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REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD PLAN OF ACTION:
EMPLOYMENT

Item 8 of the provisional agenda



Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report reviews and evaluates efforts undertaken at the national level to implement the minimum objectives set forth in paragraph 46 of the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year. The report contains an analysis of progress made and of obstacles encountered in the field of employment.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1 - 8	4
I. MAJOR DETERMINANTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	9 - 88	7
A. Economic development and women's economic roles . . .	9 - 43	7
1. Trends in the developing countries	14 - 43	8
(a) Trends in agricultural employment	14 - 23	8
(b) Trends in non-agricultural employment	24 - 33	11
(c) Migration and the socio-economic conditions and opportunities of women	34 - 43	16
2. Trends in the developed countries	44 - 58	19
(a) Trends in countries with a centrally planned economy	44 - 50	19
(b) Trends in developed market economy countries	51 - 58	21
3. The effect of the recent economic crisis on women's employment	59 - 69	23
B. Underestimation of women's productive activities and economic contribution, and the division of labour within households	70 - 73	27
C. Women as heads of households	74 - 88	28
II. RECENT TRENDS: MEASURES TAKEN BY MEMBER STATES TO IMPROVE THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN	89 - 140	31
A. Measures aimed at facilitating the combination of work and family responsibilities	92 - 116	31
1. Measures aimed at changing working conditions . .	92 - 102	31
2. Measures to reduce the burden of work at home . .	103 - 109	34
3. Measures aimed at recognizing the value of work performed at home	110 - 113	36
4. Measures aimed at making men capable of and willing to take their share of the work at home .	114 - 117	37

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
B. Measures aimed at ensuring equal access to employment and equal conditions of employment for women	118 - 127	37
C. Measures and programmes aimed at improving the economic status of women in the rural areas	128 - 141	40
III. OVERVIEW	142 - 148	44

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INTRODUCTION

1. The report of the Secretary-General has been prepared by the secretariat of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, 1980 in compliance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 3490 (XXX) of 12 December 1975 and with Economic and Social Council resolutions 2060 (LXII) of 12 May 1977 and 1978/28 of 5 May 1978. It reviews and evaluates efforts undertaken at the national level to implement the minimum objectives set forth in paragraph 46 of the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year. 1/ The report contains an analysis of progress made and of obstacles encountered in the fields of employment.
2. The over-all analysis is based on replies to the questionnaire, prepared and circulated by the Advancement of Women Branch in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, on data from specialized agencies and regional commissions and on various other studies and research.
3. In recent years, considerable attention has been given to the identification of crucial issues affecting women's economic status and economic activities. A substantial body of research exists which has reviewed and analysed the condition of women in different socio-economic contexts as well as the manner in which women's position is affected by major economic transformations, such as industrialization, market incorporation of agricultural activities, and changes in technology.
4. In the past, economic analysis tended to concentrate on market activities and on the processes of capital accumulation. As much of the work of women is not subject to the market place, women's work has been neglected or treated inconsistently in census and employment surveys, which define work as an activity producing monetary remuneration. A salient feature of the rising body of research is the removal of the artificial separation between market and non-market activities and emphasis on the productive nature and the importance of non-paid female work for the process of economic development. 2/ In this connexion the different types of functional relationships that have emerged between subsistence and cash producing economies in developing areas have been examined. In Africa, for example, subsistence sectors have become labour reservoirs for the adjoining plantation, mining and export economies, which absorb a largely male labour force, while the food-producing sectors remain the women's domain. Since the men's earnings have not been sufficient, the subsistence output provided by women is necessary for family survival but in the process it subsidizes men's commercial activities.

1/ Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.1), chap. II, sect. A.

2/ See, for example, Claude Meillassoux, Femmes, greniers et capitaux (Paris, François Maspero, 1975).

5. Research shows ^{3/} that the bulk of the males' wages goes to major purchases (home improvement, school fees and livestock) whereas the daily maintenance of the family is mainly provided for by the work of women as cultivators and petty traders. As male workers' families have alternative means of support in subsistence agriculture, male wages can be kept low in the monetarized sectors, allowing profits to be high and hastening the process of capital accumulation. ^{4/}

6. Analysis that stresses the role of women in the production of goods for direct consumption without circulation of this output in the market has also been undertaken in different contexts both for developing and developed economies, suggesting a continuous and mutually reinforced relationship between paid and unpaid work and further highlighting the short-comings of past definitions both of work and of the labour force. An answer to these inadequacies has been the use of alternative methodological devices such as time budgets - consisting of a careful check on how members of a household use their time - which are a useful way to compare work inputs by men and women and their respective contribution to the economy.

7. As a result of these analytical developments, there has been a growing increase in the economics of household decision-making, where attention has increasingly focused on the labour participation of individuals as members of household production units rather than as isolated workers. ^{5/} A concomitant of this view is that employment patterns are often said to reflect the interaction of two major sets of determinants. First, they reflect the survival strategy of the family group faced with over-all economic constraints. In different national contexts, major economic transformations affect the division of labour within households, obliging family members to readjust their economic roles and activities. ^{6/} Second, employment patterns are also to a large extent determined by the division of labour within the households, particularly the traditional confinement of women to child-rearing and domestic work.

8. Any attempt to evaluate the employment status of women, their economic activities and their conditions of work should identify those factors and processes which are determinants of women's economic opportunities and the extent

^{3/} For example, Martha Mueller, "Women and men, power and powerlessness in Lesotho", in Women and National Development: the Complexity of Change, Wellesley Editorial Committee, ed. (Chicago, Illinois, University of Chicago Press, 1977).

^{4/} See African Labour Survey, Studies and Reports, New Series, No. 48 (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1958), p. 138.

^{5/} See Carmen Diana Deere, "Rural women's subsistence production in the capitalist economies", Review of Radical Political Economy, vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring, 1976), pp. 9-17.

^{6/} Thus, the significant and downward pressure on real incomes of households arising from the inflation and recession of 1974-1975 is thought to have accelerated an ongoing trend towards multiple-income-earner households in many developed economies (see Michael Deppler and Klaus Regling, "Labour market developments in the major industrial countries", Finance and Development, vol. 16, No. 1 (March 1979), pp. 24-25.

and the importance of women's productive activities beyond their participation in the labour market. Section I below attempts to deal with some of these questions: it provides a characterization of the major determinants of the trends in female's employment; it discusses evidence regarding the underestimation of women's economic activity; and it reviews the recent data on women's socio-economic status and conditions of work. The analysis is completed by an attempt to present the perspectives and approaches of the national Governments with respect to women's employment. Section II below reviews the major government initiatives taken in recent times to ensure equal access to and equal conditions of employment for women, measures taken to combine work and family responsibilities and measures taken to improve the economic status of women in rural areas.

I. MAJOR DETERMINANTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A. Economic development and women's economic roles

9. Between 1950 and 1975, the proportion of women in the total work-force, world-wide, increased from 31.3 per cent to 35.0 per cent. According to projections made by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), this proportion will decrease slightly and reach 34.5 per cent by the end of the century; despite this projected decline, if the trends observed in the preceding quarter of a century are maintained, 320 million more women will be working, representing an increase of 52.5 per cent over the 1975 figure. The proportion of women in the labour force will continue to increase in Latin America, North America and Europe, but is expected to decrease in Asia and Africa as well as in the world as a whole.

10. In the past, the erosion of family employment and the congruence of industrial and agricultural changes have greatly affected employment opportunity trends for women. The erosion of family employment and the growth of various employment modes based on wage labour have tended to convert household members other than the main earner into a labour reserve. Although the process has varied from country to country, the divergence in income opportunities for males and females has generally coincided with the growth of wage employment in the process of development. Many women have been relegated to the relatively low-income non-wage earning jobs, whether in agriculture, in trade or in cottage industries. Others have been forced to take only low-paid hard-labour employment, and many more have been eased out of the labour force altogether. As such, women have become supplementary earners while men have developed a labour-force commitment and acquired skills that have increased their relative wages.

11. If in the processes of economic growth the development and mechanization of large-scale farming takes place concurrently with the rise of capital-intensive industry, thus displacing traditional industry, a severe deterioration of employment opportunities for women will occur. In Latin America this has led to a drastic proletarianization of the labour force and a reduction in the number of temporary workers in the rural areas. Although mechanization has reduced employment for all workers, the rise in the number of unemployed and underemployed males has undermined the competitive position of women, who were thus excluded in greater numbers, even from temporary jobs. Consequently, women have become increasingly confined to working the smaller plots as unremunerated family helpers, or have been discouraged or prevented from migrating to the urban areas. The use of capital-intensive technology has restricted the incorporation of labour into the modern sector for both men and women; nevertheless, when jobs have been created they have traditionally been reserved for men. 7/

12. Processes of social change are not usually smooth operations by virtue of which changes in one sector of society will induce comparable changes throughout.

7/ "Effective mobilization of women in development: report of the Secretary-General" (A/33/238 and Corr.1).

New technology introduced to raise productivity levels may remain encapsulated, just as development programmes which do not take into account the socio-economic status of women may fail to extend benefits to them. ^{8/} For example, "When modernization involves both additional labour-intensive work and high productivity work, women are usually left with the former. Case studies in Gambia show that women's working work in agriculture rose from 19 to 20 hours when 'improved methods' were introduced, but men's working work fell from 11 to 9 hours ...". ^{9/} It may also be suggested that in some cases land reform, although conceived to improve the socio-economic status of both men and women in rural areas, has had negative consequences on the status of women. First, most land reform legislation does not make any distinction between males and females among beneficiaries; therefore, both the land distribution organizations and the services connected with them function within the prevailing norms and values, which uphold the role of men as the major farm producer and women as farm helpers or consumers. In some cases women, who have been the actual cultivators of the land, have been deprived of their land property rights. Furthermore, because the emphasis on agricultural modernization that is supposed to accompany land reform has most often been conceived in terms of increasing production for sale and export, such policies, when implemented, have adversely affected the status of women by failing to develop strategies that would aid women who have a vital role in subsistence agriculture. ^{10/}

13. This subsection assesses some of these broad trends and socio-economic constraints by focusing on the particular manner in which development schemes have affected the economic roles and the working conditions of women in agricultural and in non-agricultural employment in both developing and developed countries. The analysis will concentrate on the major factors and tendencies which are considered to be more representative for each group of countries, and which deserve the careful examination of policy makers; special emphasis will be placed on pertinent regional differences as well.

1. Trends in the developing countries

(a) Trends in agricultural employment

14. About half of the world's population lives in the rural areas of developing countries. Most of these people derive their livelihood from agriculture, fishing and forestry or from closely related activities. They include a large proportion of the world's poorest inhabitants, undernourished and illiterate, concentrated mainly in southern Asia and Africa but constituting quite a significant part of the population in the Near East and Latin America.

^{8/} Ibid..

^{9/} Ulrike von Buchwald and Ingrid Palmer, "Monitoring changes in the conditions of women - a critical review of possible approaches" (paper issued by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD/78/C.18), p. 17).

