date information on the level of ratification of conventions referring to women, and also to extend this task to all the conventions of the system; b) carry out research utilizing the data indicated in item a) and evaluating the level at which United Nations resolutions and mandates concerning women are reflected in the national legislation of the countries of the region, using as possible indicators the level of ratification, the level of implementation (through collective labour agreements, social and labour situations), and the level at which legislative action by governments is oriented by the resolutions and recommendations of the United Nations system.

d) *The degree to which the body of legislation produced by the United Nations on the legal situation of women reproduces or furthers national legislation*

This body of legislation does not reproduce national legislation of the countries of the region, but establishes antecedents in statute law for the points which are critical in national legislation and furthers them in the sense that it proposes improvements which the former do not provide. For example, while the majority of national bodies of legislation firmly establish the legal incapacity of married women, the United Nations reaffirms the equality of married women and their full legal capacity. This feature of improving national legislation gives the theory and practice of the United Nations an enormous capacity for effecting change, both in terms of thought and planning.

e) *The imbalance between the international instruments and the legal and social condition of women and levels of awareness of this problem*

Despite the fact that the body of United Nations legislation goes beyond national bodies of legislation, it has not been successful in becoming part of those bodies in order to produce an effective *de facto* and *de jure* change in the situation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean. This imbalance is obvious in various spheres of human activity. At the political level, women vote but barely



participate in parliament or the judiciary and even less so in national executive powers; there have been only three female chiefs of State in the entire history of Latin America and the Caribbean: in Argentina, Bolivia and Dominica. Women have participated in traditional political parties as a female branch or minor partner in support activities for the most part (only in a few national and labour movements in Latin America and the Caribbean have women become more fully integrated).

In the labour field, and despite international and national legislation, women receive less remuneration than men and do not enjoy equality of opportunities and treatment; they generally perform non-directive duties and are the subject of discrimination for reasons of maternity and child care. In the educational field discrimination against women also persists, and the so-called "female careers" (nursing, social work, all branches of teaching), with a majority of female staff, are one of the forms in which this discrimination is manifested.

Women in the region are continuing to reproduce stereotyped roles in which they are not considered as active subjects of the society in which they live; they study, but are prepared to postpone those studies in the name of marriage; they work, in order to complement the salary of their father or husband, without fully assuming their destiny. Similarly, they are basically dependent in the affective sphere, a situation which is favoured by inadequate legislation, legitimized by law and by a deep-seated tradition of male chauvinism.

Although international legislation may appear utopian in the current stage of development, it undoubtedly constitutes an alternative for change. It should be complemented with effective mechanisms for change, in the countries, which will help women in the region, and especially women in the popular sectors, to achieve full integration into all plans concerning what is to be done with society.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

This work is in line with a long tradition within the United Nations system, consisting of systematizing its own actions. It may therefore be viewed in the context of the efforts at compiling and analysing information periodically carried out by the Commission on the Legal and Social Status of Women and by the Subdivision for the Advancement of Women in connection with progress in the legal status of women in the different countries and concerning the level of ratification or accession to the conventions emanating from the United Nations. It also provides continuity with the compilation and systematization work conducted by the ECLAC Unit for the Integration of Women in Economic and Social Development. The report can be used as an instrument of dissemination and reflection and as a planning instrument. In the first case it will make it possible to compare and place in perspective the immediate legal reality and in the second will enable the transformation of that reality. The recommendations presented below envisage both of these dimensions.

1. To orient actions designed to promote the legal equality of women according to the following principles, contained in different mandates emanating from the United Nations system:(92)

a) Legislative measures cannot by themselves modify the situation of discrimination against women, but they can facilitate the conditions for eliminating it. Legislative measures should be part of integrated planning and development strategies.

b) The legal and social situation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean is closely linked with the underdevelopment and structural dependence affecting the region, and the solution of this problem can only materialize within the context of a new international economic order, based on peace, co-operation and self-determination of peoples.

c) The full integration of women in development is a process in which legal equality is a basic condition; it is a task still to be accomplished, possesses its own legality, and its success does not depend automatically on changes in society at large.

d) *De facto* and *de jure* equality of women necessarily implies equality of duties and responsibilities and women's acceptance of their contribution to the maintenance and well-being of society.

e) The idea of "integrating women into development" means including women in the creation of new and egalitarian social structures, organized without distinction based on sex, and does not assume women's integration as a minor partner into a world foreign to them.

2. To disseminate among the United Nations member States, permanent bodies, functional commissions and specialized agencies, and among women's associations and non-governmental organizations, all existing information to date on international legislation referring to women, and the United Nations resolutions and mandates which, although they do not constitute legislation, orient the legislative actions of governments.

3. To conduct research on the legal status of women in each of the national bodies of legislation of the countries of the region, for the purpose of elaborating up-to-date diagnostic analyses and a general study in comparative law. In both cases an effort should be made to delve into the rights proclaimed, the omitted or poorly developed aspects, the level of equality attained in the different fields of law (labour, penal, agrarian, etc.) and the differences between the *de facto* and *de jure* situations. On the basis of these studies and of the existing diagnosis of international legislation and related resolutions referring to women, there should be an evaluation of the level at which international legislation and the resolutions and mandates of the United Nations are reflected in the national bodies of legislation of the countries of the region, measured in terms of ratifications, accessions, degree of orientation of actions and level of actual implementation.

4. To propose that the governments of the region should review and modify the national bodies of legislation using the following elements:

a) Information on international instruments and the United Nations resolutions and mandates referring to the legal situation of women (both the diagnostic analysis and the evaluation of the level of reflection in national bodies of legislation).

b) Information on the critical points in national bodies of legislation, including the diagnostic analysis of the topic elaborated by ECLAC for the Second Conference on the Integration of Women in the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (1979). (82)

c) Studies on the social, cultural, economic and political needs of women at the national and regional level. On the basis of the above-mentioned information, it is recommended that governments should: i) compare national legislation with the international instruments to detect differences and similarities, granting priority to the study of poorly developed fields of law or those which legitimize or sanction discrimination; ii) take legislative measures to end discrimination; iii) elaborate strategies and integrated programmes for promoting the egalitarian participation of women, in which legislative measures are contained.

5. To recommend that the member States should ratify or accede to all the conventions approved by the United Nations and orient their actions according to the United Nations resolutions and mandates which, although they do not constitute legislation, give legislative guidelines to governments.

6. To request United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and functional commissions to review the international legislation and resolutions and mandates of the system which, although they do not constitute legislation, refer to the legal situation of women in Latin America, for the purpose of:

a) Eliminating protective laws, above all in labour and civil law;

b) Seeking the universal ratification of the conventions formulated;

c) Elaborating conventions, resolutions and mandates relating to rights that have been omitted or poorly developed, both in international and national legislation; and

d) Formulating the conventions, resolutions and mandates taking into account the following criteria: i) the need for including certain types of women, especially those who are doubly discriminated against (such as elderly women, women in popular sectors, etc.); and ii) the advisability of accompanying legislative measures by relevant activities in the spheres of planning, research, evaluation, education and dissemination.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The case of the ILO deserves separate mention, since this body has been legislating and issuing recommendations on the legal situation of the working woman since 1919.

<sup>2</sup>This convention was adopted by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries convened by the Economic and Social Council through its resolution 608 (XXI) of 30 April 1956, on a Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery.

<sup>3</sup>During the following period, 1975-1981, the ILO policy was different, as will be seen later on, since all the conventions aimed exclusively at women were promotional.

<sup>4</sup>Regional commissions were designated as regional focal points for the integration of women; specialized units were established within commissions and other bodies and specialized agencies, the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) were created.

<sup>5</sup>As at 30 June 1982, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had been signed by 88 States. Of these States, barely 37 had ratified it and 2 had acceded to it, for a total of 39 ratifications and accessions, or 44% of the signatory States.

<sup>6</sup>The General Assembly conventions, as at 1 July 1982, are contained in United Nations, *Human Rights: International Instruments. Signatories, ratifications, accessions, etc.*, 1 July 1982 (ST/HR/4/Rev.4); the ILO conventions, as at 1 July 1980, appear in ILO, *Standards and Policy Statements of Special Interest to Women Workers, Adopted under the Auspices of the International Labour Office*, Geneva, 1980.

## Annex 2

### RESOLUTIONS AND APPRAISALS FROM THREE REGIONAL MEETINGS ON WOMEN (MACUTO, VENEZUELA, 1979; MEXICO CITY, 1983, AND HAVANA, 1984)

#### I. RESOLUTIONS FROM THE SECOND REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF LATIN AMERICA\*

(Macuto, Venezuela, 12 to 16 November 1979)

##### 1. CREATION OF AN AD HOC COMMISSION TO STUDY MOTHER AND CHILD PROBLEMS

*The Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Bearing in mind* that the present situation of the world and especially the developing countries due to the serious economic crisis affects mothers and children with particular intensity,

*Considering* that, following a careful review of the studies and statistics, the solution to this problem requires specific strategies with clearly structured priorities,

1. *Recommends* that CEPAL should study the form of setting up an *ad hoc* commission which should, *inter alia*:

(a) Visit the most depressed areas of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and make an on-the-spot study of the serious problems affecting mothers and children;

(b) Collaborate with the existing national sub-commissions or with those set up with similar aims;

2. *Requests* CEPAL to submit this study, including the financial implications, to the Committee of the Whole of the Commission so that a decision may be reached as soon as possible.

\*Taken from the report of the Conference (E/CEPAL/CRM.2/L.6/Rev.1).

