



UNITED NATIONS



**WORLD CONFERENCE
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR**
MEXICO CITY, 19 JUNE TO 2 JULY 1975

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.66/C.1/L.38
28 June 1975

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

First Committee
Agenda item 11

WORLD PLAN OF ACTION

Draft report of the First Committee

(Part I)

Rapporteur: Mr. John Bruce Campbell (Australia)

A. Organization of work

1. The Conference at its second plenary meeting on 19 June 1975 allocated to the First Committee agenda item 11 (World Plan of Action) on the understanding that, should a text of a draft declaration be submitted, it could be considered by the First Committee in connexion with that item.
2. The First Committee met under the chairmanship of Jeanne Martin Cisse (Guinea). It held _____ meetings between 20 and _____ June 1975. At its 1st and 3rd meetings it elected by acclamation: Nilima Ibrahim (Bangladesh) and Jaroslav Havelka (Czechoslovakia), and Gladys Freyre De Addiego (Uruguay) Vice-Chairmen; and John Bruce Campbell (Australia) Rapporteur.
3. The Committee considered item 11 at its 2nd to _____ meetings. For the consideration of the item it had before it a draft World Plan of Action prepared by the Secretariat (E/CONF.66/5 and Corr.1). It also had before it as a background document the report of the Consultative Committee for the World Conference of the International Women's Year (E/CONF.66/BP/18) and the following background documents: E/CONF.66/BP/1 and Add.1, E/CONF.66/BP/2, E/CONF.66/BP/3, E/CONF.66/BP/4, E/CONF.66/BP/16 and E/CONF.66/BP/17. It also had before it a statement submitted by the International Council on Social Welfare, a non-governmental organization in Category I consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (E/CONF.66/NGO/1).

B. Brief summary of general debate

4. In accordance with the decision taken at its 1st meeting the Committee held a brief general debate on the item and set a five-minute time-limit for statements in the general debate, which was held at its 2nd to 4th meetings.

5. The Chairman of the Consultative Committee for the World Conference of the International Women's Year, Princess Ashraf Pahlavi (Iran), described the work of the Consultative Committee, established under General Assembly resolution 3277 (XXIX), which had considered the draft Plan. She stressed the fact that the draft Plan was essentially designed to translate into practical reality principles already contained in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other instruments. The time had come, she said, for effective action to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women. The Plan should provoke, stimulate and provide guidance for such action.

6. In introducing the revised draft Plan of Action (E/CONF.66/5), the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference and Director of the Branch for the Promotion of Equality of Men and Women of the United Nations noted that one of the basic problems before the Consultative Committee had been to draw up a plan of universal application for countries at very different levels of development. The draft contained detailed, though not exhaustive, guidelines for action; it would be for each Government to draw up its own strategy and priorities on the basis of the recommendations contained in the Plan. She drew particular attention to the minimum targets which, it was suggested, should be achieved by 1980 (E/CONF.66/5, para. 35). Pointing out that the draft Plan called for the proclamation of a Decade for Women and Development (1975-1985), she stressed the need for effective national, regional and international action. All organizations in the United Nations system had a role to play in the effective implementation of the Plan and in the periodic review and appraisal provided for in chapter VI.

7. Representatives agreed that the Plan of Action was the most important document of the Conference and congratulated the Secretariat of the United Nations and the Consultative Committee, for preparing a comprehensive text, which formed a good basis for discussion. The idea of a Decade for Women and Development (1975-1985) contained in the Plan received the support of many representatives. Great stress was placed on the effective implementation of the Plan, nationally, regionally and internationally, as well as on adequate provision for review and appraisal of the progress made in achieving the objectives.

