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Equality, Development and Peace**

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NATIONAL REPORT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF GUINEA  
FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN.

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The proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women after the celebration of the International Year of Women in 1975 was welcomed in the Revolutionary People's Republic of Guinea where the Democratic Party of Guinea which liberated the working masses has always centered its preoccupations on the emancipation of women, a sine qua non condition for the emancipation of society as a whole.

To that effect many decisions have been taken at the national level to concretise the rights and duties of women in our society. We are happy to note these many measures taken on the basis of a profound social, political and economic change and which match perfectly well with the central theme of our Decade, that is equality, development and peace.

It is to be underlined that the Guinean Constitution provides all field of activity and equal opportunities for men and women.

Today through the enjoyment of a whole set of rights, woman of Guinea advances alongside her brother.

The woman of Guinea enjoys fully the fruit of her struggle for her emancipation. Her political and administrative responsibilities are strengthened. She participates directly to the economic, social and cultural development of her country.

The contribution of the Guinean Woman to the struggle for peace is also as important. She actively participates in the defence of the Peoples struggling for their independence and takes part in the fight against unbridled arm race. She struggles for disarmament actively participates in the World Peace Council.

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EQUALITY : Rights acquired in the political, civic, sanitary and educational fields.

As said President AHMED SEKOU TOURE, "Real independence, is that which liberated both man and woman, and modifies structures on which the unjust action of feudalism and colonialism was based. The regime in the People's Revolutionary Republic of Guinea is characterized by the fact that the formerly privileged classes are enjoying new energy which has projected them to the same level as others".

Law no 4 of November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1958 in its article 10 gave the same political, economic and social rights to women and men. This is a fundamental achievement. Up to independence no woman had any political and administrative responsibility in any

The Guinean Woman has the right to elect and to be elected. Women belong to a single organization within the Democratic Party of Guinea and are organized from the summit that is from the village to the national level.

At the level of the 2.433 villages or local Revolutionary Powers (P.R.L.) 17.031 Women are leaders that is 7 in each P.R.L.

At the level of the 302 sections of the Parti corresponding to the district 2.114 assume leading roles. Each executive committee includes 7 Women.

At the level of the 35 Federations of the Parti (corresponding to the 35 Administrative Regions of the country) 235 Women are leaders that is 7 in each organ

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The labour code in its articles 146 to 152 of title stipulates prohibition :  
execution of some type work by pregnant women :

a) right to 14 week maternity leave without interruption of the employment contract.

b) The possibility of leaving work without notice during pregnancy and nursing periode.

c) The need to grant an hours' rest the nursing mother. It is also worth noting

- The obligation to recruit in all primary Revolutionary centres (C.E.R.) an equal number of boys and girls.

- Admission of girls in all vocational schools according to their option and their training in the National Productivity Centre (C.N.P.) like boys.

To article 152 was added the following law :

" A married woman who is having her own job should contribute to the household expense in proportion to her and her husband's means. "

The national social security code offers guarantees to the woman and no deduction is done from her salary. This code provides by virtue of articles 191, chapter I, title II, family allowance and loans in kind or cash in the event of sickness or disability. This same code provides free care to the mother and child.

Enactment n°28/PRG. of August 15, 1959 makes marriage control by the state compulsory. Civil marriage becomes compulsory and must be performed before a Government officer (The Mayor of the P.R.L. or the district officer and the first woman leader of the P.R.L.) civil marriage must precede religious marriage of any kind. The party has taken adequate measures to ensure homogeneity to the family and to give it a greater social cohesion. These measures aim at suppressing every traditional obstacle to marriage :

- Compulsory marriage was abolished by articles 135, 134 of the people and liberality Code. Exorbitant dowry which reached 500.000 C.F.A. Francs has been reduced to the symbolic amount of 500 sylis (25 U.S. \$) for the unmarried girl and to 250 Sylis (12,5 U.S. \$) for the woman who has already contracted a first marriage. The marriage age the girl is 17 Years.

- Laying down of laws which aim at promoting the stability of house keeping.

- The act 54 lays down the necessary conditions for the validity of marriage and the respective duties of the married couple.

- The law which prohibits polygamy and regulates divorce, dissipates all ambiguity within the field of marriage and institutes monogamy. However, some impairments are provided for in case of the sterility of the woman confirmed by medical authorities and, this taking into account the African mentality which gives great importance to child when it is question of the continuation of offspring. Families which are already polygamous keep all the same their statu quo.

- In case of divorce, the widow has right to assume the guardianship of the children up to the age of seven. No relatives of the defunct have a right to touch any family effects.

- Any child born outside the legal marriage is entitled to recognition and care by his her father.

- Concerning succession, women can no longer be considered as objects can inherit, they are entitled to the heritage of their deceased husbands. Even in polygamous families, they are, whether they have children or not, as full heirs as the children.

In addition, a married woman may still go by her maiden name.

