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**REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS
OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN
INTO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

(Mexico City, 27-28 May 1997)

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraph</u>	<u>Page</u>
A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK	1-7	1
Mandate and objective	1-2	1
Place and date of the meeting	3	1
Attendance	4	1
Chairperson and Rapporteur	5	2
Agenda	6	2
Documentation	7	2
B. OPENING MEETING	8-13	3
C. SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND AGREEMENTS ADOPTED	14-33	4
D. TRIBUTE TO THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN ON THE OCCASION OF ITS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY	34-39	7
Annex 1: ANNOTATED OUTLINES OF CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS	-	9
Annex 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	-	19

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Mandate and objective

1. As stipulated in subparagraph 2 of paragraph 88 of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development adopted in 1977 at the eleventh extraordinary session of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean are to serve as the link between member Governments and the ECLAC secretariat in the field of women's integration into development.

2. Furthermore, the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean adopted by the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean at its sixth session (Mar del Plata, Argentina, 25-29 September 1994) requests that "... the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean assume responsibility for following up the implementation of the Programme of Action in collaboration with Governments, and with the participation of national bodies responsible for policies and programmes for women as well as of the subregional groupings" (chapter E, paragraph b).

Place and date of the meeting

3. The Presiding Officers, who were elected at the sixth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held their twenty-fourth meeting on 27 and 28 May 1997 in Mexico City.

Attendance

4. Attending the meeting were representatives from the following countries serving as Presiding Officers: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Honduras, Mexico, and Uruguay. Representatives of Brazil and Paraguay, States members of ECLAC, were present as observers. The following United Nations bodies were represented at the meeting: Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The following United Nations specialized agencies were also represented: International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Bank, and United Nations Industrial

Development Organization (UNIDO). Also present were representatives from the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (IACW-OAS), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO).

Chairperson and Rapporteur

5. The meeting was chaired by the regular Chairperson, Ambassador Zelmira Regazzoli. The functions of Rapporteur were entrusted to the Mexican delegation, headed by Ambassador Aída González, Coordinator for Women's Issues of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Relations.

Agenda

6. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda for their twenty-fourth meeting:
1. Adoption of the agenda
 2. Review of the activities of the Presiding Officers and the ECLAC secretariat since the twenty-third meeting of the Presiding Officers on 18 and 19 November 1996
 3. Preparations for the seventh session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, Chile, November 1997)
 4. Composition of the next set of Presiding Officers
 5. Other matters

Documentation

7. The delegations had before them the following documents: Provisional agenda (LC/L.1018(MDM.24/1)); Annotated provisional agenda (LC/L.1019(MDM.24/2)); Report of the twenty-third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Port of Spain, 18-19 November 1996) (LC/L.999(MDM.23/3)); Análisis de los aspectos legales desde la aprobación de la Convención, Plataforma de Beijing y Programa Regional (DSC/1); annotated outlines of documents I and II; Women and health in Latin America and the Caribbean: old issues and new approaches, Mujer y desarrollo series, No. 17 (LC/L.990); Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1990s: diagnostic elements and proposals, Mujer y desarrollo series, No. 18 (LC/L.836/Rev.1); Roles sexuales y juego en la educación preescolar: invitación a la reflexión (LC/R.1705); The equity gap. Latin America, the Caribbean and the Social Summit (LC/G.1954(CONF.86/3)); Social Panorama of Latin America. 1996 Edition (LC/G.1946-P).

B. OPENING MEETING

8. The meeting was opened by the Under-Secretary for International Cooperation of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who extended the greetings of the Foreign Minister to the delegations. He said that his Government was well aware that no development policy or programme could be successful if it did not provide for women's participation and equal opportunity. Policy in Mexico was oriented towards eliminating the gap between equality in law and in practice.

9. With regard to foreign policy in that regard, the Under-Secretary stressed the promotion of international cooperation on women's issues and recalled Mexico's active participation in all international conferences on the subject and in particular its collaboration with ECLAC, a regional forum Mexico considered of great importance. In closing, he said that the Regional Conference had made a vital contribution to the advancement of women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and he wished the Presiding Officers all success in preparing for the seventh session of the Conference.