^{10/} Ingrid Palmer, "Rural women and the basic needs approach", International Labour Review, vol. 115, No. 1 (January-February 1977), pp. 97-98.

15. In many developing countries, women constitute the bulk of the labour force. Depending on the agrarian structures - i.e., the pattern of land distribution - on the level of modernization of agriculture and the type of crops cultivated and on the trends in agricultural development, women's participation in agriculture varies in form and extent. The forms range from full proletarianization, to a temporary labour force which is responsive to agricultural labour's seasonal demands, or to subsistence producers on plantations, haciendas and independent land parcels.

16. In Latin America, for example, there are important differences between the working position of women in areas where large estates predominate and that of women in areas characterized by smaller holdings. In the former case, women as agricultural workers tend to have a less permanent status than men, even when the concentration of land ownership requires that both landless men and landless women work for the land-owner classes. In the latter case the cultivation of subsistence agriculture tied to the very small plots of land is often carried out by women, while men are released to work as wage-labour outside the subsistence economy. 11/

17. As pointed out above, the advance of a more capitalized and commercialized agriculture in Latin America has led to a drastic proletarianization of the labour force, and the permanent workers have been replaced by wage-earners who are no longer given land for personal cultivation. Such workers are most often employed on a temporary basis. The number employed as permanent workers on the large estates has tended to decline in both relative and absolute terms while the number of temporary wage-earners has increased in agriculture, as has the number of people confined to the smaller farms as proprietors and unremunerated family helpers. In the same period, the occupational distribution of the male and female labour force has become increasingly dissimilar. Women have been displaced from permanent employment on the large estates and have not been absorbed into temporary wage-labour; instead, more and more are being confined to the smaller plots as unremunerated family helpers (A/33/238 and Corr.1, paras. 72-73).

18. Contemporary research has extensively analysed how the present division of labour in agriculture by sex in many parts of the world stems from past colonial policies. Thus in Africa, it has been stressed that the "typical female farming systems" 12/ (in which women have been the traditional and main cultivators of the land) was the prerequisite which allowed the release of men as workers for the plantations, mines and road-building without any ensuing critical fall in food output. In Asia, however, colonial policies of labour recruitment did not bring about a sex-differentiated labour market. In most parts of Asia, the ratio of cultivable land to population was lower than in Africa at the advent of colonialism; population therefore exerted pressure on the land and both men and women became important for carrying out the agricultural tasks that had previously been sex-allocated. As a result, in many cases both sexes were hired for seasonal

11/ Lourdes Beneria, "Reproduction, production and the sexual division of labour", World Employment Programme Research Working Paper No. 2 (1978).

12/ See Ester Boserup, Women's Role in Economic Development (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1970).

or permanent work on the plantations to avoid a fall in food production. Thus, colonial patterns of labour recruitment affected the entire family labour force, and a sexual dualism in the labour market did not occur. In contrast with Africa, where women are primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture as self-employed farmers and family workers, in Asia a large number of women engaged in agriculture work as wage-earners on commercial farms and on plantations. In Sri Lanka, the Philippines, India, Malaysia and Pakistan, women account for 35-50 per cent of the total labour force in the plantations. 13/

19. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of women in the Middle East is that they have been concentrated at the two poles of the socio-economic spectrum: women with a university education and women without qualification who work only from economic necessity, especially in the rural areas. 14/ In general, the Moslem custom of secluding women leads to a restriction of women's participation in agricultural tasks in the fields and a concentration of their labour in those activities which can be carried out within the walls of the household (cleaning seed, drying grains, tending domestic animals). In some areas of the region, however, women are the backbone of subsistence agriculture, for example in Democratic Yemen, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen. 15/ In the southern part of Egypt, where cotton is the basis of the local and national economy, women work intensively side by side with men. Here, traditional values do not seem to have presented so great an obstacle, and women's adaptation to employment opportunities appears to have been easier. 16/

20. In most countries farm women perform functions of household and family maintenance and repair; they gather fuel and water and engage in most processes relating to food. In many developing areas most of the production, processing, storage and preparation of food is women's work. For additional family income, many women engage in petty marketing of surpluses of food and handicrafts. Much of this work is also performed by children, especially girls: evidence shows that daughters are much more likely than sons to help with cooking and washing, to haul water, collect wood, to engage in animal-raising activities and to substitute for mothers in domestic work. In many developing areas, the work input of rural women is higher than that of men when measured in terms of time-units. 17/

13/ United Nations Development Programme, Rural Development, Evaluation Study No. 2 (New York, 1979), para. 17 and A/33/238 and Corr.1, para. 53.

14/ "The recent changes and trends in the situation of women in the ECWA region" (E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/3).

15/ "Review and analysis of agrarian reform and rural development in developing countries since the mid-1960s" (FAO/WCARRD/INF/3).

16/ Nadia Youssef, "Women and agricultural production in Muslim societies", in Studies in Comparative International Development, vol. XII, no. 1 (1977), p. 51.

17/ Nancy Birdsall and William P. McGreevey, "The second sex in the third world: is female poverty a development issue?" (paper prepared for the International Center for Research on Women Policy Roundtable, held at Washington, D.C. in June 1978).

21. A key to the impact of recent trends in rural development on women may be found in changes in their access to, and control of, the allocation of production resources, a matter to which planners usually give little attention as far as women are concerned. Land, because of its traditional relationship to other production factors such as income and social status, is one of the most important resources. As has already been mentioned, under some programmes of agrarian reform new land allocations have given ownership to males, drastically altering the role of women or reinforcing existing inequalities. The existence of customary and sometimes legal inheritance systems and other property rights, bride price and dowry systems and patrilocal marriages are also usually less advantageous to women than to men. ^{18/} The socialization of land in centrally planned economies has improved women's access to land as labourers sharing in the production but has not completely solved the problems of their dual roles. The provision of "home plots" for food production and sale, which can effectively use family labour, adjusts production to women's household duties but is seen as a block to continual progress to socialist equality. Women still labour longer than men in most cases. ^{19/}

22. Ownership of land provides the incentive for investment and is the main asset which determines the credit-worthiness of clients. Institutional credit, tied in the past to land as security, has usually been unavailable to rural women. Nor have lending policies been oriented to rural women's credit needs or to the rural poor, especially the landless. Credit policies have been "landlord-biased" and have often favoured export crops, a sector in which women are underrepresented.

23. A lack of access to technical information and equipment applicable to their household, farm, market and community functions has limited women's participation in developmental activities and their capacity to increase their efficiency. The commercialization and mechanization of agriculture have often marginalized women by one of several means - for example, by reducing the amount of paid work and other income-producing activities, increasing family labour requirements, making food supply more problematic, or reducing their share of influence over the allocation of family resources. Men have assumed management responsibilities and have become the main beneficiaries of the introduction of non-human sources of farm power, heavier equipment, and the modernization of marketing systems in agriculture and fisheries. Cash cropping (even without mechanization), along with the channelling of services and inputs through men, has frequently increased demands for family labour, in competition with family food crops, and has reduced women's access to, and control of, family income. ^{20/}

(b) Trends in non-agricultural employment

24. In many developing countries undergoing industrialization, the development of

^{18/} "Review and analysis of agrarian reform and rural development in the developing countries since the mid-1960s", (WCARRD/INF.3), p. 89.

^{19/} Ibid., p. 90.

^{20/} Ibid.

modern industry and its effect on female labour may be understood in the context of the broader international changes that have been taking place and have been shaping the relationship between developed and developing countries. In the last two decades certain tendencies of an increasingly internationalized industrial market have particularly affected the employment of women. For example - mainly in Asia, but also in the Caribbean and in Central America - the creation of jobs for women in the manufacturing sector is increasing as a result of the location by transnational corporations of plants in developing countries to manufacture consumer products and components for export. As a rule these industries (the electronic, textile, clothing and toy industries) are labour-intensive, that is to say, they have a high ratio of labour costs to total costs of production. Because of the importance of low wages, even while they were operating in their mother countries such firms employed those segments of the labour force which were less qualified and less likely to organize in unions and were willing to work for very low pay. In the United States of America, for example, such labour tended to be predominantly female and non-white, and has remained so to the present day. In general, it is the female labour-intensive industries that have had the greatest propensity to move offshore; and in their Caribbean and Asian plants these industries continue to employ mostly women. 21/

25. In two of the reporting countries, Malaysia and Singapore, the development of these export-oriented industries has led to a significant expansion in female employment. In Malaysia, between 1957 and 1970, the proportion of women in manufacturing rose from 17 per cent to 29 per cent. In Singapore, the proportion of women in manufacturing increased from 18 per cent to 45 per cent during the period 1957-1977. Employment expansion was particularly rapid between 1970 and 1974, when the proportion of women in manufacturing grew by 118 per cent as against the corresponding increase of only 36 per cent for men; most of this increase occurred in the four main export industries of wearing apparel, foot-wear, textiles and electronics.

26. The employment opportunities opened up by this rapid industrialization were more likely to be in subordinate and unskilled positions (A/33/238 and Corr.1, para. 104) and the quality of the jobs created has been questioned. In particular, it has been pointed out that most of the workers are paid a subsistence wage with little hope of promotion; as an incentive to foreign investment, institutional pressure is sometimes exerted in order to prevent the organization of unions. Furthermore, there has been some concern about the future trends and impact of the

21/ For example, according to an article written in 1978 by Folker Frobel, Jurgen Heinrichs and Otto Kreye ("The world market for labor and the world market for industrial sites", Journal of Economic Issues, vol. XII, No. 4), "Foreign employment in West German textile and clothing subsidiaries in low wage countries as a proportion of the total foreign labor employed abroad in that industry has increased from roughly one-quarter in 1966 to about one-half in 1974. A breakdown by sex and age reveals that in low wage countries an extremely high percentage of young female workers are employed. Roughly one-half of the employees in the foreign subsidiaries of the West German clothing industry are younger than 20 years, and more than 90 per cent are females." See also document A/33/238 and Corr.1, para. 102.

export-oriented industries on employment in developing countries. Such industries are said to be more sensitive to the needs of the international market than to those of the host countries. Although they are important for creating employment and for providing foreign exchange earnings, in other respects their effect on the domestic economy is minimal, since virtually all their inputs are imported and all their outputs exported. The Governments of host countries seem to view such enterprises, for the most part, as short-term solutions for the need to create employment, but for development in the long run the Governments prefer industries that will engage highly skilled workers. If these long-term plans become a reality, female labour-intensive manufacturing can only be a temporary phase of industrialization in developing countries (A/33/238 and Corr.1, para. 105).