## 2. CREATION OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS TO STUDY THE PROBLEMS OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

*The Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Bearing in mind* that in the majority of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, domestic legislation and international conventions in general guarantee the equality of the rights and obligations of men and women,

*Also bearing in mind* that all these instruments are not put into practice at the national level and that there are glaring differences between the provisions of the legislation or conventions and their application or implementation,

*Aware* of the need to find a means of establishing operational machinery to solve this problem,

*Urges* governments to give all possible priority to constituting commissions at the national and local levels to co-ordinate and study the full integration of women into development, and in particular the real situation and problems of mothers and children; and report periodically to CEPAL on the results of their work, which may thus be reflected in the appraisal of progress in implementing the Regional Plan of Action,

*Also urges* governments, in accordance with their national priorities, to provide all possible facilities so that these commissions can, following their mandate, analyse the problems of women and children, and report in full to the international bodies specializing in the subject.

## 3. APPRAISAL AND PRIORITIES OF LATIN AMERICA WITH A VIEW TO THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

*The Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America,*

*Considering* that women are agents in the development process and that the situations and problems experienced by them are not exclusive to them but affect all society, and furthermore that these situations should be considered in the context of global processes in order to attain the New International Economic Order,

*Bearing in mind* CEPAL resolutions 386 and 388 (XVIII) adopted at the eighteenth session, containing the preparations and contributions by CEPAL for the formulation of the New International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, which should reflect "in an appropriate manner the need for adequate policies for the promotion of social development to be defined by each country within the framework of its development plans and priorities";<sup>1</sup>

*Recalling* that in keeping with the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX) called upon the regional commissions "to develop and implement as a matter of priority, effective strategies to further the objectives of the World Plan of Action at the regional and subregional levels, bearing in mind their respective regional plans of action",

*Taking into account* in all points the spirit and letter of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development, approved at the first Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development (Havana, Cuba, June 1977), and endorsed by Member States at the eleventh extraordinary session of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America (New York, November 1977),

*Also taking into account* that several General Assembly resolutions, notably 3520 and 3505 (XXX), 31/175 and 33/200, as well as resolution 2 of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development urge the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, all financial institutions and the international, regional and subregional development banks, and the bilateral funding agencies to accord high priority as soon as possible in their development assistance to projects and programmes for the promotion of the integration of women into development, in accordance with requests by the governments,

*Also considering* that the efforts and strategies to implement the objectives of the Regional Plan of Action were insufficient and inadequate in the majority of countries for bringing about changes of any qualitative or quantitative significance in the situation of women, or for increasing their participation in political, economic and social life, particularly in the lowest socio-economic strata and among rural women,

*Bearing in mind* that the time has come to go beyond the reiteration of diagnoses which have already been made and the statement of desirable objectives, which have already been set forth in many United Nations documents such as the La Paz Appraisal,<sup>2</sup>

*Considering* that the delay in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development stands in the way of improving the standard of living and further participation of women in the region, and also produces discouragement among broad groups of women in the region, whose hopes were raised when the Decade for Women was proclaimed,

*Particularly concerned* by the fact that a substantial number of countries of the region have not yet reviewed existing legislation with a view to eliminating the aspects which affect the legal and social status of women, preventing their full incorporation into development,

*Taking into account* the Resolution on Conditions of Work, Vocational Training and Employment of Women of the Eleventh Conference of American States Members of the ILO (Medellín, Colombia, September-October 1979),<sup>3</sup>

*Considering* that the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America consti-

tutes a preparatory activity of the Latin American region for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women to be held in 1980,

*Decides* that this resolution, together with the report of the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, should be forwarded to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and Committee for Development Planning, the Preparatory Committee for the formulation of the new International Development Strategy, and the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women to be held in 1980.

#### **A. APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF LATIN AMERICA**

1. This first process of appraisal is taking place mid-way through the "United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace", and on the eve of the formulation of the new international strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, which should incorporate the results of the appraisal of the situation of women. Consequently, it is necessary to concentrate efforts and resources on solving the problems connected with national and regional economic and social development that women will have to face in the next decade.

2. The living conditions of women of the region constitute a problem which affects the whole of Latin American and Caribbean society. Accordingly, their improvement should be a basic and explicit objective of the global processes of economic and social development and change in the countries of the region. Men and women share the living conditions determined by the fact that they belong to a particular society and a socioeconomic stratum of that society, but women also face the specific types of discrimination resulting from the social and sexual division of labour.

3. It may be affirmed that the situation of women in the region has generally improved, relatively speaking, but this cannot be said of all women or of every aspect of social life. The conditions in which women are living vary widely according to the socioeconomic stratum to which they belong, and their modes of participation in economic, political, social and cultural life and the sources and forms of discrimination against them vary accordingly.

4. The women most affected by this situation resulting from inadequate socioeconomic structures are those belonging to poor groups, particularly in rural and marginal urban areas.

5. The social organization of the region attributes to the family unit the responsibility for the biological and social reproduction of its members and, therefore, of the population. Virtually all adult women carry out the domestic work. However, this important contribution of women in fulfilling their reproductive roles enjoys no social recognition, and merely serves as a means of perpetuating the existing sexual stereotypes and cultural patterns that discriminate against women. What is more important, since the situation of women is usually viewed as forming part of the social welfare sector no recognition tends

to be given to women's domestic activities, and thus their contribution to economic and social development is ignored. Many national development strategies and plans do not take account of the link between the majority of women and domestic work. At the same time the objective of integrated development is hampered by a group of interrelated social problems which, affect men and women alike, such as critical poverty, inequitable income distribution, unemployment, illiteracy, or semi-illiteracy, the marginality of large urban, rural and indigenous sectors, little or no participation in the most important aspects of national life and so on.

6. The problems which hinder the participation of women in the economic, political, social and cultural life of their countries are closely linked with the general state of under-development. It is therefore fundamental to bring about the necessary changes in socioeconomic structures, and at the same time undertake specific action aimed at changing the Latin American woman's situation so that she becomes an active agent in transforming the existing structures and a determining factor in achieving full equality of men and women. This signifies that the situation of women in rural areas is particularly serious, they suffer not only from isolation, but also from lack of education, employment and other disadvantages which cause them to migrate to the cities in search of work, with the corresponding sequel of prostitution, begging and growth of slum areas.

7. It is therefore evident that legislation, in so far as it adversely affects women, impedes their integration into development, and while it is true that legislative measures are not in themselves sufficient to ensure women's equality, the elimination of all discriminatory provisions opens the way to equality. The *de facto* discrimination that exists in the region has been based on, and vitalized by, *de jure* discrimination and it is urgent to take appropriate measures of a legal nature to ensure the legal equality of the sexes.

8. Although education is a vital factor for the economic and social development of peoples, in the region women represent a high percentage (between 60 and 80%) of the total illiterate population. Even in the countries considered to be of a higher cultural level, the percentage of women with secondary, technical and higher education is low.

9. The limited access to education by majority groups of the population, particularly women, has led the latter to turn to the traditional sectors of the economy, basically domestic services, trade, artisanal activities and agricultural work. There is also the special problem of young people leaving school due to economic reasons, pregnancy, the need to go to work to contribute to the family income or other factors.

10. According to CEPAL and United Nations studies, the health problem in the region is alarming. Low life expectancy and high mortality and morbidity rates, and the region's critical public health situation highlights the differences which exist between the health and living conditions of the Latin American countries and those of the developed countries of the world. This is all the more critical if one bears in mind the great differences which exist in this field among the different countries of the region and among the different social groups and regions within each country.

11. Because of the special care they need during pregnancy, childbirth and lactation, women, together with children, are worst affected by the situation.



There is also the problem of the increasing cost of medicines and the monopolistic control exercised over them by transnational enterprises as well as the shortage of available and suitable medical resources.

12. With regard to employment, it may be observed that a very low percentage of women is incorporated in the labour force, although this percentage is higher in the Caribbean subregion than in the rest of the region.

13. Most of them carry out unskilled work, particularly in the services sector and above all domestic service, including unpaid family work. In many cases women are the object of discrimination and exploitation as regards pay, working conditions and hiring practices; and there are real limitations on the incorporation and retention of women in work, which hinders their participation in the political, economic and social life of their countries.

14. According to current data, the female work force is concentrated in the cities and primarily in the large capitals, where the greatest quantity of services and jobs traditionally attributed to women are grouped together, but which lack the social and educational facilities to enable the great majority of them to remain employed. Against the background of the chronic unemployment and under-employment affecting the region, this further worsens the position of women.

15. The family still inculcates and promotes among its members activities and vocations which are based more on assigned sexual stereotypes than on their possibilities and abilities as human beings, which affects not only women's opportunities of personal development but also their part as agents of development.

16. One of the fundamental limitations on the access of women to work, education, management responsibilities and possibilities of development is the excessive workload imposed on them by the domestic tasks which are wrongly viewed as the exclusive occupation of women. This double working day has an enormous influence on the millions of women incorporated into production and services, who, on top of their working day, have the added burden of all the domestic chores.

17. It is significant that women's political participation in the region in the interests of the economic and social development of their countries is extremely low. They currently form about half the electorate, but only a minute fraction of them are members of legislative bodies and an even smaller proportion are members of executive bodies. Women do not participate sufficiently in decision-making, their opinions are neglected and their needs are not taken into account in the development planning of many countries.

18. All the above, reflected in the economic and social situation of the region, is compounded by the existence of problems such as prostitution, the illegal traffic in persons and drugs, rape, drug addiction and other forms of crime and antisocial behaviour.

19. The mass media, which offer great possibilities through their functions of information, education, entertainment and persuasion, often do not attain these objectives because they usually tend to present and reinforce a stereotyped, degrading and inadequate image of women, whom they treat as sexual objects and as agents to promote indiscriminate consumption, particularly when seeking to market various types of articles.