10. The Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico greeted the participants in the name of the Executive Secretary of the Commission and stressed the importance of applying a gender perspective to the process of changing production patterns with social equity. He reported on the work of ECLAC and more specifically that of the subregional headquarters in Mexico in the area of gender; he mentioned in particular the studies that had been done on the effects of armed conflict in Central America as a basis for international cooperation to benefit refugees and displaced groups, especially women. He then outlined the typically substandard work situation of female workers in *maquiladora* companies and discussed the education and training measures that were needed to overcome the problem.

11. He said that the ECLAC secretariat's preparations for the seventh session of the Regional Conference included a meeting for an exchange of information with non-governmental organizations in order to open new avenues of debate and arrive at agreement on joint initiatives.

12. The Chairperson sketched the evolution of the United Nations development strategy over the past twenty years. She said that it was important to be the initiators and not merely the observers of change. The purpose of the meeting was to propose and debate plans of action and specific policies for combatting poverty and to promote participation and decision-making by women in achieving that colossal task.

13. She said that the time had come to take action and to apply political will to the area of development; she hoped that the seventh session of the Conference would raise awareness of the need to participate actively in the implementation of specific policies and in the responsibilities of government.

C. SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND AGREEMENTS ADOPTED

Review of the activities of the Presiding Officers and the ECLAC secretariat since the twenty-third meeting of the Presiding Officers on 18 and 19 November 1996 (agenda item 2)

14. The Presiding Officers reviewed the activities carried out, particularly those in follow-up to the agreements reached at the twenty-third meeting concerning preparations for the seventh session of the Regional Conference.¹

Preparations for the seventh session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda item 3)

15. The Presiding Officers reviewed in detail the logistical and substantive preparations for the upcoming session and the annotated outlines of the position papers as proposed by the ECLAC secretariat and incorporating the comments received from some of the countries serving as Presiding Officers. The results of the debate are reflected in the agreements.

Preparation of the provisional agenda

16. The Presiding Officers agreed to submit the following provisional agenda to the seventh session of the Regional Conference:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Activities of the Secretariat and of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean since the sixth session of the Regional Conference
4. Access to power and participation in decision-making. Latin America and the Caribbean: policies for gender equity looking to the year 2000
5. Sustainable development, poverty and gender. Latin America and the Caribbean: working towards the year 2000
6. Consideration of proposals and adoption of Conference agreements
7. Other matters

¹ Document LC/L.999(MDM.23/3), 26 March 1997.

17. The Presiding Officers also agreed to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the first Regional Conference and of the approval of the Regional Plan of Action and the fiftieth anniversary of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Documentation

18. The two position papers will be prepared by the ECLAC secretariat in close collaboration with the Presiding Officers. The topics to be covered were chosen by consensus of the Presiding Officers.

19. The Presiding Officers closely examined the annotated outlines prepared by the secretariat and incorporating the comments of some member countries and made changes which are reflected in the new version.² The process of reviewing the contents of the position papers was thus completed.

20. The Presiding Officers took due note of the reference documents that have been or are being prepared by the secretariat. They asked that the report of the Caribbean subregional ministerial conference organized by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), UNIFEM and the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Port of Spain, which is to take place in Georgetown, Guyana, on 6-8 August 1997 as part of the preparations for the seventh session of the Regional Conference, be included as a reference document.

Substantive tasks to be performed by the countries serving as Presiding Officers

21. The Presiding Officers divided the tasks to be performed for the session as follows:

a) Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay will collaborate on document I, "Access to power and participation in decision-making. Latin America and the Caribbean: policies for gender equity looking to the year 2000".

b) Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras and Netherlands Antilles will collaborate on document II, "Sustainable development, poverty and gender. Latin America and the Caribbean: working towards the year 2000".

c) During the session, Argentina and Mexico will be in charge of presenting document I, Cuba and Honduras document II. As host country, Chile will support both working groups.

Dissemination of information prior to the session

22. The Presiding Officers said that it would be helpful if the ECLAC secretariat, in addition to sending the countries invitations to the session of the Regional Conference, would contact the relevant government agencies to make sure that the information was properly received.

23. The Presiding Officers asked the ECLAC secretariat to prepare a set of guidelines for the countries in the preparation of their presentations at the session. The recommendation will be not to prepare lengthy

² Annex 1.

analyses, but to summarize the situation in four or five pages, including, where possible, examples of successful national policies and describing the major obstacles to the advancement of women.