27. In many other developing countries that are undergoing the process of industrialization the use of capital-intensive technology has restricted the incorporation of labour into the modern sector for both men and women. Nevertheless, when jobs have been created, they have gone to men. In India, for example, although total employment in factories has been increasing, the employment of women in this sector has decreased since 1964, their share being reduced from 11.4 per cent in 1951 to 9 per cent in 1971. In mines, the number of women declined from 109,000 to 75,000 between 1951 and 1971, whereas total employment increased from 549,000 to 630,000. The women's share of employment declined from 21 per cent to 12 per cent. 22/

28. In Latin America, women are frequently excluded from the slow-growing blue-collar jobs owing to their lack of marketable skills and to a marked absence of programmes to provide them with the necessary training (A/33/238 and Corr.1, para. 99). In Guatemala, for example, the participation of women in manufacturing production declined after 1950 because employment in the traditional industries such as tobacco, textile, food and paper declined when capital-intensive techniques were introduced, and the few jobs created by the modern industries (chemicals, metal products and electrical appliances) were male-dominated. 23/ In Bolivia, the introduction of new methods in concentration of minerals displaced female workers, who were replaced by male workers in the skin and float plants. Since 1960, no women have worked in the large mines as metal concentrators, because the process has been completely mechanized. 24/ In Brazil, where very rapid industrialization had taken place in past decades, the percentage of women employed as industrial labour did not increase between 1950 and 1970 (A/33/238 and Corr.1, para. 98), that is, it remained at 10 per cent, while the percentage of men in

22/ National Committee on the Status of Women in India, Status of Women in India. (New Delhi, Indian Council of Social Research, 1975).

23/ Norma S. Chinchilla, "Industrialization, monopoly capitalism and women's work in Guatemala", in Women and National Development: The Complexity of Change, Wellesley Editorial Committee, ed. (Chicago, Illinois, University of Chicago Press, 1977).

24/ June Nash, "Women in development: dependency and exploitation", Development and Change, vol. 8, No. 2 (1977).

industrial jobs doubled from 10 to 20 per cent. In Mexico, during the recent period of advancing industrial modernization, the rate of labour absorption in manufacturing decreased and, as a result, underemployment increased, particularly for women. 25/

29. In many developing countries the growth of agricultural employment has been almost stagnant or actually declining, and the expansion of the industrial sector has not been able to absorb the fast growing population, thus leading to widespread unemployment and underemployment, that is, work yielding an income inadequate to meet essential needs. 26/ Employment opportunities being scarce, new workers have continued to seek employment and income in services and the informal sector. As stated in the report prepared by the Secretariat on the review of progress made in the implementation of the International Development Strategy and in relation to General Assembly resolutions 3202 (S-VI), 3281 (XXIX) and 3365 (S-VII) "The service sector has become something like a pool in which the vast numbers of underemployed await fuller employment opportunities in a later period." (E/AC.54/22 and Corr.1, p. 11).

30. Employment data for some urban areas in Asia confirm the increasing role of this sector, on the fringes of the tertiary and manufacturing sectors. 27/ For example, in Calcutta, in 1971, the informal sector comprised 29 per cent of the total employment. In the Philippines, the proportion of those engaged in the informal sector reached 59 per cent in 1971. In many urban areas of Africa, this sector is growing rapidly and apparently absorbs 50-60 per cent of the persons employed. 28/ Between 1960 and 1970, the rate of growth of the informal market in Latin America was 25 per cent higher than the rate of growth of the formal sector. 29/ In many Latin American cities the informal sector comprises more than 25 per cent and in some cases as much as 60 per cent of the total working force. 30/

25/ Lourdes Arizpe, "Women in the informal labour sector: the case of Mexico City", Signs, vol. 3, No. 1 (Autumn, 1977).

26/ Report on the World Social Situation, 1978 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.IV.1), chap. I, pp. 10-11.

27/ Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1976 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.II.F.1).

28/ Report on the World Social Situation, 1978 ... chap. I, p. 12.

29/ The Employment Problem in Latin America: Facts, Cutlooks and Policies (Santiago, Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean/International Labour Office, 1978).

30/ Paulo R. Souza and Victor E. Tokman, "El sector informal urbano" (document issued in 1975 by the Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC)).

31. A World Bank study of the informal sector 31/ shows that of the persons engaged in this sector, a disproportionately large number are (a) very young or very old, (b) females, (c) educated at very low levels, (d) not primary household earners. It also indicates that women engaged in this sector are concentrated in the lower income levels. Although the lack of data makes it very difficult to obtain an adequate representation of the number of women engaged in the informal sector, available evidence shows that women constitute a substantial and growing share of this mass of underemployed: in Latin America, for example, between 1950 and 1975 the service sector was responsible for 85 per cent of the increase in the female labour force. Most of the jobs created were low-paid and of low status: data collected by the Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC) show that domestic servants comprise from 45 to 70 per cent of the female employment in the service sector in Latin America. 32/

32. Exclusive reliance on the informal sector and, in particular, on domestic work means that the work life of a greater number of women in developing countries is unstable, insecure and badly paid. Data collected by PREALC show that, whereas 13.2 per cent of female wage-earners in Brazil were in the lowest income bracket 33/ only 3.1 per cent of the Brazilian male wage-earners were in that same category. In Panama 34.4 per cent of the non-agricultural female wage-earners were in the lowest income category, compared with 5.7 per cent of the non-agricultural male wage-earners; in Venezuela, these proportions were 13 per cent and 1.9 per cent, respectively. 34/ In Mexico City, 72.2 per cent of all working women, compared with 53.9 per cent of the men, received less than the official minimum wage. In the service sectors, which employ 42.9 per cent of the total labour force, this figure is 72.9 per cent. 35/

33. Although prevalent unemployment and underemployment in many towns and cities would tend to reinforce sex-typing of tasks or of whole industries, there does not seem to be a common pattern of sex-typing of jobs in situations where unemployment is severe. For instance, whereas in Latin America female urban employment is found almost exclusively in the domestic service sector, and the proportion of women in manufacturing is very low and declining, in Asia there are many male domestic servants, while a substantial minority of the factory workers are women (E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/3). In the Middle East, also in contrast with Latin America, very few women carry out domestic labour and there is no predominance of women at the lower-paid end of the service sector. 36/

31/ Dipak Mazumdar, The Urban Informal Sector, World Bank Reprint Series No. 43, August 1976.

32/ "Participación femenina en la actividad económica en América Latina (análisis estadístico)", PREALC Working Paper No. 161 (November 1978).

33/ Defined as the lowest income stratum of the national tabulation.

34/ UNICEF "Situación de la mujer en América Latina y el Caribe y su impacto en la infancia" (UNICEF/TARO-7911), p. 44.

35/ Lourdes Arizpe, op. cit.

36/ Ulrike von Buchwald and Ingrid Palmer, op. cit., p. 27.

(c) Migration and the socio-economic conditions and opportunities of women

34. In many developing countries, migration in search of jobs has become a widespread feature of socio-economic development, deeply affecting the work and living conditions of women. Socio-economic factors affect the migration of the sexes differently.

Rural-urban migration

35. The migration of women from rural to urban areas is greater than that of men in many developing countries, most notably in Latin America and the Caribbean. In these regions, women rural-urban migrants tend to be very young (10-19 years old), single and to migrate to the larger cities. ^{37/} The emigration may be largely attributed to developments in the rural economy that have gradually pushed women out of agricultural livelihoods: land consolidation, mechanization and the growth of wage employment have reduced women's productive role and left them increasingly dependent on men's insecure income. The general pattern of stagnant or declining rural living standards, common to many economies in which capitalist growth is occurring, has meant a lack of jobs for women in agriculture as well as decreased opportunities to earn even low incomes. ^{38/}

36. On the other hand, urbanization acts as a "pull" factor that attracts women, unable to survive in the rural areas, to cities where a variety of jobs are available. Since in Latin America the few industrial jobs are held by male workers, migrant women tend to be relegated to sectors of low productivity and wages such as domestic work and other personal services.

37. In most African countries, out-migration from rural areas is heavily male-dominated, directed to wage-labour in the urban areas and in the mines. However, in some countries, women are starting to leave too. Increasing rural poverty, particularly for widowed or divorced women with dependants, heavy agricultural burdens for women, and the severe shortage of males of marriageable age as a result of previous male migration all contribute to pushing women out of the villages. In both East and West Africa, new evidence points to a marked increase during the 1960s and 1970 in both absolute and relative terms in the movement of women over 45 years of age, and especially after 50, to the urban areas. In a few African countries (Kenya, Lesotho, Morocco and Rwanda) rural out-migration is predominantly female for the younger groups (between 15 and 19 years old) and in Libya for all age groups. ^{39/}

^{37/} Nadia Youssef, Mayra Buvinić and Agse Kudak, Women in Migration: A Third World Focus (Washington, D.C., International Center for Research on Women, 1979).

^{38/} Guy Standing, "Labour commitment, sexual dualism and industrialization in Jamaica", Population and Employment Working Paper No. 64 (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1979).

^{39/} Youssef, Buvinić and Kudak, op. cit., pp. 16-18.

38. In Asia, increasing labour/land ratios and the mechanization of agriculture have led to high levels of rural-urban migration of both young men and women between 15 and 19 years of age. Thereafter, between the ages of 25 and 34, rural migration is male-dominated. ^{40/} The Philippines is the only country in this region where rural out-migration is predominantly female for almost all age groups. Recently, a dramatic increase in the volume of female migrants to other south-east Asian cities such as Surabaya and Bangkok and to industrial centres in Malaysia ^{41/} has also been observed. Whereas, as in Latin America, migrant women are absorbed mainly in the informal sector and marginal occupations, industrialization has intensified the flow of women migrants to certain Asian cities, especially with the establishment of off-shore industries or free-trade zones (see paras. 24-33 above).

International migration

39. Contrary to prevalent opinion, women join the international labour migration movements in significant numbers autonomously, though they also accompany their families and join the labour force in the receiving country. For instance, between 1960 and 1976, more than 52 per cent of the 1.5 million immigrants in the United States of America from Cuba, Mexico and the West Indies were women. In 1970 in Africa, 43 per cent of all emigrants leaving for residence in another country were women. In 1978, there were approximately 215,000 Turkish migrant women workers outside the country. Recent emigration from Malaysia, too, is predominantly female.

40. During the initial phases of labour movements from one country to another, female participation is often low. It increases during subsequent phases, owing both to autonomous and to dependent female emigration but it is often controlled by explicit policies of the host countries. The labour-oriented migration to South Africa is overwhelmingly male, on short-term contracts, whereas migration to Zambia is family-oriented. Since 1976, the immigration of foreign workers has been discouraged in several countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, the Netherlands and Switzerland) and a high proportion of the new immigrants have been dependants of workers (mainly women) who had arrived earlier. Because there are many different types of international migration (seasonal, temporary, permanent etc.) it is difficult to make generalizations concerning the socio-economic characteristics of the female migrants. Generally, women international migrants from the Middle East, North Africa, Latin America and Asia tend to be in the 20-30 age group and are more skilled than the internal migrants. ^{42/}

^{40/} Data from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand (see Youssef, Buvinić and Kudak, *op. cit.*, p. 21).

