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Economic Commission for Latin America

REPORT OF THE 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

Quito, Ecuador, 11 March 1979

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Date and place of the meeting

1. Pursuant to the relevant recommendations contained in the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, adopted at the eleventh extraordinary session of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL), held in New York on 21 November 1977, and in accordance with the agreement reached at the First Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference, held at Kingston, Jamaica, on 14 and 15 February 1978, the Government of Ecuador invited the Presiding Officers to hold their third meeting in that country. The Chairman of the Conference, in co-ordination with the Office of the Executive Secretary of CEPAL convened the meeting on 11 March 1979. Its general purpose was to take note of and examine the results of the work of the Group of Government Experts to Appraise the Implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America (Quito, Ecuador, 8-10 March 1979), and to consider the preparations for the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and for the region's participation in the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, which will be held in 1980.

Attendance

2. The Meeting was attended by the following Presiding Officers of the Conference: Chairman: Esther Véliz (Cuba); First Vice-Chairman: Carmen McGregor (Jamaica); Second Vice-Chairman: Humberto Martínez Romero (Mexico); Rapporteur: Marly Silva A. (Venezuela). The Presiding Officers were accompanied by the following advisers: Olga Finlay and Mirta Barquet (Cuba), and Hazel Nelson (Jamaica). Also present was Margaret Snyder of the

/United Nations

United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, Co-ordinator of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women. The secretariat of CEPAL was represented by the Executive Secretary, Enrique V. Iglesias, and by Jorge Viteri, Jorge Graciarena, Suzanne Aurelius, Carlos Borsotti, Myriam Krawczyk and Peggy Antrobus (consultant).

Agenda

3. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda for their third meeting:
 1. Adoption of the Agenda.
 2. Report of the secretariat of CEPAL on the progress made in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action and the execution of programmes related to the integration of women into development.
 3. Presentation, study and consideration of the Group of Government Experts' appraisal of the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America.
 4. Place, date and agenda of the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America.
 5. Preparation of the report on the work done by the Presiding Officers since the beginning of their mandate, for submission at the Second Regional Conference.
 6. Consideration and adoption of the report of the Presiding Officers.

Opening speeches

4. The Chairman of the meeting conveyed to the participants the greetings of the Chairman of the Presiding Officers, Vilma Espín de Castro, who asked to be excused since urgent working engagements had prevented her from being present on this occasion. She thanked the Government and people of Ecuador for the facilities provided for holding the meeting, and for their warm welcome to the participants.

5. She pointed out that this meeting was of great importance, since it was responsible for analysing the proposals contained in the appraisal which the Group of Government Experts had made the previous day and for reviewing and evaluating progress in the effective implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the integration of women into the economic and social development of their respective countries, within the framework of the political will expressed by the member States of CEPAL. She laid particular stress on the fact that this was the last time that the Presiding Officers would meet before the Second Regional Conference, to be held this year.

6. She said that the work would be hard and would call for the best efforts of the participants, as well as the collaboration which she was sure would be provided, as always, by the secretariat of CEPAL, which she congratulated for the support it had given in holding this meeting.

7. The Executive Secretary of CEPAL expressed appreciation, on behalf of the secretariat, for the work done by Vilma Espín, Chairman of the Presiding Officers. He mentioned the importance which CEPAL attached to the Programme for the Integration of Women into Development and observed that despite the considerable progress made, much still remained to be done. He stressed the important role played by the Presiding Officers, both through the constructive criticisms formulated by them and their importance as a live contact with the countries of the region.

SUMMARY OF DEBATES

8. The secretariat gave a detailed description of the activities implemented in pursuance of the mandates of the Second Meeting of the Presiding Officers, held in Mexico City.^{1/} These activities, a detailed description of which is to be found in document E/CEPAL/MDM/3, were concentrated in two areas: the preparation of the documents for the meeting of the Group of Government Experts, and the generation of projects and their submission to the United Nations Secretariat for review, and for the views of the Consultative Committee of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women. Despite the efforts made to solve procedural problems, the situation was not satisfactory, and under it was the methodology recommended by the Consultative Committee frequently necessary to reformulate the projects, which meant a reduction of the time available for other activities.

9. The Chairman thanked the secretariat for its detailed report on the activities carried out, the situation as regards the Special Unit and the state of the projects. With regard to the preparation, formulation and submission of projects, she observed that they had been a constant concern of the Presiding Officers, and that they and the secretariat should continue to make efforts to obtain financing for the projects and thus contribute to a more successful application of the Regional Plan of Action. Lastly, she asked the representative of the Voluntary Fund to give a detailed report on projects relating to the region.

