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FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN
TO THE YEAR 2000

Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies
for the Advancement of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since the endorsement of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 1/ by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/108 of 13 December 1985, the Secretary-General has annually presented a report to the Assembly on the implementation of the Strategies. Each year the Assembly has adopted a resolution on the basis of the report and requested the Secretary-General to report to its next session on measures taken to implement the provisions of the resolution. General Assembly resolution 44/77 of 8 December 1989 requested the Secretary-General to report in this way to the Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

2. Since 1988, the reports of the Secretary-General have contained two basic sections, as requested in their respective enabling resolutions: an assessment of recent developments relevant to the priority themes to be considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its next session and a report on actions taken to implement the Nairobi Strategies, with particular reference to specific points raised by the Assembly in its resolution from the previous session, on which a progress reporting is expected. The present report continues this practice. In addition, General Assembly resolution 44/76 of 8 December 1989 on elderly women requested a progress report on the operative paragraphs of that resolution. Since most of the work related to that resolution will take place during 1991 as part of the work on the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, the information on progress contained in the resolution has also been included in the present report, rather than being presented separately.

3. The present report has been prepared in consultation with the organizations of the United Nations system.

II. PRIORITY THEMES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AT ITS THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION

4. The priority themes to be considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fifth session in 1991, under the headings of equality, development and peace, deal with two different but related issues. The problems of identifiable subgroups of women are addressed under the headings of equality and peace. Here the focus is on the sex-related problems of women who, because of their special characteristics, experience not only the problems common to all women, but also specific difficulties because of their socio-economic and health condition, age, minority status or a combination of these factors. They include groups identified as "vulnerable" for which obtaining equal opportunity is a means of advancement. They also include refugee and displaced women (and children) who are specifically vulnerable because of war, conflict and natural disaster.

5. The second theme is strengthening of national, regional and international machinery for the advancement of women, including non-governmental organizations. Here, the issue is equipping institutions with the capacity to acquire, analyse and use information about the relationship of women's situation and broader development

policy. One of the functions is to ensure the type of gender-based analysis that can permit Governments to identify and deal with the problems of specific subgroups of women.

A. Equality: vulnerable women, including migrant women

6. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies ^{1/} in its section on "Areas of special concern" (see chap. IV) referred to a number of different groups of women. Although those groups are diverse and their problems vary considerably, they have in common the need to remove the multiple obstacles facing them as groups and to place emphasis on addressing the social, economic and human dimensions of their vulnerability and their consequent underprivileged position.

7. Because of the different conditions faced by them, the approach taken has been to look first at each group individually and then to seek to identify policies that will be common to all. The groups of vulnerable women to be considered in the present report include young women, elderly women, disabled women, migrant women and female heads of household.

8. For each group it is recognized that the basis of vulnerability is multi-dimensional and reflects an interrelation among social, economic, psychological, political and cultural factors, as well as sex. It is necessary to identify carefully the specific factors leading to vulnerability in each case, with a view to identifying coherent policies to recommend. For each group, an effort was made to use an existing expert meeting to explore the issues. In addition, the group focus will be an important aspect of preparing the priority theme under the rubric of development for the 1992 session of the Commission on the Status of Women entitled "Integration of women in development". Thus, the expert groups and seminars will have explored both elimination of obstacles, as an input to the 1991 priority themes, and the positive contribution members of each group can make, as an input to 1992.

1. Young women

9. Issues regarding young women were discussed at a seminar on the integration of young people into society, held in June 1990 at Toledo, Spain, as part of the activities of the United Nations Social Development Division in the field of youth. While youth does not inherently lead to vulnerability, the situation of young women is different from that of young men in fundamental ways that can lead to vulnerability. Indeed, for girls many of the problems of discrimination that begin at birth can continue through youth.

10. Persisting gender-based socialization processes tend to assign women the role of mother and housewife, while discouraging activity outside the home and thereby defining women a subordinate status. Preference in access to education and training is often given to males. Although there has been progress in recent years in the female enrolment in first- and second-level education, the world-wide ratio of girls to boys has barely increased from 80.4 girls in 1970 to 81.6 girls to

100 boys in 1984. 2/ For example, 35 per cent of girls in developing countries have no access even to primary education against 22 per cent of boys. Secondary school enrolment rates are also lower: 63 per cent of girls against 52 per cent of boys are out of schools. 3/ But even if they have access to education or training, girls are usually oriented towards occupations that are traditionally female, a circumstance that favours the continuance of traditional segregation in the labour market.

11. Moreover, young women often have a vulnerable position in the labour market. They are concentrated in low-skilled, lower paid, less prestigious occupations, work under unfavourable conditions, are more often ready to accept illegal work or undertake undeclared work inside or outside the house, which is not counted in national statistics. Unemployment strikes women more than men. For example, in 1989 the percentage of unemployed young women in nine European Economic Community (EEC) countries has been higher than the relevant figures for young men, reaching as high as 64.4 per cent in Portugal and 67.4 per cent in Belgium. 4/ Fewer opportunities in terms of education and employment also affect young women's participation at all levels of decision-making.

12. Girls may be encouraged to early marriage and motherhood. For example, 25 per cent of girls in Africa, Asia and Oceania are married at the age of 16 and teenage pregnancies are common. 5/ In that sense, the role of sex education is important. Moreover, in some countries, for economic survival, young women may fall into prostitution.

2. Elderly women

13. The vulnerable situation of young women carries over to elderly women in that persisting lower levels of education and training, limited numbers of occupations, lower level of remuneration and consequently lower levels of pension, if these exist, particularly expose elderly women to poverty. Social isolation, neglect and ill-health (including a significant degree of disability) are factors which very often characterize the status of elderly women. At the same time, elderly women, whose numbers are increasing, both absolutely and as a percentage of the population, constitute valuable human resources that are currently under-utilized for development.