24. The secretariat will also prepare an informational document on the session for the countries members of ECLAC. It was suggested that it should be prepared far enough ahead to be distributed at the Caribbean subregional conference, which has on its agenda an item relative to the seventh Regional Conference. The Presiding Officers would also like the document to provide information on the follow-up mechanisms to the Fourth World Conference On Women, particularly those established by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women, and to include organization charts of the United Nations system.

Cooperation with organizations in the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations

25. The Presiding Officers recognized the need to work together with other United Nations and intergovernmental organizations to ensure the success of the session of the Regional Conference. They expressed appreciation for the contributions that had been offered by some of those organizations and asked the ECLAC secretariat to promote such collaboration.³

26. The representative of the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (ICE/OAS) offered to inform the Presiding Officers of the outcome of the inter-American meeting on women's leadership to be held in October 1997, and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) expressed interest in reporting to the Regional Conference on the programme for economic and social leadership by rural women and asked to be invited to participate.

Participation by non-governmental organizations

27. In selecting non-governmental organizations to participate, the Presiding Officers decided to give priority to organizations of regional or subregional scope that work directly with women and engage in research or dissemination of information. The Presiding Officers also asked ECLAC to call a meeting of NGOs for 18 November, before the start of the session, to give them an opportunity to prepare a joint presentation.

Composition of the next set of Presiding Officers (agenda item 4)

28. The Officers decided to consult informally with representatives of other countries, preferably in their own areas, to find out who might have an interest in serving as the next set of Presiding Officers.

29. They raised the issue of regular attendance at meetings as a commitment that countries must make if they were to serve as Presiding Officers. The lack of representation of the English-speaking Caribbean countries was a matter of concern to the Presiding Officers, since it meant that an entire subregion was without a voice in the final review of the regional preparations.

³ At the time of the meeting, contributions had been offered by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), UNFPA, ILO, IICA, IACW/OAS and FLACSO.

Other matters (agenda item 5)

30. In view of the need to strengthen their liaison function with the countries, the Presiding Officers reviewed the allocation of responsibility to contact member countries in their subregions and decided upon the following division of work:⁴
31. Argentina will contact Ecuador and Paraguay; Uruguay will contact Brazil; Chile will contact Colombia and Venezuela; Cuba⁵ will contact the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean, Haiti, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic; Mexico will contact Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Panama; Honduras will contact El Salvador and Guatemala; and Bolivia will contact Peru.
32. The Presiding Officers also agreed to remind the countries of their responsibility to publicize and promote the seventh session of the Regional Conference.
33. The Presiding Officers decided to hold their next meeting on 17 November 1997 in Santiago, Chile, in order to examine the documentation and organizational arrangements for the session; time permitting, they would try to share their opinions on the preliminary version of the Declaration of Santiago, to be adopted at the close of the session.

**D. TRIBUTE TO THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
ON THE OCCASION OF ITS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

34. At the initiative of the host country, the Presiding Officers, in collaboration with ECLAC and UNIFEM, presented a tribute to the Commission on the Status of Women on the fiftieth anniversary of its founding.
35. The Director of ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico summarized the activities of the Commission. He noted that the representatives of the regional commissions had participated regularly and actively in the work of the Commission, bringing to it a regional perspective, especially since the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), when the regional commissions acted as focal points of the United Nations system for intergovernmental activities in that area.
36. Reviewing the various stages in the history of the Commission, he said that at the beginning its work had focused on promoting legal equality for women and overcoming discrimination based on custom and tradition; later, it had expanded into the area addressed by international goals of economic and social development. In the past decade the Commission had also worked hard to get women's issues onto the agendas of all the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system. Yet fifty years after its creation the basic goal of the Commission remained the same: to combat discrimination.

⁴ This allocation of the tasks of the Presiding Officers reflects the absence of some Officers and represents a change from what was agreed upon at their twenty-second meeting (see document LC/L.966(MDM.22/4), paragraph 11 b).

⁵ With the help of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean (Port of Spain).

37. The Coordinator for Women's Issues of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs recalled the efforts of representatives from some of the Latin America countries, who in 1945 had participated in the negotiations to amend the drafts of the Charter of the United Nations and succeeded in having the Charter enshrine the principles of equal rights of men and women and non-discrimination on the basis of sex. She gave an affectionate and detailed account of the early years of the Commission, with particular reference to the first two representatives of Mexico to the Commission in the 1950s, Amalia Caballero de Castillo Ledón and Maria Lavalle Urbina, whom she described as the "creators of feminine civic consciousness in Mexico".

