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of the
UNITED NATIONS
DECADE FOR WOMEN:**

**Equality,
Development
and
Peace**

Copenhagen, Denmark

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REPORT OF THE REGIONAL PREPARATORY
MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA

REGIONAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR
WESTERN ASIA FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE
UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY,
DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE, 1981-1985

Items 8 and 9 of the provisional agenda

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Summary of the final report entitled "The regional programme of action for Western Asia for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 1981-1985"*

Submitted to the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, held at Damascus from 10 to 13 December 1979

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INTRODUCTION

1. The World Conference of the International Women's Year, which was held at Mexico City in 1975, represented a new point of departure in the effort to define the role of women in the development of a society based on equality, development and peace. The Conference approved the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year which, together with the regional plans adopted in the different regions of the world, prompted Governments and peoples to devote serious attention to the integration of women in national development, the promotion of greater equality between women and men and the effective participation of women in establishing a just and peaceful society.
2. In implementing the World Plan of Action, the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA), in collaboration with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, convened a regional conference at Amman from 29 May to 4 June 1978 for the purpose of adopting the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development in Western Asia. The Commission, in turn, adopted the Regional Plan at its fifth session, held at Amman in October 1978. The Plan contained major recommendations for action in different areas of development in order to provide guidelines for national plans and programmes, for joint regional activities and for the kinds of assistance that could be provided by the United Nations and other international bodies, at the request of Governments, to help achieve in the ECWA region the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace.
3. After the Mexico City Conference, the General Assembly, at its thirtieth session, adopted resolution 3520 (XXX) of 15 December 1975, in which, among other things, it decided to convene in 1980 another world conference on women. By resolution 33/185 of 29 January 1979, the Assembly recommended that the 1980 Conference should emphasize the subtheme 'Employment, Health and Education' in the programme of action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women, 1981-1985.
4. By resolution 33/189 of 29 January 1979, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to invite the regional commissions to hold meetings for the purpose of adopting regional programmes of action. By resolution 33/185, the Assembly requested the regional meetings to suggest programme recommendations appropriate to their specific circumstances, emphasizing practical activities and projects, particularly in the areas of employment, health and education, for implementation in the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women. These recommendations were to be based on a review and assessment of achievements, as well as the difficulties and obstacles that had hindered progress, during the first half of the Decade.

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE MEETING

5. The Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women was held at Damascus from 10 to 13 December 1979, in response to an invitation from ECWA and the secretariat of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic acted as host to the meeting which was held under the patronage of the President of the Council of Ministers.

A. Attendance

6. Thirty-four representatives of the following members of ECWA attended the meeting: Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine Liberation Organization, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

7. Also attending were representatives of the secretariat of the League of Arab States, the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Arab Labour Organization (ALO).

8. In addition to the representatives of the secretariats of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women and ECWA, representatives of the following United Nations organizations and specialized agencies attended: Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APCWD/ESCAP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), World Food Programme (WFP), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Women's International Democratic Federation attended the meeting in its capacity as an international non-governmental organization having category I consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

B. Opening session (agenda item 1)

9. At the opening session, statements were made by the Minister of State for Planning of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. George Houraniyeh, the Secretary-General of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Ms. Lucille Mair, and the Executive Secretary of ECWA, Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Attar.

C. Election of officers (agenda item 2)

10. At the first working session the meeting elected the following officers:

Ms. Hajer Sadek (Syrian Arab Republic), Chairperson;
Ms. Maliha Yusif Al Siraji (United Arab Emirates), First Vice-Chairperson;
Ms. Aisha Abdul-Aziz (Democratic Yemen), Second Vice-Chairperson;
Ms. Isam Abdel-Hadi (Palestine Liberation Organization), Rapporteur.

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D. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 3)

11. The agenda was adopted at the first working meeting:
 1. Opening session
 2. Election of officers
 3. Adoption of the agenda
 4. Review and appraisal of the progress made and obstacles encountered in the integration of women in development in Western Asia
 5. Review of ECWA's report on its activities in the field of the integration of women in development in Western Asia
 6. Preparations for the 1980 World Conference at the national level
 7. Inclusion of Palestinian women in the proceedings of the 1980 World Conference and discussion of the two documents on the Palestinian woman
 8. Discussion of the Programme of Action for Western Asia for the second half of the Decade
 9. Adoption of final report including the Programme of Action and the special measures of assistance to the Palestinian woman to be submitted to the 1980 World Conference
 10. Other business
 11. Closing session

E. Documentation

12. ECWA prepared five working documents in Arabic and English:

E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/2	Proposed Regional Programme of Action for Western Asia for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 1981-1985
E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/3	Recent changes and trends in the situation of women in the ECWA region
E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/4	Report on the activities of the Economic Commission for Western Asia in the field of the integration of women in development in Western Asia

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E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/5

Proposed special measures of assistance
to the Palestinian woman

E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/6
(Arabic only)

The social and economic conditions of the
Palestinian woman inside and outside the
occupied territories

The Commission also prepared an Arabic translation of the bulletin of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women and distributed to the participants an information bulletin in Arabic on the women of the world in 1979, prepared by the secretariat of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women.

13. The background documents distributed to representatives included country papers prepared by the Governments of Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates. The Arab Labour Organization submitted to the meeting a document on Arab women and employment.

14. UNIDO, UNDP, the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization also prepared documents for distribution to the participants.

II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING

A. Review and appraisal of the progress made and obstacles encountered in the integration of women in development in Western Asia (agenda item 4)

15. A working paper entitled "Recent changes and trends in the situation of women in the ECWA region" (E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/3) was submitted to the meeting. The paper reviewed progress achieved in the integration of women in development, concentrating on the sectors of education, employment and health. It contained sections on rural and bedouin women, Palestinian women, legislation and the participation of women in political activities, and the different machineries for integrating women in national planning and development. The paper also contained a description of the programmes and activities undertaken by the countries of the region in the above-mentioned sectors.