8. Representatives stressed the need for allocation of sufficient funds to implement the objectives of the Plan. It was suggested that the voluntary fund, established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1851 (LVI), should be extended on a continuing basis.
9. A number of representatives recognized that, although legal equality among men and women had been almost universally achieved, implementation of the legal provisions was hindered by unfavourable socio-economic conditions and by deeply rooted discriminatory attitudes.
10. In view of the interdependence between the status of women and current global problems many representatives emphasized the need to consider the situation of women in the context of other United Nations proclamations, such as the New World Economic Order and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, and of policies for the eradication of colonialism, racial discrimination, apartheid, foreign domination and neo-colonialism.
11. Some representatives stated that the Plan should elaborate in greater detail the relationship of world peace to equality of the sexes and development. It was suggested that a historical perspective of women's contribution to peace and co-operation among States should be included in the Plan. It was also suggested that the Plan should call for complete nuclear and general disarmament. A few representatives, referring to women who were held prisoners and were being tortured, appealed to the Committee to take constructive action to alleviate the suffering of these women.
12. Many representatives in the Committee favoured the adoption by the Conference of a declaration of principles embodying some of those ideas. It was the view of most representatives that the First Committee would be the appropriate body for consideration of such a declaration so as to ensure that it should complement the Plan and that repetition and duplication between the two instruments would be avoided.
13. Many representatives were of the opinion that the Plan of Action should give high priority to the needs of the largest numbers of women in the developing countries, those in the rural areas and the urban poor. It was felt that some parts of the Plan, especially the section on housing, did not adequately reflect their needs. It was considered extremely important that women should be represented and their voices heard at the Habitat Conference on Human Settlements in 1976.
14. Many representatives recommended appropriate action to meet the needs of rural women, especially those of women working in subsistence agriculture. Others emphasized the very real needs of urban women and their problems of alienation.

15. Some representatives observed that population conditions were causally related with the status and well-being of women, although the nature of the causality varied among different cultures and reflected a diversity of problems, both at the regional and the national levels. The opinion was expressed that women were frequently used as instruments of policy. Population and social policy relevant to childbearing were, in such cases, applied in a way that eliminated women's freedom of choice as regards the bearing of children. According to that view, where childbearing was concerned, the needs and desires of women were often subordinated to those of the State and society. It was held that the Plan of Action should include reference to those points, and that it should place greater stress upon the development of the woman and the fulfilment of her own wishes and goals.

16. It was emphasized that conditions and patterns of internal and international migration often imposed personal, social and economic hardships upon women and were interrelated with the conditions and characteristics of development. In view of the scope and magnitude of those problems, the proposals for action should include provision for dealing with them.

17. A number of representatives recommended the redistribution of functions and responsibilities between men and women in order to eliminate the double burden carried by many women. Some suggested that household tasks should be developed as a social industry and that the provision of child-care services should be a responsibility of the State. It was pointed out that the vast majority of women were not able to demand better working conditions since they did not form part of the trade unions and were not organized collectively in that sense.

18. The mass communication media were exhorted to help in changing attitudes towards the achievement of the goals of the Plan. It was suggested that a non-profit international communications network should be created to feed development-oriented information to the media in each country and inform the population about new roles for women and about their struggle for equality with men.

19. Some representatives considered that the Plan should give greater emphasis to education at all levels, to equip women for greater participation in society, especially in policy-making.

20. Some representatives urged the ratification without delay of international instruments to eliminate discrimination against women. Others stressed the need to re-evaluate outdated international conventions or declarations that might have an adverse effect on women's employment opportunities.

21. Several representatives announced the establishment in their countries of regional or national research centres to study the problems of women. Others mentioned the creation of national machinery to promote the advancement of women such as national commissions and women's bureaux. The Committee was informed that the Association of South-East Asian Nations 1/ had proposed the creation of a permanent committee on women's affairs to provide machinery for regional activities to improve the situation of women and to implement the World Plan of Action.

22. The Committee also heard statements by the representatives of national liberation movements, who stressed that in countries that were still suffering from colonial rule or foreign domination women were subject to double discrimination - on grounds of sex as well as of race. In such cases, the struggle for the liberation of their countries and for the elimination of sex discrimination could not be separated and the struggle should be waged in such a way that both would be achieved together. The liberation of women required the active participation of both men and women, and the liberation of countries required the active participation of women as well as men.

1/ Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.