20. To a very considerable extent the communication media, basically motivated by the economic interests of the transnational enterprises, have perpetuated the dependence of women by showing them a reality which is not theirs and hiding from them their real identity; they have contributed to keeping them restricted to the confines of the home, preventing the development of their critical consciousness and propagating the concept of their role as useful merchandise for consumption.

21. In accordance with the appraisal undertaken, and in order to overcome the above-mentioned obstacles to the full integration of women in economic and social development, governments, women, CEPAL and international organizations should commit themselves to giving importance and priority to the following measures aimed towards improving the existing state of affairs.

## B. PRIORITY AREAS, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

1. *It is recommended* that governments should:

a) Do their utmost to furnish maximum support for the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action, which constitutes the essential instrument of the action priorities for the region.

b) Take measures to ensure that regional, national and sectoral plans actively pursue specific actions to benefit women, provide adequate resources for this purpose and monitor and evaluate their application and impact on the situation of women.

c) Include objectives, concrete strategies and studies relating to the situation of women in national preparatory activities for the formulation of the New International Development Strategy.

d) Adopt the necessary measures as rapidly as possible to implement the World Plan of Action and the Regional Plan of Action in order to establish and improve national machinery for the integration of women into development, and also analyse and identify the factors hindering the creation and implementation of, and where appropriate devise the most adequate, machinery.

e) Adopt as rapidly as possible in each country the necessary measures for the complete review of national legislation in order to ensure the legal equality of men and women in all areas, with particular emphasis upon civil, family, labour, agrarian and criminal law; and establish where appropriate regulations governing family property which ensure that the goods acquired in the marriage or consensual union of a couple benefit both members; and in countries where no Family Code exists such provisions should be included in civil legislation and finally implement the necessary measures to ensure that women are suitably informed of all the legal and legislative aspects affecting them, thus making for a better implementation of those provisions.

f) Take the necessary measures to implement the recommendations concerning employment contained in the resolution on conditions of work, vocational training and employment of women adopted at the Eleventh Conference of American States Members of the ILO in Medellín, Colombia, September-October 1979.

- i) Create conditions for generating employment for the growing number of women particularly heads of households, who constitute a high percentage of the unemployed and underemployed.
- ii) Design and implement training programme in non-traditional areas for unskilled young urban women and migrant women workers, bearing in mind their age, in order to prepare them for, and advance them in the job market and place them in a position to generate incomes through the production of goods and services and slow down migration from the countryside to the cities.
- iii) Improve the conditions of work, promote access to credit and social security and increase the managerial training for women in the "informal" sector of the economy.

g) Give priority in the short term to very broad literacy and adult education programmes with emphasis on women in rural areas since they show the highest percentages of educational backwardness; it is also suggested that use should be made of the means offered by modern techniques both in the formal and non-formal systems. In countries which still have not done so, the discrimination implicit in education where there is a separation of the sexes should be abolished very rapidly, while co-education which fundamentally strengthens coexistence, breaks with sexual patterns and stereotypes, and makes optimum use of resources, should be fostered, as should sexual education.

h) Adjust programmes and adopt flexible curricula so as to make it possible for women to be reincorporated into secondary or university education, when their responsibilities as mothers so permit or, once their desire to devote themselves full-time to the care, education and upbringing of their children has been satisfied they consider that the time has come to resume their education or careers.

i) Use the mass media to disseminate the Regional Plan of Action, and incorporate it into the formal education system, so that the population is suitably informed and able to participate actively and consciously in the country's development process.

j) Provide equitable access to health services, especially for the poorest sectors, covering all the basic medical needs of the population, including suitable infrastructure and the necessary medical and paramedical services, without distinction on sexual grounds, to achieve a good level of medical care for all.

k) Reformulate, in the countries which have social security, the criteria governing the financing and cost of nurseries or infant day care centres, for example, so that the cost is borne equally by the contributions of men and women who are parents, thus putting an end to the idea that such services are provided for mothers alone.

l) Pay special attention to improving national information and statistical services, so as to make it possible to appraise the participation of women in all levels and sectors of the planning system; and provide timely, up-to-date information on the situation of women when so requested by United Nations specialized agencies.

m) Promote, within the framework of programmes of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, as well as in the context of regional and subregional agreements, those aspects of this resolution aimed

towards securing the full integration of women into the economic and social development of their countries.

n) Adopt and implement, in conjunction with the bodies of the United Nations system, measures designed to alter the current image of women as sexual objects and portray women as economically, socially and politically productive human beings.

o) Develop specific policies to improve the status of rural women, particularly in relation to the extension of social security.

p) Include in national technical co-operation programmes, and in the corresponding indicative planning figures, those projects which concern the increased participation of women in development, attaching high priority to them.

q) Lend firm support to the setting up in the Dominican Republic of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

r) Request the United Nations Secretary-General to speed up the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the advisory boards of the Institute, so that the latter may begin its work as rapidly as possible.

s) Likewise request the Secretary-General to study the possibility of submitting to the 1980 World Conference a report on the work undertaken, the programmes prepared and immediate action.

2. *It is recommended* that CEPAL should:

a) Submit as rapidly as possible this resolution, which contains the fundamental strategies for the integration of women into development, and the relevant documentation mentioned in General Assembly resolution 33/200, paragraphs 3 and 4, to the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the New International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, and the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, for consideration at its third session.

b) Include in the implementation of its regular programmes the recommendations of the Regional Plan of Action as part of the instrumentation required by the New International Development Strategy, and in its periodic appraisals consider specific aspects of the form in which the situation of women has been affected in each area.

c) Supplement the request contained in the last paragraph by establishing machinery to permit a close link between the Special Unit for the Integration of Women and the rest of the CEPAL system so as to provide for a joint analysis of the quantitative and qualitative impact of this New Strategy on the situation of women.

d) Recommend that the Committee of High-Level Government Experts (CEGAN), convened periodically by the secretariat, should include in its periodic appraisals an appraisal relating to the incorporation of women in economic and social development and formulate recommendations which will lead to the active participation and improvement of the situation of women in the regional development process, and to achieving the objectives of the New International Development Strategy.

e) Co-operate with the governments of the region, in conjunction with the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System (SELA), to

identify and generate economic co-operation projects which affect the position of the women of the region in economic and social growth and development.

f) Continue taking the necessary steps, with the urgency which the situation requires, and in accordance with the recommendations of the Presiding Officers of the First Regional Conference, to obtain the human and financial resources needed by the secretariat to be able to make a better response to the requests of governments; and to fill as soon as possible the corresponding post in the Mexico Office, so as to make a more effective contribution to the appropriate implementation of the objectives of the Regional Plan of Action and of the United Nations Programme for the Integration of Women into Development.

g) Attach priority in the different CEPAL fora and bodies to the study and analysis of the basic concepts, strategies and action contained in the Regional Plan of Action with a view to avoiding the duplication of effort and strengthening the approach that the so-called "question of women" is not divorced from the economic, social, political and cultural problems of the countries.

h) Deploy the necessary human, technical and financial resources to co-ordinate projects for the region through the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

3. *It is recommended* that women should:

a) Participate with a greater sense of commitment in trade-union organizations and, through the women's or mixed organizations to which they belong, in the implementation of the action programmes aimed at achieving their integration into social, political and economic development; and promote the local popular organizations which strengthen the democratic principles of equality and social justice.

b) Collaborate in the dissemination of the Regional Plan of Action, and consider it as far as possible as an instrument of reference for the specific actions which their groups may undertake.

c) Urge non-governmental organizations and particularly women's associations to continue their invaluable work, focussing on activities to achieve directly or in co-operation with governments, the solutions proposed for the Decade for Women and the Regional Plan of Action.

4. With regard to the generation of projects, *it is recommended* that the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations system should:

a) Furnish the necessary collaboration to the countries of the region for reinforcing the insertion of these projects in the national infrastructure in all the aspects mentioned, either by means of technical assistance or by bilateral and multilateral collaboration.

b) Attach greater importance to the training of women, with special emphasis on non-traditional areas of training so that they can prepare and implement all aspects of projects. Similarly, they should create areas of marketing and production and other areas which may enable them to generate income and to promote the advancement of women and their families.

c) Establish through regional bodies the necessary flows of information and co-ordination so as to avoid the duplication of activities and concentrate efforts on key issues.

d) Set up producer's and consumer's co-operatives, disseminate intermediate technology which relieves rural women of their heavier work and create an adequate infrastructure of basic services.

