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*NATIONAL PAPER SUBMITTED BY
THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN
TO THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN:
EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT, AND PEACE
HELD IN COPENHAGEN, DENMARK
FROM 14 - 30, 1980.*

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I- INTRODUCTION

- 1- *Since becoming a member in the United Nations back in 1955 Jordan has been intensifying its participation in the efforts of the international community to reconstruct a world order based on interdependence, justice, and peace. We are blessed in Jordan to have young, humane and courageous leadership which has provided stability and continuity essential for our international cooperation and national developmental efforts.*
- 2- *One of the greatest obstacles to our developmental process in the ECWA region is the occupation since 1967 of Arab lands due to Israeli aggression inspite of the many United Nations Resolutions and efforts to end the occupation. The continuous tension in the area and the inevitability of another conflict has diverted most of our resources and efforts to strengthen our armed forces. If the present efforts to promote economic cooperation and social development is to have any content the international community must exert every effort to end the occupation of Arab territory by Israel and restore the just and inalienable rights of the Palestenian people.*
- 3- *As in most developing countries Jordan has been concentrating its developmental planning in the 1950's and 1960's mainly on building our basic infrastructure and achieving high rates of economic growth. In fact we managed to achieve a rate of growth of our GNP amounting to 12% during that period. We were able to achieve this growth through mobilising our own domestic resources as well as receiving cooperation from our friends both in the developed world and in the Arab region as well as from developing nations.*
- 4- *During the 1970's we realized along with many other developing countries that our economic growth figures did not provide the adequate response to our developmental problems. In fact in many instances this growth only helped to widen the gap between the rich and the poor. The issue of the distribution of the benefits of the growth especially to the poor and the disadvantaged groups had to come to the forefront. In 1975 during the mid-term review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy we supported the view of other developing countries that although the International Development Strategy for the second U.N. Decade has been very instrumental in bringing about the awareness which was put into concrete shape in the subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly the premises and assumption of the IDS proved to be inadequate. This shortcoming became clearer as new developmental concepts began to take shape. Furthermore, recent developments in world trade and raw materials situation dictated.*

a serious re-thinking on the global economic and social structures.

- 5- *The historical call for the establishment of the New International Economic Order was not only timely but in fact indispensable for maintaining international peace and security. Jordan participated actively in the drafting of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the New International Economic Order.*
- 6- *Since Jordan is committed fully to the principles embodied in the Declaration and Programme of Action of the NIEO our national economic and social developmental thinking and planning had to respond to these new concepts. Social development, equity and justice in the distribution of the benefits of growth, regional planning and restructuring our institutional system accordingly in particular those institutions relating to social development and women are some of the policies followed by our present government.*

II - INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

- 7- *The execution of plans related to integrating women in development, clearly requires appropriate institutional structures. To accomplish this, Jordan has realised that it should give priority to the institutional dimension based on linking the highest political levels with the executive level and its various machineries, both in the public and private sectors. This realization was further strengthened by the international and regional awareness and consensus under the auspices of the United Nations and the Arab League of Nations to establish institutional structures specialized for women's affairs.*
- 8- *In the light of studies based on Jordan's needs and its own experience reflected by the findings of the Department of Women's Affairs, established in 1977 within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, it was decided that in order to achieve total integration of women in development a more comprehensive approach should be adopted and the appropriate institutional dimension should be taken fully into account. This ensures the adoption and promotion by the government and its executive leaders at all levels of women's participation in development as an integral part of a general national policy.*
- 9- *A Higher steering Committee on women's Affairs: This Committee will be headed by the Minister of Social Development and will directly report to the Prime Minister.*

- 10- Directorate of Women's Affairs at the Ministry of Social Development which will initiate, co-ordinate and implement programmes for the integration of women in development. A political decision made by the Jordanian Cabinet entrusted this Directorate with the basic responsibility of co-ordinating its efforts with all concerned ministries and organisations to see to the carrying out of women's programmes according to the approved comprehensive plan. This assures the effectiveness of programmes and their compatibility with the needs of various groups of women to ensure monitoring, co-ordinating the implementation and feedback to the Directorate. The Directorate will have the following machinery as its arms:
- (a) The Secretariat of Women's Affairs: Representatives of the Directorate will be placed at certain ministries and organisations related to women's programmes. These representatives will form the Secretariat of the Directorate.
 - (b) The National Union of Women Federations: At the private sector level, there will be representation of the various women's unions, clubs and associations.
- 11- The Directorate of Women's Affairs aims in its programmes at meeting the needs of the various groupings of women according to their educational, cultural and geographical distribution, whether urban, rural or badia.
- 12- The broad aim of the Directorate is to develop the potential and skills of the Jordanian women in her personal and professional life. On the one hand this belief aspires to increase her effective participation in the economic and social development of her country; and on the other hand to provide her with knowledge in such fields as literacy, health, nutrition, sanitation and civic education aimed at making her a more enlightened and enlightening home-maker.