^{41/} For a review of the literature, see Neena N. Thadani and Michael P. Todaro, "Female migration in developing countries: a framework for analysis" (paper presented at the "Women in the Cities" meeting held at the East-west Center at Honolulu in March 1979).

^{42/} Youssef, Buvinić and Kudak, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-46; and Trends and Characteristics of International Migration since 1950, United Nations publication Sales No. E.78.XIII.5).

Socio-economic conditions and opportunities of migrant women.

41. Women migrants are particularly disadvantaged, and most likely to be relegated into low status and low-income jobs with little or no opportunity of improvement or integration into the formal labour market. Domestic service draws from the large supply of unskilled female migrants coming to the cities. This is especially well documented in Latin America for those migrants who are young and have arrived recently in the capital city areas. In 1970, in Buenos Aires, 51 per cent of the recent migrants coming from Brazil and 62 per cent of those from neighbouring countries found employment in domestic service. In Brazil's metropolitan regions, 57 per cent of the economically active women migrants are in domestic work; in Bogota, 61 per cent, in Lima, 66 per cent. ^{43/} The relationship between female migration and domestic service also holds true elsewhere, for instance in the Philippines and in New Delhi. But in Asia there is also some employment for women in the formal sector, where young, unmarried women are recruited to work as unskilled labour in the light manufacturing industries. In West Africa, women migrants tend to become traders in larger numbers than in other regions. ^{44/}

42. Migration has a more positive effect on men than it does on women. Female migrants experience lower occupational status, longer working hours, lower earnings and worse living conditions. Discriminatory practices are bound to affect women migrants because they are restricted from the outset in terms of the opportunities, types and terms of work available to them. ^{45/} In Brazil, female migrants with primary education generally earn half the amount earned by male migrants at the same level of education, and among migrants with higher levels of education the disparity is even greater. The median income in Lima, Peru, is also substantially lower for female migrants than it is for male migrants despite higher educational levels among women. ^{46/} Many women migrants are heads of households, and for them the difficulties of urban life become most severe. Not only are households headed by women poorer than those headed by men, but those headed by migrant women are the poorest of all.

^{43/} Elizabeth Jelin, "Migration and labor force participation of Latin American women: the domestic servants in the cities", in Women and National Development: The Complexity of Change, Wellesley Editorial Committee, ed. (Chicago, Illinois University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 133.

^{44/} Youssef, Buvinić and Kudak, op. cit., p. 107.

^{45/} Ibid., p. 110.

^{46/} Leda Maria Fraenkel, Mario Duarte de Souza, Mary García Castro, G. Potency Graboïs and Eugenio Tucci Neto, "Employment structure, income distribution and internal migration in Brazil", Population and Employment Working Paper No. 18, (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1975); and Peter S. K. Chi, and Mark W. Bogan, "A study of migrants and return-migrants in Peru" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, held at New York in April 1974).

43. As a result of male migration, an increasing number are left behind, mostly as subsistence rural workers on the small land holdings but also in the towns, with increased economic burdens and fewer resources to support themselves and their families. In Yemen, for example, 30 per cent of the total economically active male population is working abroad, and some villages are virtually depleted of active males. In many African countries, men leave home to work for a period of years, returning occasionally on vacation and eventually retiring to their rural homes. For example, in South Africa in 1970 there were nine foreign-born African men for every one foreign-born African woman; 420,000 migrants from Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi, Botswana and Swaziland were working in South Africa, all of whom were forbidden to be accompanied by their families. Male migration patterns are thus an important factor in the growing number of female-headed households, who suffer from increased work burdens, lower productivity and deteriorating living standards. This is also a further incentive for the out-migration of women from rural areas.

2. Trends in the developed countries

(a) Trends in countries with a centrally planned economy

44. In the Eastern European centrally planned economies, a strong incentive has been given to women's participation in the labour force as a matter of social policy and in order to meet the needs of the economy. As a result, women accounted for about 80 per cent of the increase in the labour force between 1950 and 1975. In certain countries, such as the German Democratic Republic and Hungary, the entire increase in the labour force over the same period was due to the employment of women. In all the European centrally planned economies, the participation rates of women in the economy are very high. Generally, women make up almost half, and in one case (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) more than half of the total labour force; this proportion is deemed to have reached its maximum level, and in the case of the USSR is expected to decline slightly as the sex imbalance in the population disappears.

45. There has been a sharp decline in the number of women in agriculture in recent decades, when the proportion of workers in agriculture has declined as a result of the over-all economic development. In the USSR, 63 per cent of the gainfully employed women were engaged in agriculture in 1950, and only 26 per cent in 1970. In Eastern Europe as a whole, the corresponding percentages declined from 63 to 41 per cent. But women have maintained their relative predominance in agricultural employment. Thus, in the USSR, although the female agricultural labour force has been greatly reduced, women still comprised 52 per cent of the total employed in agriculture in 1970 as against 59 per cent in 1950. In Eastern Europe, the proportion of women in the total numbers employed in agriculture has increased from 50.4 to 53 per cent (A/33/238 and Corr.1, para. 32).

46. The increased participation of women in the economy in these countries shows a somewhat different pattern from that in other developed countries with, for instance, a higher proportion of women in the total industrial labour force except in Romania and Poland: some 30 per cent of the production workers in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the USSR are women. Traditionally, male industrial occupations in the

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chemical and the glass industries and in printing have become largely female in some of the Eastern European countries including the USSR, in which a number of occupations, which elsewhere are held by very few women, such as painting, metal-work, the electrical trades, etc., are female-dominated. So are the occupations related to the processing of food and beverages and especially the textile, clothing, and leather industries, which show an occupational "crowding" very similar to that found in other developed countries.

47. Another result of the Governments' policies of encouraging the involvement of women in a wide range of economic activities has been that some of the higher professional jobs in the medical and scientific fields have become dominated by women. In the USSR, women account for 72 per cent of all the medical doctors, and are well represented in the scientific and engineering professions. There is in this group of countries a movement of women into some traditionally male occupations, both in the higher professions and in the less skilled industrial jobs.

48. Despite these differences, women form an overwhelming majority in the traditional "female" jobs of the service sector - paramedical workers, non-university teachers, sales and clerical workers, and miscellaneous service workers - all with a relatively low status and low pay. And, as a whole, women workers in all sectors are concentrated in occupations where the labour force is predominantly female.

49. This prevalent segregation of the labour force is one of the factors of the pay differentials for men and women in some Eastern European countries. For example, in Czechoslovakia, women's wages in industry averaged 65 per cent of men's wages in 1975. According to the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, two thirds of the difference is accounted for by the distribution of men and women by industrial branch, and the qualifications structure of men and women in those branches; a further 17-19 per cent is explained by older women who entered employment without any qualifications, and 7-8 per cent by differences in working time between the sexes. As in all other countries, men's branches pay better than women's - the retail trade and public catering, health and education pay lower wages than fuels, metallurgy and railways. In the USSR, within the same branch of industry - machine-building or food-processing - the proportion of women working at the lowest levels of skills is consistently higher than that of men.

50. Where data is available, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that women's monthly earnings, in all sectors of the economy, averaged 69.4 per cent of men's earnings in Czechoslovakia (1977), 61 to 65 per cent in Hungary (1974-1976) and 69.7 per cent in Poland (1973). During the period from 1972 to 1977, for industrial occupations, there has been a small narrowing of women's pay differential in Hungary, but no change in Czechoslovakia.

(b) Trends in developed market economy countries

51. Fast economic growth and rapidly expanding employment opportunities have characterized most of the post-war period in the developed economies; male participation rates have declined in most countries and women have accounted for a large proportion of the labour force increment. In North America (the United States of America and Canada), women accounted for some 60 per cent of the increase in the labour force between 1950 and 1975; in most European market-oriented economies, ^{47/} women contributed over 50 per cent of the increase in the labour force, and in some cases almost the entire increase between 1950 and 1975 was due to an increase in female employment. ^{48/} In 1975, women made up between one third and 40 per cent of the total work force in these countries. Data both from the Governments' responses to the questionnaire and from the International Labour Organisation indicate that women's participation in economic activity in the developed market-oriented economies has increased since 1975 and should continue to grow during the last quarter of this century, in spite of an over-all drop in the activity rates for the 14-20 and 65-and-over age groups. If recent trends continue, the increase in women's participation rates will be largely attributable to increased employment of married women, mainly in the 25 to 44 age group.

52. As the relative importance of the agricultural work-force was diminishing during the last decades, the participation of women in this sector declined steadily, and by world standards it is fairly low. According to the International Labour Organisation projections, it will be less than five out of 100 economically active women at the end of the century. However, the modernization of agriculture has not necessarily displaced women from agricultural employment entirely. In the last two decades, the shrinking of the agricultural labour force has been accompanied by an increase in the proportion of women in agriculture (A/33/238 and Corr.1, para. 77) in North America, and in most of the Western European countries. The increasing participation of women in agriculture in relation to men seems to be primarily a result of a shift in the division of labour among sexes in family-operated farms. In the market-oriented developed countries, the larger proportion (around 80 per cent or more) of women working in agriculture are family workers. Many of the holdings are too small to provide adequate standards of living. Men are then obliged to take non-agricultural jobs, while women take on most of the responsibility for the farm and are becoming more burdened by agricultural work (*ibid.*, para. 80).

53. In almost all market-oriented economies, the participation of women in the manufacturing sector is decreasing, and a large majority of them are employed in the service sector, where they sometimes outnumber men. This trend has been parallel to the growing number of women working part-time. In 1977, Canada and

^{47/} With the exception of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

^{48/} For example, in Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

the United States of America indicated that a little over 25 per cent of the females worked part-time; in the Federal Republic of Germany, the proportion was 28 per cent; in Sweden, 44 per cent; in Denmark, 46 per cent, and in Norway, 52 per cent. In Norway, the increase in female employment in recent years is attributed entirely to part-time jobs.

54. The increased participation of women in working life has not to any significant extent broadened their range of employment opportunities: in all the market-oriented economies men and women still tend not only to be employed in different occupations, but also women are engaged in a narrower range of occupations (most of them low-paid and with a low status) than men. For example, the Seminar on the Participation of Women in the Economic Evolution of the ECE Region reported that for the market-economy members of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), only 20 per cent of all men but over 60 per cent of all women were in the following occupations: nurses and midwives and other paramedical workers; non-university teachers; clerical workers; shop assistants and the whole group of miscellaneous service occupations (waitresses, hairdressers, maids etc.). For men, the percentage employed in these occupations ranged from 16 per cent in Finland and Sweden to 26 per cent in the United States of America. In the Netherlands and Norway, as many as 80 per cent of all active women were engaged in those occupations.

55. Although there is still a pronounced division into male and female jobs, it is important to notice that the set of female-dominated occupations is not the same in all countries. Apart from the "traditionally female" jobs, which survive as such in all countries - nurses, teachers, clerks, shop assistants, miscellaneous service workers, textile and clothing workers - occupations in the leather, paper and rubber industries are female-dominated in a number of countries. Occupations related to the processing of food and beverages are dominated by women in Finland and in the countries of southern Europe, as they are in Eastern Europe and in the USSR.