16. An attempt was made in the paper to identify the basic trends in the integration of women in development by describing the growth in the sectors of education, health and employment. In education, for example, there had been a notable increase in female enrolment in schools at the different levels and in the ratio of girls to boys. There had been an increase in the distribution of female students over the different fields of specialization, in addition to a clear increase in some countries in the percentage of girls specializing in technical and scientific subjects. But the ratio of girls entering vocational and technical schools was still below the ratio required by the labour force for middle-level skills. The need for change in most educational curricula was very great. There were also the problems of the quantitative expansion of enrolment, the gap in educational opportunity between rural and urban areas and the school drop-out rate, particularly after the elementary level.

17. In the field of employment, women's participation in the labour force in most countries was still low, averaging about 5.5 per cent of the total non-agricultural labour force. The ratio of women's participation in the labour force in the modern occupational sector ranged between 1 per cent and 23 per cent. Despite the growth in the female labour force there was still much to be accomplished in social and economic development plans, if the objectives of female employment were to be achieved.

18. There was a lack of data on health conditions classified by sex and the delivery of existing health services. Even though there had been progress in the health status of the population of the region, it was clear that short-comings remained in health services institutions in general and in preventive services and health-care institutions in particular. Those short-comings were greater in rural and sparsely populated areas.

19. During the discussion it was pointed out that in some countries, certain trends were well advanced while in others, they were just emerging. One main trend was the development of programmes for women, from small-scale scattered efforts to systematic and well-organized cross-sectoral programming, integrating the objective of women's participation into the framework of comprehensive national development

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plans. There was also a trend for women's participation to move away from traditional domestic activities by entering the labour force, women were becoming an important element in human resource development. Governments were urged to commit themselves to that objective. Women were also being educated and trained to become an effective element in production and other economic activities. Another trend was identified in connexion with family and mother and child care.

20. The question of the data and the statistics upon which the document was based was raised. It had not been possible to utilize recent data and statistics because most countries had not replied to the questionnaires sent by the United Nations Secretariat to member Governments. Most of the representatives pointed out that the questionnaires were complicated, requiring special field studies to answer them. They emphasized the need for simplified questionnaires and suggested that ECWA should be involved in the design of the questionnaires to ensure the inclusion of up-to-date information on the special problems and needs of and programmes for women. It was recommended that experts should be made available to assist in formulating responses to questionnaires.

21. The participants went on to discuss concepts and terminology that needed to be clarified in the document, such as the concept of economically productive work and its relationship to wages, the question of surplus labour and wage differentials among the countries of the region. They also discussed the concept of household work and its contribution to human resources, especially in terms of raising children, household expenditure and consumption.

22. During the discussion, the question was raised whether to approach and consider the problems of women as a separate issue, because of the specific problems that women faced, or whether it would be preferable to consider them within the total scheme of development. Opinion favoured the idea that the two concepts were complementary, not contradictory. The real problem was to identify the practical measures that would achieve women's increased integration and participation in development.

23. It was indicated that, if an assessment of the achievements of the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women, 1980-1985, was to take place, it would be advisable to establish as early as possible a framework identifying indicators for such an assessment, so as to render the responses more practical and useful for comparison.

B. Review of ECWA's report on its activities in the field of the integration of women in development in Western Asia
(agenda item 5)

24. The report on activities in the field of integrating women in development (E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/4) contained data on the condition of women in the region and the evolution of their status in the different areas of development. It delineated various regional and national projects organized by ECWA and supported by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, and identified the objectives of the Voluntary Fund, the criteria for selecting projects submitted for financing, the dates for submission and the channels of submission, either from the countries themselves through UNDP or through ECWA.

25. In commending the efforts of ECWA on its programmes for women, the participants urged continued support for ECWA to meet the requirements of the countries of the region in research, applied projects and technical consultations.

C. Preparations for the 1980 World Conference at the national level (agenda item 6)

26. Ms. Lucille Mair, Secretary-General of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, reviewed the organizational and staffing arrangements made in preparation for the Conference. She pointed out that the General Assembly had approved the agenda for the Conference, which would include items on the review and appraisal of progress made and obstacles encountered in the advancement of women's situation, 1975-1980; the Programme of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women; the effects of Israeli occupation on Palestinian women inside and outside the occupied territories; the effects of apartheid on women in southern Africa; and the over-all situation of women refugees.

27. The Secretary-General stressed the importance of the data collected for the global report on progress achieved in the advancement of women during the first half of the Decade for Women, 1976-1980. Much of that information had been derived from national answers to questionnaires sent out by the United Nations Secretariat early in 1979. Although 90 countries had already replied to the questionnaire, there was still time to process additional information, if this were sent promptly to the Conference secretariat. She urged all Governments to transmit that information in order to make the global report as comprehensive as possible. The understanding of women's situation in Western Asia depended on the provision of full and accurate information.

28. The third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference was to be held in April 1980 to review the reports of the regional preparatory meetings. Other activities preceding the Conference would include a series of workshops on national planning and women's integration in development and a joint project with UNESCO on women and the mass communication media.

29. Ms. Mair also pointed out the usefulness of case studies on national experiences in the advancement of the role of women. These case studies, which would be distributed as background material at the Conference, should be prepared soon. Some of the regional meetings had stressed the importance of linking planning for women to the formulation of the international development strategy for the third United Nations development decade.

30. The Secretary-General also raised the question of the direction in which activities for the integration of women in development would move. Two views were expected to be aired at the Conference, namely, the separatist view which advocated dealing with women as a specific target group and the integrationist view which stressed viewing women within the context of the total population and its problems.

31. In responding to the Secretary-General's statement, the participants gave the advantages and disadvantages of both the separatist and the integrationist views indicating that they need not be exclusive categories. The participants felt that all the Governments of the region should be urged to participate in the Conference and undertake the fullest possible preparations for the effective contribution of their representatives.

