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**REPORT OF THE NINETEENTH 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**

(Mar del Plata, 24 September 1994)

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Mandate and objective

1. Paragraph 88, subparagraph 2, 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), stipulates 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 will be the link between member Governments and the secretariat of ECLAC in the field of women's integration in development.
2. The nineteenth meeting of the Presiding Officers was held for the specific purpose of considering the agenda and documents for the sixth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Place and date of the meeting

3. Pursuant to that mandate, the Presiding Officers who had been elected at the fifth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean held their nineteenth meeting on 24 September 1994 at Mar del Plata, Argentina.

Attendance

4. Attending the meeting were participants from the following countries represented by the Presiding Officers: Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Mexico and Netherlands Antilles. Also attending the meeting were representatives of United Nations programmes, bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and the Non-Governmental Organizations' Forum on Women-Beijing '95, who had been invited to attend the sixth session of the Regional Conference.

Chairperson and Rapporteur

5. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Edith Strauss, Minister for Women's Affairs of the Netherlands Antilles. The functions of Rapporteur were carried out by the delegation of Argentina, headed by Ms. Zelmira Regazzoli.

Agenda

6. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda for their nineteenth meeting:
 1. Adoption of the agenda
 2. Report by the Chairperson of the Presiding Officers on the activities carried out since the eighteenth meeting, held in Curaçao (30 June and 1 July 1994)
 3. Organization 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:
 - a) Provisional agenda
 - b) Documents prepared by the ECLAC secretariat
 - c) Proposal submitted by the Netherlands Antilles regarding the election of the Presiding Officers
 4. Other matters.

7. The delegations had before them the following documents:
 - Provisional agenda (LC/L.840(CRM.6/1))
 - Annotated provisional agenda and organization of the sixth session of the Regional Conference (LC/L.842(CRM.6/2))
 - Activities of the ECLAC Secretariat from 1 June 1991 to 31 May 1994 relating to the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.829(CRM.6/3))
 - Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1990s: diagnostic elements and proposals (LC/L.836(CRM.6/4))
 - Documents presented 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 (LC/L.844(CRM.6/6))
 - Training and development of female human resources: a challenge for equity (DDR/1)
 - Uprooted women and poverty in Central America: an area requiring special attention (DDR/2)
 - Women and urban employment in Latin America: the significance of changes in the 1990s (DDR/3)
 - Gender-based violence: a human rights problem (DDR/4)
 - Women and human resource training in Central America: efficiency and equity (DDR/5)
 - Hacia una estrategia educacional para las mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe (DDR/6)
 - Mujeres en el proceso de toma de decisiones en América Latina y el Caribe (DDR/7)
 - La salud y las mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe: viejos problemas y nuevos enfoques (DDR/8).

B. SUMMARY OF DEBATES

Report by the Chairperson of the Presiding Officers on the activities carried out since the eighteenth meeting, held in Curacao (30 June and 1 July 1994) (agenda item 2)

8. Ms. Edith Strauss, head of the delegation of the Netherlands Antilles, welcomed the participants and briefly summarized the activities carried out since the eighteenth meeting of the Presiding Officers, which were particularly important in relation to the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held at Beijing in 1995. In her capacity as representative of the Netherlands Antilles, she said that the English-speaking Caribbean countries attached great importance to those preparations, in which they had been participating actively.

Organization 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 (agenda item 3)

9. The Chief of the ECLAC Women and Development Unit reported on the preparations for the sixth session of the Regional Conference, and presented a list of the documents prepared and the national reports received by the secretariat. In that regard, she stressed that an unprecedented number of up-to-date national baseline studies had been made available; although they had been received too late to be considered in the preparations for the sixth session of the Regional Conference, they would be analysed and consolidated in preparation for the World Conference.

C. AGREEMENTS

10. The Presiding Officers agreed to broaden the debate under item 4 of the agenda for the sixth session of the Regional Conference in order to include, in addition to the presentation by the Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women, presentations by the representatives of the Government of China, which would host the Conference, and by the representative of the Non-Governmental Organizations' Forum on Women-Beijing '95.

11. Some delegations expressed concern about the procedure used to elect the Presiding Officers, and proposed that it should be formalized. The participants re-examined the criteria proposed by the Presiding Officers at the fourth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, which had been endorsed at the fifth session (see annex), but acknowledged that they should be considered as suggestions only, since the choice of Presiding Officers reflected the interests of the member countries.

12. The Presiding Officers recommended that a resolution on their functions, especially with regard to follow-up activities for the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, should be considered at the sixth session of the Regional Conference.

Annex*

"The report of the Chairman of the Presiding Officers of the Fourth Regional Conference was received with applause by the participants. In response to a request made by the representative of Mexico, the meeting approved the Officers' proposal concerning the functions which future Presiding Officers should fulfil, which reads as follows:

- 'a) To follow up on the issues treated by the Conference, studying them more deeply and trying to heighten awareness and bring about a consensus with respect to them among government officials and non-governmental women's organizations, as preparation for the following Conference and as orientation for the substantive work in the countries.**
- 'b) To promote a broader and more valuable participation in the following Regional Conference, through permanent contact with specific focal points and with government and key non-governmental agencies. Individual Presiding Officers could divide up the countries of the region among themselves, determining where the action of each one could be the most effective in this promotional task.**
- 'c) To function as a counterpart of the secretariat of ECLAC in identifying issues to be treated and projects of interest to the countries, as well as in systematizing the information concerning these issues found in the countries. To dedicate part of their meetings to a previously selected substantive issue, in order to help further the discussion of that issue from a regional perspective.**
- 'd) To improve the coordination of tasks with the other agencies working on women's issues. Each member country of the Presiding Officers could do so within its area of regional action.**
- 'e) To contribute to a better preparation of regional participation within the world-level international agencies concerned with women's issues.**
- 'f) To make recommendations, by means of a communication from the Presiding Officers to the following Regional Conference, concerning the issues that the Presiding Officers think should be treated at that Conference.'"**

* Report of the Fifth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, paragraph 44.