56. Although the right of women workers to equal remuneration is generally acknowledged in principle, women continue to be paid less than men. In seven developed countries for which data are available, ^{49/} women's monthly earnings as a percentage of men's earnings range from 60 per cent in the United States to 70 per cent in Austria. In Western Europe, throughout the manufacturing industries, there are three countries in which the average gross hourly wages of women are coming closer to those of men: Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, where they represented 87.4, 86.5 and 80.3 per cent of men's wages, respectively. In five countries the difference is (in order of diminishing importance): Norway (79.8 per cent), France (75.8 per cent), Finland (74.2 per cent), the Federal Republic of Germany (72.3 per cent), and the United Kingdom (70.8 per cent). Women workers in this sector of the economy earn a little less than two thirds of male workers' wages in Ireland and Luxembourg and a little more than two thirds in Switzerland. ^{50/}

^{49/} Austria, Denmark, France, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

^{50/} Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 1978 (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1978), tables 17 A and B. (Data for 1977).

57. For the industrial sector, data show that the average pay differential between women and men has narrowed during the 1970s. The biggest reduction in the average pay differentials has occurred in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, Finland and Sweden. The ECE Seminar attributed those changes to vigorous government policies in implementing equal pay legislation and promoting employment opportunities for women. More importantly, the seminar pointed out that there was no evidence that the rising pay of women in relation to that of men had resulted, in the countries where it had occurred, in any general reduction of the employment of women relative to men. The proportion of women in employment had increased during the 1970s in the countries of the region and curiously, the women's share of employment had increased most in such countries as Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, where the narrowing of the women's pay differential appeared to have been most marked.

58. There are many reasons why women's average earnings are in the lower brackets. In the first place, even though statistical data on wage differentials of men and women in the various sectors and occupations are very inadequate, ILO statistics suggest that in many industrialized countries women still earn less than men for equal work. 51/ Furthermore, women are concentrated in sectors which are traditionally the least well paid; in sectors where women are in the minority, they usually start work at the bottom of the pay scale. A fairly high proportion of women work in small enterprises, possibly because they want to find a job near to their homes. Women are, on the average, less skilled than men and their average age is lower. They do not work overtime, or very little, which can increase earnings considerably in some sectors. They do not benefit greatly from seniority bonuses, and have fewer chances of promotion than men because their working life is interrupted more often. Finally, different methods of pay and varying definitions of duties, as well as segregation in employment, are all used to mask wage discrimination. 52/

3. The effect of the recent economic crisis on women's employment

59. The slow and erratic growth in most market-oriented economies in recent years has further underlined the basic structural problems affecting women's economic well-being. The recent economic crisis in virtually all industrialized countries has substantially affected the labour market. Levels of unemployment in the developed market economies increased from 2 per cent of the labour force in 1970 to approximately 5 per cent in 1975, 1976 and 1977. Rates of unemployment varied within this group of countries from 2 per cent in Japan, Norway, and Sweden to

51/ Information derived from an inquiry undertaken by the ILO in October 1976: see Bulletin of Labour Statistics, second quarter, 1977.

52/ International Labour Organisation, "Women's participation in the economic activity of European market economy countries" (ILO/W.2/1979), p. 19.

more than 7 per cent in Canada, Spain and the United States. ^{53/} The upturn in economic activity has been slow and unequal and unemployment remains at very high levels in most developed countries.

60. Evidence shows that women workers in the developed market-oriented economies appear to have felt the impact of the recent business cycle to a greater extent than men. Data on unemployment, specifying sex, age, skills, occupation and economic sector, are not available for all market-economy countries. Those that do exist nevertheless show that the number of unemployed women workers has grown over the past few years, sometimes even in countries where unemployment has been reduced. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the number of men out of work went down by 133,700 between 1975 and 1978, but the number of unemployed women went up by 52,500.

61. In Austria, Belgium, France and the Federal Republic of Germany, more than half of those unemployed in 1978 were women. The proportion of women in the total number of unemployed was more than a third in Finland, Greece, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland, while it was less than a quarter in Spain and the United Kingdom.

62. Since in the European market-economy countries women are far from being in the majority of the total national labour force, these figures mean that their unemployment rates (the proportion of unemployed females over the total female labour force) are higher, and sometimes very much higher, than male unemployment rates in several of these countries. The greatest difference was noted in Belgium: in 1977, an average of 17.3 per cent of the female labour force were unemployed, whereas only 6.0 per cent of the male labour force were in the same situation. In May 1978, the respective rates rose to 18.7 per cent and 6.2 per cent; in 1974, however, they had been much lower, at 6.4 and 2.8 per cent. The percentage of unemployed women was also higher than that of men in Austria, France, Sweden and the United States. ^{54/}

63. The effect of the recession on the position of women in the labour market should be understood against the background of a major factor - the structure of female employment opportunities, which are more concentrated than opportunities for males in a few industries and a narrow range of occupations. Ironically, at the start of the recession women were somehow protected by job segregation - they are strongly concentrated in tertiary activities which were not affected to the same extent as industry by the slow-down. The production industries and manual occupations, in which women's employment is relatively rare, were the first to be affected. However, as the crisis became more widespread and severe, and affected the light manufacturing and service industries, women grew much more vulnerable to job-loss. Many of them worked in low-skill and/or part-time jobs which were

^{53/} Report on the World Social Situation, 1978 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.IV.1), chap. I, p. 13.

^{54/} International Labour Organisation, "Women's participation in the economic activity of European market economy countries" (ILO/W.2/1979), pp. 19-20.

among the first to be jeopardized when production declined. In many cases the seniority system, under which the last to be hired is the first to be fired, worked against women. Once unemployed, it was harder for them to find work than it was for men because of the narrow range of jobs they were able to seek, given their previous training and educational background. 55/

64. For example, in Belgium both men and women experienced a sharp rise in unemployment during the recession (roughly from mid-1974 to mid-1975) with the unemployment rate of women climbing from 6.0 to 9.9 per cent and that of men from 2.4 to 4.4 per cent. With the recovery, the number of jobless men began to decline at the end of 1975, but the women's unemployment rate continued to rise steadily, reaching 14.0 per cent in mid-1976 compared with 5.1 per cent for men. The down-swing greatly curtailed employment for the young, who lacked seniority and experience; in absolute terms the increase in unemployment was more pronounced for young women than for young men. 56/ In the developed market economies, the number of unemployed young women doubled during the period 1970-1976, whereas the corresponding figure for young men showed an 84 per cent increase. 57/

65. The recent deterioration in economic activity coincided with a period when there was a rise in the number of women participating in working life. This trend, which became apparent in the majority of countries a decade ago, accelerated in the early 1970s owing in large measure to the expansion of employment opportunities and to changes in the attitudes of society towards men and work, which were encouraged by favourable legislation and supportive policy measures. In contrast with past economic crises, when women constituted the majority of the "discouraged workers" (those who withdraw from the labour force because they give up looking for employment) in the recent period women have maintained themselves in the labour force despite unprecedented high unemployment levels. It appears that this new trend reflects a change in women's status in the labour force from performing the function of a "reserve army" (which could be called upon in time of labour shortages and then demobilized in times of strong growth) to forming an integral part of the workers, who are committed or compelled to seek employment in the face of their growing dependence on an independent source of income. This strong female participation in the labour force may be attributed to several factors, 58/ among which is the downward pressure put on real income by the current inflation and recession. A second income becomes necessary for many households, the more so because of the threat of unemployment for the male income-earner. Another factor

55/ Diane Werneke, "The economic slowdown and women's employment opportunities", International Labour Review, vol. 117, No. 1 (January-February 1978), p. 51.

56/ Ibid., p. 42.

57/ Hans Gallis, "Youth unemployment in industrialised market economy countries," ILO Working Paper ENP 47-1 (WP.1).

58/ Michael Deppler and Klaus Regling, "Labor market developments in the major industrial countries", Finance and Development, March 1979, pp. 24-25.

encouraging female participation has been the combination of improved unemployment compensation systems and reduced opprobrium attached to unemployment; the prolongation of unemployment benefits has the effect of extending the stay in the labour force of those who would otherwise withdraw.

66. Finally, there certainly is a new attitude among women towards remunerated work, which is increasingly recognized as a "normal" part of life. Women's attachment to the work-force is increasingly strong even in a situation of high unemployment.

67. With the recession in the industrialized countries, the peaking of major commodity prices, international inflation and exchange rate instability, 1974 marked a turning point in the economic performance and prospects of developing countries. For all developing countries, the average annual percentage growth rates of the gross domestic product dropped from 6.2 in 1965 to 4.9 in 1974. The sharpest declines in growth occurred in countries in sub-Saharan Africa (from 5.9 to 1.6 per cent average growth rates) followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (from 6.5 to 4.0 per cent average growth rates). ^{59/} The decline in economic growth demonstrably affected the creation of employment in developing countries. As reported by the Economic Commission for Africa, "despite the sketchy nature of existing data, there is no doubt that the problems of open unemployment, underemployment and mass poverty have assumed more serious proportions in recent years." ^{60/}

68. Certain economic sectors and industrial branches, such as the textiles industries, which have been traditional female employers, were particularly affected by the economic crisis or by the policies originated by the recession. The report of the Secretary-General on the review of progress made in the implementation of the international development strategy points out that "the intensification of protectionist measures in the developed countries affected a number of industries including textiles and foot-wear. Textiles were particularly stricken by the restrictions on trade imposed by the developed market economies." (E/AC.54/22 and Corr.1, sect. II, p. 9).

69. The registered results for agriculture in the developing countries have also proved to be quite disappointing; the average annual rate of increase in agricultural production during the period 1970-1977 for the developing countries as a whole was 2.6 per cent - less than the corresponding rate (2.9 per cent) achieved during the 1960s. Considering that population grew at an average rate of 2.5 per cent, it is obvious that agricultural production barely kept pace with population growth. This has resulted in a decrease in food production in the majority of the developing countries during the decade, which is bound to have had a particularly negative impact on the social and nutritional conditions of women and on their families, as well as on their economic opportunities, where agriculture has constituted the principal economic occupation for women. This is

^{59/} World Bank, World Development Report, 1979 pp. 10-13.

^{60/} Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa, 1976 (E/CN.14/654) Part I, p. 73.

especially significant for subsistence agriculture, where women are concentrated and where, in contrast to the export sector, the benefits of special measures for encouraging development have been least felt.

B. Underestimation of women's productive activities and economic contribution and the division of labour within households

70. Women's underrepresentation in cash-income employment does not imply a reduction in their economic and productive activities. Time-budget surveys have demonstrated what employment surveys have often disregarded: the contribution of women to the real income and economic welfare of households, especially in the poor areas. Market income fails to measure the contribution of at-home work, estimated to be at least 40 per cent of the gross national product in the United States and probably more in less monetarized economies. ^{61/} A recent time-use survey undertaken in rural areas in the Philippines shows that fathers put up the largest proportion of average household market income, but women and children together bring in almost 50 per cent of this market income. When home production and related activities are included so that we are considering full income, mothers contribute more than fathers, and the average of four children per family, as a group, contribute more than either parent.