38. The General Director of the Matías Romero Institute of Diplomatic Studies (IMRED) of Mexico summarized the evolution of the Commission between 1983 and 1995, a period during which she had been representative of Mexico to the Commission. She noted the changes that had come about in the United Nations agenda for women and recalled the two big world conferences that had shaped international initiatives and the work of the Commission. Among the main challenges of the period, she mentioned the incorporation of the regional viewpoint into the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the restructuring of the Commission's agenda.

39. The Director of the regional office of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) recalled that the Fund had been created in Mexico on the occasion of the First World Conference on Women as a way of providing women with visibility and a voice. She said that Mexico had been an active participant in the entire process of promoting the advancement of women, and she paid tribute to the Commission through mention of two Mexican women who had endowed the issue with great professionalism on the international level: Ambassadors Aída González and Olga Pellicer.

Annex 1

DOCUMENT I

Access to power and participation in decision-making.
Latin America and the Caribbean: policies for gender equity
looking to the year 2000

Provisional annotated outline

1. Background

The document, "Access to power and participation in decision-making. Latin America and the Caribbean: policies for gender equity looking to the year 2000", is one of two position papers being prepared by the ECLAC secretariat, in collaboration with the Presiding Officers of the sixth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, as a contribution to debate at the seventh session of the Regional Conference to be held in Santiago, Chile, from 19 to 21 November 1997.

The experience of this intergovernmental forum, which in 1997 is celebrating the twentieth anniversary of its founding, has shown that it is hard to prepare comprehensive diagnostic analyses every three years that reflect the changes, advances and setbacks that have occurred in relation to the plans and programmes approved by the Governments as the basis for action in the sphere of public policy.

For this occasion, therefore, it was decided that two topics¹ would be selected in accordance with the priorities set by the countries on the international level, through the Commission on the Status of Women, and on the regional level, as expressed in the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, and the recommendations of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference.

Inputs for the document will be drawn from existing studies in the field and contributions from countries of the region, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations. United Nations bodies will also be asked to make contributions on topics within their purview.² Consideration will be given, particularly in the formulation of proposals, to the output of other international conferences held since the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and to the Consensus of Sao

¹ The second document prepared for the Regional Conference will be entitled "Sustainable development, poverty and gender. Latin America and the Caribbean: working towards the year 2000".

² Contributions have already been offered by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (ICW/OAS) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has up-dated for this session of the Regional Conference the document it prepared for the previous session, entitled "Women and health in Latin America and the Caribbean: old issues and new approaches" (Mujer y desarrollo series, No. 17).

Paulo, which was adopted during the first Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development (São Paulo, Brazil, April 1997).

2. Purpose

The purpose of the document is to focus and deepen debate on the priority issues in this field on the regional and international levels, to orient analysis towards a cross-linked treatment of issues, to identify the obstacles that prevent the design or application of policies with a view to eliminating them, and to accelerate the pace of implementation of the international Platform for Action and the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001.

The basic aim of the document is to identify the obstacles women and Governments face with respect to sustainable development, democracy and the gender dimension in formulating and implementing policies that incorporate gender equity, taking into account existing intergenerational and socio-cultural factors, and that are truly effective in increasing women's access to decision-making and the exercise of power in the countries of the region.

3. Theoretical framework

This chapter will set out the concepts to be used and their implications. The underlying assumption will be that power-sharing is an prerequisite for democracy. The nexus of discussion will be shaped by sustainable development, democracy and gender equity and the interrelationships between them. Special consideration will be given to the cross-sectional nature of the issue, which spans all cultures and affects all socio-economic strata. Strengthening women's exercise of citizenship, understood as active participation in and access to all levels of decision-making in society, is considered to be the key objective towards which all efforts should point.

Nevertheless, although this element is fundamental, it is not sufficient in itself. It is possible to have access to decision-making, yet not exercise power where it is needed to change the conditions of inequity in which women live. Participation in decision-making requires the exercise of power in all spheres, from the domestic to the political. Emphasis should be given to the kinds of processes and procedures that enhance participation and access to all levels of decision-making and to power and the exercise of power.

In addition, it is important to identify the "cultural" obstacles that result from "gender-based socialization" and from a political culture that strongly influences the kinds of participation open to women.