14. Women in many countries have a longer life expectancy and constitute well over half of the elderly population of the world. If, in 1980, women aged 60 and over outnumbered men in the same age group by 45.5 million, they are projected to outnumber their male counterparts by 74 million by the year 2025. As can be seen from table 1, women outnumber men in both developed and developing countries, but especially in the former. Longer life-expectancy for women can be explained by several reasons, including the greater biological resistance of women. At the same time, such factors as alcohol and tobacco abuse, occupational injuries and stress-related disease also contribute to shorter life expectancy of men. It should be noted, however, that when women have a lower status than men, have high fertility and lack basic medical attention, women do not outlive men on the whole.

Table 1. Sex ratio a/ in the less developed and more developed regions, 1975 and 2025

Age group	1975		2025	
	Developing regions	Developed regions	Developing regions	Developed regions
60-69	96	74	94	78
70-79	88	62	86	75
80+	78	48	73	53

Source: Based on estimates and projections of population by sex and age, 1950-2025, prepared by the Population Division of the United Nations.

a/ Number of men per 100 women of the same age group.

15. The two basic sources of vulnerability among elderly women are economic insecurity and health. With regard to economic security, social security schemes, where they exist, still tend to favour men. Female survivors, especially, tend to receive inadequate benefits. Social security schemes seldom provide coverage to persons working in informal sectors, including agriculture, small trade and domestic work, where women are heavily represented. The process of family disintegration, shorter male life expectancy coupled with age differentials at marriage often combine to leave many older women with little economic support. When health problems related to age begin to appear, older women's relative disadvantage is compounded. While men tend to be cared for by their spouses, women - who usually outlive their spouses - must depend on younger relatives, on friends or on the community. Thus, community-based health and social services for elderly and disabled women are often given high priority in formulating the relevant policy as these factors contribute to the advancement of their status. Some of these dimensions will be explored in an interregional conference on population aging to take place in Japan in October 1990 under the sponsorship of the United Nations Population Division.

16. Further analysis of the role of elderly women in development will be undertaken at a special expert group meeting to be organized in 1991 in relation to the preparation of the priority theme on integration into development, as requested in Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/38 of 24 May 1989 and General Assembly resolution 44/76.

17. In light of the heightened data requirements on elderly women as well as men and for the study of population aging, the United Nations Statistical Office has begun work on the collection of comprehensive statistics on aging and plans to publish in 1992 a special issue of the Demographic Yearbook on aging and a statistical chart on aging to highlight major findings. As part of preparations for these publications, a questionnaire on aging has been sent to national

statistical offices along with the regular questionnaires for the Demographic Yearbook. This questionnaire requests data from each country on age distribution, household size and living arrangements and disability, with special reference to the problems and needs of elderly women and men. Each of these tabulations is requested by age and sex. In addition to disseminating data in the Demographic Yearbook 1990, plans are under way for data dissemination on computer tapes and diskettes.

3. Disabled women

18. Disabled persons of both sexes confront discrimination. However, disabled women are doubly disadvantaged in terms of education, employment, rehabilitation and public income support. Furthermore, disabled women have fewer chances of getting married and setting up their own family as compared with disabled men.

19. The issue was considered at a seminar organized jointly by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women and Disabled Peoples' International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, at Vienna from 20 to 24 August 1990, with substantive support from the Social Development Division and financial support from the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The participants were largely disabled women from non-governmental organizations dealing with disability issues, as well as United Nations system organizations concerned with the issues, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The seminar discussed the factors related to disability in women and the extent to which there are gender-differences among disabled. It focused on problems related to the provision of public services to disabled women in terms of health, social security, education, vocational training and rehabilitation and employment. The emphasis here was design of services to meet the particular needs of disabled women, even beyond those of disabled persons generally. The importance of providing disabled women with equal access to those and other services was stressed.

20. The seminar also dealt with social factors concerning the acceptance of disability in women and how they could be modified to permit autonomy and independent living, as well as marriage and family life. Here the emphasis was on elimination of stereotypes about disabled women and providing the necessary structure in which disabled women could attain autonomy and self-realization.

4. Migrant women

21. The issues concerning the vulnerability of migrant women were discussed at the Interregional Expert Group on Migrant Women, organized by the United Nations Population Division at San Miniato, Italy, in March 1990. Female migration, including both independently migrating women and those who move to follow their family, has been gradually increasing in all parts of the world. Unfortunately, there are no generally comparable statistics on female migration, because migration statistics, like many others, are not reported by sex. Percentage of foreign-born

inhabitants of a country is a good proxy measure, as foreign birth is usually a sign of previous migration. Several studies in Western Europe indicate that the proportion of female migrants is growing. There was a sharply upward trend in almost all countries, from an average of 30 per cent in the 1960s to 45 per cent in the 1980s. Projections suggest that women will constitute the largest part of the foreign-born population in the medium and in the long run. 6/ Women migrants face discrimination both as women and as migrants in legal, socio-economic and political terms, particularly if they migrate to countries where legal provisions for equality between men and women do not exist or there is a strong traditional perception of women's role in society.

22. At the same time, when women move to countries where their status is higher than in their home countries, migration is a step towards individual improvement. Women can develop a different self-concept and strive for personal aspirations linked to economic independence. For migrant couples, this might entail changes in family relationships and lead to conflicts and frustrations. The task is to adjust both men and women to the new norms and standards, assure that they are aware of and exercise these rights. Programmes to ease adjustment by providing language training as well as other orientation are ways of eliminating many problems.