71. A report prepared for the International Women's Year (1975) provided estimates of time devoted both to market and to household activities by men and women in 12 countries, including developing, centrally planned and market-oriented economies. ^{62/} Later studies confirmed and qualified further the findings of this report. The data show a great variation across countries, the centrally planned economies exhibiting substantially higher levels of market time by women. Employed women spend on the average less time on paid work than do employed men; they are more often part-time workers than men; they try to avoid overtime because of their duties at home or because legal regulations intervene etc. It appears, however, that the average total working time (paid work plus unpaid work) of employed women invariably surpasses that of employed men. In general, increases in time spent in market-employment do not imply a proportional decline of unpaid household work, but rather a reduction of women's leisure-time. The leisure-time of employed females is lower than that of employed males for all the countries observed. ^{63/}

^{61/} Birsall and McGreevy, op.cit., p. 6.

^{62/} Alexander Szalai, "The situation of women in the light of contemporary time budget research" (E/CONF.66/BP.6). The 12 countries were Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Peru, Poland, the USSR, the United States and Yugoslavia.

^{63/} Data presented to the Seminar on the Participation of Women in the Economic Evolution of the ECE Region; see also Robert E. Evenson, "The allocation of time by adult women: an international comparison (Yale University, 1979), mimeographed. Evenson extended Szalai's data to 32 countries, including developing, market-oriented and central planned economies.

84. In Singapore and in Nepal, approximately 50 per cent of all divorced women are classified as economically active; in Islamic societies, the proportion is one out of three.

85. The number of single mothers (that is, who have never been in legal or consensual union) is striking in Central and South America and in the Caribbean. In the Caribbean and Chile, for example, single mothers make up 50 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively, of all single women 15 years and over. The phenomenon is widespread in other parts of the world. In Mozambique, 20 per cent of all adult single women have children; in Botswana, 45 per cent.

86. International data show the linkage between female family headship and poverty. In the United States in 1972, 52 per cent of the minority households headed by females and 25 per cent of the white households headed by females were below the poverty level, compared with only 5 per cent of the families with an adult male head who were below this level.

87. In the United Kingdom, 43 per cent of the people claiming family income supplements (which are paid to low-income heads of households having dependent children) are single parents, nearly all of them women. In Canada, for female single parents with at least one child under the age of 18, average family incomes are only 45 per cent of the national average.

88. In Santiago, Chile, in 1973, 10 per cent of the male family heads and 29 per cent of the female family heads fell into the lowest income bracket. In 1977, in metropolitan Belo Horizonte, in Brazil, the percentage of households at poverty level headed by women was 41 per cent, compared with 26 per cent for households headed by men.

II. RECENT TRENDS: MEASURES TAKEN BY MEMBER STATES TO
IMPROVE THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND WORKING
CONDITIONS OF WOMEN

89. As shown in section I above, women's lack of access to paid employment is still a major problem throughout the world. Paid employment for women is not merely a question of economic independence and, hence, equal status with men. Since the numbers of women who are single heads of families has dramatically increased, as has the number of those whose families depend on a double income, fair employment opportunities for women become a question of fighting poverty or even of survival. The problem of women's employment is further aggravated by the fact that in many parts of the world, while employment for women is scarce, women are nonetheless overworked. Such are the harsh realities in places where women are confined to agricultural work.

90. The analysis also points out that the unequal sexual division of work at home is a major factor underlying the differences between the sexes concerning employment. Recognizing the value of such work, sharing the tasks more equally between the sexes, changing the conditions on the paid labour market in such a way that workers - men, as well as women - may perform their double role as workers and parents, are fundamental prerequisites for equality between sexes.

91. This section of the report aims at assessing measures undertaken by Member States in this regard. It is primarily based on the replies to the questionnaire on the implementation of the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year and on relevant reports of the ILO. The measures aimed at facilitating the combination of work and family responsibilities will be examined first. Measures concerning the improvement of women's position in the labour market will then be reviewed. The last subsection deals with measures aimed at improving the socio-economic status of women in the rural areas.

A. Measures aimed at facilitating the combination of
work and family responsibilities

1. Measures aimed at changing working conditions

92. Maternity protection is a prerequisite if women are to be able to combine employment and the social function of child-bearing. Maternity protection in a strict sense includes the right to maternity leave, the right to benefits and the right to job security during prescribed periods. Most countries have stated that their legislation guarantees some kind of maternity protection for women, granted either under social security or under collective arrangements combined with labour legislation.

93. The length of leave granted and the extent of benefits paid, however, vary considerably from one country to another. An ILO study of 25 selected African countries shows that the majority of the countries provide for a leave of 12 to

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14 weeks. In most countries, cash maternity benefits to which the recipients are entitled are equivalent to half the wage that the women receive at their job when working full time. Few countries provide full pay, others do not provide any cash benefits at all. For Asia as a whole, the longer period of leave is 12 weeks but the great majority of countries provide for a leave shorter than 12 weeks. Cash maternity benefits correspond to full pay only in a very few countries.

94. The period of paid leave is sometimes longer than 12 weeks, especially in the centrally planned economies, and several countries have extended the duration of maternity leave in the past few years. Many countries also report having strengthened their legal protection against dismissal on account of pregnancy. 65/

95. Despite the progress achieved, the situation concerning maternity protection cannot be considered satisfactory. Most of the developing countries exclude the entire informal and the agricultural sectors, leaving the largest group of women without protection. Some countries report that maternity protection is restricted to the public sector. 66/ It should also be noted that in several countries, although the allowances are covered by the social security system, employers also have to pay in full or in part. This manner of financing the benefits is reported to give rise to discrimination against women, creating a constraint on their employment opportunities. 67/

96. A recent legislative improvement in this field, restricted mainly to developed countries has been the extension of the period of authorized maternity leave beyond the normal or statutory period, without loss of employment grants.

65/ A detailed description of provisions for maternity protection (conditions for benefits, length of maternity leave, cash return benefits, prohibition of dismissal and nursing breaks) in the following issues of the ILO Newsbulletin Women at Work: No. 2, 1977 (Salient Provisions on Maternity Protection, Selected Asian Countries); No. 3, 1977 (Maternity Protection in Selected African Countries); No. 4, 1979 (Maternity Protection in Various Industrialized Market-Economy Countries). See also S. A. Smirnov, "Maternity protection: national law and practice in selected European countries" (ILO/W.8/1978).

66/ "Recent changes and trends in the situation of women in the ECWA region" (E/ECWA/SDMS/CONF.4/3 I), prepared for the ECWA Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. See also Conditions of Work, Vocational Training and Employment of Women, Report No. III, submitted to the Eleventh Conference of American States Members of the International Labour Organisation, held at Medellín in September and October 1979.

67/ See "Review and appraisal of progress made and obstacles encountered at the national level in Asia and the Pacific in attaining the minimum objectives set forth in paragraph 46 of the World Plan of Action and of objectives of the Asian Plan of Action", prepared by Rita M. Gerona-Adkins, a consultant for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

The duration of this child-care leave varies greatly: up to three years in Spain, Bulgaria and Hungary, two years in Czechoslovakia and France, one year in the USSR, Austria and Norway and six months in Italy. In some cases a special allowance is payable during such leave for the whole period or for part of it. It may be equivalent to a sickness allowance (Sweden), to the minimum wage (Bulgaria), or equal to a percentage of earnings (30 per cent in Italy).

97. While women's rights to maternity leave have been extended and rights to child-care leave added, little progress has been made in extending child-care leave to fathers. Sweden, Norway and France now give parents freedom to decide whether the leave should be taken by the father or the mother. In Sweden, the percentage of men using these rights has increased annually since the right was conferred in 1974, and reached 12 per cent in 1978. It should also be noted that the option of replacement of part of the present maternity leave by a longer period of leave that parents can divide between themselves, is receiving attention in some other countries as well. The right to leave (paid or unpaid) in the case of children's illness has been extended to several new countries, especially in the industrialized world. Only a few countries - Austria, Israel, Sweden and Finland - have, however, extended this right to fathers as well as mothers. In Hungary, single fathers as well as working mothers can benefit from leave for nursing their sick children.

98. In addition to the need to stay at home on certain occasions, the general pattern of working time is an important factor in a person's day-to-day handling of his or her combined role as a worker and parent. Some countries have tried to ease the combination of paid work and family work by giving working women with family responsibilities time off for household work and child care. In the German Democratic Republic, for example, women with several children have shorter working hours and longer holidays (with no reduction in pay). All women with children under 18 years of age or other family members requiring special care have one paid "household day" per month. In the United Republic of Cameroon, Mali and the Upper Volta, a working woman can take two extra days' leave each year for every child under the age of 15. In Israel, collective agreements provide that mothers of children under 12 may work a seven-hour day while receiving pay equivalent to a full day's work. In a number of countries there is a demand for a general reduction of daily work hours so as to enable both men and women to combine family work and paid work. Some countries, while seeing the six-hour day as a long-term goal, have advocated the need for a shorter working day for working parents with small children. Since 1979, Swedish parents have been entitled to reduce their working day to three quarters of the normal working hours until the child's eighth birthday. The right can be exercised by one parent at a time or by both parents simultaneously. No compensation is payable for the loss of earnings.

99. It should be noted, however, that the concept of shortened daily hours is not yet given priority in most countries. Reduced retirement age, extended weekends and holidays are often set as primary goals, evoking protest from women's organizations.

100. In many industrialized countries women seem to use part-time work as a means of combining paid work with family responsibilities. In some developed countries as many as 40-50 per cent of the working married women work part-time; the corresponding number of men is approximately 5 per cent.

101. Part-time work is often connected with low-skilled, routine, dead-end jobs, with small opportunities for further training, education and promotion. Since it is frequently of a temporary nature, job security leaves much to be desired. In many countries social security benefits are not equivalent to those of full-time workers. Most alarming, because the solution of part-time work is sought almost exclusively by women, this aggravates their marginal position in the labour force. For women who do not have to provide sole or substantial family support, part-time work can be a satisfactory solution to the dilemma of combining home and job responsibilities. We should recognize, however, that this may perpetuate the myth that women's participation in the labour force is peripheral. Some Governments have made efforts to increase the possibilities of part-time work, while at the same time ensuring for part-time workers the same rights as full-time workers.

102. The Federal Republic of Germany has published guidelines in promoting part-time work for women and men, and a draft law has been prepared aimed at increasing the opportunities for civil servants to undertake part-time work. The Government of Norway, in addition to stimulating private and public employers to provide part-time jobs, has ensured part-time workers the same working conditions and social security rights as full-time workers. A government committee is to make proposals for further steps to give workers a right to choose their own patterns of working hours, without losing their rights. The Government of Sweden, too, has begun an investigation into the causes, conditions and consequences of part-time work. Special information material on the social benefits for part-time employees has been gathered, and authorities have initiated some 80 conferences in 1979 on part-time work and social benefits.