The issues of "cultural diversity" must here be considered from the perspective of whether they enhance or impede gender equity.

While bearing in mind the need to approach the topic in an integrated fashion, it may be useful to begin by distinguishing between participation and access to decision-making and power. It can also be helpful to differentiate political participation from other forms of social participation.

The theoretical framework of the document will draw on the ECLAC proposal for changing production patterns with social equity and the need for an integrated approach to that undertaking.

Consideration will also be given to human development studies recently conducted in the region, reports prepared by intergovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies that approach the issues to be addressed from a gender perspective, and papers produced by academic centres and think tanks in the region.

4. Diagnostic analysis

This chapter will focus on the legal, political and social obstacles that limit women's full participation in decision-making at the family level, the community or local level, and the political level, that is, their exercise of full citizenship, and identify ways of overcoming these obstacles with the active participation of women. The basic framework for the proposed actions will be the recommendations set out in the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, and emanating from other world conferences.

Clearly, the distinction between the family, local and political levels is purely analytical, and mutually supportive actions at all three levels are necessary. What is also clear, however, from the many studies already done on the subject, is that participation at one level does not automatically guarantee decision-making power at other levels. Socio-economic, cultural and political factors combine to create differentiated levels of participation, and integrated policies are necessary to leap the hurdles. For this reason, particular attention will be paid to what relation the opportunities for participation at each of these levels bear to each another and what impact they have on strengthening women's exercise of full citizenship.

These obstacles form part of a vicious circle whereby the lack of opportunity to participate reinforces and consolidates the already depressed status of a large proportion of the female population.

There should also be mention of the problems that confront women as individuals and that are directly related to the prevailing gender structure.

As a factor hindering access to decision-making, poverty should occupy a central place in each chapter of the document. However, the relationship between poverty and participation in decision-making is not a simple one, especially in the case of women.

Attention should be given to the influence of women's networks on the regional, subregional and national levels as vehicles that contribute to women's exercise of citizenship by building women's advocacy skills, helping them to articulate their demands and disseminating information through alternative channels.

5. The family level

This section will deal with the changes in family structure in the region as the result of major demographic shifts relating to the size of households, the ageing of the population, the economic contribution made by the different adult members of the household and the increasing number of female-headed households among households in poverty, factors which augment the difficulties facing the

region's families. It will also analyse the ways in which different family structures facilitate or hamper women's participation.

' Special consideration will be given to women's position in the home, since this has a direct bearing on their say in the management of family resources and participation in family decision-making.

Priority issues at the family level include the socialization of girls and boys, in the sense of the roles society assigns to them; the content of family upbringing and its impact on individuals' attitudes and future options; the distribution of responsibilities within the family; and child-care systems in light of the new conditions household face. The assumption underlying the analysis is that emphasis on shared family responsibilities is an intrinsic part of the process of training girls and boys to be citizens.

It will be important to analyse, insofar as possible, the manner in which property is administered and decisions are made. Another key area relates to the characteristics of intra-family relationships and manifestations of domestic violence.

The contribution of paid and unpaid work to family survival and the impact of these forms of work on decision-making power will also be examined. Family law will be analysed, and special attention will be paid to comparing existing legal conventions with actual conditions.

Another pertinent topic at the family level is that of access to housing and housing services, viewed from the perspective of participation in the management of community services. While this dimension is more closely related to the community level, it can also be considered from the standpoint of the needs of the family group. It is central to the treatment of poverty as an issue that cuts across all three of the proposed levels.

6. The community or local level

With regard to the processes of decentralization, the main forms participation has taken at the local level will be described, and the approaches and issues that motivate women and men will be differentiated.

The opportunities for participation and the progress made in this respect in the local structures of government and administration will be analysed, in terms not only of the services they provide, but also of the forms of and main obstacles to participation. The document will examine the existence or lack of an agenda addressing gender issues, such as women's access to decision-making in programmes; and it will also look at the mechanisms used to monitor policies of this kind.

Priority issues for local-level analysis include women's participation in decision-making and their access to the political decision-making level; obtaining community services for the family; local programme design and management; opportunities for training in management or self-help; and the interchange of information between the local and overall policy levels.

The document will examine existing channels for participation, gender-perspective training for civil servants and community management with genuine participation.