5. Female heads of household

23. The number of female-headed households is increasing all over the world. Factors contributing to this increase are the growing participation of women in the labour force, which allows them the possibility of economic independence, increasing out-migration of men in search for work and a higher level of marital dissolution, as well as a growth in female-headed households among women who have survived their spouses. The basis for female-headship has shown a tendency to change from predominantly widowed to divorced and never married. The percentage of the total households headed by women varies by countries from a global average of around 20 per cent to 30 per cent to as high as 40-50 per cent. Female-headed households in both developing countries and developed countries alike are more likely to be poor than male-headed households, especially where social support systems are weak. Indeed, female-headed households are beginning to form the core of what has been termed the "feminization of poverty".

24. The relatively higher incidence of poverty in female-headed households stems from the fact that female-headed households typically have one potential wage-earner who in addition must also bear the full burden of child- and dependant-care. The effort to balance the two roles, in a context where women's access to the labour market is inferior to men and where they typically must take lower-paying jobs, means that it is difficult to perform either effectively. Similarly, their lack of access to technical and economic services, as well as other factors of production, can prevent them from earning acceptable incomes from agriculture or self-employment. For many women, the choice is between work and caring for dependants; this is often accompanied by psychological or social problems. The extent to which this occurs depends on the effectiveness of support systems, whether provided from within the family or by the community or the State. It is often thought that problems are different between developed and developing

countries where extended families are assumed to provide a social support to female heads of household, but this assumption remains to be proved.

25. The specific problems of female heads of household in both developed and developing countries will be examined as part of a final expert group on vulnerable women, to take place at Vienna from 26 to 30 November 1990.

6. General issues

26. It should be noted that vulnerability has a cumulative character, where characteristics are frequently interrelated and overlapping. To be old or young, disabled or the head of household and female has a multiplier effect as it often implies poverty, social neglect and isolation. Some of the problems of vulnerability can be seen in terms of comprehensive social policy rather than in terms of group-specific policies. Failure to do so might result in unnecessary competition among different groups for scarce public resources.

27. The disadvantages arising from vulnerability can prevent women from active participation in development. Awareness of the specific gender-bases for the problem is a first step towards formulating strategies, policies and programmes to promote the full integration of all vulnerable women into development.

28. The expert group on vulnerable women at Vienna in November 1990 will examine the common factors that underlie vulnerability and the types of action, public or private, that could help mitigate the effects of those factors. The meeting will examine the results of group-specific discussion and seek to draw general conclusions. The results, together with group-specific recommendations, will form the basis of the report to be submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fifth session.

B. Development: national, regional and international machinery for the effective integration of women in the development process, including non-governmental organizations

29. Strengthening national machinery was an issue considered by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1988 under the rubric of equality, where the emphasis was placed on the consideration of the role and structure of national machinery. The thirty-fifth session in 1991 will consider the development aspects of this issue, emphasizing the means by which national machinery can be strengthened with the support of regional and international institutions. Attention will be given to the role of non-governmental organizations at all levels in the process.

30. During the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, more than 50 per cent of the present national machinery was established. That has been considered one of the factors that contributed to the effectiveness of the Decade. The specific structure varies according to the economic, social, political and cultural context of each country, but the necessity of having one has been clearly recognized. In 1989, the Directory of National Machinery published by the

Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Office at Vienna included information about national machineries in 91 countries and additional data was annexed on 37 countries, for a total of 128 countries. This compared with only 71 countries included in the 1988 edition of the Directory. An update of the Directory is currently under way.

31. The basis for the consideration of the role, objectives and major functions of national machinery in 1988 derived from the Seminar on National Machinery for Monitoring and Improving the Status of Women, which took place at Vienna in September and October 1987, and a technical seminar on information systems for national machinery also held at Vienna in January 1988. The latter seminar, in particular, stressed the importance of information systems development for the effectiveness of national machinery, including development and use at national level of comprehensive statistical indicators on the status of women. The usefulness of national machineries exchanging information between themselves, bilaterally or multilaterally, on issues of mutual concern, including information on policies and measures, was also emphasized.

32. The main function of national machinery is catalytic: to promote advancement of women by assuring that women's concerns are incorporated in all relevant national policies and programmes. By a combination of advocacy and careful technical analysis, national efforts for development can be prevented from having negative effects on women and actively promote women's advancement.

33. Many models of national machinery exist. In some countries, a women's unit (often at ministerial level) is established in the prime minister's or president's office. In others, a line ministry (usually social affairs) may contain a women's division. In some, it is a full-fledged ministry or an ombudsmen's office. A common practice in some countries is to designate a non-governmental organization as the national machinery. Whatever the form they take, successful national machinery have two characteristics: they are able to mobilize information and they have a direct channel to decision-makers. In short, they are visible at the political level and have a formal and informal network in the public and private sectors, as well as close co-operation with non-governmental organizations and grass-roots women's movements.

34. Starting from the consensus on the role and function of national machinery, reflected in Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/30 of 26 May 1988, as well as in recommendations XXIII and XXIV, contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15 of 24 May 1990, the focus of the report of the Commission on its thirty-fifth session will be oriented to increasing the role of national machinery in the advancement of women as an instrument of development and to the identification of regional and international mechanisms to provide assistance to national machinery.

35. Efficient functioning of national machinery requires the support of the Government in terms of resources and publicity for its work. As a result of technical co-operation activities, as well as other information, it is clear that most national machinery lack one or both of these. The typical national machinery lacks sufficient human and technical resources to provide the information base from

which political visibility and the ability to mobilize support must come. They are small, lack equipment and trained staff and have often diverse goals.

36. Public resources are always limited and if national machinery are to function, it is necessary first to analyse the resources available as against the resources needed in terms of finance, professional skills, information management, planning and budgeting and define the set of priorities within the context of a final goal. Special emphasis should be placed on establishing the comprehensive information base that allows the social monitoring of the situation of women to perform and consequently achieve real practical results.