10. The representative of the Voluntary Fund said that of the five projects submitted by CEPAL, for review by the secretariat and the advice of the Consultative Committee at its fifth session, the financing of three national projects and one subregional project had been recommended, the latter project being subject to the participation of a consultant. One of the regional projects had been returned for revision and re-submission.

^{1/}= See the report of this meeting in document E/CEPAL/MDM/2/Rev.1, paragraph 16.

11. She explained that in view of the limited resources available and the fact that other bodies would finance the recruitment of staff to implement activities relating to women, the United Nations Secretariat, in keeping with the advice of the Consultative Committee, followed the policy of financing no more than two posts per region. She also explained that at its fifth session the Consultative Committee had recommended modification of the system for submitting national projects.

12. In response to a question about a specific project, the representative of the Fund explained that the secretariat would circulate guidelines on national applications to the fund within 2 or 3 months.

13. One of the Presiding Officers asked the representative of the Voluntary Fund about a project on the co-ordination and promotion of research, which contained a post for a co-ordinator stationed in Mexico City. The representative of the Fund repeated that although the Consultative Committee, and the United Nations Secretariat considered the existence of subregional co-ordinators to be extremely important, the Fund was not at the moment in a position to finance more than two posts per region and suggested the possibility of having recourse to other bodies. Several of the Presiding Officers then stressed the urgent need in the region for the promotion of national projects and mentioned the diversity existing in the subregions and the need for technical assistance and for concerting activities, pointing out that everything confirmed the need for regional co-ordinators. They therefore requested the representative of the Fund to convey this concern to the United Nations Secretariat and the Consultative Committee.

14. With regard to this point, a representative of the CEPAL secretariat said that this was not a matter of generating additional bureaucracy, but of having officials at the service of the countries to generate projects for submission to the Voluntary Fund.

15. In response to a request from one of the Presiding Officers, the representative of the Voluntary Fund reported that out of the total number of projects approved by the Consultative Committee since 1977, 30 projects presented by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) were in course of execution, 13 from the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 6 from the Economic Commission for West Asia (ECWA), and 13 from the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL). She also reported that at the last session of the Consultative Committee, held in March 1979, US\$ 546,800 were allocated for ECA projects, US\$ 209,000 for ESCAP projects, and US\$ 159,000 for projects presented by CEPAL. ECWA had not submitted any new projects.

16. The representative of Cuba asked that the agenda of the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America should include an item concerning the difficulties in generating and financing projects.

17. In answer to a question, the representative of the Voluntary Fund said that flexible funds would be available to improve the technical assistance capacity of the regional commissions, provided that they requested such funds to meet specific national situations.

18. In answer to a question by a participant, the secretariat reported that arrangements for appointing a co-ordinator for the Caribbean were already well advanced, and she would no doubt take up her post before the Second Regional Conference.

19. With regard to information, the representative of the Voluntary Fund said that resources were allocated for this purpose to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

20. The Chairman requested the collaboration of the secretariat in order to make progress in the submission of projects, despite the difficulties which had been met with and which had been reported in the meeting.

21. With regard to item 3 of the agenda, the Chairman reiterated the Presiding Officers' concern about the lack of response to the questionnaire sent out by the CEPAL secretariat. By way of solution, it was suggested that the replies to a new questionnaire sent out by the United Nations Secretary-General should be transmitted to the secretariat of CEPAL so that it could use them to prepare the documentation required for the Second Regional Conference.

22. A representative of the secretariat informed the Presiding Officers that the report of the Group of Government Experts (E/CEPAL/CRM/R.1/4/Rev.1) would be sent to all the governments of the region so that they could make appropriate observations. Moreover, an edition of Notas de la CEPAL would be published containing the conclusions of the Group's meeting, those of the meeting of the Presiding Officers, and the questionnaire sent out by the United Nations Secretary-General.

23. Concerning agenda item 4, there was agreement that the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America should be held before the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of 1980. In addition, it was agreed to give the secretariat flexibility in establishing the precise dates and venue of the Second Regional Conference, which would be formally convened at the eighteenth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America, to be held in La Paz, Bolivia from 18 to 26 April 1979.

24. Concerning the agenda for the Second Regional Conference, the secretariat recalled the need to bear in mind the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 33/185 and 33/189, as well as the arrangements for holding other regional meetings, with which the consideration of the question of the situation of women should be co-ordinated.

