Sixteenth 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

Caracas, Venezuela, 27-28 May 1993

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF ACTION
FOR THE WOMEN OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

93-5-574

CONTENTS

I. PREAMBLE

A. What are the objectives?

1. Radical change of society; the achievement of this objective presupposes the creation of societies in which there exists consensus-based, fully participatory economic and social equality and in which assets, power, prestige and tasks relating both to gainful employment and to the home, family and child care are equitably shared by men and women by virtue of decisions freely taken on the basis of all the information available at a given historical moment.

2. Modernization and the changing of production patterns with economic, social and gender equity.

3. Full, effective exercise of women's civil rights in all spheres of society.

4. Expression of the needs of different groups of women as coherent demands; this implies that situations of conflict —between the demands of the various groups of women or between these groups and the rest of society— should be dealt with under the rules of democracy.

B. Why?

There is a discrepancy in the region between de jure equality, or equality recognized by law, and de facto equality, or the day-to-day living situation of women.

The development model of the recent past has been depleted. The internationalization of the economy has made the Latin American and Caribbean region, which is a developing region, much more vulnerable vis-à-vis the developed countries. The crisis augmented poverty, and poverty has a greater proportionate effect on women. The gains made by women as a result of the modernization of the region —wider educational coverage, more participation in the workforce and expanded civil rights— were an engine for the integration of women in recent decades; in addition, women gained further access to contraceptive methods.

Today, these achievements raise problems relating to access to the economy and reveal some deficiencies; there is also the danger that their effects will be weakened. Moreover, although respect for women's civil rights has improved as a result of the recognition of their equality before the law, the power relations that block their full participation have yet to be modified. Accordingly, it is important to understand that greater participation does not necessarily mean equitable participation.

C. How to do it?

To achieve the proposed objectives, the following steps must be taken:

1. Changing production patterns with social equity, including gender equity.

2. Democratizing the development process, with the active participation of all social actors, so that their real needs are reflected. To that end, women must move into all the areas where real citizenship can be exercised, especially those that involve their participation in decision-making.

3. Changing cultural patterns, by reforming education and carrying out training programmes for women to ensure their access to all social functions and a real broadening of their citizenship.

D. Who will carry it out?

1. The State

The State should attempt to achieve an equitable redistribution of resources by allocating funds for designing comprehensive policies which incorporate the gender perspective and which contemplate socially equitable public expenditure.

Priority areas

a. Coherent macroeconomic policies, which facilitate the redistribution of resources and make productive resources available to women, especially to those living in poverty, as a way of ensuring the exercise of their civil rights.

b. Social policies integrated with economic policies that promote technical progress and are complemented by coherent investment in human resources, ensuring equitable access for women to technical training so as to familiarize them with technical innovations.

c. Reform of the State, to promote its modernization and democratization, a process which, besides making the State more efficient, favours the achievement of social integration and greater participation, and therefore enhances the full exercise of women's civil rights.

d. Decentralization. Adoption of local and regional policies that ensure the active participation of women and make it easier for their broad experience at the local level to be incorporated into policy. This requires considering "institutional reforms...in order to strengthen the national social sector as a receiver and transmitter of social

demands within the State system of redistributive agencies".[1] Women's participation in local institutions should also be used as the basis for training them for political participation at the national level.

e. <u>National offices for women</u>. Consolidation, based on an assessment of existing mechanisms, of an office or ministry, depending on the characteristics of each country, having a regular budget, trained human resources and managerial and promotional capacity.

The programmes of the national offices for the advancement of women should be concerned with changing cultural patterns to ensure the full exercise of women's civil rights; to that end, they should help to elaborate indicators which quantify the contribution of women; prepare gender-based training programmes for other government agencies and for women; follow up on legal changes; and act as systems of horizontal coordination to ensure the implementation of sectoral policies that take women's demands into account.

f. <u>Educational and cultural policies</u>

    i. massive dissemination of United Nations instruments in educational establishments;

    ii. educational reforms that involve changes in content and teaching methods. Elimination of stereotypes; motivation for women to study a wider range of disciplines; sex education which is not restricted to reproductive health;

    iii. participation of women in the regional and national debate on new educational strategies, designed to develop modern citizenship and enhance the competitive position of the countries, with the aim of transmitting to all members of society the values that help to establish a new kind of relationship between men and women.

g. <u>Employment policies</u>

    i. design of training programmes for women that offer real possibilities for productive employment;

    ii. motivational policies for women to awaken their interest in studying a wide range of disciplines, especially in the field of technology;

    iii. establishment of support services to care for the children of working men and women, on an equal footing, in order to prevent discrimination against working women;

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[1] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), <u>Social Equity and Changing Production Patterns: An Integrated Approach</u> (LC/G.1701/Rev.1-P), Santiago, Chile, 1992. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.II.G.5.

iv.   opening of a debate which would explore the possibilities for establishing flexible work schedules and systems for men and women, in order to give them more time not only for rest and recreation but also for the affective side of life, personal care and the care of others, especially children, the elderly and the sick.

h.   Legislative mechanisms. The implementation of the necessary legal reforms to ensure compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the countries.