37. Since integration of women in the development process is a global objective, its achievement depends heavily on joint international efforts. Experience of different countries, as well as regional and international ones, can contribute a lot to the efficient functioning of national machinery in a given country. The issue is how to mobilize this international support in a practical, co-ordinated and cost-effective way. A first step is to analyse existing international policies, procedures and methods of assistance to national machinery and co-ordinate them with national efforts.

38. Based on a joint activity between the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Division for the Advancement of Women, an effort is being made to diagnose the assistance needs of national machinery in all regions and, through informal consultations, identify co-ordinated approaches among development co-operation organizations, both bilateral and multilateral. The results of a series of technical seminars concerned with national machinery in the context of specific issues, meetings of groups of national machinery at both regional and global levels, diagnostic efforts by individual countries and advisory missions will provide the factual basis for the preparations of the themes.

C. Peace: refugee and displaced women and children

39. The situation of refugee and displaced persons continues to be dramatic. According to currently available estimates, the world refugee population is approximately 14 to 15 million persons and the number of displaced persons may even be larger. Most are women and children. Their situation can be particularly difficult as they are not only confronted with the trauma of uprooting often related to armed conflict but they are also deprived of normal family and community ties, and also they are forced to assume an abrupt change in socio-economic roles and status. It was only recently, during the United Nations Decade for Women, that it has been realized that refugee and displaced women and children merit special attention.

40. The Executive Committee of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has adopted various resolutions calling for increased attention to the specific resources and needs of refugee women. In particular, they have focused on the vulnerability of refugee women and children in areas of security, particularly related to sexual and physical abuse and exploitation. As well, they emphasized the resources and experience represented by refugee women and

the need to promote their participation in the planning and implementation of protection and assistance programmes, in order to ensure their equitable access to the benefits of such activities.

41. To analyse those issues, an expert group meeting was convened in July 1990 by the Division for the Advancement of Women, with the co-operation of UNHCR and financial support of UNIFEM. The needs of refugees and displaced women and children were discussed under four major categories: protection issues, assistance issues, durable solutions and participation in decision-making. Because displaced women and children have a different legal status than refugees, they were dealt with separately.

42. The meeting recognized that the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of refugee women must be respected. It entails ensuring compliance not only with the provisions of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, but also with those of the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their two additional Protocols of 1977 and the International Covenants on Human Rights of 1966. In addition to sharing the basic needs of all other refugees, refugee women and children have particular protection needs in relation to the determination of their status, protection from sexual and physical abuse and exploitation, as well as protection from discrimination. These instruments are gender-neutral, but in their application women may find it difficult to obtain the same refugee status as men, usually only on the basis of the principle of family unity under which granting of refugee status to the man in a family leads to the spouse and children being given that status. Discrimination based on sex has not usually been considered as accepted reason for obtaining refugee status. The absence of trained and sympathetic interviewers, especially women, has been found to be reasons why women are reticent to recount experiences that might justify their qualifying for refugee status.

43. In addition to the basic needs shared with all other refugees, women and children have special protection needs that reflect their gender and age; they need protection against sexual and physical abuse and exploitation and protection against sexual discrimination. With regard to material assistance, there is a need to ensure that women have the same access to supplies as men.

44. There is increasing recognition that the relief-focused activities appropriate to the emergency phase of refugee situations must be supplemented by the development-oriented approaches in long-term refugee situations in order to promote self-reliance. Refugee women should be considered agents for development rather than as merely passive beneficiaries of programmes. Assistance in various spheres should be examined in a development context that in conformity with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies that asserts that all women regardless of condition should be enabled to exercise their full potential for individual growth and contribution to society. Special attention should be given for development and diversification of education and training and economic opportunities aimed towards the appropriate durable solution.

45. Durable solutions are the major focus of refugee programmes. Whether the solution is a voluntary return to one's country of origin, settlement in a country of first asylum or resettlement in a third country, there should be an effort to involve women in the choice and to make appropriate provisions to ease their transition. This could include rebuilding of homes and infrastructure in the country of origin, provision of training and materials or development of programmes to accelerate adjustment.

46. The crucial task is to integrate refugee women as full and active partners in the process of assessing needs, planning programmes, defining the proper durable solution and implementing them. Participation of women in the management of their own lives, whether it is in camps or other refugee centres, make programmes more effective and has a lasting effect on the women themselves.

47. While the international community has expressly recognized the need for providing international protection, assistance and seeking durable solutions to the problems of refugees, including women and children, and designated international agencies for carrying out these tasks, the same recognition and designation has occurred with respect to the plight of displaced persons. Since most of the problems faced by refugee women and children are common to those of displaced women and children, it is necessary that the international community address this issue as a matter of urgency. Without adequate attention, it is unlikely that displaced women and children will receive the protection and assistance they need and deserve.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/77 ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

A. Monitoring, review and appraisal

48. The Commission on the Status of Women undertook the five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000, as well as the biennial monitoring, at its thirty-fourth session. As required under the comprehensive reporting system for monitoring and review and appraisal, the review was based on a report by the Secretary-General that drew on national reports, material provided by non-governmental organizations, input from the organizations of the United Nations system, international statistics and the results of consideration of priority themes by the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/1990/5). The report provided a picture of changes since the Nairobi Conference. Based on the report, the Commission identified obstacles to the implementation of the Strategies and made recommendations for immediate action to overcome them. The Commission also specified the priority themes that it will consider during the period 1993-1996. The conclusions and recommendations were adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/15.

49. The Commission concluded that, although some progress continued to be made, a combination of economic and political factors had slowed the rate of progress

sufficiently to place the achievement of the objectives agreed upon at Nairobi at risk. Steps would have to be taken in key areas to remove immediate obstacles and thereby accelerate improvements.