Other topics will include existing dialogue or the potential for dialogue between local government, non-governmental organizations and other grass-roots organizations and institutions.

The document will consider programmes especially geared to working women and to expanding their vocational training and job opportunities.

The relationship between national and local government policies and their interaction in the context of the decentralization process will be explored.

Existing poverty-reduction programmes and their impact on women and on men will be reviewed.

The inflexibility of structures and programmes and the possibilities they offer for continuity are crucial elements to be considered.

7. The societal level: exercise of citizenship

At this level, the analysis will emphasize factors that ensure development with democracy, social equity and gender equity, including women's attainment of full citizenship.

With respect to national government, the document will examine whether the issue is on the political agenda and how it has been incorporated into the government apparatus.

In the field of education, the issues concern the ways in which poverty and cultural factors block women's access to education, and the content of women's education and socialization.

Other topics to be analysed are women's role in urban and rural economic, political and social development, the employment options and job training opportunities available to women, and the limitations imposed by poverty and by persistent cultural patterns that restrict the range of occupations open to women.

In the political sphere, the discussion will cover the types of issues that mobilize women; existing forms of participation and their characteristics; the size, scope and actual effectiveness of women's mobilization; and the possibilities of strengthening women's mobilization through labour or political organizations and movements or other structures or means of political participation.

Insofar as possible, the document should examine election laws and affirmative action programmes as appropriate means for insuring equality of opportunity.

Political participation merits particular attention, because it is crucial for influencing government policy and facilitating women's empowerment. Since it can be exercised in a number of different areas, a distinction may be drawn between participation in institutional spheres and participation in civil society and social movements.

Participation in institutional spheres entails occupying decision-making positions within the political system (electoral processes, political parties, trade unions); within the executive, legislative and judicial branches; and within private- or public-sector enterprises.

Participation in civil society comprises political participation in defence of the family's living standards (community management at the local and neighbourhood levels; community management and leadership); participation and leadership in grass-roots and citizens' organizations (non-governmental organizations devoted to consumer, environmental, peace, and human-rights issues; neighbourhood committees and the like).

Other areas of interest are women's participation in collective movements and collective movements in support of gender-related demands.

The document will consider the presence or absence of women in other traditionally male decision-making areas, such as security, finance, economics, trade unions and professional and business associations.

Poverty will be analysed as an obstacle to access to decision-making. Also considered will be the options and means of participation by poor women, their ability to create their own agendas, their degree of association, and their actual channels of participation and dialogue.

8. Participation in the family, the community and society: the necessary intersection

The issue of female participation requires an integrated approach that considers the interrelationships between the family, community and societal levels and the structures that either facilitate or hamper that participation and the exercise of power at one or more of these levels.

9. Proposals

The proposals should relate to each of the levels defined and should specifically target the obstacles identified.³ For this reason, the proposals will need to be discussed as the document takes shape. In addition, the proposals should cut across the three levels, linking them to create a multiplier effect.

Points to be emphasized are the need to create awareness of gender issues among women in positions of power and the need to build up the participation of women in different spheres, particularly in political parties.

³ It will be recalled that neither the international Platform for Action nor the Regional Programme of Action achieved this level of harmonization owing to time constraints. This has hindered their practical application. The document in question, particularly since it is intended to be the springboard to concrete action, must bring together these two aspects.

DOCUMENT II

Sustainable development, poverty and gender.
Latin America and the Caribbean: working towards the year 2000

Provisional annotated outline

1. Background

The document, "Sustainable development, poverty and gender. Latin America and the Caribbean: working towards the year 2000", is one of the working documents being prepared for consideration at the seventh session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Santiago, Chile, from 19 to 21 November 1997.

As agreed at the twenty-third and twenty-fourth meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference, it will be prepared by the ECLAC secretariat in collaboration with the member countries currently serving as Presiding Officers.

Inputs for the document will be drawn from existing studies on the subject and contributions from countries of the region, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations. United Nations bodies will also be asked to make contributions on subjects within their purview.⁴ Consideration will be given, particularly in the formulation of proposals, to the output of other international conferences held since the preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and to the regional follow-up activities to the World Summit for Social Development and the Consensus of São Paulo, supplemented by the gender dimension.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to focus debate on priority issues in this field at the regional and international levels, accelerate the pace of implementation of the Platform for Action and the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, gear analysis towards a cross-linked approach to the issues and seek ways of overcoming problems relating to the design and implementation of poverty eradication policies.