5. With regard to financing *it is recommended* that governments and the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system should:

a) Ensure the effective allocation and use of financial resources for the generation and implementation of projects aimed towards the incorporation of women into development.

b) Request in particular the organization of the United Nations system to appraise what they have done to improve the status of women, increase their financial contributions and identify the necessary measures to implement the Regional Plan of Action.

c) Request CEPAL to seek further funds from the General Assembly for projects, without thereby causing any reduction in the funds to be allocated by the Consultative Committee of the Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women.

d) Reaffirm paragraph 88.8)i) of the Regional Plan of Action, which "requests the Secretary General of the United Nations to assign additional resources to the CEPAL Secretariat from the regular budget to strengthen its regular activities concerning women and to facilitate the establishment within the CEPAL Secretariat of a specialized unit for the integration of women in development". It is also recommended that these resources should be increased so as to consolidate the unit. Additional human and financial resources should be allocated at headquarters of CEPAL and its regional offices pursuant to the recommendations to CEPAL in the resolution, and studies and research undertaken for the creation of appropriate programmes of information and dissemination.

e) Reiterate paragraph 88.8)ii) of the Regional Plan of Action which "requests the Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women to give the greatest possible support to CEPAL's activities, programmes and specific projects deriving from the priorities laid down in this Regional Plan of Action in the field of the integration of women in development and consistent with the criteria established by the United Nations for disbursements from the Fund", and also give greater flexibility to the criteria for the allocation of resources according to the region's needs; the time which elapses between the allocation of funds for the projects and their implementation depending on their reception should be cut as far as possible; financial support should be secured for the projects until they are inserted in the national programmes; and the maximum priority should be given to integrated programmes which will ensure a genuine impact on the situation of women.

f) Reiterate paragraph 88.8)iii) of the Regional Plan of Action which "requests the Administrator of UNDP to give the greatest possible co-operation—on the national and regional level—to the provisions of the present Regional Plan of Action, supporting the specific activities, programmes and projects of the CEPAL Secretariat aimed at the achievement of its goals", so that it is the offices of UNDP in the countries which are responsible for this co-ordination in order to avoid duplication of efforts; and inform the CEPAL Secretariat in accordance with the procedures recently established by the Consultative Committee of the Voluntary Fund in March 1979.

g) Reiterate paragraph 88.8)iv) of the Regional Plan of Action which "requests the Executive Secretary of CEPAL to explore and negotiate with bodies for international co-operation on a bilateral or multilateral basis, financial support for specific programmes connected with the fulfilment of the goals of the present Regional Plan of Action"; and request him to seek, through organizations such as UNCTAD, UNIDO and others, financial support for programmes whose priorities include aspects relating to women, in relation to the New International Development Strategy.

#### 4. SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN IN NICARAGUA

*The Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America,*

*Considering* that the governments of the region are engaged in implementing the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, in view of its vital importance for integrated national advancement,

*Bearing in mind* that the governments of the region, member States of the United Nations, have taken the initiative for the integration and participation of women in activities aimed at development, as have the international organizations, since they attach priority to that issue,

*Mindful* that Nicaragua, a country of Central America, is currently at a crucial stage as a result of its movement for political transformation, in which women have from the start played an outstanding role,

*Urges* the member States of the United Nations and the international organizations to provide the necessary collaboration urgently needed in support of projects designed to benefit the women of Nicaragua in order to continue the process of rebuilding the country and restoring its national dignity.

#### 5. WOMEN AT THE DECISION-MAKING LEVELS IN THE CEPAL SECRETARIAT

*The Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America,*

*Bearing in mind* that the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms its belief in "the equal rights of men and women",

*Noting* that the majority of the officials at the decision-making level in the United Nations in general and in CEPAL in particular are men,

*Convinced* that a great number of women are fully qualified to take up high positions and assume major responsibilities,

*Recommends* the Executive Secretary of CEPAL:

1. To make a review of the staff list at all levels, particularly at the directoral levels, in order to secure greater representation of women and a balance in the distribution of posts within the system;

2. To take measures to ensure the real participation of women in CEPAL and its programmes.

## 6. PROBLEM OF REFUGEE WOMEN

*The Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America,*

*Bearing in mind* General Assembly resolution 3318 (XXIX) and resolution 7 of the twenty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women concerning the protection of women and children in states of emergency, national disasters and armed conflicts, in the struggle for peace, self-determination and independence, and the situation of women and children obliged to leave their countries due to well-founded fears of persecution on grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion,

*Recommends:*

1. That the basic rights of those affected by these situations, which constitute a pressing problem in the region, should be promoted and safeguarded;
2. That the various recommendations and resolutions formulated on the subject in the different international organizations should be implemented since they will contribute in particular to providing a solution to the problems arising for refugees.

## II. RESOLUTIONS OF THE THIRD REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

(Mexico City, 8 to 10 August 1983)

### 1. SOME GUIDELINES FOR REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ACTIONS AIMED AT IMPROVING THE STATUS OF WOMEN

*The Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Recalling* the mandates and resolutions contained in: the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year (Mexico, 1975); the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development (Havana, 1977); the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (Copenhagen, 1980); the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America (Macuto, Venezuela, 1979), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and evaluations made during the United Nations Decade for Women,

*Considering* that despite the progress made, there remain profound social inequities and discriminatory values obstructing women's integration into development,

*Taking into account* that the present crisis being undergone by the region, aggravated by international economic problems, has an especially serious effect on the participation of women in this integration,



*Recognizing* women as protagonists in the quest for new styles of development and as agents of innovative change in the direction of more just forms of social organization,

*Convinced* that the solving of current problems constitutes a challenge to the region which requires the establishment of new formulas based on democracy and participation of women promoting solidarity and friendship among the countries of the region,

1. *Recommends* to the governments that they:

a) increase the levels of participation of women in decision-making processes that transcend local levels;

b) consider the family as a basic unit, subject and object of overall policies which ensure the satisfaction of their needs and aspirations and the improvement of their living conditions, with special emphasis on cultural and educational training;

c) redefine the responsibilities of each member of the couple and those assigned to the remaining members of the family so as to reflect equality and equity between sexes, their right to make a free and informed decision as to procreation and their relationship with their children, based on training them to become persons capable of making decisions;

d) formulate social policies based on a more equitable distribution of income that are designed to generalize the infrastructure established to attend to the fundamental needs of low income women and families, particularly as regards health, education and employment;

e) ensure the effective equality, guaranteed by law, of men and women as individuals and as family members, and support the dissemination among the population of information on the significance of such legislation in local practice;

f) promote and support, as appropriate, a change in the stereotyped image of women in society, beginning with the image transmitted by educational systems and including the one presented by the mass media, with a view to emphasizing the importance of women as individuals;

g) provide incentives for the participation of women in remunerative work, giving increased attention in educational processes to the types of training that would enable women to engage in a wide variety of occupations, and encourage women to pursue studies in areas other than those involving traditional activities;

2. *Recommends* to ECLA that it:

a) continue to conduct research and prepare studies and diagnoses aimed at providing more in-depth knowledge of the situation of women in the region, especially as regards their dual relationship with the family structure and with the conditions and incentives created for their participation in education, health, employment and social and political organizations, and with special emphasis on young women, with a view to the forthcoming Regional Meeting of Youth;

b) disseminate amongst the countries of the region the results of its studies directed towards the establishment of the relevant policy guidelines;

c) consider, in consultation with the governments, the possibility of preparing national, subregional or regional programmes for training and providing skills to women, with special emphasis on education, employment and health;

d) continue its activities in the training of middle- and high-level technical personnel for the countries, with a view to the exchange of experience, the establishment of methodologies and the inclusion of the situation of women in global social development programmes;

e) stress the need to prepare a general plan of regional review and appraisal corresponding to the second half of the Decade.

## 2. SHORT-TERM MEASURES TO PROMOTE THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

*The Third Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

Considering the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, which seek to promote the economic and social development of member States through the full and active participation of women at all levels of society,

*Acknowledging* the need in all member States for the implementation of measures to achieve these goals,

*Recalling* the affirmation by member States of their support for the United Nations Decade for Women,

*Recognizing* the serious international economic recession which has adversely affected progress in the achievement of the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women at the national, regional and international level,

*Acknowledging* the initial measures implemented by member States which have supported actions at the national level,

*Fully appreciating* the magnitude of the scope of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace and the need for further concentrated efforts in every aspect of the economic, social and political life of member States,

1. *Urges* member governments to give realistic support to the United Nations Decade for Women through the strengthening of the established national machinery, made potentially more effective by the specific provision of budgetary allocations for adequate personnel and programmes;

2. *Further urges* member States which have not yet done so to ratify the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, to effect the necessary legal provisions to give effect to the Convention, and to fulfil the obligations to report to the United Nations Committee monitoring the status of implementation of the Convention;

3. *Calls upon* member States to honour their commitment to subscribe to United Nations funding sources, thereby increasing the level of funding available to national and regional agencies for the implementation of programmes relating to the United Nations Decade for Women;

4. *Stresses* the need for the promotion of women to the highest levels of decision-making in all the regional and international agencies working for the promotion of the integration of women in development;

5. *Specifies* the inclusion, where applicable, of a "women-in-development" component in the formulation and implementation of all programmes and projects, as a condition for their funding.

### 3. INTEGRATION OF RURAL WOMEN INTO DEVELOPMENT

*The Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Considering* that the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace (1975) established that:

a) Equality between men and women means equality of their dignity and value as human beings, as well as equality of rights, opportunities and responsibilities,

b) States should make the necessary changes in their economic and social policies to permit the integration of women into development, as it is their right to participate in and contribute to development,

*Considering also* that the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held in Copenhagen in 1980, established that the presence of rural and peasant women is necessary in the development process and stressed the importance of satisfying the specific needs of the rural world, and particularly those of women in rural areas,

*Bearing in mind* that the peasant women of the region should participate in the development of each country as protagonists in social demands and agents of their own transformation.

1. *Recommends* governments to:

a) promote such legal reforms and agrarian policies as may be necessary in the countries, with a view to securing access by peasant women to land holding, productive inputs and employment;

b) prepare and implement integrated rural development programmes that provide for specific action in which peasant women participate, in accordance with their perceived needs and the level of socio-economic development of their communities;

2. *Recommends* ECLA to review and promote the strategies established on the basis of the decisions and resolutions of the United Nations conferences on women in order to fulfil their objectives of establishing legislation to guarantee the right of women wage earners to work and to the enjoyment of working conditions and social benefits which support them as mothers and workers;

3. *Recommends* the bodies of the United Nations system, and in particular the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as the International Labour Organisation, to examine their financing policies and priorities with special regard to their programmes of action for women in order that more resources may be allocated to programmes for women in rural and agricultural zones during the next five years;

4. *Recommends* the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference to serve as the formal vehicle for transmission of this resolution, through the appropriate channels, to the World Conference to be held at Nairobi in 1985.