50. Emphasis was placed on the role of education in reducing stereotyping of women's roles in society and in providing women with the skills necessary for economic and political participation. In this respect, the relevant steps should be taken to ensure access to education and improve its quality, including reforming formal and informal educational systems at all levels, and to promote change in psychological, social and traditional practices that are the foundation of the de facto obstacles to women's progress. Special efforts should be made to remove all gender-related differences in adult literacy by the year 2000. If possible, by 1995 the Governments should complete the revision of textbooks according to national laws and practice in order to eliminate sex-biased presentations. Consequently, efforts should be continued to ensure equal educational and training opportunities at all levels. Encouragement should be given to promoting women's access to scientific and technological subjects.

51. A second area of action is to promote women's equal participation in the economy, which is still characterized by job segregation, unequal training, unequal pay for the work of equal value, inadequate career prospects and lack of full participation in decision-making. The effort should be renewed to close the gap between women's and men's pay, possibly by 1995, and special measures should be taken to address the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, including measurement of the economic value of women's unpaid work. For this, the United Nations system should complete work on methodological aspects of measuring pay inequities between men and women, unpaid work and work in the informal sector and should publish studies of countries where such measurements have been made.

52. The significant underrepresentation of women in economic and political decision-making needs to be addressed since it constitutes a major obstacle to progress. Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15 stipulates that Governments, political parties, trade unions and professional and other representative groups should each aim at targets to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions to at least 30 per cent by 1995 with a view to achieving equal representation between women and men by the year 2000 and should institute recruitment and training programmes to prepare women for those positions. The United Nations Secretariat, in co-operation with other institutions and Governments, should further develop and disseminate an accessible data base on the composition of the highest decision-making bodies at the national, regional and international levels, disaggregated by sex, and should assist national Governments to set up such data bases.

53. While the Commission did not recommend changing the comprehensive reporting system, it did suggest that the reporting process for the next review and appraisal should be simplified and be based more on information gathered at the international level, including improved statistics. This was reflected in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/14 of 24 May 1990. Further, by its resolution 1990/9 of 24 May 1990, the Council recommended that the United Nations make a special effort to publicize the results of the first review and appraisal.

54. Finally, considering the importance of the issue of environment for women, and in order to contribute to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Economic and Social Council, by its decision 1990/213 of 24 May 1990, added the question of women and the environment to the priority themes to be dealt with by the Commission in 1992 under the rubric of development.

B. Contribution of the organizations of the United Nations system to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women

55. Paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 44/77 reaffirmed the central role of the Commission on the Status of Women in matters related to the advancement of women, and urged all organizations of the United Nations system to co-operate effectively with the Commission in the task of promoting the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies to the year 2000; and paragraph 9 requested the relevant United Nations bodies to continue to provide action-oriented input when reporting to the Commission on the priority themes.

56. The preparations for the work of the Commission have involved considerable input from the organizations of the United Nations system. A system of focal points exists that consists of a network of responsible officials in 32 units of the United Nations Secretariat, seven United Nations programmes, 17 specialized agencies and 10 United Nations research institutes or inter-agency bodies. Organizations provide text and comment on documents to be presented to the Commission, both through annual inter-agency meetings held immediately following the Commission and through the circulation of drafts. The review and appraisal, the monitoring report and the priority theme reports presented to the Commission at its thirty-fourth session all had involved that input. At the Commission meeting itself, 16 organizations were present and contributed to the discussions, both through formal statements and through participation in informal consultations.

57. The 14th Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women, held at Vienna on 12 and 13 March 1990, discussed the ways to ensure efficient response by the organizations of the United Nations system, both to the review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, in general, and the preparation of priority themes for the thirty-fifth session of the Commission, in particular. It was agreed that, in order to facilitate and make more visible the input of organizations of the United Nations system, both agency statements and copies of the most relevant resolutions and summary of the programme of work of the respective agency should be available during the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women. In order to assist in the preparation of the reports on the priority themes, agencies should provide the additional documents at the earliest opportunity. To enhance co-ordination and to improve interaction of the United Nations bodies and agencies, periodic consolidated lists of meetings related to the advancement of women are prepared and issued and a list of future meetings related to the preparation of the priority themes through the year 1995 has been prepared.

58. Organizations of the United Nations system have been substantively involved in the preparation of priority themes for the next session of the Commission. For example, the expert group meeting on refugee and displaced women and children, held

at Vienna from 2 to 6 July 1990, was organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women in co-operation with UNHCR and with financial and substantive support from UNIFEM. It was also attended by substantive specialists from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNRWA, ILO, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and United Nations regional commissions. Similarly, the meeting on disabled women in August 1990 was assisted by specialists from ILO, WHO and UNRWA. The expert group meeting on women and HIV/AIDS and the role of national machinery for the advancement of women to be held at Vienna from 24 to 30 September 1990 is being organized with the assistance of WHO. As noted earlier, the preparation of other priority themes involves similar co-operation.

C. Recommendations of the Commission on the Status of Women on the role of women and their contribution to development, international economic co-operation and the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade

59. Resolution 44/77, paragraph 7, requested the Commission on the Status of Women to consider during its thirty-fourth session in 1990 the role of women in and their contribution to development, international economic co-operation and the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade. The Commission considered those issues and made recommendations, which were adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolutions 1990/10 and 1990/15 of 24 May 1990.

60. In the recommendations, the critical role that women, comprising half of available human resources, play in the development process was stressed and also that, without the advancement of women, development will be difficult to achieve. However, for the majority of women, economic and social development have not resulted in the expected benefits. Indeed, the increase of feminization of poverty reflects the underlying structural problems faced by women in the midst of economic changes.

61. Bearing that in mind, it was recommended that the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Preparation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade should identify strategies for ensuring that women's needs and contribution to the development process are reflected in all aspects of the international development strategy, including human resource development and economic growth. Measures should be considered to ensure the full and effective participation of women in development, taking into account Economic and Social Council resolutions 1989/105, paragraph 11, 1990/10 and 1990/15, annex, section B.