2. Measures to reduce the work burden at home

(a) Child care

103. Adequate schemes for looking after children during working hours constitute one of the most important single factors enabling either parent to seek employment. In industrialized countries it has become difficult to solve these problems in the family context alone; and the changes undermining the extended family in many developing countries suggests that these problems will eventually have to be faced there as well. An ILO survey indicates that there are many countries where the Government and various groups, including employers and workers organizations, are aware of the need to create and implement a suitable child-care infrastructure. No less than 87 Governments mentioned the existence in their country of appropriate services and amenities, which in many cases were in the process of being extended or improved. However, although child-care services have increased in most

countries over the past 15 years, the number of workers with young children has grown to such proportions that the supply is still far short of the demand. 68/

104. Replies to the questionnaire confirm this observation. Replies from the ECA region indicate that the number of day-care centres and nurseries, private or State-owned, has been on the increase. However, in some if not all countries, women rely heavily on other women for domestic help. The general impression derived from the responding member Governments of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is also one of increased activity in providing day-care facilities in the post-1975 period. Data are, however, limited.

105. For the developed countries, especially for the centrally planned economies, successful policies of providing supportive services and child-care facilities is well known. The extent of these services varies considerably from country to country in the rest of the industrialized world, leaving the demand far from satisfied in most cases. 69/

106. Finally it has been pointed out that the practice of charging a portion of child-care costs to the mother's and not to the father's employers reduces the recruitment of married women to the labour market. Devising effective institutional mechanism for charging fathers' employers for their share of the cost of day-care centres should therefore be given priority in this connexion. 70/

(b) Other measures

107. Other measures to reduce the burden of work at home may vary from the planning and building of housing and the provision of essential public utilities such as water, electricity and gas to the provision of semi-prepared foods and other consumer goods and the production of labour-saving devices to reduce household drudgery. The latter can be made available through community services or at prices accessible to low income families.

108. Although further efforts can be made in developed countries to improve collective services or make technical appliances available to a larger group of households, 71/ the most severe problems in this area are to be found in the developing world. Millions of women in developing areas expend individually as much energy on household tasks as does a paid worker in a working day. The majority of women still rely on a low level of technology, using out-moded equipment for domestic purposes. A study of nine villages in an African country

68/ International Labour Organisation, Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities, Report No. VI, part I, submitted to the International Labour Conference at its sixty-sixth session.

69/ The ILO report cited in foot-note 63 above, reviews the situation in different countries all over the world and gives an analysis of problems connected with child care.

70/ See foot-note 67 above.

71/ An analysis is found in the International Labour Organisation, Equal Opportunities ..., chap. VI.

has shown that a woman responsible for the water supply has to walk four hours a day to fetch enough water for a family of four. The daily chore of picking vegetables and winnowing, pounding and milling the cereal before cooking may take from two to three hours of work.

109. International agencies and national Governments are becoming more aware of the gain in productivity that may be achieved in the field of household tasks, and of the need to lighten the burden of women's work. Nevertheless, resources invested for development in this area are still scarce. African women themselves have identified several areas in which appropriate technologies could make a significant difference to the lives of women, especially women in rural areas. These include the provision of water supply; the introduction of light transport facilities for the portage of water, food, farm produce and other loads; the adoption of efficient agricultural tools; and the introduction of grinding mills and other crop-processing equipment. For these purposes priority consideration must be given to producing new or adapted technologies in sufficient quantities and at very reasonable prices.

3. Measures aimed at recognizing the value of work performed at home

110. Although national accounting systems have become significantly more sophisticated, none of them include women's unpaid productive work. Some countries have, however, made attempts to assess the economic value of women's unpaid work at home. Canada reports on a study in which the value of housewives' labour to the Canadian economy as a whole has been estimated; the economic value of voluntary community work has also been estimated. A Finnish time-budget study, initiated by the Finnish Council for Equality, will attempt to define the significance of unpaid housework for the national economy and assess its contribution to the accumulation of family property when questions about the division of property in case of death or divorce arise. No concrete action has been taken so far to incorporate the knowledge gained into over-all economic planning policies.

111. Recognition of the value of work performed at home raises a whole series of issues related to benefits connected with employment status. Women who often have to interrupt their occupational activity to bring up young children are disadvantaged under most social security systems, with the exception of those which provide uniform basic benefits to all residents. Employment-linked pension rights are reduced because the career has been interrupted and when these persons return to work they are likely to find that they are no longer entitled to short-term benefits, such as medical care, sickness and maternity benefits and unemployment benefits, since they do not meet the requirements regarding length of service, insurance or contribution. During the period spent at home, these women acquire no claim to social security benefits and, even under schemes which grant uniform benefits to all residents, they are dependent on their husbands' income.

112. In some developed countries, a growing attention has been paid to the subject of granting personal rights to claims for social security benefits based on housework, although few countries report having taken any concrete steps.

Important questions to be considered in this context are the value of the work performed at home, the level of protection to be afforded and the question of who is to bear the consequent financial burden.

113. Government replies indicate that discussions on the subject are only just beginning and that it should be considered an area of major concern in the years to come. It might be added that inherent in such measures is a danger of freezing the existing sex-based division of labour, maintaining women in the reproduction sector and weakening their position in the labour market upon re-entering it.

4. Measures aimed at making men capable of and willing to take their share of the work at home

114. As already indicated, progress in this field has been very slow. It goes without saying that progress depends on a change of attitudes both among men and women, and is therefore a slow process. However, concrete measures to accelerate the process are being taken by some countries, and may become most effective in bringing about the desired change. One example of such measures is the sharing of parental leave; another is the right to leave to take care of a sick child, given to fathers as well as mothers, as in the case of the Scandinavian countries.

115. Another useful development would be the equalization of wage levels between the sexes, thus actually creating equal opportunities for fathers as well as mothers to choose between paid work and work at home. Austria reports that working groups are deliberating on amendments to social legislation which would enable men to fulfil their family responsibilities to a greater degree by dividing the maternity leave between the spouses, and by co-insuring a housekeeping husband under the health insurance of his gainfully employed wife.

116. Some countries (among them Denmark and Iceland) said they were considering conferring the right of child-care leave on fathers while others (among them Austria and the Netherlands) cited it as a target. Denmark added, however, that the current economic situation might hinder such a reform.

117. In countries faced with economic development problems and limited resources, a fundamental change in attitudes towards women's work is seldom a priority. Such change is expected to occur eventually with the improvement of economic conditions. However, it is more useful to consider the counter-argument that integrating women into social and economic life on an equal footing with men is the first necessary step towards development. Cuba, for instance, has such a strategy; it combines legal, economic and social measures with active opinion campaigns to make the whole population aware of the importance of the problem.

B. Measures aimed at ensuring equal access to employment and equal conditions of employment for women

118. Open discrimination against women seems, at least in principle, to be considered unacceptable throughout the world. The great majority of countries report that they have legislation ensuring equality for men and women as regards

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employment opportunities and conditions. Some countries, although they have no equal pay laws, report ratifying the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100), which calls for equal pay for men and women.

119. In many developed market-oriented economies there has been a general trend towards the adoption of equal employment opportunity laws for women. In Western Europe, 13 countries ^{72/} reported that they had promulgated such laws. Their scope varies greatly but most of them prohibit discrimination in employment on the grounds of sex or marital status in relation to job advertisements, job classifications, recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, training and promotion. Some countries likewise reported having set up special supervisory bodies whose task was to ensure the enforcement of the equal opportunities legislation. In New Zealand, the Equal Opportunity Tribunal was created in 1978. In Australia, a National Committee on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, and committees in all States, have been established to investigate and attempt to resolve by conciliation allegations of discrimination. In addition, the Public Service Board has upgraded its Equal Opportunity Bureau.

120. Two countries which have long since adopted "equal work, equal pay" legislation report that a difficulty in implementing such legislation is the lack of an accepted methodology which would allow for comparability of jobs. The Federal Republic of Germany indicated that research had been initiated by the Government to provide employers and trade unions with a better basis for reliable job analysis and a more equitable evaluation of work. The United States reported that the Secretary of Labor had been authorized to undertake research programmes to investigate the extent to which job and wage classification systems undervalued certain skills and responsibilities on the basis of the sex of the person who usually held the position.

121. The promotion of women through education and training has been a long-standing policy of the centrally planned economies of Eastern Europe. The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that "one important aspect of the changes in employment of women at present is the major increase in the number of those employed in the most skilled occupations" as a result of a rapid rise in the level of higher and technical education for women; among working women in 1977, the proportion of specialists with higher or specialized secondary education was greater (27.1 per cent) than it was among men (17.9 per cent). The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics saw the broad access of women to all forms of vocational training as a firm guarantee that they would master new occupations arising from scientific and technological progress.

122. In developing countries existing legislation continues to have important limitations: it applies primarily to modern sectors and leaves out the masses of women working in agriculture, in the domestic sectors and in the whole informal

^{72/} Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

sector. Moreover, some developing countries reported that while legislation might protect women working in the public sector, it was difficult to enforce similar measures in the private sector. In spite of their limited scope, however, anti-discrimination laws were considered important for, in addition to their direct effect, they might also be instrumental in changing cultural values in favour of sexual equality.

123. Although the importance of legal measures to combat open discrimination is generally recognized, many Governments pointed out that the major constraints to progress were not legal ones. The developing countries, in particular, underlined the importance of socio-economic factors and of age-old attitudes which confined women to the roles of mothers and wives. Some countries stressed that a conscious policy for improving employment conditions for women must therefore go further than legal provisions for non-discrimination and maternity protection. The Government of India pointed out that women's employment had to be a target in itself. In India, the chapter on employment and manpower in the Draft Five-Year Plan 1970-1983 deals with employment of women separately, and has laid down guidelines in this respect:

All those industries and occupations which are "women-preferred" (office work, textile, chemicals and electronics) will be specially stimulated by government investment programmes;

Co-operative and commercial bank credit and other aids will be made available to potential women entrepreneurs and co-operatives employing a majority of women workers.

124. In Sri Lanka, quotas for female hiring of 20 to 25 per cent have been established for some sectors of Government. In Thailand, the Development Plan specifies that the number of female staff in the Government "will be increased" during the plan period. Cuba has taken measures to facilitate the incorporation of women in new jobs in transportation and construction. Equality of treatment for all workers is embodied in the new Penal Code, promulgated in February 1979, which provides that discrimination or incitement to discrimination is punishable by gaol sentences. Legal aid is provided without cost.