#### 4. PEACE IN CENTRAL AMERICA FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO DEVELOPMENT

*The Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Considering* that since the Second Regional Conference, held in 1979, the crisis in the Central American region has become worse and that this has had a direct impact on the situation of women, making their integration into economic and social development more difficult,

*Further considering* the persistent violation of basic human rights, which affects the physical and psychological integrity of the women of the area,

*Taking into account* also that the rural and urban female population has suffered directly through loss of lives, family disintegration and destruction of its heritage,

*Bearing in mind* that violence has taken its toll on the family unit, resulting in the disappearance or scattering of its members,

*Acknowledging* that the young women of the region are witnessing a reduction in their opportunities for access to economic and social development, and

*Considering* also that the aggravation of the tensions in Central America could provoke the spread of violence in the region and that only a peaceful and negotiated solution to the conflicts can ensure the authentic economic and social development to which its people aspire,

1. *Expresses* its concern for the situation of human rights in the region and requests the governments to ensure their full exercise;

2. *Urges* the Central American countries to resolve their differences on the basis of the fundamental principles of international law;

3. *Requests* ECLA to make every effort to contribute by all possible means to achieving the integration of women into development in the Central American region;

4. *Expresses* its resolute support of the steps taken by the Contadora Group in its quest for the pacification of the Central American region.

#### 5. PRESERVATION OF PEACE IN THE REGION

*The Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Mindful* of the example set by the women of the region in resolving their ideological differences,

*Recommends* to States that, with a view to preserving peace in the region, they should resolve their controversies by peaceful means, and in all cases in accordance with the principles and procedures set forth by international law.

## 6. CONTINUATION OF ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO DEVELOPMENT BEYOND THE END OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN

*The Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Considering* that ECLA's activities in its area of action have had positive results in achieving the goals proposed by the United Nations General Assembly,

*Taking into account* that the integration of women into economic and social development is an irreversible historical fact and clearly beneficial both to women themselves and to all mankind,

*Also considering* that women have effectively assumed the responsibilities which fall to them, both to their own benefit and to that of their families, society, their cultures, the economies of their countries and the higher standard of living of human beings,

*Bearing in mind* that the technical diagnoses made and solutions proposed at the regional conferences organized by ECLA have helped in the activities of women in the region aiming at the final implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development adopted by the member States,

1. *Requests* the United Nations General Assembly, through ECLA at its twentieth session, to support the continuation beyond the end of the Decade for Women of ECLA's activities with regard to their integration into economic and social development;

2. *Also requests* the General Assembly, through ECLA at its twentieth session, to allocate sufficient funds to permit the continuation and expansion of ECLA's programmes in this area.

## 7. FUTURE OF THE VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN

*The Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Recalling* that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women was established by the General Assembly as the only international fund created to provide technical and financial assistance to strengthen the integration of women into the economic and social development of their countries,

*Noting* the innovative and catalytic nature of the activities stimulated, promoted, supported and executed with resources from the Voluntary Fund, through governments, non-governmental organizations, ECLA and other organizations linked in particular with development planning, the strengthening of national machinery, training, assistance in self-reliance for poor rural and urban women, and other related activities,

*Taking into account* the support given to the Voluntary Fund by member States,

*Taking into account* also that the development of the Voluntary Fund since its establishment in 1976, in terms of the consolidation and streamlining of its operative aspects, the magnitude of its support to activities involving and benefiting women, and the flexibility of its criteria as regards the special needs of the subregions, has resulted in considerably improved conditions in the lives of the women of the region,

*Recommends* that ECLA member States should continue to support the Voluntary Fund, especially seeking to ensure its stability and continuity by contributing even symbolic donations.

## 8. CO-ORDINATORS OF THE WOMEN'S PROGRAMME IN THE MEXICO/CENTRAL AMERICA/CUBA SUBREGION AND THE CARIBBEAN SUBREGION

*The Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Considering* the need to provide the countries of the region with greater technical assistance and guidance with respect to programmes, promotion and research on the subject of women,

*Bearing in mind* the need for the systematic maintenance of this type of guidance and assistance in order to help fulfil the objectives of the Regional Plan of Action and the programme of the ECLA Unit for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development,

1. *Urges* ECLA to maintain the posts of co-ordinators for the Mexico/Central America/Cuba subregion and for the Caribbean subregion;
2. *Requests* ECLA to seek financial support for these posts by means of extrabudgetary contributions.

## 9. WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO FAMILY INCOME

*The Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Considering* that the economic problems of the region have direct repercussions on the family,

*Considering* also that working women contribute nearly all their own income for the benefit of the entire family,

*Bearing in mind* that women's work today is not a supplement to the family income but rather an essential factor in the family's subsistence,

*Bearing in mind* also that an extremely high percentage of women are heads of households,

1. *Urges* governments to eliminate all forms of wage inequalities between men and women;
2. *Requests* governments to devote resources to economic inputs and basic infrastructure to make possible the economic activation of areas under the responsibility of women, both rural and urban;

3. *Suggests* that governments study the use of the economic income provided by women working outside the home in order that ECLA may consider including in its programme of work as complete a regional study on the subject as possible, for later transmission to the Economic and Social Council, heads of State, ministers of labour and entities concerned with women's labour in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## 10. FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES

*The Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Considering* the increasing incidence in the region of pregnancies in teen-age girls,

*Aware* of the serious socio-economic problems which arise for young adults, particularly women, who have sole responsibility for bringing up these children,

*Considering further* the inter-relationship between the fertility behaviour of women and their role and status in the family and society,

1. *Supports* the call for all agencies to take special measures in favour of young women as an important strategy of the Programme of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women;

2. *Urges* the ECLA Secretariat to recommend to member governments the need for special programmes of education for young people, both women and men, related to family planning and the provision of services when needed.

3. *Requests* the relevant United Nations specialized agencies, in particular the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), to provide financial and technical support for such programmes in accordance with national population policies and development programmes.

## 11. REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL TEXTS AND PROGRAMMES

*The Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Considering* that educational programmes and texts in some respects reaffirm the differentiation of activities by sex, thus impeding the full development of women on an equal footing with men,

*Recalling* the relevant provisions of the World Plan of Action of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development, of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade, and of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,

*Recommends* governments which have not yet done so, and when applicable, to establish appropriate machinery in each country for the review of textbooks and educational curricula and to propose changes in them so as to ensure that they do not reaffirm the distribution of family and societal tasks on the basis of sex.

## 12. RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMES

*The Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean,*

Considering that every human being should have access to recreation and sports and the State should promote these activities so that they fulfil a broad social function and contribute to the physical and cultural development of the individual,

1. *Recommends* government offices and non-governmental organizations responsible for programmes for women and the family to design recreational projects based on rest and recreation periods and on the beneficial use of free time.

### III. APPRAISAL OF THE DECADE AND CONCRETE OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES AND MEASURES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN UP TO THE YEAR 2000 ADOPTED BY THE REGIONAL MEETING FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE TO REVIEW AND APPRAISE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE\*

(Havana, 19 to 23 November 1984)

**Critical review and appraisal of the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in the realization of the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women**

This meeting is the culmination of a regional process of review and appraisal of the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, as well as of the design of operational strategies for the advancement of women up to the year 2000 initiated at the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean; and it is being held less than a year before the end of the Decade. This implies that the appraisal has been based on the reports of the World Conference of the International Women's Year (Mexico, 1975), the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (Copenhagen, 1980) and the three regional conferences. It has likewise taken into account the Appraisal of the Implementation of the IDS for Latin America and the Caribbean (twentieth session of ECLA, Lima, 1984). Therefore, efforts and resources must be focused on solving the problems linked to national, regional and international social and economic development with which women will be faced in the future, above all with regard to equality, development and peace.

\*Taken from the report of the meeting (LC/G.1339).



Albeit the elements that make it difficult to assess progress related to the integration of women into development have been emphasized on numerous occasions, it would be advisable to point out some of their essential aspects. One of these is the wide variety of parameters used in each country to measure national realities. Another has to do with the countries's different sizes, economic situations and ways of tackling the crisis. Moreover, the national situations are increasingly complex, as are the relations between the social groups and their relations with the governments. These are only the most outstanding aspects that impede exhaustive assessments and comparative analyses of the specific situations in individual countries. Nevertheless, it is mainly those common to all, such as economic dependence, the foreign debt and other characteristics that influence the need to seek points of consensus in order to adopt a regional criterion whereby a new pattern of development can be found that will basically break the ties of dependence. Furthermore, even though the transformations in the region have already lasted nearly three decades, the context in which the United Nations Decade for Women was initiated and that in which it is being concluded are different. When the Regional Plan of Action was adopted in Havana in 1977, there were signs of optimism and growth in the region, which are now replaced by deep concern over the worsening of the crisis and the consequent deterioration of the life of our peoples.

Latin America and the Caribbean are currently undergoing their most acute economic and political crisis of the past 50 years: a crisis which has placed most countries of the region in a precarious situation and which has been caused by both external and internal factors. The last years of the Decade have witnessed a deterioration of the general economic situation in the region. The financial economic and social crisis of the developing world has worsened the situation of large sectors of the population, and especially women, who in the Caribbean are, in large proportion, heads of household. In particular, the decline in economic activity is having a negative impact on an already unbalanced distribution of income, as well as on the high levels of unemployment prevailing in the subregion, which affect women more than men.