2.   Society

a.   Non-governmental groups: women's groups, academic centres, social movements, political parties.

i.   effective coordination to reinforce women's capacity for exercising their civil rights;

ii.   establishment of dissemination channels to publicize various aspects of the role of women as citizens;

iii.   elaboration of training programmes in citizenship for women, including political training;

iv.   coordination of the demands of women's social organizations with the main topics being debated at the national level, so as to generate a "process of feedback and convergence between demands and real possibilities of meeting them".[2]

b.   Private sector

i.   training of women working in this sector on an equal footing with men, which presupposes, inter alia, the provision of care facilities for the children of both male and female workers during the training period;

ii.   adoption of measures to ensure equal wages for men and women;

iii.   adoption of measures to ensure that hiring practices are non-discriminatory with regard to pregnant women.

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[2] Ibid.

II. THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION

In order to facilitate the achievement of the objective proposed in the programme of action for the women of Latin America and the Caribbean, namely, to change the kind of society in which the women of the region live so that they can achieve de facto equality with men, the programme has been organized around major strategic objectives, specific objectives and basic measures which those responsible for effecting this change, be it the State or civil society, will have to adopt.

According to the programme, those who intervene should act within the framework of the following strategic objectives: a) elimination of factors that structuralize subordination; b) equal participation of women in leading and directing society; c) equitable participation of women in the production and distribution of the benefits of development; and d) defence of women's human rights. These strategic objectives flow from the concrete needs of women in the region and the major orientations of the Nairobi Strategies: equality, development and peace.

A.   Eliminate factors that structuralize subordination

1.   Development of gender sensitivity

    a.   Training activities designed to modify the behaviour of men and women working in development institutions.

    b.   Organization of meetings to raise the consciousness of government planners, and information campaigns in schools and the mass media.

    c.   Public campaigns calling for recognition of the importance of the reproductive function in the formulation of the social agenda.

    d.   Measurement of women's contributions to productive activities, whether remunerated or unremunerated.

    e.   Gathering of data disaggregated by sex.

2.   Educational measures

    a.   Gender education for men and women.

b.   Education to raise consciousness about equality.

c.   Education through participation.

d.   Elimination of stereotypes which are reflected in teaching materials.

e.   Development of self-esteem in girls and women and of awareness of their identity as women.

f.   Teacher education.

g.   Adaptation of education to different socio-economic and ethnic realities.

h.   Bilingual education for indigenous women.

i.   Integration of pregnant adolescents into formal education.

j.   Sex education which is not restricted to reproductive health.

3.   **Measures relating to the family**

a.   Revision of legislation governing marriage (including filiation, inheritance and ownership of assets).

b.   Research on the situation and structure of the family in each society.

c.   Education designed to encourage men and women to share responsibilities in the family and avoid violence (see section D.2).

4.   **Measures designed to eliminate gender-based division of labour**

Women are considered the main providers of services within the home, while men are still considered the providers. This image is transferred from the private to the public sphere, and in order to change it, the following policies should be adopted:

a.   Social policies that contribute to the integration of women into the workforce.

     i.   non-sexist job training programmes (see section C.3);

     ii.   infrastructure for child care (see section C.4).

b.   Social policies that encourage men to share in domestic chores.

5. **Research, communication and information activities**

    a.   **Research**

        i.   theoretical research: studies on the relationship between the public and private sectors, production and reproduction; historical analysis of the feminine; the family, etc.;

        ii.   research on models transmitted to youth of both sexes;

        iii.   diagnostic studies of the situation in each country of the region;

        iv.   monitoring programmes for the evaluation of activities with target groups.

    b.   **Communication and information**

        i.   activities designed to facilitate consensus-building between different groups;

        ii.   activities designed to heighten awareness of the importance of women's contribution to family, economic and social life and to development, and to change discriminatory images of the roles of men and women.

B.   **Egalitarian participation of women in leading and directing society**

    1.   **Legislative measures**

        a.   Elimination of _de jure_ discrimination.

        b.   Preparation of national reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

        c.   Development and recognition of the rights of women.

        d.   Legal literacy training.

        e.   Establishment of quota systems for the selection of decision-making personnel.

        f.   Elimination of violence.

        g.   See also the recommendations contained in the document "Regional programme of action for the women of Latin America and the Caribbean: a contribution to its elaboration" (LC/L.728(MDM.16/5)).