III- A HEALTH

- 13- The Health Sector has had its share of projects in our development plans. These projects aim at improving and widening the coverage of health services. The principal health objectives during the past five years were as follows:
- (a) Increased coverage and support of preventive health services with special emphasis on school health and Maternal Child Health (MCH).

- (b) Increased coverage and improvement of Curative Health Services in hospitals and health centres.
- (c) Control over imported pharmaceutical products and development of local pharmaceutical industry.
- (d) The availability of emergency services to all Jordanians.
- (e) Upgrading the quality of health services in rural areas and coordinating it with health services in the urban areas.

14- Manpower providing medical care had shown an increasing trend during the period 1975-1978 as illustrated in the following table:

<u>Type of Speciality</u>	<u>Number of Specialists</u>			
	<u>Male</u> <u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u> <u>Female</u>	
	1975		1978	
Physicians	707	37	1058	48
Dentists	119	26	212	29
Pharmacists	233	52	313	65
Registered Midwives	-	157	-	182

The number of health services centres has also increased during the same period as shown below.

<u>Type</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1978</u>
Maternal-child Health	41	58
Respiratory	18	18
Dental	29	36
Rural Health Clinics	250	270
Health Centres	41	77

15- The Ministry of Health in Jordan is devoting increasing attention to Maternal Child Health. This is reflected in the increasing number of Maternal Child Health Clinics. By the end of 1979 there were 58 such clinics which met the needs of 25% of all live births in Jordan during 1979 and 26% of pregnant women during the same year. 200 MCH clinics are needed according to the estimates of the Ministry of Health for the period 1980-1985.

It should be clear from the above that there is poor coverage in our MCH care services as a result of the inadequate type, number and training of health manpower resources, the poor cadres of MCH clinics, and the limited financial resources. The next Five Year Plan 1980-1985 is hoped to address these obstacles to the

delivery of health care through promoting a more dynamic primary health care system and the development of primary health cadres. Due to limitations of resources it is estimated that during the next 5 years it will be possible to set up only half of the needed extra 150 clinics. Furthermore, the Higher Council of Health recently established is presently considering proposals relating to Primary Health Care characterized by dynamism, comprehensiveness and integrated services i.e. health education, prevention, control of endemic diseases, maternal and child health services, upgrading the primary health personnel responsibilities, referral system follow-up and easy access.

16- Nutritional practices in Jordan have been the subject of several studies and surveys during the last decade. The latest published studies regarding the feeding practices of children and mothers in Jordan as of 1975 were:-

- (a) Child Growth and Nutrition in Jordan, (Jordan University 1975).
- (b) Jordan Fertility Survey, (Statistics Department, 1978)
- (c) Beliefs and Practices Affecting Food Habits in Rural Jordan, (CARE with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 1978).
- (d) Fertility and Breast-feeding, (Jordan University, 1978)

Some of the findings of these surveys were as follows : There were some correct and other incorrect popular beliefs and practices in this area. Among the correct practices was breast-feeding which was practiced by around 95% of rural mothers. An example of the incorrect beliefs is that around 44% of rural women thought they must reduce their dietary intake during pregnancy, 39% took the regular amount and only 16% increased their intake.

Based on the findings, these studies recommended that:

- (i) Mothers should be educated about the increased demand for proper nutrients during pregnancy and lactation. Their intake should be increased and quality of food taken is as important as the quantity. Locally available vegetables and animal products may suffice without causing any strain on the family budgets.
- (ii) Breast-feeding remains widely practiced in Jordan. However, further educational efforts should be directed at emphasizing the beneficial effects of breast-feeding, in particular, immediately after birth.

(iii)- The introduction of supplementary feeding and solid foods as early as the third month should be encouraged.

17- In spite of the improvement in the quantity and quality of health services offered to women in Jordan, many problems still exist. Some of these problems are common to other developing countries and others are specific to Jordan because of its special demographic situation. The following is a brief listing of these problems:

- (a) Hospital beds to every 10,000 persons was 17.4 for the year 1980. The next Five Year Development Plan will attempt to increase this number to 30 by 1985.
- (b) Insufficient numbers of trained auxiliary health workers.
- (c) The poor distribution of Health Centres and their inaccessibility.
- (d) The Bedouin woman is especially exposed to health problems. Health services are not available nor accessible to her (4% of the population of Jordan are Bedouins).

Remedies to these problems are further complicated by limited financial resources, lack of manpower, especially of trained women, and finally the relatively inadequate representation of women in policy and decision - making positions.