The living conditions of the women of the region are a problem that concerns all of Latin American and Caribbean society. The central development problems prevailing in the countries of the region concern three essential, dynamically interrelated aspects which characterize the status and evolution of the socioeconomic process. They are, first, the harmful effects that continue to be felt in the structure of their foreign relations —as a result of the nature of trade and the increased protectionist measures adopted by some developed countries in their trade with the region—, the deterioration of the terms of trade and the increase in the foreign debt; secondly, a decline in the growth rate in most Latin American countries in consequence of these foreign relations and the crisis in the world economy; and, thirdly, the present unsatisfactory socioeconomic structures that have tended to form extremely inequitable societies.

The effects of the world economic crisis on the Latin American economies —which are most clearly manifested in the contraction of the region's trade, the disproportionate increase in international bank interest rates, the tightening of the already crippling protectionist measures that the Latin American countries' traditional markets are applying against their exports and the adjustment

policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund on the majority of the governments of the region in the rescheduling of their debts— have greatly impaired the region's economic capacity to cope with its economic programmes. The crisis made itself felt in Latin America and the Caribbean with even greater force, inasmuch as most of the countries in the region have inequitable, unjust societies characterized above all by inequality in the distribution of national income, and in participation in national development processes. In other words, a broad mass of the population—in which women play a significant role— is dispossessed and reduced to extreme poverty and even to crushing indigence, while most of the benefits of the development process go to minority population strata.

This set of interrelated social problems—such as the unequal distribution of income; critical poverty; unemployment, underemployment and poor working conditions; the low productivity of a considerable part of the labour force; the backwardness and marginalization of vast rural and urban sectors; the widespread illiteracy and semi-literacy, which have a negative effect on the capacity of the labour force; and most of the population's limited participation in decision-making at all levels and in the process of economic, social and political development— constitutes a major challenge and affects large sectors of the national population in some countries and the majority in others.

Although the situation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean has experienced a relative improvement, this cannot be regarded as extending to all women or to all aspects of social life. The living conditions of women vary enormously, depending on the socioeconomic strata to which they belong. In accordance with this, too, their forms of participation in economic, political, social and cultural life likewise vary, as do the sources and forms of discrimination to which they are subjected. The women most affected by this situation—which is the product of inadequate socioeconomic structures— are those belonging to the lowest income groups, especially in rural areas and urban slum or shanty town areas.

Therefore, as affirmed in the RPA, the problems preventing women's participation in the economic, political, social and cultural life of their countries are intimately linked to the general conditions of underdevelopment. Hence it is essential to bring about the required transformations in the socioeconomic structures and to take specific action that will aid in modifying the situation of Latin American and Caribbean women, so they may take an active part in changing the existing structures and become a decisive factor in the achievement of full equality between men and women.

It is common knowledge that men and women share certain living conditions determined by the fact that they form part of a given society and a given socioeconomic stratum within that society, and that women face specific discrimination resulting from the social and sexual division of labour.

With regard to employment, it can be seen that the percentage of women incorporated into the labour force remains very low. Although the percentage of participation is greater in the Caribbean than in the rest of the region, it should be noted that this is largely due to the availability of employment in subcontracting activities. In the region as a whole, most women work in unskilled jobs, concentrated in the service sector, especially in domestic service and unpaid

family work. In many cases, women are the object of discrimination and exploitation with regard to wages, working conditions and contract practices, and there are real limitations on their being hired and remaining employed. This situation is more critical in rural areas, causing an exodus from the countryside to the cities. In Latin America, 65% of the population lived in the cities in 1980, and, according to projections, this proportion will increase to 76% by the year 2000. The demographic growth rate will exceed 2%: if present conditions persist, migratory flows from the countryside to the cities will consist mainly of young single women.

In analysing the case of women who are already incorporated into the labour force and the problems deriving from their dual responsibility for work inside and outside the home, general points should be noted: a) in a great many cases, the occupations in which they work are those traditionally assigned to women; b) since these are jobs on which a low social value is set, they are usually badly paid and carry little prestige; c) married women who take a job must do a double day's work, unless they have the means to employ a domestic worker to do their housework or can get a relative to help them. The situation of women who are heads of households is even worse, since they simply have to work to earn a living; d) women employed in the tertiary sector are mostly travelling saleswomen and domestic workers. Bearing in mind the rise in educational levels, however, it can be assumed that these jobs will not be acceptable to the coming members of the labour force, whose expectations will probably be higher. Predictably, therefore, social pressure will in the future be brought to bear on employment —pressure which could in some cases generate serious social conflicts unless appropriate solutions are quickly found: i.e., ways and means of creating enough jobs to absorb the increasing flow of women graduating from the educational system. Various studies have confirmed the influence of education on the decision to enter the labour market. Mention has also been made of the danger that the economic crisis may bring about a swingback towards the traditional ideology that seeks to keep women confined to their role as housewives.

The structure of health services commonest in the region is centred primarily on curative medicine, with a predominance of private services, a serious lack of free public services and a system of hospital care which has very specialized services concentrated mainly in urban areas. If a larger resource allocation could be secured for activities aimed at the prevention and early detection of disease expenditure at the curative level could be better adjusted to the available resources, of which at present it absorbs the lion's share. In most of the countries of the region, the economic crisis has led to a reduction of the funds allocated to the health sector and to a decline in the services provided by the State and intended primarily for low-income population groups and rural areas. In the field of social security, unemployment and underemployment, and the special participation of women in the informal sector, as, for instance, in domestic service and rural labour, have meant that fewer women are covered by health care under the social security system. This has been reflected in a deterioration of women's health situation in the region. The emphasis on curative medicine in the countries concerned has led to a considerable increase in spending on medicaments. The monopolistic features of the production of medical supplies

and the almost total external dependence of the countries of the region are a source of particular concern, because drugs and medications are introduced that do not always meet the people's real health needs but serve the interests of a market which exacerbates the economic crisis and the external dependence in question.

Despite the fact that education is an essential factor in the peoples' economic and social development, women constitute a high proportion (60 to 80%) of the total illiterate population in Latin America and the Caribbean. Lack of access to education for majority groups and particularly for women has forced the latter into traditional sectors of the economy —mainly domestic services, shopkeeping, cottage industries and agricultural tasks. Then there is the special problem of girls and young women who drop out of school for lack of economic resources, pregnancy, the need of a job to supplement the family income, or other causes.

Some of the characteristics of the educational system in the region have been a high growth rate, in terms of the reduction of illiteracy in the 15-and-over age group; increased coverage of school-age children; and their significant absorption, as measured by the progress made in the population's incorporation into the educational system. Notwithstanding this expansionist trend, the educational process retains élitist and exclusive traits. Thus, while enrolment in intermediate and higher education increases at a rapid pace, a considerable portion of the population aged ten years and over is still illiterate. Gauging the educational situation seems easy, since there are abundant statistical data. Some aspects, however, are still unexplored such as feminine drop-out and absentee rates and differences in the contents of curricula and in the ways in which boys and girls are taught.

Statistical data are available for analysing literacy and educational levels. Census data only allow for an overall analysis of the situation of women as a nominal category, however. In other words, distinctions can be made between the differences in the situations of women and of men, from one country to another and within a given country, but the differences existing within the category "women" are overlooked.

The following are the main educational problems in most of the countries of the region:

- i) Although wider coverage has been provided in respect of primary education and the enrolment percentages warrant optimism, it will still take several decades for the entire population to complete at least the basic cycle. At this level, there are no marked differences based on the student's sex, but there are with regard to areas of residence; special attention should be given to the rural areas, which are the most backward. Primary education offered by State institutions is free, but this does not suffice to ensure full coverage. The implicit content of education is of major importance at the primary level, since what is learned at that age will condition the traits to be enhanced or attenuated in the child's personality.
- ii) The intermediate level poses no serious problems, since its rate of expansion to cover the feminine population is satisfactory. At this level, women are not discriminated against in general, but their specialization is usually restricted to learning some middle-level skills and technical vocations.

Many women drop out because of lack of economic resources, pregnancy or the need to work outside the home.

- iii) Discrimination against women remains greater in higher education, though more women than men are enrolled at that level. Specialization by vocational courses is, however, still in accord with what has been established by sex stereotypes: cultural barriers determine and over-concentration of young women students in the careers traditional for women and a small number in the technical courses that open the way to the new technologies.
- iv) It should be mentioned that, although there is a trend in the region towards greater incorporation of women into secondary and higher education, serious differences between population groups still persist, which makes it necessary for the educational system to ensure equitable access.
- v) Continuing education and non-formal education in the area of skills training has been emphasized during the Decade, but these activities are still fragmentary and not easily accessible, particularly to women in rural areas. Training is given mainly in skills traditionally associated with women and has not encompassed the type of specialized technical training envisaged.

From the formal point of view, in the area of legislation, the following are some of the points on which agreement exists at the end of the Decade: no one may deprive a woman of her right to vote, and, in countries where voting is obligatory, an attempt to prevent her from exercising it may incur penalties. Majority is attained at the same age by both sexes and involves the same rights and responsibilities. No one may attempt to prevent a woman from exercising her profession or occupation. Legislative changes are being aimed more and more frequently at equalizing responsibilities with regard to parental authority over children, administration of the family's assets and the establishment of the domicile or household. Equality of labour rights has been established throughout the region, but has not been adequately enforced. Protection of motherhood is guaranteed by legislation throughout the region; however, the concept of maternity as illness is still maintained and makes it difficult to implement existing regulations and contractual clauses. The situation of urban women appears to be better in these respects than that of rural women, on behalf of whom large-scale efforts should be made to develop egalitarian attitudes at both family structure and institutional levels. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that since, in general, these laws have not been applied effectively, their application should constitute one of the objectives or strategies for the year 2000.