2. Civic education

    a. Dissemination of knowledge and transmission of the codes needed for civic participation, through the educational system and without gender-based discrimination.

    b. Dissemination of ethical values and principles and development of the skills which men and women need in order to perform well in the different spheres of social life, i.e., work, family life, environmental protection, culture, politics and community life.[3]

3. Organization of women

    a. Political training programmes.

    b. Strengthening of women's organizations; development of their capacity to present their demands and formulate proposals.

    c. Enhancement of women's capacity to defend their own causes and interests (advocacy).

    d. Promotion of the incorporation of women into local politics and activities.

    e. Expansion of women's participation in different spheres of entrepreneurial, trade union and political action, until equality is achieved.

    f. Special attention to promoting community organizations in rural areas.

4. Promotion of women's participation in decision-making processes

    a. Promotion of participation by women in local institutions (decentralization) as a priority objective.

    b. Adoption of measures designed to overcome gender-related problems and racial discrimination.

5. Support for vulnerable groups

    This category includes all measures aimed at providing support for women who are poor, heads of household, indigenous, black, elderly, pregnant adolescents, migrants, refugees,

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[3] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC), Education and Knowledge: Basic Pillars of Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity (LC/G.1702/Rev.1-P), Santiago, Chile, 1992. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.II.G.6.

displaced persons (see section D.2.b.), unskilled workers and victims of domestic violence (see section D.2.a.).

Support for women who belong to vulnerable groups requires the identification of the strategies to be followed in order to meet their needs.

6. **Research, communication and information activities**

C. **Equitable participation of women in the production and distribution of the benefits of development**

1. **Improvement of living conditions**

   a. **Social equity**

      i. efficiency and equity in social expenditure;

      ii. structural adjustment;

      iii. elimination of the transmission of poverty from generation to generation.

   b. **Education**

      i. literacy training;

      ii. free, compulsory primary and secondary education;

      iii. ongoing adult education.

   c. **Health care**

      i. making the necessary investments in public health programmes, especially in rural areas;

      ii. improved health care for women throughout their lives;

      iii. reproductive health programmes;

      iv. special attention to the mental health of women;

      v. campaigns against AIDS.

   d. **Nutrition**

e.   <u>Social security</u>

f.   <u>Housing</u>: Capital formation for investments in housing.

2.   <u>Reproductive rights of women</u>

    a.   <u>Expansion of sex education programmes</u>

        i.   incorporation of sex education into school curricula;

        ii.   education of men and women so that both sexes assume responsibility for birth control.

    b.   <u>Freedom of choice regarding maternity</u>

    c.   <u>Fertility regulation by couples</u>: Dissemination of information and provision of means to broaden the options of men and women.

    d.   <u>Abortion</u>

        i.   revision of legislation;

        ii.   adoption of measures to facilitate the consideration of abortion within a preventive context, and free and timely attention to any complications that may arise.

3.   <u>Educational reform</u>

    a.   Training throughout active life, and higher quality, job-oriented formal education.

    b.   Guidance to encourage girls to prepare for careers in science and technology.

    c.   Preparation of study programmes that respond to the situation of each country.

    d.   Non-formal education and use of the mass media.

4.   <u>Access to productive resources</u>

    a.   <u>Legislation</u>

        i.   revision;

        ii.   adoption of measures to allow women to own land and have access to credit;

        iii.   granting of leave so that parents may care for their children.

b. <u>Access to resources</u>

    i. land, credit, technologies, etc.;

    ii. regulation of land markets;

    iii. development of women's managerial capacity.

c. <u>Employment policies designed to strengthen the participation of women in production</u>

    i. elimination of wage discrimination;

    ii. elimination of gender-based division of labour and sexist job training;

    iii. modernization of labour relations;

    iv. improvement of environmental conditions: on-the-job safety and health; day care and nurseries in the parents' workplace;

    v. adoption of measures to alleviate the burden of housework and child care on women.

5. <u>Measures relating to the situation of women in urban areas and in the informal sector</u>

6. <u>Measures relating to the situation of women in rural areas</u>: Provide incentive for women to participate in modern agricultural production and not only in subsistence agriculture.

7. <u>Social policies focused on groups of poor and vulnerable women</u>

8. <u>Sustainable development</u>

9. <u>Research, communication and information activities</u>

D. <u>Defence of women's human rights</u>

1. <u>Participation of women in peace-making processes in cases of political and armed conflict</u>

a. <u>Education for peace</u>

    i. use of the talents of women artists, writers, journalists and educators in disseminating ideas which help to promote peace;

        ii.   inclusion in school curricula of teaching materials that promote peace and give recognition to those who struggle for it, especially women.

    b.   **Participation of women in political negotiations**

2.   **Measures to eliminate all forms of violence against women**

    a.   **Measures to eliminate sexual and domestic violence**

        i.   **penal legislation**

        ii.   **education**

           -     elimination of sexual stereotypes in teaching materials;

           -     organization of workshops for enhancing self-esteem and awareness of discrimination, for victims of violence and their aggressors.

        iii.   **creation of special police units**

        iv.   **establishment of refuges**

    b.   **Measures for the protection of displaced and refugee women**

3.   **Research, communication and information activities**