D. Inclusion of Palestinian women in the proceedings of the 1980 World Conference and discussion of the two documents on the Palestinian woman (agenda item 7)

32. The Commission had prepared two documents under this agenda item: "The social and economic conditions of the Palestinian woman inside and outside the Occupied Territories" (E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/6) and "Proposed special measures of assistance to the Palestinian woman" (E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/5). The documents were reviewed and thoroughly discussed in the meeting.

33. The participants adopted the outline of the social and economic conditions of Palestinian women as it appeared in the introduction to the document. They also expressed their views on the introduction and the first and second chapters which had been completed; the changes were incorporated in the final text of the paper (see document A/CONF.94/21). The document entitled "Proposed special measures of assistance to the Palestinian woman" was reviewed and adopted after the suggested changes had been made (see document A/CONF.94/4).

E. Discussion of the Programme of Action for Western Asia for the second half of the Decade (agenda item 8)

34. The Economic Commission for Western Asia prepared a document entitled "Proposed Regional Programme of Action for Western Asia for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 1981-1985" (E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/2). It constituted a detailed complement to the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development in Western Asia (see para. 2 above). The document delineated specific programmes, activities and projects in various fields relevant to the integration of women in development, in particular, education, health and employment, for implementation during the period 1981-1985. The comments of the participants were incorporated in the final version of the document (E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/2/Rev.1) (see the annex to the present report).

Other business (agenda item 10)

35. Under this agenda item the subject the Lebanese woman in general and in southern Lebanon in particular was introduced. The head of the Lebanese delegation described the condition of Lebanese women in general, which resulted

from the four years of war, and the condition of women in southern Lebanon, which resulted from repeated Israeli aggression. The meeting called on the United Nations and its specialized agencies to give the necessary attention to the needs of Lebanese women in general and those in southern Lebanon in particular, to study means of meeting these needs and to provide financial, material and technical assistance from various international sources.

III. DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

36. The Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, which represents the members of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA),

Having appraised the achievements that have been made and the obstacles encountered in the field of the integration of women in development in Western Asia during the first half of the decade, 1976-1980,

Having reviewed the activities of the Economic Commission for Western Asia,

Having considered the statements and views of the representatives of the Arab regional organizations and the organization of the United Nations participating in the meeting and in light of the discussions that took place,

1. Declares its adoption of the following:

(a) The Regional Programme of Action for Western Asia for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 1981-1985; 1/ and

(b) Special Measures of Assistance to the Palestinian Woman;

2. Submits these documents to the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held at Copenhagen in July 1980;

3. Recommends that the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women should:

(a) Endorse United Nations efforts to change the prevailing economic relations between advanced industrial countries and developing countries, with a view to the establishment of the new international economic order and its implications in terms of social, cultural and scientific transformations; and request the United Nations to exert continuous and persevering efforts to create the desired pattern of international relations that would form a solid framework for the participation of women in the establishment of equality, development and peace;

(b) Urge the advanced industrial countries to increase their participation in international co-operation by providing technical and material support to the developing countries that would enhance both self-development and the mobilization of human resources especially female resources;

(c) Organize international and regional seminars on the participation of women in political action and liberation movements and their effect on women's economic and social conditions;

1/ See annex below.

(d) Call upon the United Nations and its specialized agencies to undertake a comprehensive study in order to identify the needs of Palestinian women inside the occupied territories and to formulate the appropriate programmes, especially in view of the conditions of occupation which have not allowed the implementation of most resolutions of international organizations owing to obstacles set up by the forces of occupation in the way of experts and committees designated to fulfil this task;

(e) Urge the United Nations and its specialized agencies to direct serious attention to the needs of Lebanese women in general and women in southern Lebanon in particular, to study the measures necessary for meeting their needs and to provide financial, material and technical assistance from various international sources;

(f) Organize an international conference in 1985 to review and evaluate accomplishments in the light of specific indicators and to formulate a strategy to meet the challenges that confront women in their effort to attain the objectives of equality, development and peace.

4. Also recommends that the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, take the necessary steps to adopt Arabic as one of the official working languages of the Conference so as to facilitate the effective participation of the delegations of the Arab States therein.

ANNEX

REGIONAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR WESTERN ASIA FOR THE
SECOND HALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN:
EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE, 1981-1985

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INTRODUCTION

1. Quantitatively, the issues relating to women in Western Asia are those of half of a society representing more than 65 million persons. Qualitatively, they are issues concerning the society as a whole, since the effective participation of women adds important human resources which contribute towards the goal of developing and improving the quality of life for everyone in the region. As a consequence, an important principle has been established: the necessity for women to participate in the life of the society, both as givers and receivers, on an equal basis with men.

2. Having gained the support of United Nations organizations, the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of International Women's Year and the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development in Western Asia have guided efforts in this field at the national and regional levels. The pattern of development has varied among the members of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, owing to differences in social and economic conditions, differences in the attainment of political independence, differences in control over national resources and differences in the available human and material resources. Progress in integrating women in development in Western Asia has been achieved in many fields, most notably in education, health and family care and services. Those countries in the region that are rich in material resources and limited in population have been able to implement policies for social welfare covering both sexes and to establish policies for universal compulsory elementary education; female enrolment at all educational levels has approached the level of male enrolment and health services have been greatly improved. The other countries in the region have also shown improved performance in the same areas; moreover, they provided more scope for the achievement of equality for men and women in employment opportunities, in political rights and in greater public participation in society.

3. Despite the progress that has been achieved in the past five years, the accomplishments do not match the declarations of national policies and the opportunities created by those policies. In some cases, the policies have not attracted the attention of women or sufficiently motivated them to benefit from the available opportunities. Progress has been hindered by the weakness of the technical and administrative leadership in realizing political will. The traditional customs and mores in conservative societies have also played their role in obstructing progress. Laws and legislation, with the exception of certain countries, have not developed in line with the needs of women relevant to their participation in development. The expansion of employment opportunities for men and women has not met the planned objectives. Some fields of economic activity continue to be closed to women or to discourage the participation of women. In some cases, three separate employment markets exist: for men, for women, and for men and women. In fact, the slow rate of increase in the participation of women in the labour force is the least satisfactory achievement of the first half of the Decade. It is, however, closely related to the fall in the rate of social and economic growth in most countries of the region.