18- Recommendations:

- (a) What is needed and lacking is data regarding the social, mental and physical health problems of women in their respective roles as mothers, workers and women; as perceived by women themselves. This should be addressed through special surveys that are designed accordingly.
- (b) Collection of data on the number, type and training of providers of auxiliary health workers which is deficient at present.
- (c) Evaluation of the available MCH Services by the use of measurable indices.
- (d) In addition, it is imperative that we know how these services are perceived by women who are the recipients of these services.
- (e) Control on all imported canned foods and pharmaceutical products must be enforced with special attention to expiry dates.
- (f) Training of female primary health workers who will return to their villages and render necessary services.

- (g) Promoting higher education and specialization to women students.
- (h) Women should be adequately represented in decision and policy making positions.

III-B EMPLOYMENT

- 19- The economic development in the region since 1973 has been accompanied by a high demand for skilled manpower. Many Jordanian workers (mainly males) migrated to neighbouring oil-producing Arab countries that offered higher financial incentives.
This has created an acute shortage in the available manpower in Jordan and workers from other countries had to be imported. This situation was instrumental in creating the awareness to the need for training female workers. During the same period, Jordan witnessed a rising rate of inflation which made it necessary for the family to look for extra means of increasing its income to face this world-wide inflation.
Coupled with this, the country's Five Year Development Plan (1976-80) created many job opportunities so that the demand for trained workers exceeded the local supply.
- 20- Statistical data indicates that in 1975 women represented 4.5% of the total working force and 15% in 1979. This positive trend clearly reflects that the Jordanian woman is becoming more active in the economic development of the country and that socially the idea of women joining the working force has become more acceptable.
- 21- However, studies indicate that the present efforts of training women to become better qualified workers is still insufficient and that extra training facilities are needed. This might result in certain stability in the labour market since women are less likely to emigrate to other countries for work.
Another long-range benefit for training women would be that if women work and increase the family income, men would be encouraged to stay in their country instead of migrating and uprooting themselves for the very same reason.
- 22- Another positive trend in the employment of women which took place within the last half decade is that women are seeking employment, and succeeding in being employed, in non-traditional fields. The Jordanian women have entered diverse fields such as engineering, aviation, mass media, computer programming and analysis, and electronics maintenance.

Furthermore, during the same period women started stepping into decision-making positions by being represented in rural and municipal councils, in the National Consultative Council and in a ministerial position .
Despite this new trend, the highest rate of female employment lies within the traditional sectors of public services and administration.

23- An employment survey in 1977 shows that the public sector does not discriminate in employing women due to their marital status. In the private sector, however, there have been no conclusive studies on discrimination in the employment of single, married, divorced or widowed women.

24- Incentives such as day-nurseries, and providing transportation are increasingly offered by employers to attract more women into the working force.

A further incentive to women workers is provided by the new Social Security System which was launched during 1980 and is gradually growing to incorporate most establishments.

25- Although rural women are less qualified educationally, surveys show that a large part of temporary and permanent field workers are women. Agricultural work in Jordan can still absorb a large number of trained females. However, to provide better services rural women should be given more guidance and training in new technological methods and agro-industries as well as in sanitation and nutrition.

III C- EDUCATION

26- Opportunities in education for Jordanian women have advanced considerably. In 1975-76, female enrolment reached 46% of total enrolment in the primary school cycle. The female rates were approximately 41% of total enrolment in the preparatory school cycle, and 38% for the secondary school cycle. Compulsory education in Jordan is for 9 years, i.e. the elementary and preparatory cycles.

27- Latest statistical surveys show that in Jordanian universities, an average of 40% of the student population is female. It is significant to note that in technical colleges such as engineering female enrolment has reached 50%.

28- Vocational training for women is being encouraged. Plans are being launched in the non-traditional occupations for women particularly since studies show that women are being trained in only 14 out of 43 vocational areas now available in Jordan.

- 29- The number of adult education centres for all citizens above 15 and under 40 who did not have the opportunity to go to school is growing rapidly. In 1975 there were 305 such centres, while this year the number has increased to 602 centres.
- 30- In 1975, the rate of female student drop-out was 11.7% but it has decreased to 8.3% in 1980. Civil Law has been amended to sanction marriage for the female after 18 years of age, instead of 16. Labour Laws prevent males and females from working before the age of 16, to enable them to finish their compulsory education. Most factories, companies and industrial public and private institutions require applicants to have the secondary education certificate as a minimum requirement for recruitment.
- 31- Statistical data available for 1980 show that the percentage of students to the total population in urban areas is 34.8% , 34.6% being females . In rural areas, the percentage of students to the total population is 29.9%, 28.2% being females.

IV- CONCLUSION

- 32- The circumstances in Jordan are just right for the establishment of the Directorate of Women's Affairs, its Higher Steering Committee and its public and private machineries, since all sectors of the society feel the need to involve women in the development of Jordan, whether the working women themselves who want improved conditions, women who want new opportunities for work, families who need to augment their income, or employers who need skilled labour. Support for this move has also been forthcoming from the State: first and foremost from His Majesty King Hussein.