25. In response to a question from a delegation, a representative of the secretariat announced that invitations to the Second Regional Conference has been sent to the Assistant Secretary General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the Chairman of the Consultative Committee of the Voluntary Fund and the Secretary-General of the World Conference of 1980.

26. At the proposal of one delegation, it was agreed that the secretariat, together with the Presiding Officers, should complete the drafting of the provisional agenda for the Second Regional conference, bearing in mind the recommendations to that effect made by the Group of Government Experts and by the Presiding Officers at their second and third meetings.

27. Concerning agenda item 5, it was agreed that the Chairman should be authorized to draw up the report on the work carried out by the Presiding Officers since taking up their duties. The report would be prepared within one month, on the basis of the reports of the meetings of the Presiding Officers and the activities of the Chairman herself, and would be sent to the remaining Presiding Officers for their approval. Once approved, the report would be sent to the secretariat of CEPAL to be included among the working documents for the Second Regional Conference.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

28. Following a lively exchange of views, the Presiding Officers agreed to:

(a) Reiterate their concern at the small number of projects generated in the region, as well as at the difficulties encountered in formulating and financing them, and request the CEPAL secretariat to approach the Consultative Committee of the Voluntary Fund in order to inform it of their concern.

(b) Request the CEPAL secretariat to inform the Consultative Committee of the Voluntary Fund that the Presiding Officers regard as essential the early approval of the project on the co-ordination and promotion of research, which provides for the creation of a post of co-ordinator in the CEPAL office in Mexico City.

(c) Reiterate that the agenda of the Second Regional Conference should include the items indicated by the Presiding Officers at their Mexico City meeting, with special emphasis on the consideration of measures to speed up the generation, financing and implementation of programmes relating to women and their integration into development.

(d) Urge the governments which have not yet replied to the questionnaire dispatched some time ago by CEPAL to do so as soon as possible, or, in the event that they have also received a questionnaire from the United Nations Secretary-General on the same subject, to send CEPAL a copy of their replies to the latter.

(e) Request the CEPAL secretariat to expedite its steps to recruit a co-ordinator for the Caribbean.

(f) Request the CEPAL secretariat to distribute the report of the meeting of the Group of Government Experts (E/CEPAL/CRM/R.1/4/Rev.1) to all the governments of the region, so that they can make appropriate observations, and to distribute the conclusions of the meeting as widely as possible.

/(g) Request

(g) Request the CEPAL secretariat to take the necessary steps to establish the date and place of the Second Regional Conference.

(h) Request the CEPAL secretariat, in drawing up the provisional agenda for the Second Regional Conference, to do so in consultation with the Presiding Officers and bearing in mind the recommendations formulated on the subject by the Group of Government Experts and by the Presiding Officers at their second and third meetings.

(i) Authorize the Chairman to draft the report on the work carried out by the Presiding Officers since taking up their duties, within one month and on the basis of the reports of the meetings of the Presiding Officers and the activities of the Chairman herself, and to send it to the remaining Presiding Officers for their approval. Once approved, the report should be sent to the secretariat to be included among the working documents for the Second Regional Conference.

(j) Request the CEPAL secretariat to invite the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the Secretary-General of the World Conference of 1980, the Chairman of the Consultative Committee of the Voluntary Fund and the Co-ordinator of the Unit for Women and Development of Extension Department of the University of the West Indies, to participate in the Second Regional Conference.

(k) Request the CEPAL secretariat that when convening the Second Regional Conference it should also send governments the necessary documentation, at least one month in advance.

Annex

LIST OF DOCUMENTS PRESENTED BY THE SECRETARIAT

Working documents

E/CEPAL/CRM/R.1/1

Provisional agenda

E/CEPAL/CRM/R.1/2

Women in Latin America: the situation as regards the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action

E/CEPAL/CRM/R.1/3

Comments of the specialized agencies of the United Nations System on the document "Women in Latin America: the situation as regards the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action"

Reference documents

E/CEPAL/1042/Rev.1

Regional Plan of Action for the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America

E/CEPAL/MDM/1

Report of the First Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America

E/CEPAL/MDM/2/Rev.1

Report of the Second Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America

E/CEPAL/MDM/3/Rev.1

Report on activities of the CEPAL system secretariat relating to the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean

E/CEPAL/MDM/4

Report on activities of the CEPAL system secretariat on the problems of youth most closely related to the situation of the family and the status of women (education, health and housing)