62. Member States were also urged to give special attention in their contributions to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee to the role of women in development, and to consult with national machineries and non-governmental organizations concerned with those issues.

63. The Economic and Social Council also decided, by its resolution 1990/10, that the Commission should monitor the implementation of the international development strategy as it pertains to women and development in the context of its review of the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies.

D. World conference on women in 1995

64. In paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 44/77, the Assembly requested the Commission on the Status of Women to consider at its session in 1990 the question of holding, in 1995, a world conference on women, at the lowest possible cost, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its forty-fifth session. The Commission recommended holding such a conference in 1995 and this was embodied in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/12 of 24 May 1990. That resolution recommended that (a) a world conference on women should be held in 1995, (b) the Commission, as the preparatory body for the conference, should include preparations in its regular programme of work during 1991-1995 under the item on monitoring the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies, (c) requested the Secretary-General to include the relevant costs of preparing and convening the conference in the programme budget of the Organization for the bienniums 1992-1993 and 1994-1995 within the respective budgetary limits, and (d) further requested the Secretary-General to make proposals on the preparation and convening of the conference for submission to the Commission at its thirty-fifth session.

65. In the statement of programme budget implications presented to the Council (E/1990/25/Add.1), the Secretary-General estimated the probable cost of the conference at \$2 million, of which over half consisted of conference-servicing costs that were expected to be absorbed within the normal conference servicing resources. He also noted that there would be a need to strengthen the Division for the Advancement of Women temporarily with three Professional and four general service posts to cope with the increased work-load. As a headquarters conference, as is usual in such cases, the conference will take place at the headquarters of its secretariat, which is Vienna.

66. The purpose of the conference would be to conduct the second review and appraisal of the Forward-looking Strategies and to determine those measures necessary to ensure that the Strategies achieve their objectives during the last five years before the end of the century, especially at the national level. The conference would provide Governments, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations and the United Nations system with a focus for preparations of national reviews and appraisals, provide a forum for exchange of experience, set targets and mobilize interest in the issue. The emphasis would be on the preparatory process, especially at the national and regional levels.

67. Based on its programme of work, it is anticipated that the Commission will determine, at its 1991 session, the main themes of the Conference, as well as a programme of preparations. Regional preparatory meetings have already been mandated in three regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean) for 1993 and 1994 and informal consultations have been held among the concerned secretariats on preparations.

E. Interregional consultation on women in public life

68. Paragraph 13 of resolution 44/77 endorsed the convening of a high-level interregional consultation on women in public life. The results, in conformity with resolution 33/2 of 6 April 1989 of the Commission on the Status of Women, as endorsed by Economic and Social Council decision 1989/129 of 24 May 1989 will be made available to the Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

69. It is suggested that the consultation be entitled "Women in Politics: the Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life". It is scheduled to take place at the Hofburg Palace at Vienna from 10 to 12 September 1991. As recommended (recommendation VI) by Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15 on the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, the consultation "should have maximum participation by Governments and non-governmental organizations and should elaborate for the first half of the decade an agenda for political action that will mobilize all women to participate actively in the political process". In that sense, it would be a preparatory activity to the 1995 world conference on women and would also form the basis for the priority theme under the rubric of peace for consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1992.

70. It is proposed that the emphasis should be on the difference women can make in politics. The absence of women in large numbers from decision-making has been amply documented. Indeed, recent results of parliamentary elections in Europe, as reported by the Inter-parliamentary Union, note that despite improvements in a few countries, in most countries where elections have recently been held - mostly in Eastern Europe - the percentage of women elected to parliaments has declined sharply. The overall figures have declined from 19.1 per cent on 1 January 1988 to 13.6 per cent on 30 June 1990.

71. The importance of increasing the participation of women in politics was stressed during the review and appraisal of the Nairobi Strategies. There are almost no formal legal impediments to women exercising this right, meaning that the issue is one of practice rather than law. Politics for women in practice mostly means "getting things done" and "making a difference" at the grass-roots level, rather than engaging in more formal institutional politics or "public life". There is a gap between women's effective activism in the issues of immediate and often local importance to them, and their participation in the broader national and international arenas where the issues of concern to them may be submerged by the interests of an overwhelming majority of men. Moreover, women's perception of global issues is often different from that of men. It is at the subnational and local levels that women's effectiveness and areas of primary interest are demonstrated and from which an agenda of political issues relevant to women, and to the community at large, can be constructed.

72. The purpose of the consultation would be to examine the factors that would encourage women to translate their concern for issues at a local level into an interest in national political participation and to elaborate an agenda of issues that can mobilize women's interest in politics and which could be used as a basis of information campaigns, education and action by women in all political parties

and associations. For these issues, the consultation should show how women decision-makers in large enough numbers would reach different conclusions, set different priorities and suggest newer solutions than would otherwise be the case.

73. The consultation would bring together active political leaders from all over the world, participating in their individual capacity, although nominated and funded by their countries. Ideally, each country would send one or several women who currently hold office in government, political parties, unions or interest association and who are considered to have the potential for high office. Based on a combination of formal meetings and informal caucusing, the consultation, a form of global women's political caucus, would agree on a final agenda of action, which could be presented to the world at large through mass media coverage.

74. The preparations for the consultation have already been included in the programme budget of the United Nations. Preparatory work will be undertaken by an expert group meeting at Vienna from 27 to 31 May 1991. The group will examine how women in different countries and regions are making a difference in politics at the subnational, local and neighbourhood level; identify those issues that have particularly mobilized women's support and interest; identify those factors that have influenced the outcomes of elections and political decisions; and draw preliminary conclusions about the best means of eliciting women's greater participation in politics.