I. FOUNDATIONS FOR THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION

4. The Regional Programme of Action for Western Asia for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 1981-1985, is based on the efforts of countries in the region to supply and support cultural renewal and spiritual resurgence. These values make human beings - men and women - the focal point for development, its highest objective and most valued resource. The Programme of Action is, therefore, based on the countries' past experiences in development, the strength drawn from Arab co-operation and collective Arab action and the assistance available at the international level.

5. The experiments in development and the plans and programmes of the countries in the region have indicated that national plans, in their present state, lack the necessary emphasis on the human factor. Such an emphasis is essential for the participation of human resources in increasing and meeting the basic needs of all citizens. In the new models for development, women must become qualified to participate and to contribute to the economy and to the society, while continuing to carry their family responsibilities.

6. Furthermore, the Programme of Action must be founded on the policies of the Arab States and on the capabilities of the League of Arab States and its specialized agencies. Efforts are being co-ordinated to draw up, through the secretariat of the League of Arab States, a strategy for economic action and, through the Council for Economic Unity, a strategy for Arab social action and a strategy for the Arab child. These efforts will reinforce implementation of the Strategy for the Development of Arab Education, through the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO). The Programme of Action, in complementing these strategies, emphasizes the importance of self-reliance and collective co-operation among the Arab countries.

7. At the regional level, the Programme of Action is founded on the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development in Western Asia, adopted by the Economic Commission for Western Asia at its fifth session (Amman, October 1978). The Programme of Action represents the main framework for action in the field of women and development during the second half of the Decade. At the regional level, implementation of the Programme of Action can be achieved in co-operation with Arab and United Nations organizations and their regional offices, each within its scope and specialization in terms of women and development.

8. At the international level, the Programme of Action further stresses the position of women and the requirements for their participation in development within the framework of the new international economic order and the international development strategy for the third United Nations development decade. The Programme of Action also draws on the Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (Rome, July 1979) and the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development (Vienna, August 1979), especially those decisions relating to the participation of women in development.

II. PRIORITIES OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION

9. The appraisal of the achievements of the first half of the United Nations Decade for Women has suggested many areas of activity for the Regional Programme of Action. Although circumstances in the countries of the region differ, priorities of common strategy can be set forth in order to increase the participation of women in development. These priorities are:

- (a) To make the status of women and their effective participation one of the indices of national planning as well as one of its objectives and requirements;
- (b) To emphasize income-generating skills and knowledge in training programmes for women;
- (c) To organize governmental and non-governmental machineries capable of co-ordinated and complementary action for planning and executing women's programmes;
- (d) To expand the base of women's participation in the various political, governmental, labour and non-governmental organizations at the local, national and regional levels;
- (e) To reach women in rural and isolated areas in order to develop their skills and enable them to benefit from opportunities for social development and services;
- (f) To create the appropriate intellectual and cultural climate, and to change the attitudes of men and women, so as to pave the way for and remove the obstacles to the effective participation of women in development; the programmes of the mass communication media, the talents of intellectuals, writers, religious leaders and others of similar influence should be mobilized to this end.

Within the context of these priorities, the objectives and strategies of the Programme of Action are considered in detail below.

A. National and regional objectives and strategies for the participation of women in development

1. National planning

Scope and direction of action

10. The Regional Programme of Action aims at giving priority to the women's sector and the prerequisites for policy-making in human resources planning. The following are the main objectives:

- (a) To increase women's proportional participation in the productive labour force during the years covered by national development plans, and to evaluate those plans on this basis and in relation to the increase in the total rate of employment;

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(b) To include special indicators related to women among the measurements used for evaluating and implementing economic projects; women's needs should not appear only within the social sector of the plans;

(c) To include, in sectoral plans, development targets based on male/female indicators and to avoid reliance on over-all qualitative and quantitative targets;

(d) To ensure that national plans include the needs of rural, urban and bedouin women and those in disadvantaged areas, taking into consideration the special priorities of each of these groups;

(e) To evaluate the implementation of plans through field studies aimed at identifying the positive and negative effects of the projects on the participation of women and at proposing further action;

(f) To set measurements for planning and evaluation that are not limited to distribution of investment and evaluation of expenditures, but that have as their primary objective expanding the participation of men and women and improving the quality of life;

(g) To study present planning practices, in order to adjust the planning process and its requirements to the objectives of the women's sector, and to create a new conceptual framework for indicators to be used by central and sectoral planners.

Specific activities and projects

11. The Programme of Action stresses the importance of planning and executing the following projects at the national and regional levels during the second half of the Decade:

(a) To set up appropriate data collection machinery in central planning bodies to conduct studies and formulate programmes that will ensure the integration of women in development as an essential part of over-all comprehensive national planning;

(b) To organize training workshops and seminars for male and female planners working in national and sectoral planning, in order to identify special requirements for the national and sectoral integration of women in development and to explore different models in formulating programmes and projects. Some of the workshops should be held at the national level and others at the regional level in order to exchange experience and knowledge among the countries of the region;

(c) To include the topic "The participation of women in development" in the training and educational curricula of planning institutes, universities and social work institutes and to make it a subject for specialization so that it can take its proper position in the fields of sectoral and intersectoral studies and in planning and execution;

(d) To devote a special section on women in the reports evaluating national plans and sectoral programmes. These sections should contain information on the extent of the progress achieved in the area of the participation of women in development.

2. National machineries

Scope and direction of action

(a) To reiterate the emphasis of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development in Western Asia on the necessity of providing national women's commissions and women's bureaux with technical expertise, to initiate the early establishment of such structures in countries in which this has not already been done, and to include in their membership representatives of ministries, Governments and non-governmental organizations;

(b) To encourage national machineries for women to undertake studies aimed at analysing the condition of women in society, to monitor and follow-up changes in their condition and make recommendations to the planning and executive authorities for women's programmes.