It will seek to identify the obstacles that women and Governments face in implementing policies that combine improvements in the quality of life of the population, especially women, with gender equity.

⁴ Contributions have already been offered by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

3. Theoretical framework

This section will describe the concepts to be used and their implications. The nexus of discussion will be shaped by the issues of sustainable development, gender, poverty and the environment. It will attempt to illustrate the close links between all these elements, which necessitate the design and application of integrated policies in the economic and social development spheres.

The theoretical framework of the document will draw upon the ECLAC proposal for changing production patterns with social equity and the need for an integrated approach to that undertaking. Consideration will also be given to human development studies recently conducted in the region. As on other occasions, studies and research projects undertaken by academic institutions in the region and by non-governmental organizations will also be used.

The document will focus on pinpointing the obstacles that exist in this area and proposing ways to overcome them through policies involving the active participation of women. This approach strengthens women's capacities, thereby helping them to overcome poverty and facilitating their access to other levels of decision-making.

The conceptual terms of discourse of poverty have been widened to include such dimensions as equity and social exclusion. Analysis will be based primarily on the ECLAC document entitled "The equity gap. Latin America, the Caribbean and the Social Summit", recently approved by the region's Governments at the Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development in Sao Paulo and the Consensus of Sao Paulo, adopted on that occasion.

4. Diagnostic analysis

Since the Latin American and Caribbean region exhibits the most regressive distribution of income, a brief description will be provided of current income distribution patterns and poverty trends and their impact on women and men.

An overview will be presented of the extent of poverty by countries or groups of countries, including information relating, among other things, to hunger and malnutrition, labour force utilization, changes in income distribution, trends in social expenditure and the distribution of poor households.

Rural and urban poverty and poverty among different ethnic groups will be examined separately.

5. Gender and poverty

A comparison will be made of poverty among females and males in order to identify similarities and differences in this regard, and the forms that poverty takes depending on gender will be explored.

The strategies used by poor women and poor men to deal with poverty in different geographic areas and at different poverty levels will be studied. An effort will be made to work with the different segments of the population below the poverty line in order to determine with greater precision the actions to be proposed.

6. Work and gender

This section will deal with access to employment for the poor; the options open to women and to men; the problems women face in entering the labour market; segmentation of the labour market; distribution by occupational category and job quality; access to job training; employment conditions and income level.

7. Gender and access to social programmes

a) Education

The discussion will cover access to education for the poor; differences in access for men and women; differences in the quality of education by socio-economic level; problems of illiteracy and inadequate educational coverage; gender-based educational content; the relationship between education and employment for women and for men; the influence of gender on overcoming poverty.

b) Health

The document will address such issues as access to health care for the poor; health care coverage for poor women and men; specific gender-related health problems.

8. Special groups and topics

Female heads of household

Female-headed households; poverty and how it relates to the head of the household; survival strategies of poor female heads of household.

Migrant women

Migration patterns in the region; poor migrant women.

Gender and the environment

Poverty and the environment; the relationship of poor women to the environment; natural disasters.

Family, gender and poverty

Socio-demographic profile of the family in Latin America and the Caribbean; social policies directed towards families.

9. Access to decision-making, exercise of power and poverty

Poverty as an obstacle to access to decision-making; options and means of participation open to poor women (within the family, in the neighbourhood or community and in the political sphere).

10. Proposals

The proposals should be aimed at promoting simultaneous progress in two mutually reinforcing directions: overcoming poverty and empowering women, especially with respect to access to decision-making.

Policies should be designed taking into account the segments of the poor population to which the target groups belong, since this will determine the nature of their needs.

Policies geared to the family should be designed from a gender perspective. This means considering the differential impact that the proposed actions will have on women and on men.

The proposals should relate to each of the levels defined and should specifically target the obstacles identified.⁵ For this reason, the proposals will need to be discussed as the document takes shape. In addition, the proposals should cut across the three levels, linking them to create a multiplier effect.

In formulating the proposals, it will be necessary to draw upon the successful experience of other regions and the progress already made, including advances in legislation.

⁵ It will be recalled that neither the international Platform for Action nor the Regional Programme of Action achieved this level of harmonization owing to time constraints. This has hindered their practical application. The document in question, particularly since it is intended to be the springboard to concrete action, must bring together these two aspects.

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