75. The success of the consultation will depend on the level of national participation, the extent to which the preparations and the consultation itself receive attention in national and international mass media, and the degree to which pointed, multi-partisan issues can be identified and agreed upon. Efforts are underway to obtain extrabudgetary resources to assist developing countries to participate and to improve public information coverage.

F. Situation of the disabled women

76. In paragraph 12 of its resolution 44/77, the General Assembly called on the United Nations and Governments to give special attention to the situation of disabled women, so as to ensure the equalization of opportunities for them in the economic, social and political fields.

77. The Commission on the Status of Women, under the priority theme "Equality: vulnerable women, including migrant women" will review the issue of disabled women at its thirty-fifth session in 1991 from the point of view of obstacles and, at its thirty-sixth session in 1992, from the point of view of their integration in development. To ensure full incorporation of disabled women in these themes, as noted above, a seminar on disabled women was organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women at Vienna from 20 to 24 August 1990. The seminar examined the obstacles to full integration of disabled women in development in the context of their double discrimination of being a woman and a disabled person, and focused on practical measures to be taken in this respect.

G. 1994 world survey on the role of women in development

78. By both resolutions 44/77 of 8 December 1989 and 44/171 of 19 December 1989, the Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to continue updating the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, with the next update due to be considered by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in 1994. A number of preliminary drafts and progress reports have been requested for earlier sessions of those bodies, as well as of the Commission on the Status of Women.

79. Based on the guidance provided, the organizations of the United Nations system have begun planning the 1994 survey. The possible structure and approach were discussed during the 14th Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Women in March 1990. A revised proposal is being prepared for the fifteenth inter-agency meeting in March 1991, with a view to ensuring that preparations for the survey are reflected in the work programmes of the co-operating organizations. The first progress report is scheduled to be presented to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session in 1992.

H. Situation of women in the secretariats of the United Nations system

80. Paragraph 18 of General Assembly resolution 44/77 once again called upon the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies to establish five-year targets at each level for the percentage of women in Professional and decision-making positions, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in order that a definite upward trend in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/206 D of 11 December 1986 might be registered in the number of Professional and decision-making positions held by women by 1990, and to set additional targets every five years. For the United Nations Secretariat, Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/3 of 24 May 1990 has requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to increase the number of women employed throughout the United Nations system in posts subject to geographical distribution, and to make a special effort to increase the number of women in senior policy-level and decision-making posts, in order to achieve an overall participation rate of 35 per cent of the total by 1995, without prejudice to the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts.

81. The situation of women Professional staff, as a percentage of all Professional staff at Headquarters and other established posts as at 31 December 1989, is shown in figure 1. The 1989 figures represent an increase over previous years at all levels, as can be seen from table 2. While the percentage of women in regular Professional appointments (first and second officer level) is near the target level of 30 per cent and equality is being approached at the entry-level, the proportion of women at senior and middle management levels continues to be low, especially in the specialized agencies.

82. Since the last report of the Secretary-General (A/44/511), which indicated that quantitative targets had been set by the United Nations Secretariat, WHO, the

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNICEF and the World Bank, additional steps have been reported by the United Nations Secretariat and by UNIDO.

83. In the United Nations Secretariat, special efforts are being taken during 1990 to hasten progress towards attaining the 30 per cent target for women in posts subject to geographical distribution by the end of 1990 and improving their representation at higher levels in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/185 C of 19 December 1989. Among these were the earmarking by departments of at least 50 per cent of vacancies for women; limiting the submission of candidates to women where qualified women candidates for recruitment have been identified; urging managers to propose women candidates for recruitment and placement in higher level posts; seeking women candidates from among former junior Professional officers, associate officers and other project personnel; treating women currently in technical co-operation posts as internal candidates; and establishing a network of focal points in every department and office to work with the focal point for women in the Office of Human Resources Management, as well as in the permanent missions of Member States to the United Nations where possible.

84. UNIDO's policy-making organs at each of its sessions passed resolutions calling for measures to be taken to improve the status of women in the UNIDO secretariat, including the setting of five-year targets for each level for the percentage of women in Professional and decision-making positions and to take the necessary action to ensure that an upward trend be registered in the number of these positions being held by women by 1990. In November 1988 the Director of Personnel Services Division was designated Co-ordinator for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the secretariat and, in January 1989, a comprehensive plan of action was introduced, covering such aspects as recruitment and placement promotions, attitudes and other measures to improve the working conditions of women staff. In order to establish targets and monitor their implementation, internal working groups have been created in each department that are co-operating closely with the Co-ordinator for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the secretariat.

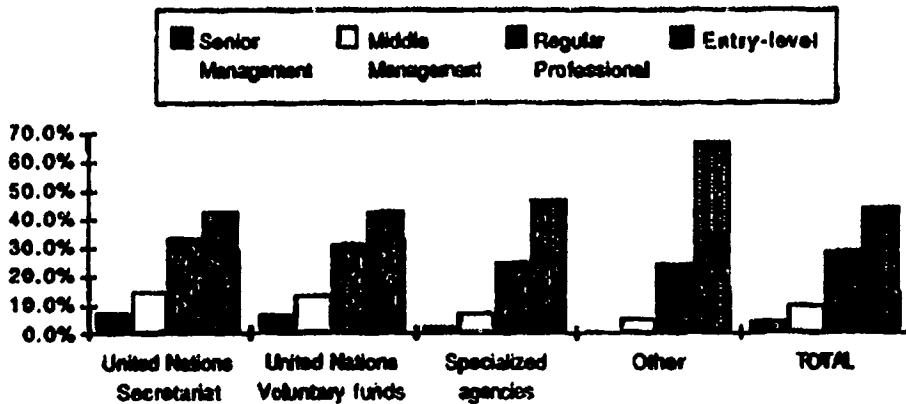
85. Among the efforts undertaken to improve the status of women were special recruitment missions that resulted in an increase in applications from women during 1989 of over 150 per cent. Nevertheless, the low number of women on the UNIDO roster remains one of the obstacles to increasing the number of women in the secretariat. The representation of women in posts subject to geographical distribution increased from 16.7 per cent at the end of 1988 to 17.8 per cent by 1989 and at the end of July 1990 has reached 19.2 per cent. (Women in all Professional posts accounted for 18.4 per cent at the end of 1988, 18.3 per cent by 1989 and in July 1990 for 20.4 per cent.) Although the representation of women at the senior and middle management levels is still low with 6.8 per cent in July 1990, it has increased considerably from 1988 when women accounted only 3.5 per cent in those levels. Although there were no women among the five deputy directors-general, one of the six directors is a woman. Further, while 10 years ago only 18 per cent of the women were to be found in the grades P-4 and above, 40 per cent of the women Professionals were in these grades by 1988 and 46 per cent at the end of 1989.