Specific activities and projects

(a) To undertake a study of women's commissions and bureaux in Western Asia, in order to evaluate their activities and resources; to compare the results with those of other commissions in various parts of the world; and to recommend action appropriate to the region for establishing these commissions, identifying their specialization, resources and methods of functioning;

(b) To hold a regional meeting to discuss the results of the above study and to urge Governments to adopt the recommendations of the meeting.

3. Legal and legislative measures

Scope and direction of action

(a) To ensure that constitutions and laws of States stipulate full equality between men and women with regard to their rights and obligations, in the fields of political action and work and property rights, and to eliminate all rulings that discriminate between men and women in terms of rights and obligations in those countries in which this has not already been done;

(b) To ratify the international conventions related to the rights of women that have been adopted by the United Nations and its specialized agencies and to ensure the implementation of these conventions, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session;

(c) To follow-up the recommendations of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development in Western Asia in the section dealing

with the legal field, so that women can enjoy equality with men in all civil rights and obtain the necessary legislation, procedures and facilities.

Specific activities and projects

(a) To appraise the laws and their application and to identify obstacles to their application in terms of administrative bodies, customs, prevailing conditions or the women's lack of awareness. National women's commissions, in co-operation with women's organizations, could undertake such studies and present the results to the proper legislative and executive authorities;

(b) To intensify efforts, to formulate programmes and to set up machinery for increasing women's awareness of the provisions of laws and other legislation that are harmful to their general and family interests; and to offer women the legal aid that will help them enjoy their rights.

4. Educational and informational measures

Scope and direction of action

12. Informational and educational communication media and organizations are spread widely throughout the countries of the ECWA region and exert considerable influence on the different sectors of the population in the urban, rural and bedouin areas. In the content and presentation of their programmes, all these communication media carry social and human values that leave their imprint on the formation of the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of the inhabitants of the region. The communication media should certainly be utilized for developing positive trends and for removing obstacles in the way of the integration and participation of women in development.

13. The Programme of Action endorses the recommendations of the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development concerning the role of mass communication media in the countries of the region, for radio, television and other communication media disseminate the messages of seminars, meetings and publications among most segments of the population. It is important that the mass communication media produce programmes that are directed towards:

(a) Emphasizing the image of equality between men and women, clarifying the changes that have occurred in their respective roles in contemporary society, and stressing their common and equal responsibilities in bringing about development and progress;

(b) Eradicating all aspects of discrimination based on sex in social and legal areas;

(c) Modernizing women's education in accordance with their progressive roles in various economic and social activities and making public opinion more receptive to and supportive of the new roles.

Specific activities and projects

14. Mass communication media and culture in Western Asia must deal with the inappropriateness of informational programmes, especially since those relayed by television and the cinema are usually prepared in countries with different cultures and values from those of the ECWA region. Often, inappropriateness and contradictions are evident between local and foreign programmes and among the local programmes themselves, particularly with regard to portrayals of the role of women. Consequently, the Programme of Action stresses the following activities:

(a) To undertake studies that examine the positive and negative effects of the content of informational and educational programmes on the participation of women in development;

(b) To organize a regional seminar for those who work in the mass communication media in order to review the results of the study, to examine the requirements for integrating women in development in terms of planning, preparing, and selecting programmes and, finally, to produce a document containing principles for the presentation of the image of women through the mass communication media;

(c) To prepare informative publications and documentary films illustrating the evolution of the condition of women and their new opportunities for participation in the development projects of the ECWA region and of other developing countries;

5. Sources of information, data and research

Scope and directions of action

15. The Programme of Action stresses the importance of the following requirements:

(a) To provide the necessary facilities to social and economic research centres, central and sectoral statistics organizations, universities and other national and regional research institutions for undertaking research in fields relevant to increasing the participation of women in development, for printing studies based on that research and circulating them among the countries of the region;

(b) To categorize the data of statistics departments and bodies at the various levels and sectors according to sex distribution:

(c) To train women in research and data collection, stressing the importance of the role of women researchers in field studies, especially in rural areas where prevailing customs make the female researcher the most appropriate factor in communicating with the family and obtaining the necessary data;

(j) To give priority to research and studies that are relevant to planning, project and policy formulation for the integration of women in development. The Regional Plan of Action indicated other priorities in this field in the section dealing with the role of studies, research and data collection.

Specific activities and projects

(a) To formulate a project proposal for co-operation in establishing and funding a regional centre for research and training for women and development, and to submit it to the Governments in the region and United Nations organizations for their consideration;

(b) To urge the League of Arab States to complete the establishment of the Information and Documentation Centre for Arab Women and to call upon Arab Governments and the concerned international organizations to support it, so that this regional Centre might provide the services necessary for the establishment of units or national centres specializing in women and development;

(c) To formulate a conceptual framework for measuring the work of women in the home as part of the gross national product and for assessing the participation of rural women in agricultural and related activities. This framework should be based on field studies examining conditions in the region; national studies could also be based on these field studies;

(d) To award annual prizes for practical and scientific research in the field of women and development, either on the basis of special competitions or on already published studies.

6. Employment

Scope and direction of action

16. The Regional Plan of Action indicated the areas to which efforts must be directed for the effective participation of women in the labour force. With the exception of the agricultural and rural sector, the rate of participation of women in the labour force and the rate of growth of employment remain low. Though the work laws in the countries of the region have affirmed the right of equal pay for men and women, these laws have not been fully implemented in the private sector. It is important to stress the following in the Programme of Action:

(a) To formulate strategies for increasing the rate of participation of women in the labour force and to use these strategies as directives in planning, selecting projects, evaluating alternatives and executing programmes and projects;

(b) To increase the productivity of working women through training and to provide them with supporting services so that they can combine their family and work responsibilities;

(c) To encourage women to enter occupations besides the traditional ones and to give them the same opportunities as men for promotion in employment;

/...