The exercise of civil, political and social rights should not be conditional on women's and men's knowledge or ignorance of them. To adduce the need for women to know of their rights in order to exercise them implies discriminatory treatment against them, since approximately the same proportion of men are unaware of their rights yet they are nevertheless required to exercise them as a duty.

In spite of all efforts, no significant progress has been made with regard to the statement in the Regional Plan of Action that the mass media tend to have harmful effects on attitudes and values related to the function and role of women

in society, that they frequently raise obstacles to positive changes in behaviour patterns and that they may perpetuate stereotypes and myths concerning women.

It has been observed that sexist cultural patterns still persist in educational systems, mass media and socializing activities. In the mass media, this phenomenon is aggravated by the strengthening of the role of the transnational model and the absence of alternative channels of communication for, by and with women on a multinational basis throughout Latin America.

Significantly, women's political involvement in economic and social development in most of the countries in the region is extremely limited. Though women constitute almost half of the electorate, their representation on legislative bodies is minimal, and it is even lower on executive bodies. Women are not sufficiently involved in the decision-making process, their views are not respected and their needs are disregarded in development planning in most countries. All these disadvantages, which are reflected in the economic and social situation in the region, are heightened by problems such as violence against women, prostitution, illegal trafficking in persons and narcotics, rape, drug addiction and other forms of crime and antisocial behaviour. Mention must also be made of the fact that the existence of non-democratic governments in the region has influenced the loss of the most fundamental political rights of women political refugees, exiles and involuntary migrants.

On the foregoing evidence, it may be asserted that the overall quality of life has declined substantially, owing to the multiple effects of the economic crisis and, in most countries, to a reduction, in real terms, of public spending on education, health and housing under the various stabilization programmes, as well as to the weakening of social security and welfare systems. This implies reduced access to goods and basic services, such as food, housing, health and education, for the majority of the population.

This situation has been aggravated by the tensions existing primarily in Central America and the Caribbean, and in the Southern Cone, as a result of foreign interference in the internal affairs of the States of the region, in violation of the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, all of which has created focal points of conflict that represent a serious threat to regional and international peace. Armed intervention in the Caribbean has recently had dramatic manifestations, of which a more vigorous resurgence has already begun in Central America. Similarly, the continued violations of fundamental human rights affect the physical and psychological integrity of women, men and children in the region. These are some of the obstacles to the development of Latin America and the Caribbean and to inter-country negotiations, such as those of the Contadora Group, which make the achievement of the objectives of the Decade difficult since development and equality are impossible without peace. The existence and persistence of destabilizing policies aimed at perpetuating or reinstating authoritarian systems constitute yet another serious obstacle in the way of the objectives set for the Decade. The exercise of the rights of women, which are integral part of human rights, can be ensured only within the framework of democratic participation.

The solution of current problems, however, is more complex today than in the past, and the gravity of the present situation calls for strategies that respond to the new needs of countries and societies which are totally different from what they were before, both in level of development and in economic, political and social aspirations. With each passing day, therefore, it becomes more essential to step up the struggle for equality, development and peace and for the elimination of societies in which the benefits of development are unequally distributed.

On the basis of the foregoing appraisal, and in the interest of overcoming the above-mentioned obstacles to women's full integration into the economic, political and social development of their respective countries, governments, women, ECLAC and other international organizations should pledge themselves to accord importance and priority to forward-looking strategies and concrete measures for the advancement of women up to the year 2000.

The Regional Plan of Action for Latin America and the Caribbean, in relation to the International Youth Year, states that young women bear the brunt of the conflicts generated by the transformation that has taken place in the region. This is due, on the one hand, to the fact that, in their case, the other changes are compounded by very rapid modifications in their educational level and in the role of women in society. Both phenomena widen the cultural gap between them and adult women and hamper the socializing function of the family, which is an expression of traditional patterns and values and to which young women have much stronger ties than young men. Moreover, young women's increasing incorporation into the active population creates role conflicts for them between their job — frequently organized and regulated by men — and family life. The problem is rendered worse when family roles are influenced by machist attitudes and early motherhood, which are very common in Latin America. In addition, because they are women, they are much more vulnerable to the effects of social marginality, particularly when it is linked to irregular family situations, unstable early unions and premature motherhood. Young women are particularly hard hit by the unemployment characteristic of youth, and aggravated by the situation of the Latin American and Caribbean economies. To this must be added the various forms of discrimination against women which still prevail in these societies.

Furthermore, the Regional Plan of Action implied the generation of activities aimed at transforming the status of women. This is reflected in a growing awareness of their situation and has given impetus to its improvement. The presence of women in the processes of democratization and structural transformation of many of our societies must not be forgotten; in these, the traditional stereotypes have been shattered and the models which are emerging are oriented towards equality of rights and responsibilities between the sexes. For this reason, in spite of the crisis and its impact on the standard of living, it seems that the qualitative changes which have occurred with regard to the status of women are deep-seated and unlikely to disappear as a result of the present situation.

## Strategies for the future and concrete measures of application for the advancement of women up to the year 2000

The World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace, the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace and the Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation remain valid at present and therefore constitute the basis of activities for strategies and concrete measures up to the year 2000.

Aware that it is necessary to concentrate efforts and resources on solving the problems linked to economic and social development at the national, regional and international levels so as to enable women to achieve true integration, especially as regards equality, development and peace, the Latin American and Caribbean governments, taking into account the results of the three regional conferences on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, and in the context of the economic, social and cultural characteristics of their countries, pledge themselves to make efforts to implement the concrete strategies and measures for the future advancement of women, as set forth below:

### At the national level

To bear in mind, with regard to development, that the framework within which strategies for the future should be formulated must take into consideration, first, the effects of the crisis and, secondly, the need to reformulate some aspects which seem to be most relevant to the development process. This type of analysis should combine socioeconomic aspects with an ethical and cultural approach to society. Consequently, development should be considered as an integral process characterized by the achievement of economic and social objectives and goals that guarantee the population's effective participation in the development process and its benefits, to which end it is necessary to effect thoroughgoing structural changes in that sphere as a prerequisite for the desired process of integrated development. In order to attain this objective, the full participation of women on a plane of economic, political and cultural equality is considered indispensable. During the 1980s, efforts should be made at least to attain the following closely interrelated objectives: i) acceleration of economic and social development and the structural transformation of the national economies; ii) more rapid development of the region's scientific-technical capacity; iii) promotion of an equitable distribution of national income and complete elimination of absolute poverty in the shortest possible time, with special application of an integrated strategy to end hunger and malnutrition; iv) construction of an appropriate economic policy to establish conditions that will make it possible to control or prevent inflation, without resorting to recessive measures which cause unemployment and exacerbate social tensions, or to adjustment processes that may contribute to the deterioration of the socioeco-



conomic conditions of popular sectors —and of women in particular within them; and v) encouragement of the effective economic, social and political participation of the entire population, especially women, young women and youth in general, in the economic, social and cultural development process and in decision-making at all levels.

In order to achieve women's full integration in national development, not to limit national development plans to devoting a special chapter to women's problems; rather, the measures that relate to these problems should be organically incorporated in every pertinent sector. It is essential, moreover, to formulate, adopt and implement policies that will substantially improve the conditions in which women take part in the economic and social development process and to put into effect those structural changes that are needed in order to adjust the mechanism for guaranteeing women's full equality and the elimination of discriminatory barriers to their full participation in production and all development tasks. It is equally essential to establish measures for following up such policies and reviewing and evaluating them on a regular basis in order to assess their efficacy.

To make profound structural changes in order to establish and improve the national mechanisms for guaranteeing women's full equality with men and for the application of measures to achieve women's true integration in their countries' economic, social, political and cultural development processes, and, in addition, to situate the national machinery at a sufficiently central and high level to influence decision-making; to confer on the national machinery the mandate to co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate all policies influencing the integration of women into the development process; and to assign sufficient human and financial resources to enable the national machinery to discharge its responsibilities.

To achieve women's participation in decision-making at all levels in respect of nutrition, food and agriculture, in order to accelerate the development process, particularly rural development. Integrated land reform and rural development policies should be designed and established in order to guarantee rural women access to the land, the necessary support in carrying out the production process and the revaluation of their work in the production, elaboration, marketing, managing and preparation of foodstuffs.

To promote the real democratization of education, eliminating all concepts that discriminate against women, at all levels; the generalization of elementary or complete basic education for all school-age children; the eradication of illiteracy and other problems that hinder the normal development of children; and the gradual, in-depth intensification of programmes of integrated care for pre-school children. Policies in this regard should ensure that everybody is mentally developed and possesses basic knowledge for living and that everyone is qualified for an economically and socially productive life. In other words, education should be equitable for all: on the one hand, forming human beings who are useful to society and, on the other hand, training each type of worker in line with his or her own kind of work. It should be borne in mind that this requires harmonizing equality of opportunities for all with a specialization that is appropriate for society.

To reduce the shortage of urban and rural housing and increase the supply of housing for the low-income majorities, solving the problems of the deterioration of urban and rural housing and of the peripheral settlements with precarious housing, and improving the electric light, drinking water and sewerage infrastructure. For this purpose, an absolutely essential requisite will be State participation, giving priority attention to the lowest-income population's housing needs.

To procure access to health services free of charge; to enlarge the coverage of services, especially in the rural areas; to develop special preventive maternal and child health plans; to give women access to appropriate information and methods for exercising their rights and responsibilities with respect to their own fecundity; and to promote breast feeding in early infancy as a source of natural basic food. To these ends, men's and women's full and equal participation in the adoption of policy decisions relating to the health services is required at the community and national levels.

