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**SUBSTANTIVE PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE**

Activities of the relevant organs, organizations and  
bodies of the United Nations system in the field of  
new and renewable sources of energy

Addendum

**ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

Corrigendum

Insert the following text after paragraph 20 and renumber the subsequent paragraphs accordingly.

21. The Advancement of Women Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, being the focal point of women's questions in the United Nations system, is deeply concerned with the energy issue as it relates to the role and status of women. The present brief report will look at the issue of women and energy within the framework of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 35/56) and the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women adopted at the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held at Copenhagen from 14 to 30 July 1980.

22. The International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade recognized the importance of the mutual relationship between international economic structures on the one hand and the situation of women on the other. The Strategy was formulated within the framework of the new international economic order, which called for a fundamental restructuring of existing international economic relations. In particular, the Strategy aims at the accelerated development of the developing countries on the basis of a more equitable distribution of economic opportunities among nations.

23. The Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women recognized the importance of the implementation of the International Development Strategy and the establishment of a new international economic order as a prerequisite for the implementation of the direct measures which it included among its recommendations. In its goals and objectives the Strategy stated that

women should play an active role in development. Appropriate measures should be taken to bring about profound social and economic changes and the elimination of the structural imbalances which compound and perpetuate women's disadvantages. To this end, all countries should pursue the objective of securing women's equal participation both as agents and as beneficiaries in all sectors and at all levels of the development process.

24. In its review of progress achieved in the first half of the United Nations Decade for Women, the Programme of Action pointed out that the situation of women in the so-called "backward" sectors had worsened, particularly in the developing countries. The current world economic crisis had contributed to this worsening. Bearing in mind the real economic and social situation in those countries, women had been most adversely affected. Deterioration of international development conditions had even further restricted implementation of the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held at Mexico City from 19 June to 2 July 1975.

#### Implications for energy policies

25. The question of energy technologies is crucial to the attainment of the aims of development. This is well recognized and reflected in the goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy which stated, inter alia, that in order to create conditions more favourable to the development of the developing countries and the growth of the world economy in general, efforts for the development and expansion of all energy resources should be intensified. The Strategy indicated an increasing reliance on new and renewable sources of energy, seeking to reserve hydrocarbons for new energy and non-substitutable uses and called for the development of effective measures to conserve fossil fuels.

26. Within its policy measures, the Strategy called for effective and urgent measures to be taken by the international community for the attainment of the goals and objectives in the field of energy. These measures include, inter alia, assessment of energy needs, uses and resources. Countries, in particular the developed countries, would undertake immediate measures to rationalize their energy consumption through, inter alia, conservation, improved efficiency of their energy systems, especially of hydrocarbons, improved energy management and increased technical manpower training. The Strategy urged that the needs of energy-deficient developing countries be met through co-operation, assistance and investment in relation to conventional as well as new and renewable sources of energy.

27. The policy measures concerning energy do not make any specific references to the needs of women. However, within the over-all context of the goals and objectives of the Strategy, it is evident that unless there is a clear assessment of the needs of women in energy use and unless their priorities and interests are met in planning and decision making relating to the application of renewable sources of energy, the policy measures may adversely affect women and/or further widen the inequities of their position.

Implications for the status of women

28. Recent world inflationary trends and the present energy crisis resulting in the rapid rise of oil prices have pushed up industrial production costs and the cost of living throughout the world. The working class and the poor have been most affected in their struggle to meet basic human needs in both urban and rural areas. Within this context, progress to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women will be severely impeded.

29. The Copenhagen Conference, in its Programme of Action, pointed out that the expansion of industries - made possible by the available energy resources - operated by transnational corporations had in certain cases increased employment for women (para. 38). However, where the energy crisis and protectionist measures have resulted in the escalation of production costs and market problems it can be expected that some manufacturing plants will be forced to close down, if not reduce their production output.

30. Indeed, in the review of progress achieved in the first half of the Decade, the Programme of Action stated that women's employment in such industries as textiles, clothing and electronics, which had high levels of female labour participation, had been negatively affected by the needs of the international market, price fluctuations and protectionist measures. In such situations, women had been the first to lose their jobs. The lack of access to land, credit, financial and technological resources worsened the impact of rapid displacement in the work activities of women. The Programme of Action further cautioned that the redeployment of industry in developing countries should not be used as a means of providing a cheap labour force, especially women, or that the redeployment of obsolete and "dirty" industries was not carried out in the developing countries. Industrialization should be carried out in accordance with the over-all national aims, priorities and aspirations of the developing countries, as a part of a process which will contribute to the transfer of technology to the developing countries. Women's right to participate in and benefit from the industrialization process on equal terms with men must be secured (paras. 35, 37, 39).