(d) To provide incentives for women to turn to areas of commodity production, in addition to services, and to increase their opportunities for training in these fields;

(e) To formulate and execute projects that would allow women in rural and poor urban areas to locate new sources of income, to equip them with the necessary skills and to provide financial assistance and loans necessary for the establishment of the private economic activities that women in those areas pursue;

(f) To develop the skills of rural women in agriculture and animal husbandry so that they can improve their products, utilize modern technology in agriculture and become an effective factor in ensuring food security;

(g) To develop the necessary productive skills of bedouin and semi-bedouin women, in addition to improving their skills in animal husbandry and increasing their animal wealth, and to seek the assistance of governmental and popular organizations in the training programmes designed for bedouin areas;

(h) To urge labour unions to form working women's committees to help unionize the female labour force, orient them, develop their skills and provide them with all possible services;

(i) To take into consideration the other recommendations of the Regional Plan of Action in the field of employment.

Specific activities and projects

(a) To hold regional and national training workshops for female extension workers in order to examine the role of extension services in integrated rural development and in developing agricultural and family skills for rural women;

(b) To hold a regional meeting for experts in animal breeding and livestock in order to study the role of rural and bedouin women in developing this resource and in meeting the region's nutritional needs, especially with regard to overcoming protein deficiency;

(c) To undertake a field study of the employment market, the opportunities for employment for women in the region, the progress made in increasing these opportunities and the relationship between labour force supply and demand in various skills in the social and economic sectors;

(d) To undertake a study of the movement of the labour force from the countries of the region with high population density and a relatively large reserve of trained manpower to the countries having relatively low population density and a lack of qualified manpower, with emphasis on the effect of this movement on the social and economic aspects of the family in general and on women in particular; and to take into consideration the recommendations of this study when setting up programmes and activities for education, training, employment and services to families;

(e) To support or establish institutions for traditional industries and handicrafts; to benefit from appropriate modern technology in revitalizing these industries and in training women to develop them; and to assist families in producing and marketing these crafts;

(f) To institute informational programmes aimed at making women aware of available employment opportunities, especially in the new fields of employment opened up by development projects, and the existing opportunities for education, training and skill acquisition at national, regional and international institutions;

(g) To adopt national policies for increasing the opportunities available to women for advancement and for accession to positions of executive responsibility commensurate with their qualifications, expertise and capabilities; to make sure that their sex is no impediment to their advancement and to provide the training and experience needed for the productive exercise of their functions at those levels;

(h) To prepare a roster of Arab women specializing in various fields related to the integration of women in development, to update this roster periodically and to distribute it at regional and international levels;

(i) To expand proportionately the coverage of social security so as to include agricultural workers and to enable women to enjoy the same social security rights as men;

(j) To increase the opportunities for women to participate in labour and professional organizations, and to study the progress of the participation of women in those bodies.

7. Health

Scope and direction of action

17. Health care is among the services that have special priority in the field of women and development. It is important to stress that investment in health services is a fulfilment of one of the rights of all citizens, men and women. It has a simultaneous investment return, since health is the foundation of work and productivity.

18. Generally speaking, noticeable improvement has taken place in the health indicators. However, classifications of these indicators according to sex are lacking. Furthermore, although there is a proportional increase in health institutions in the region, it is clear that there are disparities in the availability, extent and effectiveness of these services. These disparities are often the result of organizational and administrative bottle-necks in health services for women, especially in rural areas and poor urban settlements. The Regional Plan of Action indicated priorities and programmes for health and nutrition care, and health, social, and housing services. The Programme of Action stresses the following objectives with respect to health:

(a) To give priority to programmes for preventive health care for both sexes, especially those related to immunization against children's diseases, to programmes for the care of pregnant women, and to school health programmes for primary school children;

(b) To utilize efficiently health-care institutions, especially mother-child care centres, to expand the establishment of these centres, and to institute the necessary procedures for facilitating their use;

(c) To provide clean water sources, garbage collection and other health and environmental services;

(d) To adopt the primary health services approach in rural areas and bedouin settlements and to involve local women leaders and educated girls, after training them in primary health skills, especially in areas where there is an absence of preventive health institutions or mother-child care centres;

(e) To formulate an agricultural policy which would ensure the availability of the principal nutritional elements at reasonable prices;

(f) To organize programmes for making women aware of proper nutritional practices, to train them in those practices and in the preparation and preservation of foods, and to introduce programmes of nutrition education for both sexes in the curricula of schools and adult education institutions.

Specific activities and projects

(a) To organize a regional meeting for health statisticians in order to formulate a detailed plan for data collection on health indicators, especially relevant health and medical data on women, from all health institutions and at all levels. There is an urgent need for statistics on women's health needs in order to guide both the planning and the evaluation of health programmes and to effect an improvement in the health of women;

(b) To prepare model radio and television programmes based on tested material on health and nutrition relevant to the needs of women in particular, and to ensure the evaluation of these programmes and the extent of their effectiveness;

(c) To prepare simplified audiovisual kits for health education to be used by rural extension workers and health educators, in order to bring about health awareness in rural areas and poor urban sectors;

(d) To evaluate through a field study the benefits that women receive from health services, especially mother-child care services, and to compare the results of this study with those of studies carried out in other countries in the region, so as to improve the services both quantitatively and qualitatively and to increase their effectiveness;

(e) To organize a regional seminar to discuss the requirements for primary health care in the countries of the region, to appraise similar experiences in other parts of the world, and to give due consideration to the role of women's organizations in the promotion of primary health care services;

(f) To organize a regional seminar for the countries in the region that have adopted family planning policies, in order to evaluate the social and health efforts expended in terms of providing the appropriate services and enhancing correct awareness in this field;

(g) To undertake appraisal studies of health training institutes with the object of improving their functioning, quantitatively and qualitatively; and to stress the importance of increasing the number of women health workers, in order to meet the challenges of the increasing need for various health and medical services.