To establish programmes providing equal opportunities for women in the areas of sport, recreation and culture, since these are activities of great importance in the present century, necessary for self-realization and for the conservation of the cultural identity of peoples.

To adopt, as soon as possible, the measures needed for a thorough review of national legislation, in order to ensure the legal equality of men and women in all areas, with special emphasis on civil, family, labour, agrarian and criminal law; to establish, wherever appropriate, a régime of family ownership that guarantees that the assets possessed at the time of the couple's marriage or consensual union will be for the benefit of both; in countries where no Family Code exists, to include the pertinent norms in the civil legislation; and, finally, to apply the mechanisms needed to provide women with adequate information on all juridical and legislative questions that concern them, thus guaranteeing more efficient implementation of the provisions.

To promote the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, since these legislative measures are incorporated in it, and its adoption would mean that the goal of equality were more quickly reached. Dissemination of the Convention should be promoted throughout the region.

To create conditions that generate employment for the growing number of women who constitute a high percentage of the unemployed and underemployed; to design and implement training programmes that equip unskilled women in the labour force with technical skills, applying, where appropriate, measures in favour of women to enable them to attain the same level as men; and to devote special attention to job opportunities in the rural areas, with a view to helping, furthermore, to slow up the rural-urban migration.

To adopt legislative measures permitting use of the mass media to eradicate the transmission of sexist cultural models, which should be replaced by others that recognize natural differences between the sexes. Impetus should be given to the diffusion of the Regional Plan of Action, of the findings of research on women and of the measures adopted on their behalf, and alternative channels of communication should be promoted. The object sought is a change in the mechanisms of cultural transmission, to which end it is indispensable to create

alternative channels of communication at all levels, and to establish permanent spaces in the social communication media. The Regional Plan of Action should be incorporated into the formal educational system, so that the population is informed and can participate actively and consciously in its implementation.

To ensure that the problems stemming from the economic crisis do not cause a continuance of the deterioration in the social policies that benefit the least-favoured groups, since in many countries social programmes have been drastically affected as a result of the adjustment process imposed by IMF. Special attention should be paid to the need for continuity in all social programmes and projects concerned with women —both those designed to improve their living conditions and those that seek to transform their image of themselves. In this respect, emphasis should be placed on training and consciousness-raising among policy-makers in order to sensitize them to the necessity of establishing programmes for women.

To recognize the importance of the role of non-governmental organizations concerned with women by promoting their establishment as an integral part of overall development efforts and by providing adequate financial support.

To formulate more concrete observations and proposals concerning the integration of women in a framework that is in accord with the march of science and technology, with the environment and with its impact on women; and to incorporate topics related to women in the context of regional co-operation.

To establish policies aimed at helping young women to overcome obstacles and enabling them to achieve incorporation into social life that is compatible with their diverse roles and balanced self-fulfilment. The relevant group of measures especially embraces education and labour and environmental problems, but it also includes many aspects of social policy. It must not be forgotten that the change in women's functions in modern society and the overcoming of subordination and discrimination demand that they participate much more actively in collective life. As a result, the training of young women should play a very important role in their effective participation.

To make young women the focus of very energetic policies aimed at the achievement of their full integration, culturally and workwise, and at the provision of specific services to improve personal and family conditions in all their dimensions. This will make it possible to break one of the circuits operative in the reproduction of poverty and marginality, which are conducive to prostitution and other types of social behaviour that are injurious to women's dignity.

To create specific forms of participation that, at the same time, help to overcome marginalization and adapt policies to fit real needs and solutions.

To place special emphasis on measures to raise the educational level of young women in the strata under consideration to the same level as that of young men, as a means of combating social and labour force discrimination against women. In order to offset discrimination against women in this sphere, it is important to encourage diverse forms of participation.

To assign high priority to action in the field of health, education and social welfare services, directed towards promoting responsible parenthood and avoiding the health and social consequences involved for both mother and child in pregnancies at a very early age, too close together, accompanied by poor states of health, and/or occurring in inadequate physical and family conditions.

## At the regional level

To make the greatest possible efforts to attain the goals and objectives established in the Regional Plan of Action on the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development, which was approved in Havana in 1977 and constitutes the basic instrument in which the action priorities —which are still valid for the region— are defined.

To promote, within the framework of programmes for economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, and in the context of regional and subregional agreements, those aspects of the recommendations in question that bear on the full integration of women into their countries' economic and social development.

To support action in quest of negotiated political settlements of the conflicts in Central America; and to back the peace moves of the Contadora Group as the most viable alternative for the solution of the crisis in Central America and the Caribbean, to the benefit of their peoples and in particular of women, as the most vulnerable sector in conflicts of this type. Foreign intervention in these countries constitutes the most serious obstacle to securing peace in the region and therefore the success of the strategies up to the year 2000. For that reason, major efforts are required to procure peaceful solutions to the existing problems and condemnation of the use of threats or force in relations between States. Similarly, it will be necessary to include in the strategies consideration of the problems for women implicit in foreign intervention, which provokes areas of tension in diverse parts of the region, giving rise to situations like those of women who are refugees, displaced and subject to emergencies.

To stress the need for perfecting statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in the areas of health, employment and education, in order to provide a data base by virtue of which the statistical information could be analysed in time to improve the quality of decisions. In this regard, close collaboration in the field of research among regional and international research institutions is emphasized.

To recommend to the Committee of High-Level Government Experts (CEGAN) that it include an appraisal of the incorporation of women in economic, social and cultural development as part of its periodic appraisals, and that it formulate recommendations, within the framework of the objectives and goals of the Regional Plan of Action, that promote the active participation and improvement of the situation of women in the region's development process and the attainment of the objectives of the New International Development Strategy with a view to the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women.

To give priority, in ECLAC's various forums and agencies, to the study and analysis of the fundamental concepts, strategies and measures contained in the Regional Plan of Action, so as to avoid duplication of efforts and strengthen the criterion that the status of women is not divorced from the countries' economic, social, political and cultural problems.

To make great efforts to strengthen the ECLAC programme for women, and to urge the United Nations, within the resources available, to endow the Commission with sufficient staff and resources to enable it to carry out its programmes.

To request ECLAC to continue approaching the General Assembly, the United Nations institutions and other organizations with a view to obtaining the financial resources which the Secretariat needs in order to meet the requests of governments more fully, given the importance of the topic of women.

To recommend to ECLAC that it take steps to fill at the earliest possible date the post of Subregional Co-ordinator of the Programme for Women in its Mexico Office in order to contribute more effectively to the full achievement of the objectives of the Regional Plan of Action, as agreed at the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, 1983).

To request that ECLAC should increase the participation of women specialists in questions related to the work of the Commission, in order to step up the number of women in positions with decision-making faculties, as established in the decisions of the General Assembly.

To support and expand technical and economic activities on behalf of women in the region, through closer collaboration with the relevant international development financing institutions.

#### **At the international level**

To recognize that the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace, the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, and the Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation are still valid today, and, therefore, constitute the basis for concrete strategies and measures up to the year 2000.

To reiterate the unity, inseparability and interdependence of the objectives of equality, development and peace for the advancement of women and their full integration into economic, social and cultural development, for which purpose they should remain in force in the operational strategies for the advancement of women up to the year 2000.

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

To seek to ensure that the various international bodies succeed in creating conditions to provide women with possibilities of access to development of their artistic and athletic capabilities, oriented especially towards young women, using for that purpose high-level motivation, publicity and training programmes.

To stress the importance of promoting technical, scientific and economic co-operation and analogous social and cultural exchanges between countries of the region and other developing countries, with a view to strengthening the region's ability to build on its own resources and contribute to its self-reliance within the world economy; and, further, to stress the need to ensure the full participation of women in these activities.

To recognize that the growing interrelationship between the preservation of peace and the attainment of development in conditions of equality between States is of strategic importance for the improvement of the status of women, and that consequently there is a pressing need to demand the effective attainment of the goals and objectives contained in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and the adoption of policy measures which could permit its execution as a first step towards the implementation of the New International Economic Order.

To emphasize that since women comprise one of the most vulnerable groups in the areas affected by armed conflicts, by internal situations of repression and violation of human rights, or by foreign intervention and threats to international peace, they must be the subject of special attention, since these obstacles obstruct achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace.

To carry out, every five years and with the participation of all States members of the United Nations, an appraisal of the successes achieved and the obstacles encountered in pursuing the objectives contained in the relevant documents.

To support and expand technical and economic activities for women in the region through collaboration with international development assistance agencies. In this respect the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women is particularly recognized as implying an innovative contribution in the area of technical assistance for development in favour of disadvantaged women in the different regions and its continuation and expansion beyond the Decade is considered of vital importance to the development needs of women in the region.

To support the activities of the International Institute of Training and Research for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), which does important work in this field.

To request in particular the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to appraise what has been done to improve the status of women, to increase their financial support and to establish the measures necessary for the continued implementation of the Regional Plan of Action.

To stress the essential need for all States members of the United Nations that have not yet done so to accede to and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>E/CEPAL/1083/Rev.1, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 203 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup>Document CRA/XI,AP/13, presented at the Conference as annex II of the reference document, *Activities of the International Labour Organisation in favour of Women in Latin America* (ILO/W.4/1979).



# ECLAC publications

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN  
Casilla 179-D Santiago, Chile

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*CEPAL Review* first appeared in 1976 as part of the Publications Programme of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, its aim being to make a contribution to the study of the economic and social development problems of the region. The views expressed in signed articles, including those by Secretariat staff members, are those of the authors and therefore do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the Organization.

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