Table 2. Per cent of women at different Professional levels in the United Nations system, 1987-1989

	<u>Senior management (Director and above)</u>			<u>Middle management (Senior and principal officers)</u>			<u>Regular Professional (First and second officers)</u>			<u>Entry-level (Associate and assistant officers)</u>		
	1987	1988	1989	1987	1988	1989	1987	1988	1989	1987	1988	1989
	(Percentages)			(Percentages)			(Percentages)			(Percentages)		
United Nations Secretariat	5.1	4.5	7.1	10.9	10.3	14.3	29.4	30.2	33.5	35.8	37.5	42.4
United Nations voluntary funds	3.5	6.5	6.6	11.7	12.9	13.3	27.3	28.6	31.0	40.7	40.1	42.6
Specialized agencies	2.3	2.6	2.6	4.1	4.6	6.7	18.9	20.1	24.3	36.6	35.9	46.6
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	2.9	5.1	19.8	18.9	24.0	68.4	56.5	66.7
Total	3.4	3.9	4.6	6.6	7.0	9.5	23.4	24.5	28.5	38.1	37.9	44.0

Source: Consultative Committee for Administrative Questions (Personnel Matters), reports from 1987, 1988 and 1989.

Figure 1. Per cent of female professional staff by level, 1989



Source: Consultative Committee for Administrative Questions (Personnel Matters).

I. Public information programme relating to the advancement of women

86. Paragraph 20 of General Assembly resolution 44/77 requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide for the existing weekly radio programmes on women in the regular budget of the United Nations, with adequate provisions for broadcasts in different languages; it also requested him to develop the focal point for issues relating to women in the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, which, in concert with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, should provide a more effective public information programme relating to the advancement of women.

87. Production of the special radio feature/documentary programme "Women" continues on a weekly basis in English. The Department has also resumed production in Arabic, French and Spanish on a monthly basis. Among the major themes and issues of the series are "Rural Women's Role in the Economy", "United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", "Elderly Women", "Women in Political Life", "Women in Promotion of Peace", "Debate on Women's Status", "United Nations Women's Institute in the Dominican Republic", "UNIFEM", "Income-Generating Women in Kenya" and "Women Confront AIDS".

88. The focal point post for women's issues was filled and with the active participation of the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information of the Secretariat, initiatives have been undertaken to establish an Inter-Agency Advisory Group on Information Activities, which would allow all United Nations system bodies based either in or represented in New York to exchange information on their activities, with a view to collaboration wherever it is feasible and effective. It has been proposed that those regular meetings should produce a quarterly public-oriented calendar of United Nations women's events. Furthermore, programmes on women have been prepared by the regional units in the following languages: English, French, Dutch, French Creole, Spanish, Bangla, Portuguese, Kiswahili, Hindi, Turkish and Indonesian.

89. Efforts to develop a more effective information programme aimed at the public have also resulted in a series of United Nations Focus Features on issues relating specifically to poverty, domestic violence against women, and literacy as a tool for empowering women. Contacts have been established with the media, especially with decision-makers of major English-language women's magazines, as well as with leading New York area educational institutions and with NGOs.

90. In response to ECOSOC resolution 1990/14, the Department of Public Information is preparing a booklet which will increase awareness of the obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, particularly in relation to education and to economic and political participation and decision making.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/76
ON ELDERLY WOMEN

91. General Assembly resolution 44/76 reaffirmed Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/38, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to organize a seminar to study questions arising from an in-depth analysis of the situation of women as they age, and to transmit the results of the study to the Commission on the Status of Women, under the priority theme of development, at its 1992 session, which will also mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Aging. General Assembly resolution 44/76 also invited the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the Statistical Office of the Secretariat of the United Nations to pay specific attention to older women in their efforts to improve methodology for data-gathering on women.

92. The requested seminar on the integration of aging women in development has been programmed to take place in October 1991. It will be organized with the co-operation of all relevant organizations of the United Nations system and will include participation by major international non-governmental organizations concerned with aging, both in planning and execution. Background documentation for the seminar will include an in-depth analysis of the situation of women as they age. The seminar is intended to contribute to the preparations for the priority theme to be considered by the Commission at its session in 1992 and will seek to encourage organizations of the United Nations system to pay particular attention to the role of aging women in development activities as requested by General Assembly resolution 44/76.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, data highlights, No. 7, May 1989.

3/ United Nations Population Fund, Investing in Women: The focus of the 1990s, New York, United Nations Population Fund, 1990.

4/ United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, data highlights, No. 4, January 1989.

5/ United Nations, Fertility Behaviour on the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5), p. 34.

6/ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: "The situation of women migrants", (OECD publications, Paris 1985), The Integration of Women into the Economy, chap. IV.