8. Education and training

Scope and direction of action

19. The countries of the region have expanded greatly the availability of education and training for both men and women. The education of girls has noticeably progressed; however, there are still many areas in which action is needed in order to attain equal educational opportunities for both sexes, and to make girls' education an effective means of preparing them for full participation in social and economic activities.

20. In the Regional Plan of Action special attention was given to the education and training sector by detailing various areas for action. The recommendations contained in the Plan should be put into effect; they are listed as follows:

(a) To adopt comprehensive educational policies and plans as integral parts of over-all socio-economic planning so as to provide for a diversity of skills in the labour force for both men and women; to promote, without discrimination as to sex, the development of the full capabilities of individuals and to prepare them adequately for productive employment within the priorities of the development plan;

(b) To fully implement a policy of compulsory primary or basic education, to expand the capacity of school enrolment for girls at this level; to adopt educational measures and social incentives (such as school meals and school health care) necessary for diminishing the high drop-out rate for girls; and to establish a time-limit for the enrolment in schools of all boys and girls of compulsory school age;

(c) To improve, through action by the responsible ministries and authorities, the quality and methods of education at child-care centres and kindergartens; to expand these institutions; and to provide the necessary training to female teachers of this level, in order that children may receive a sound education during this crucial stage of their personal and social growth;

(d) To encourage girls to pursue their education beyond the compulsory level into the various areas of specialization, including technical and vocational training compatible with their abilities and talents; to study the factors that deter capable students from pursuing their studies; and to provide needed incentives, including free boarding facilities;

(e) To review textbooks and rewrite those parts that reiterate the sex-stereotyped roles of men and women in society, with a view to correcting the traditional image of Arab women that portrays them as making no contribution to their society beyond the walls of the home and the world of the household;

(f) To orient school curricula towards a sound equilibrium in its scientific, vocational and cultural goals for establishing a common culture for boys and girls, thus promoting the constructive interaction of the two sexes as partners in life. This common culture, in addition to other topics of civic education, should define the responsibilities of the two sexes in the development of modern society, develop an awareness of the issues of scientific and technological progress and promote a sound approach to responsible fatherhood and motherhood in the formation of the family and the rearing of children;

(g) To develop educational methods that prepare students for their participation in development activities for the achievement of economic and social goals, and the use of methods that promote individual creativity, initiative, respect for the other sex and responsibility;

(h) To increase the enrolment of girls in technical education, expand facilities for technical training, diversify the variety of specializations taught therein and encourage girls to enrol, thereby increasing their employment opportunities and productivity;

(i) To undertake organized efforts and programmes for awakening the authorities to the importance of technical education and its role in the national economy; and to orient social values so that this type of education can attract boys and girls to the technical jobs and skills needed in economic development;

(j) To expand opportunities for women to enter advanced scientific and technological fields of specialization to which they can make a creative contribution, and to provide increased scholarships to women for advanced specialization at home and abroad;

(k) To make vocational education an employment prerequisite and training opportunities available to all potential workers, both through the normal educational curriculum and through other facilities;

(l) To urge the Arab countries that have not yet done so to implement with urgency the Arab Strategy for the Eradication of Illiteracy adopted at the Third ALECSO Conference held at Baghdad in December 1976. The aim of that Conference was the total eradication of male and female illiteracy among the 15-45 year age group in a period no longer than 15 years and the education of elementary school drop-outs of the 8-14 year age group;

(m) To promote the return of drop-outs to school at their former level and to administer positive and negative incentives for regular attendance in adult education programmes; to develop curricula and methods suitable to the needs of men and women in their work and daily life, and to use strategies to promote the regular attendance of housewives in literacy and other adult education classes;

(n) To encourage popular participation in the eradication of functional illiteracy in accordance with the standards established in the Arab Strategy for the Eradication of Illiteracy through the mobilization of the efforts of all voluntary vocational and popular organizations;

(o) To maximize the use of the mass communication media, especially television as a tool in the eradication of illiteracy and in the education of adult women inside the home and within the family;

(p) To aim at including in the in-training programmes for elementary school teachers, in their respective institutes, the subjects of health, nutrition, animal husbandry, agriculture and the basic industrial skills in order to assist those teachers in performing their duties as social counsellors in their own environment;

(q) To develop vocational training techniques using modern educational methods and to increase vocational training opportunities for women in different skills, especially in the new skills required in development projects, and to provide such training either at special centres or on the job;

(r) To organize non-formal studies and education programmes for women through the mass communication media by correspondence, through practical demonstration studies and in-plant training, in order to improve their knowledge and skills, thereby enabling those women who have left economically active life for a certain period because of family responsibilities, to return to it;

(s) To provide adequate and organized in-service training for women in the different fields of employment to increase their productive abilities and to expand present and future training opportunities for women engaged in management, production, government service, and private and public sector industries.

Specific activities and projects

(a) To undertake a study of the rate of enrolment of children subject to compulsory education in the least developed countries of the region; to devise measures for increasing the rate of girls' enrolment in particular; and for decreasing the rate of dropping-out; and to suggest alternative and complementary solutions for achieving universal compulsory education in those countries over the next 10 years;

(b) To organize a regional meeting of planning and education experts to evaluate the opportunities for technical and professional education for girls, and the means by which to encourage girls to enrol in such education; to increase

the rate of acceptance of girls in these fields of education; to advertise new employment opportunities; and to indicate ways for preparing girls educationally and technically to enter these fields;

(c) To encourage the countries of the region to experiment in and to expand non-formal education for everyone, but particularly for women; to reproduce the results of the experiments; and to exchange expertise in this field at the regional and international levels;

(d) To organize a high-level regional meeting for evaluating programmes for eradicating illiteracy for women and men; and to formulate policies and set objectives and specific programmes directed towards the elimination of illiteracy in the region in the next 10 years;

(e) To analyse the content of school books in some countries of the region, in order to identify images and roles of women in society and discriminatory trends in terms of the roles assigned to men and those assigned to women; and to recommend proposals that would assist in reviewing the image of women in these books;

(f) To produce a training manual for workers and teachers in nursery schools and kindergartens in order to guide their training; and to identify practical requirements for the activities of these institutions, which are increasing in number because more women are requiring child-care facilities.