31. In the rural areas, women have also been hit by the energy crisis. It has been estimated that a major portion of the total energy budget in the developing countries is used for household and homecraft activities, for food production, processing, storage, transportation and preparation. By and large, women in these countries perform these tasks of firewood collection, drawing water, food processing and food preparation.

32. As fuel prices rise, cooking and eating patterns will change and this may have a negative nutritional impact. For example, foods requiring substantial energy use in their preparation may be replaced by less nutritious ones requiring less energy input. Human and animal energy will be used instead of more efficient but more costly sources where possible. It is likely that further pressures upon use of wood, animal waste etc. as fuel will occur, with consequent further deterioration of the environment. Thus the deprivation of the poor and especially the responsibilities that women bear - since they will be the ones most involved in the

household and domestic activities - will most certainly be compounded. Women's health, and consequently productivity and ability to contribute to development, will deteriorate further.

33. Within this context the search for and improved efficiency in the use of new and renewable sources of energy, including wind, the sun, waves and more traditional sources such as firewood, dung and agricultural waste is most pertinent to the efforts to improve the lives of women, particularly the poor in the urban and rural areas. The solution to the poverty lies not in increasing the work time of women but in increasing the productivity of their present activities, making available appropriate equipment and skills and shifting them to activities which will improve their incomes, health and well-being. Studies are necessary to assess more accurately the energy and technology needs of women to lighten their workload and improve productivity.

34. With the fast depletion of forest areas arising from the use of forest resources and land for agriculture, commercial undertakings, firewood, human settlement and other purposes, the rural poor stand in danger of losing one major resource for food, shelter, clothing and medicine. The urgency of the reforestation programme cannot be overstated. The success of many forestry-based projects (including reforestation) depends on the rural women who are directly engaged in the utilization of fuelwood within the home and the extraction, conversion and commercialization of fuelwood.

#### Implications for national energy planning of women's advancement

35. At present a significant proportion of total energy use in developing countries is accounted for by the manual labour of women, or by the use of wood and other vegetable and animal matter collected by women. The greater part of the energy consumed in the household sector, and significant proportions of that used in agriculture, manufacturing and services, including transportation, is provided by women in this way. It may be expected that, as women progress towards equitable conditions of work and participate in society at higher levels of productivity, they will be unwilling and will not have the time to engage in such low-productivity activities, and will increasingly prefer to utilize more efficient forms of energy. The need to provide from different sources the energy required to allow women to undertake activities at an acceptable level within society must be taken into account in any planning for national energy use for the future. In many developing countries women already undertake substantially more than half of all economic activities. The objective of all development policies in such countries is to improve productivity by means of improved technology and different forms of organization. The position of women in this situation is clearly a major factor to be taken into account in energy planning.

#### Implications for programmes

36. Assistance to women to improve their understanding of the energy situation and "know-how" in the efficient use of energy for heating, lighting, farming, food processing and other subsistence or income-raising activities greatly contributes to their improved living standards and family well-being. Since women share in

the agricultural tasks, subsistence farming and crop production, they should be trained in and be more involved in the decision-making, assessment and planning processes concerning alternative technologies for efficient application of energy resources, improving the food system, management of forest resources and related activities.

37. In relation to the above, the Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen urged that the General Assembly at its eleventh special session devoted to economic development, should take into full account women's role in economic development. The forthcoming United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and other forthcoming international conferences should also take into account issues of particular interest to women. The United Nations and its organizations should, in co-operation with national Governments, develop strategies for increasing women's participation in social, economic and political life, ensuring full and effective participation of women in all sectors and at all levels of the development process, including planning, decision making and implementation, and, in keeping with these objectives, seeking, inter alia, to reduce the burden on women of tasks traditionally performed by them in the home and in food production and child care through appropriate technology and a fair division of labour between women and men.

38. The Programme of Action further pointed out that in order to achieve the targets envisaged for the Third United Nations Development Decade, all development planning should take due account of the potential contribution and the interests of women and thereby guard against the possibility of any adverse impact of the transfer of technology and the redeployment of industry. Development projects should strongly emphasize the indigenous capabilities of the developing countries and enhance their creative capacity.