Three series of powers lay within the prerogatives of the married woman :

- The power of collaboration
- The personal power
- The power of representation.

- The legal power of the married woman is effective. It provides her with liberty and responsibility within the family, and thus assures the economic and social development of the people as a whole.

## II.- WOMAN'S PARTICIPATION TO DEVELOPMENT.

The fundamental pillars which helped Guinean woman to apply her capacities to the service of the Nation's development are the education and the guarantee for all fields of activities.

a) - School Education : Our government has taken measures which provide the same rights to education for both male and female youngsters.

In our country education is co-educational free and compulsory for the first twelve years of schooling. The infrastructure has been established in such that in every village or district of town there exists a Revolutionary Education Centre (C.E.R.), i.e. school of primary education covering the first six years and whereby National Languages are used through as medium of instruction.

At the level of the Revolutionary Powers of District, the C.E.R. of 1st and 3rd Cycles, that is secondary education or university training.

Faculties of 4th cycle (higher education) fall under the Regional Revolutionary Powers, for the first three years which represent the first division of higher education.

This structuring complies with the guiding principle of our education system, school and life merging into one reality. It allows students and pupils remain in permanent contact with the realities of their birthplaces.

The difficulties encountered in the integration of young girls into school way of life have lessened due largely to free education, changes of mental and guarantee for jobs on completing studies. In this scope and within the frame of family planning, our government has decided to insert sexual education in the school teaching programmes at the secondary and higher levels of education.

The percentages of young girls attending schools confirm their presence in all streams of studies :

- Medical school and Pharmacy : 70 %
- Faculty Administrative Legal Sciences : 50 %
- Training Colleges : 65 %
- Faculty Agriculture (Agronomy) : 40 %
- Faculty of Geology and Mines : 25 %
- Vocational Schools : 25 %

b) - EXTRA CURRICULA ACTIVITIES.

The aftermaths of the colonial occupation created in our country a great number of illiterate people, namely among the female cross-section of the population. To put this state of affairs, the Central Power decided as from 1977 to put forward literacy as a criterium forelligibility. This permanent concern about literacy was already being dealt with in the Centres of Feminin Promotion (C.P.F.) which had well defined programmes of action.

These Centres, thirty-six all together, located in both rural and urban areas are both training centres and units of production complying with laws and regulations governing the industrial and commercial enterprises of the state, and placed under Ministry of Social Welfare.

The creation of these C.P.F. is to promote the integration of woman into development, economic life in giving her a professional qualification that will help her to participate better to the yielding of production for the benefit of all, herself and children ; it will secure her a theoretical and practical training in the valorisation of féminin fruitful activities. The practical activities of the C.P.F. are

- Cottage industry (dying, pottery, basket trade weaving, etc...).
- Sewing (napkins, school uniforms, overalls, hospital and hospital bed-sheet table cloths, needlework, etc...).
- Washing - Laundry
- Cookery

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- Animal husbandry on a small scale
- Processing of foodstuffs (grains) flower, paste, oil, tec....) and other su soap making.

Let us underline here that the sections dealing with laundry and food making are becoming more and more active in some C.P.F., offering to their customers better prices than elsewhere.

- In practising these activities women become familiar with the techniques of family saving, food and clothing hygiene, the environmental hygiene and child care. officering personnel also teach them how to write and read in the National Language

Most of our Centres have food mills, motor pumps and washing machines offered generously by UNICEF, these items alleviate largely houseworks of families.

The management and control of C.P.F. are assured by a Board who, every year have to submit a balance of activities to the National Economic Conference, on equal footing with the other economic units of the State.

About a hundred trainees attend regularly every one of our urban Centres whereby they receive their training carried out by skilled workers operate at home CPFs and receive a salary for such an operation.

In general every Centre is responsible for the sale of its manufactured finished goods. Part of the profit goes to the workers and the other part is used for various expenditures resulting from the running of the Centre.

As for the trainees, they receive a pocket money every three months. The finished products can be sold either during national exhibitions or the occasion of international fairs in addition to local market.

The C.P.F. then appears as a Centre of ideological spreading professional training and emulation between women. There is a wide move aiming at helping women read books published in the National Languages exclusively for them : works of popularisation and information, posters, films on health education, films on environment on the foetal danger and the "onchocercose" which are included among the video material which are used.



The Eleventh Congress of the Party State invited the Regional Committees of women to make arrangements with the Regional Education Office better functioning of literacy classes in compliance with the programme of manual work.

The ideological education women receive allows them to understand and to implement the decisions taken by the Party State for the good functioning of organisms.

Seminars and trainings are periodically organised for further training of the workers of C.P.F. and refreshment courses are offered by the National Centre of Productivity (C.N.P.) for the enterprises and the general administration.

Health education has been given an important place in the programme of training and furthers training of women namely in the rural areas. It is an integral part of activities of the Nation in terms of environment hygiene and protection.

