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Agenda item 11

Chapter V

REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND ACTION ON THESE

REPORTS BY THE CONFERENCE

A. Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Ms. M. VAN HEMELDONCK (Belgium)

Addendum

Insert the following text after paragraph 8 of A/CONF.94/L.21.

9. It was agreed that the Committee should consider the items allocated to it without a general debate. It was further agreed that items 8(a) and 9(a) would be discussed concurrently.
10. The representative of the Secretary-General of the Conference, in introducing document A/CONF.94/30 submitted under item 8(a), noted that it was the basic overview document for this item. Documents A/CONF.94/8/Rev.1, A/CONF.94/9 and A/CONF.94/10 related, respectively, to employment, health and education, the subthemes of the Conference.
11. The essence of the discussion on the basic themes which emerged is reflected in the passages which follow.
12. A majority of delegations expressed concern about the frequently negative impact of technological advances on women's employment opportunities and living conditions. It was noted that in developed market economies and in developing countries women workers in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs were among the first victims of labour-saving technology.
13. It was stressed that to ensure that benefits of technological advance became accessible to women, women must make a substantial input into technological design, choice and control.

14. It was also stated that in both developing and developed countries new technologies had too often been introduced without sufficiently careful consideration of their full impact on women. This had therefore also sometimes resulted in the displacement of women from their existing occupations. The introduction of such technology should include built-in arrangements for training women in its use and for their full participation in the new employment opportunities which were thereby made available.
15. With respect to employment in developing countries, a large number of delegations said that the great majority of women worked in the informal, unorganized sector. Employment in this sector needed to be covered by legislative and other measures, in order to ensure the protection of women workers, including improvement in their working conditions, higher wages and increased economic returns.
16. In many developing countries, self-employment accounted and would continue to account for a large percentage of women's participation in the labour force. However, as several delegations noted, women lacked access to the necessary information and training. They also experienced difficulty in obtaining credit. Measures to provide this information and training and to provide access to these facilities would be an important factor in increasing women's participation in economic activity.
17. All delegations which spoke on this point agreed on the overriding need to increase women's participation in decision-making, especially in those areas which were of central importance to the planning and governing of their societies. Often important decisions were made in bodies other than popularly elected ones - such as public councils, boards and committees - and in these the proportion of women members was too often even lower than in elected bodies.
18. Some delegations referred to the role of educated women or women in influential positions. Future efforts to organize and mobilize women should include strategies which would make the most effective use of these valuable human resources. Governments should recognize the importance of these groups. Women's organizations should consider strategies for the best use of their talents and capacities towards the promotion of women in high-level network decision-making positions.
19. There was unanimous agreement on the essential role which education played in the advancement of women, and the urgent need to promote female literacy, which still lagged behind, particularly in the developing countries. There was also a need to abolish existing differentials in the over-all educational attainment rates of boys and girls.
20. Some delegations referred to the importance of educating women to make them aware of existing legislative and other provisions concerning their rights and duties.
21. A number of delegations referred to the important role of the media in accurately depicting women in present day society and thereby helping to change the way women are viewed in society.
22. The need to change social attitudes was addressed by many delegations. Social, cultural and ideological, as well as economic factors played a significant part in determining the status of women. Delegations agreed

on the importance of comprehensive and integrated programmes for the advancement of women, especially in developing countries.

23. There was a broad measure of agreement on the need to redefine the roles of women and men in relation to their societies, and more especially in the family. Women and men must learn how to share responsibility for their families. Such a redefinition of roles would require not only changes in the attitudes of the individuals and the societies but also structural changes at every level and, most especially, at the family level.

24. Some delegations stressed the need to give higher priority to peace, as one of the aims of the Decade. Peace was a precondition for real equality and development. It was suggested that both educational systems and the mass media should be more involved in the positive promotion of peace. The media should be urged to stop the glorification of "might and power". There should be programmes of education for peace and the respect of human rights at every level, beginning with the primary schools and going on to the universities.

[to be completed]