9. Women's organizations

Scope and direction of action

21. In many countries of the region, women's organizations play an important role in advancing the participation of women in national development. The Regional Plan of Action emphasized the importance of popular participation in general aspects of development. It also stressed the role of women's organizations in creating the proper ambience for enhancing the rate of women's participation in economic and social life and for mobilizing the voluntary efforts of women in local social activities. It is hoped that the efforts of these women's organizations will become more effective during the second half of the Decade in fulfilling its objectives. Moreover, the Regional Plan of Action indicated the importance of governmental financial and technical assistance to these organizations, as well as the importance of training their cadres and co-ordinating their activities with other governmental and non-governmental bodies and national bureaux for women.

Specific activities and projects

(a) To request women's organizations to set up a definite programme for their activities for the next five years, taking into consideration programmes for improving the condition of rural women and developing their agricultural skills;

(b) To organize training workshops for the cadres of women's organizations in the field of project formulation, implementation and evaluation;

(c) To organize regional seminars for cadres of women's organizations on the techniques of participation in national, regional and international conferences, so that they may play a positive and effective role in such meetings. The seminars should include information on issues important to the international community and their effect on equality, development and peace, in particular disarmament, establishment of the new international economic order and the struggle against colonialism, racism and discrimination.

10. The Palestinian woman

22. The issue of the Palestinian woman emerges within the framework of the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. One of the major issues severely impeding stability and development in the region is Israel's occupation of territories belonging to the Palestinian people and to other Arab countries. In the light of the circumstances of occupation and the dispersion of the Palestinian people, Palestinian women deserve special attention to enable them to continue the struggle for the liberation of their land and to obtain the basic necessities for survival and for daily life.

23. In the Regional Plan of Action, a special section was devoted to the situation of Palestinian women. At the Regional Preparatory Meeting (Damascus, December 1979) two reports on Palestinian women were adopted, "Proposed special measures of assistance to the Palestinian woman" and "The social and economic conditions of the Palestinian woman inside and outside the occupied territories" (E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/5 and E/ECWA/SDHS/CONF.4/6). a/ The execution of the major part of the Programme falls upon the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Action must be taken to implement all United Nations resolutions on the requirements of the Palestinian people and on the preservation of its identity and its rights in the occupied territories. The Palestinian people must benefit from the international resources available for implementing social and economic projects inside the occupied territories.

B. Regional and international co-operation

24. Regional and international co-operation occurs within the framework of the Programme of Action in the various areas relevant to the effective participation of women in development in the ECWA region, with an emphasis on employment, health and education. Such co-operation involves setting relevant priorities and agreeing upon activities. This co-operation will support and strengthen the process of integrating women in development in the region whether it occurs at the national level or through regional and international activities. The importance of this co-operation lies in the planning and implementation of most of the activities and projects delineated in the Regional Programme of Action. Regional co-operation can take place either bilaterally (between two Governments) or through Arab regional and international organizations.

a/ See documents A/CONF.94/4 and A/CONF.94/21.

25. In addition to the common language, history and culture that tie the countries to each other, the region includes countries with abundant wealth and countries with abundant human resources. The combination of material and human resources through integrated activities and co-operation among these countries would increase the rate of development and progress. Preparing women and increasing their opportunities for participation in developmental issues would undoubtedly also increase the resources for development. The least developed countries of the region will receive greater regional and international assistance owing to their numerous pressing development problems. In view of those problems, there is the danger that the question of women may assume a secondary position.

26. With regard to organizations whose activities include women and development, the Regional Plan of Action, in the section on regional and international co-operation, identified Arab regional organizations represented by the League of Arab States and its specialized agencies, the subregional organizations, the institutes of the Gulf countries and the Arab development funds. The Regional Plan of Action also mentioned in that connexion the United Nations, its organizations and specialized agencies, and their offices in the region. It delineated the role of the Economic Commission for Western Asia in enhancing the process of integrating women in development and indicated projects whose implementation required regional and international co-operation in such fields as training, research, data collection and exchange, technical assistance and other areas relevant to the priorities of the Decade. It should be noted that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women also plays a significant role in activating programmes and projects for women in the region.

27. It is important to emphasize the need for mechanisms and structures for co-operation and co-ordination at the regional and international levels, in order to enhance the possibility of meeting the increasing responsibilities of the next five years for implementing the activities of the Programme of Action. The following are required for co-operation:

(a) To form a committee to co-ordinate women's programmes undertaken by ECWA and the regional offices of the United Nations specialized agencies, the regional office of the United Nations Development Programme and the Arab League. The Committee would be responsible for co-ordinating, implementing and evaluating the programmes during 1980-1985;

(b) To form a special unit for women's programmes as part of the organizational structure of the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Western Asia so that it can undertake studies, collect data, formulate the necessary indicators for monitoring progress in the participation of women in development and assist in planning and executing the projects of the Voluntary Fund. The Economic Commission for Western Asia should support this unit and increase its capacity to fulfil the responsibilities of research, data collection, project formulation and advisory services to the members of ECWA;

(c) To organize a regional meeting in 1982 as a follow-up to the Programme of Action, in order to evaluate the achievements, identify obstacles and recommend the necessary solutions for overcoming them. It is hoped that such a meeting would take place every three years;

(d) To organize a regional meeting for investigating possible sources of funding for women's programmes. The Economic Commission for Western Asia would invite to this meeting representatives of Arab development funds in the region in order to examine possible ways and means for funding women's projects and other projects relevant to the participation of women in development;

(e) To call upon the members of the Economic Commission for Western Asia to pay greater attention to the projects of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women and to increase their donations to the Fund so that it can fulfil its objectives in the ECWA region and in other developing countries.