39. Specific reference was made to developing co-operative movements, particularly among women of the poorer sectors of society, aimed at developing co-operative technology enterprises for community self-reliance in water, energy, health, and other basic services.

40. Programmes of multilateral and bilateral development to provide development assistance to developing countries to promote women's integration and participation in all aspects of the development process, within the framework of technical co-operation among developing countries, were also encouraged. These projects of technical assistance, training and advisory services should, inter alia, focus on efforts to strengthen developing countries' capabilities to plan and implement programmes for women, including capabilities to develop alternative technology, research and the application of renewable sources of energy.

41. Experience has shown that major obstacles to the spread, acceptance and use of improved technologies for efficient use of new and renewable sources of energy among the poor include the lack of sensitivity of the decision-makers/innovators concerning the cultural biases and local conditions (social and environmental) of the poor rural communities and the additional cost constraints, especially for women.



42. New technologies tend to benefit the "better-off" and in many instances remain inaccessible to the poorest, thereby increasing the disparities. Thus, in developing equipment and technologies for more efficient application of energy sources, socio-economic and cultural factors must be considered. The cost of developing or adopting such technologies may require financial and technical support by Governments or other external sources if the poorest are to break away from the grips of poverty. There is also a case for developing co-operative ventures which will enable the poorest groups in society to benefit from better application of renewable sources of energy. Women themselves, national Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies have crucial roles in determining the outcome of the policy measures on energy as an integral part of the International Development Strategy.

43. In full cognizance of the above, and in continuing efforts for the advancement of women, the work programme of the Advancement of Women Branch during the next biennium includes activities in the fields of women, science and technology; women and the new International Development Strategy, and women and training for development. Expert group meetings will be convened on certain of these subject areas. The Branch is also revitalizing the Inter-Organizational Programme for the United Nations Decade for Women to bring about more effective collaboration and mutual support among the United Nations system of organizations with respect to programmes to improve women's status. Consideration would be given to issues in the use of conventional, new and renewable energy sources to benefit women, particularly those in the least developed countries.

44. In addition the Branch undertakes, as a substantive aspect of its work, the monitoring of international strategies, policies and programmes, and the preparation of studies and inputs - including those related to energy issues - to promote their beneficial impact on women.

45. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs also administers the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women created by the General Assembly following the International Women's Year (1975). The resources of the Fund are used to support technical co-operation activities, regional and international programmes, joint interregional programmes and research aimed at improving the status of women.

46. A review of more than 180 projects supported until now by the Fund shows a heavy concentration in areas involving access by women to scientific knowledge and to technologies, including those related to the application of energy resources. Currently the Fund includes 46 projects in the fields of technology, including income-raising activities, and 10 involving energy resources. For example, in South-East Asia, forests are gradually being depleted by alienation of land to productive agriculture, by uncontrolled collection of firewood and by shifting cultivation. The Fund has been used to support the convening of an Expert Group Meeting on Women in Forest Industries, and projects to involve women in reforestation, cultivation of village woodlots, fuel-saving cooking technologies and forest-related industries in Thailand. Similar projects, including research on methane gas and grinding mills, are being supported in Africa.

47. These projects are executed by the regional commissions, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, and national governmental and non-governmental bodies through various forms of collaboration and co-operation among them.

48. All these programmes of the Centre and the Branch will allow for, and aim, inter alia, at:

(a) Further examination of the implications of energy policies, in particular the development, utilization and management of new and renewable sources of energy vis-à-vis the energy needs of women and their role and status;

(b) Increased information flow and transfer of appropriate technology and technical co-operation among countries with respect to the application of new and renewable energy sources to improve the status of women, their participation and integration in development;

(c) Identifying aspects requiring further investigation and developing recommendations to guide research and other activities during the United Nations budget biennium of 1982-1983, and the medium-term plan period of 1984-1989;

(d) Stimulating the formulation and implementation of regional, interregional, country and intercountry projects which would enable women to contribute to, participate in, and benefit from the development and implementation of policies, programmes and technologies in relation to energy resources.

49. In consultation and collaboration with the regional commissions, other relevant United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, international organizations (including non-governmental organizations) and national Governments and bodies, the Advancement of Women Branch will continue to promote awareness of the special needs and requirements of women in programmes and projects related to the assessment and planning of energy needs, uses and resources. It will also continue to monitor the impact of the implementation of policy measures on the energy question as these affect the status of women.

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