125. Some market-oriented developed economies, while referring to prevailing attitudes as a constraint, stress the importance of the labour market structure, that is, the existence of a segregated labour market for men and women, as a major obstacle to progress. Recently, some Governments have introduced measures which directly require or induce employers to open up job opportunities for women. 73/

126. For example, United States contractors and subcontractors holding federal or federally-assisted construction contracts in excess of \$10,000 are required to take

73/ For a more comprehensive review, see International Labour Organisation, Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers ...

specific affirmative action steps. The Swedish regional development policy regulations make government grants given to companies located in sparsely populated areas dependent on a recruitment policy unbiased by sex; that is, at least 40 per cent of the employees must be women, another 40 per cent men. The requirement has significantly contributed to women's employment in areas previously dominated by men. Norway is discussing the introduction of a quota policy.

127. Some countries report that they have taken measures to help make traditionally "male" jobs available to women. In the Federal Republic of Germany, a press campaign initiated in 1977 was directed towards women and prospective employers, on the one hand to motivate women to use periods of unemployment to improve their professional qualifications and, on the other hand, to motivate employers to understand that women's capabilities qualify them for more than conventional women's occupations. The Federal Republic of Germany is giving financial inducement or compensation to cover the additional costs incurred by employers who will institute training for women in those crafts and technical trades which have hitherto been practised largely by men. Since 1975, Sweden has developed a pilot programme to stimulate women to apply for typical "male" positions. Systematic and sustained efforts to inform and motivate women, employers and trade unions, combined with visits to industrial plants and followed by training programmes, have proved successful. A special experiment has also been carried out in the National Telecommunication Administration. Norway is discussing a similar recruitment programme with employers and trade unions in the building and construction sector, and with the public railroad authorities. The Swedish and Norwegian experiment of "equal status grants" given to employers who employ women, or men in occupations traditionally dominated by women, is also an example of a more direct policy to break up occupational segregation. The grant, a fixed amount per hour, may be given for a period of up to six months.

C. Measures and programmes aimed at improving
the economic status of women in the rural
areas

128. The developing countries constitute the great majority of the Governments reporting the initiation and/or development of measures and programmes directed at women in the rural areas. Most of the developing countries remain predominantly agrarian, and a sizable proportion of their female working force is engaged in agricultural pursuits.

129. In the African region, for example, 9 out of the 20 countries that replied to the question reported undertaking such measures. In general, their efforts centre around rural development schemes and include legislative measures as well as initiatives to promote income-generating activities for women and to support women's organizations. In Lesotho, "the Ministry of Rural Development sees to the active involvement of women in income-generating activities ... Women are encouraged to co-operate so that they produce more products. They crochet, sew, knit and build feeder roads, work on soil conservation programmes in their respective villages." Also, the Ministry of Rural Development has established the Office of Women's Affairs Co-ordinator for ensuring the participation of women

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in the formulation of rural development. In Mali, a National Centre for Research and Industrial Development was created in 1975, under the Ministry of Industrial Development, to examine the possibilities of improving traditional activities in the rural areas. More specifically directed at women, training centres for rural women have been created and the number of rural social centres has been increased. In Kenya, the Women's Bureau channels inputs for training and for projects started by women; many of the projects are income-generating (animal husbandry, small-scale business etc.); others are community welfare projects (water supply, day-care centres, handicrafts). Moreover, local authorities in many parts of Kenya have accepted the principle and practice of allocating business and farming plots to rural women groups for development.

130. In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya the rural development centres, which provide agricultural guidance for men and women, are currently planning a nine-month training programme to instruct women in vocational and technical skills.

131. Most developing countries in Asia which replied to the questionnaire said that they had general programmes for rural development, a few of them putting special emphasis on women's involvement. Bangladesh has provided a detailed paper entitled "Forward-looking assessment of recent years' efforts to increase rural women's participation in development". Increased participation, it is stated, often starts with opportunities for improving education and training - literacy, home economics and crafts courses.

132. In India, during the period 1975-1978, the Ministry of Agriculture's Central Department of Rural Development implemented schemes to promote and strengthen the Rural Women's Organization by training, incentive awards and multilateral assistance and promotion from the recently created Women's Co-operative Finance Society. The Draft Six-Year Plan, 1978-1983 on Integrated Rural Development has devoted a separate section to women's programmes. Bahrain, Iraq, and Yemen reported the establishment of training centres for social and community development, targeted at rural areas, which generally provided, inter alia, reading, writing, and home economics classes for rural women.

133. The Government of Papua New Guinea reported that it had undertaken studies on the social impact of private investments on the socio-economic status of women in the rural areas; it also stated the need for an integrated view of rural development projects in which women's participation should be taken into account. Finally, it reported that the National Council of Women was advising on the revision of the land laws in order to ensure the equal rights of women with respect to ownership of land and to the benefits of rural development programmes.

134. In Latin America, 11 out of the 20 countries responding to the questionnaire reported that they had taken measures to improve the economic status of women in the rural areas. The great majority, however, referred to general programmes of rural development without indicating their specific effect on women's economic opportunities and social well-being.

135. Some countries reported having initiated or developed special programmes for the rural female population. Cuba indicated that the integration of women in rural

development was the result of a conscious policy. The Federation of Cuban Women organized brigades of women small farmers for voluntary work and cultural and social development, and encouraged their integration in co-operatives; they constituted 35 per cent of all members of rural co-operatives, and that proportion is growing. That policy was supported by a growing infrastructure of social services and communal facilities to relieve women from traditional tasks and integrate them in economic development. The Government of Haiti reported the creation of a national bureau to protect and promote the development of the small, family-owned craft industries. Jamaica noted that it was planning to reorganize and further develop the craft industry (which had an approximately 75 per cent female involvement), under the Institute of Craft. The Jamaican Women's Bureau was also initiating women's groups for goat-raising, training in woodwork and welding, and baking for sale on local markets.

136. Women's vital role in agriculture was stressed by several Governments in the developed countries. Poland pointed out that women accounted for 60 per cent of all the persons working in individual farming, owning at present 80 per cent of the cultivated land. Romania reported that women, who constituted 56 per cent of the total agricultural labour force, accounted for 68 per cent of all agricultural workers on individual farms, 60 per cent on agricultural co-operatives, but only 18 per cent on state farms.

137. The replies indicate that the major problem of women in the agricultural sector in the developed countries is not of a legal nature. Women's right to succession and ownership of land is ensured. As far as eligibility for aid-grants or loans to improve farming is concerned, there is no discrimination between the sexes. It is not clear, however, who the actual registered owners are. There are reasons to believe that in most cases they are men - even when the man is employed in non-farm activities and the wife is doing most of the farm work.

138. Some Governments expressed special concern about the farm-wives who were registered as "unpaid family workers". Finland, for example, referred to the need to improve old-age pensions for farm-wives and to secure their rights to annual vacation. Poland reported that individual farmers and their families were covered by free medical care, and a bill had been passed on a system of retirement pensions for farmers.

139. Some countries expressed concern about inadequate training of women in the rural areas. The Federal Republic of Germany, for example, reported that half the present day country women were without any special training in agriculture. Poland reported that, since a considerable number of employed women in rural areas had not completed primary education, they were given the opportunity to receive education at so-called farming courses, enabling them to complete primary school and receive certified qualifications in farming. The Central Union of Individual Farmers' Circles participated in building professional skills of women by courses for housewives.

140. The lack of supportive services - child care, health, help in case of sickness - which are more often identified in the rural areas than in urban, are referred to as obstacles to further progress. So is lack of public transportation. In Austria, "the authorities grant cheap interest loans to add to agricultural investment credits serving to relieve peasant women's work, for the purchase of labour-saving and work-facilitating equipment, machinery and appliances for household and farm work, as well as for the furnishing of guest rooms in farm houses".

141. Finally, several countries reported that they were trying to expand economic activities in non-farm sectors in order to supplement employment opportunities in agriculture. For example, some countries indicated that they had stimulated tourism as a source of supplementary income for rural women. Cottage industry and folklore handicraft were also often cited as sources of alternative income.

III. OVERVIEW

142. The socio-economic changes taking place in most parts of the world, as the survey shows, have given rise to a vast array of consequences, the effects of which have not always been favourable to women. In developing countries, women in rural areas are overburdened and under-remunerated rather than underemployed, a situation which becomes even more dramatic in view of the low yields obtained. Moreover, when processes of modernization reach the rural areas women often have no access to fundamental production resources, such as land, credit and technology, despite their substantial involvement in agricultural production.

143. Whereas rural women are overworked, women in the urban areas, especially in developing countries, are largely underemployed or confined to low-paid and marginal jobs. In many developing countries, the expansion of capital-intensive industries, combined with stagnant or declining agricultural employment, have not been able to absorb the fast growing population, and women continue to seek employment in the services and the large informal sector. Migrations in search of jobs have become a widespread feature of socio-economic development and are deeply affecting the work and living conditions of women.

144. Moreover, where new employment opportunities are opened up, women are frequently cheap-labour targets, as in the case of the recent expansion of female employment in the export industries in Asia and in the Caribbean, while they have remained noticeably underrepresented in the higher-status and highly qualified positions.

145. In the countries with centrally planned economies, the proportion of women in the national labour force is high, and women are distributed more evenly throughout the occupational structure. However, they still tend to be concentrated in certain professions.

146. In both centrally planned and developed market-economy countries there is still an income differential between the sexes, largely due to occupational segregation. In the developed countries, women are increasingly employed in the fast-growing service occupations such as sales and clerical work, paramedical professions, teaching and personal services.

147. The recent economic crisis that has affected the market-oriented economies has affected women's employment more severely than men's, mainly because women are more concentrated in a few branches of industry and a narrow range of occupations. They are, moreover, underrepresented in labour unions, a fact that weakens their ability to make known their specific problems and defend their rights. Finally, the problems faced by women engaged in economic activities should also be viewed against the fact that women are in increasing numbers the sole income-earners for themselves and their families, and the first victims of poverty.

148. In spite of the clear differences that exist with respect to socio-economic levels of development and political forms, it appears that the economic changes

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and apparent progress in the course of recent decades have not only been unevenly distributed among countries and social groups, but have been unequally shared by men and women. The integration of most developing economies into the present international economic order has led to the subordination of the use of their natural and human resources to the needs and priorities of the developed countries, rather than to the utilization of these resources in accordance with the requirements and full potentialities of the developing countries themselves. As a result, there has been an excessive emphasis on export policies in both agricultural and industrial sectors, instead of on the promotion of domestic market expansion and food production leading to economic self-reliance. This has been followed by chronic rural decapitalization and deprivation, increasing rural-urban migration and widespread unemployment and underemployment. As shown above, each one of these aspects has exercised a particular negative impact upon the role and socio-economic status of women. The possibilities of providing women with additional opportunities for more productive and remunerative employment clearly have a relationship to the changes which can be made in the existing international order. However, it will also be necessary to redirect national policies so as to take full advantage of the impact of the international measures: in particular, a more equitable internal income distribution and the re-allocation of investment resources in favour of rural infrastructures and services would help to eliminate the existing limitations upon women's productive employment and effective participation in the economy.