The health inspection and coverage from the village to the urban centre are carried out by sanitary teams constantly on the move. Agents of Health Services organise at P.R.L. level conferences, seminars, meetings and casual talks which are meant to complete the methods of actions used for the success of health education process. It has resulted in greater hospital attendance by people, and this helps with detect diseases widely and early.

Education by means of radio and television through National Languages inform the female population of reality of the moment and provides them with technical and scientific knowledge ; Thus, "For you Militantes" is a radio programme which cammen on the directives of the Party and creates emulation in work. And other programmes "P.R.L. and development", "Woman in the family life" complete education by radio on public Radio-programmes dealing with various themes health helps women to find solutions for various problems of daily life in rural areas: the environment, the rubbish, to drive against mosquitoes, water, parasites of intestine, germs, etc...

c) - USE -

The degree of economic development today is expressed in terms of the participation of women to production.

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In rural-area, woman constitutes an important force working masses (over 92). Her participation is namely registered in the field of agriculture-animal husbandry. To that effect, the Eleventh-Congress of our Party State has invited all the, federations, organisations-to a general mobilisation as as to work out an hectare of vegetables per organisation.

Thus a greater number of women are busy with an active and paid work. The yield of produce from the gardens-have registered reasonable decrease; this of course has a happy repercussion on family budget.

To these fruitful activities are to be added handcraft, small industrial trades and sales of products, all this-is to contribute to the increase of the woman-power and the increase in the purchasing power of the family.

Women participate actively-to the grow of vegetables, the production of industrial crops-and-cash-crops, particularly in the Forest Region where this work occupies 60 % of their time: coffee, tobacco,-tea, rice, palm oil, banana and tubers are the-production-of women of this zone in compliance with the norms laid down by the National Councils of the Revolution.

On the Coast Region or Maritime Guinea, the market gardening-produce, the processing of fish (smoking, salting, etc...) are women's prerogative. They are more experienced in these fields than men.

In handcraft work, within the frame of cooperation, Guinean women communicate regularly their experience and their technique to their-African sisters of sister African countries namely in the field of tie and dye, using other natural and artificial colouring substances..

Thanks to the creation of-the Agro-Pastoral Farms of District (FAPA) and the AGRO-FARMS (FAC), women will have a new market-where to make better use of their potentialities in terms of agro-pastoral activities and to assure their specialisation in agronomy and zootechny.

Today the number of salary earning women has improved considerably, as compared with the Colonial period when a small minority were confined to the primary teaching sector, that of health and Secretariat.

- National Education - : 12 %
- General Administration : 27 %
- Rural Economy : 2 %
- Industry, mines, geology, Postes and Telecommunications, Weather forecast, service, Statistics : 5 %
- Information : 4 %
- Printing : 22 %
- Labour, Justice : 10 %
- Health : - 41 %
- Financial services, Customs : 14 %
- Police and security : 8 %

### III. - PROSPECTS

The condition of the Guinean women has improved indeed during the recent years. However, we should not linger over this self-satisfaction, we must recognise efforts are still to be made so that the female cross-section of the population, representing over half of the population, bring to the development of the Nation a more positive contribution.

That is why the programme of action of our government has among its prospects several points :

- The extension on a large scale of the Centres of Feminine Promotion that will help women in rural areas enjoy a more scientific teaching free of routine that characterises their activities.

Our government with the collaboration of UNICEF, foresees the decentralisation of the Centres of Feminine Promotion (CPF) down to the village order in order to get into contact with the greatest possible number of women. By 1984, a minimum of a hundred Centres must be established.

The drive against the discrimination that still exists in the functions of authority and of responsibility in putting an emphasis on the reconversion of men and women and intensifying the education of women in becoming aware the more of the necessary qualification in the Nation building.

An improvement of the sanitary protection of woman, because of the impact her physical efforts, due to the varied range of her activities, on her state of health.

The alleviation of household works by introducing an appropriate technology for an economy of time and energy.

The creation of pre-school institutions (nurseries, kindergartens) and the extension of the centres for handicapped children.

More scientifically organised literacy classes and the intensification ideological education.

Constancy in the drive against school girls misbehaviour in developing education in changing the backward mentalities of some of the parents and in improving the school infrastructure, in rural zones.

Our legislation foresees, in case of separation of the married couple, the guardianship of children up to the age of seven by the mother. We envisage the guardianship after the age of seven by the most qualified morally and materially of the couple.

In People's Revolutionary Republic of Guinea,

the creative work, the cultural activities far from being a nuance to women in her responsibilities of mother of family, can but render her more dignified and more efficient. This situation that constitutes the pride of Guinea today has been achieved thanks to the effort of formation that has been made.

And to quote President AHMED SEKOU TOURE, father of the Guinean nation, we see that the "Society will be liberated from material needs, it will be in a better position to control the Nature yet, when it will have established the conditions that allow it to make up, fully the second half of the greatest part of its active forces, constituted by women".