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UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Draft Declaration on the Participation of Women in the Struggle
for the Strengthening of International Peace and Security and
against Colonialism, Apartheid, All Forms of Racism and Racial
Discrimination, Foreign Aggression, Occupation and All Forms of
Foreign Domination

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

BULGARIA

[Original: Russian]

[12 June 1981]

1. The Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria fully supports the idea of the adoption by the General Assembly of a declaration on the participation of women in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace and security and against colonialism, apartheid, occupation and all forms of foreign domination. The adoption of such a resolution would be fully in keeping with the efforts of the United Nations to secure equality for women in accordance with the noble aims of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace.
2. Today's struggle to ensure for women an equal place in society is not limited to purely "women's" problems; it is an effective factor not only in the attainment of economic and social progress but also in the consolidation of general peace and security. We are profoundly convinced that full political, economic and social equality for women in the world is possible only under conditions of peace, mutual understanding and close co-operation between all peoples, in a climate of universal social progress free from discrimination and violence. On the other hand, there is no doubt that women, who represent one half of humanity, can make and are making an essential contribution to the consolidation of positive trends in international relations, to the struggle for the strengthening of general peace and security, to the elimination of the last vestiges of colonialism, and against racism, racial discrimination, and the shameful system of apartheid.
3. In the present complex international situation, which has arisen because of the unwillingness of imperialist militaristic circles to accept existing political realities and their decision to openly embark on the adventurist path of intensifying the arms race, even more women are becoming clearly aware that the policy of peaceful coexistence and international détente represents an objective imperative and the only reasonable escape from the catastrophic risk of a world-wide thermonuclear conflict.
4. Faced with these facts, women cannot shrink from the task of undertaking fresh initiatives for disarmament, the strengthening of peace and international security, and the elimination of hotbeds of tension; they cannot remain indifferent to the just struggle of different nations for their national liberation.
5. The People's Republic of Bulgaria attaches particular importance to the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, and in particular to that section of it which speaks of the intimate linkage between the struggle for peace, détente, and the strengthening of international security, on the one hand, and the campaign for the attainment of full equality for women, on the other. We are in complete agreement with the analysis which sees the causes of women's unequal status in imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. It is for this reason that we are deeply convinced that it is impossible to discuss the elimination of discrimination

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against women without dealing with the solution of the major political problems of our time, a time when colonialism neo-colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, apartheid, and foreign domination continue to exist. As emphasized in the Programme of Action, women can and must play an active role in efforts to eradicate these shameful phenomena. We regard the draft declaration on the participation of women in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace and security and against colonialism, apartheid, occupation, and all forms of foreign domination as a continuation of the Declaration of Mexico and the World Plan of Action adopted at the first Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, and also of the Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen.

6. Bulgarian women have always taken a position in defence of peace, for détente and disarmament, and against discrimination and terror. Together with all the Bulgarian people, the women of the country support the new peaceful initiatives put forward at the Twenty-sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; they support the struggle of the Palestinian people, which has been deprived of its homeland, and also the struggle of the peoples of Namibia and southern Africa for national liberation and the liquidation of the shameful system of apartheid.

7. The People's Republic of Bulgaria, a co-sponsor of resolution 11 adopted at Copenhagen and of draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.17, reaffirms its support of the draft declaration and believes that its approval and adoption by the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session would be a timely and necessary measure that would play a substantial role in the mobilization of women throughout the world for even more active and purposeful endeavours in safeguarding mankind's greatest blessing - peace on earth.

BURUNDI

[Original: French]

[4 June 1981]

The Government of Burundi wishes to make the following proposals with regard to the draft declaration:

1. Page 1: third preambular paragraph: replace "or political" by "and political". The text would then read as follows:

"Considering that only if women have the same access as men to education, employment, health care and public offices in the social, economic, administrative and political field, will they be able to play an equal and effective role in the development process."

2. Page 4: Part II: add to the measures to be taken by States:

"- to promote means for providing women with political education and information to develop further their civic sense and the awareness that they themselves must bring about their emancipation.

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- "- to give women a greater degree of motivation and help them to acquire a sense of responsibility for defending the interests of their society and their nation and for maintaining it in an atmosphere of security, by abolishing through practical measures and legal texts those traditions and customs which confine women to the role of a mere prop for men and society, so that they can participate fully in the management of the family and of society and in the enjoyment of the rights of all members of society, including the right to perform the duties incumbent on all citizens."

BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

[Original: Russian]

[20 August 1981]

1. In its reply on this question for 1979 (E/CN.6/626), the Byelorussian SSR expressed its positive attitude towards the intention of the United Nations to prepare a draft declaration on the participation of women in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace and security, and made a number of specific proposals regarding the nature and contents of the international document that was to be drawn up.
2. While reaffirming its own unchanged position on this matter and taking into account the divergence of views regarding it, the Byelorussian SSR considers it appropriate to draw attention to the lack of foundation in the objectives of certain States to the adoption by the United Nations of a declaration of the kind envisaged, on the grounds that this would lead to the drawing of a distinction on the basis of sex and to the highlighting of particular areas of interest to the status of women to the detriment of others
3. There can be no question that, if the genuine equality of women was guaranteed, the raising of the question of the drawing of this distinction in the discussion of the role of women in political life and in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace and security would automatically become superfluous because of the absence of any reasons requiring it. However, the real state of affairs in the world is such that, in most States, discrimination against women continues to exist. This circumstance has been a decisive factor in the decision to discuss the status of women in all walks of public life as a separate issue within the United Nations. It is therefore advisable that the established practice should not be changed and that the struggle for women's equality should be considered in a wider context, including the efforts being undertaken at both the national and international levels.
4. The Byelorussian SSR considers that an expansion of women's activities in the strengthening of peace and international security is fully in keeping with the objective of promoting a wide involvement of women in political life and in accord with the imperative need of today's world to take the necessary steps to reduce the danger of a new world war.

5. The preparation of the draft declaration will provide an opportunity to focus attention on the need to create, as quickly as possible, the optimum conditions for a more active political role by women in the effort to eradicate aggression, colonialism, racism, apartheid, and other such phenomena of universal significance, and will have a beneficial effect on the solution of the most important social problems: education, employment, health care, etc.

6. The Byelorussian SSR believes that the draft declaration officially submitted by the German Democratic Republic at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly should be supplemented by a reference to equal participation by women in economic, social and cultural life. The operative part of the text should include a provision regarding international co-operation on the basis of equality and in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, and regarding the non-use of force or the threat of force in international relations.

PORTUGAL

[Original: English]
[30 July 1981]

1. Consistent with its position of principle, expressed in past votes in the General Assembly, the Portuguese Government does not see the need for such a declaration. In its view equality in the political participation of women and men is a matter covered by already existing instruments, namely the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
2. Moreover the Portuguese Government does not see the political participation of women limited to the areas mentioned in the present draft declaration.
3. The draft in A/C.3/35/L.17 reflects a legitimate, but selective preoccupation with only certain aspects of international political problems, without taking into account the general concept of human rights, which the Charter entrusts us to defend. The Portuguese Government sees the participation of women in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace and security and against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, foreign aggression, occupation and all forms of foreign domination, only in the framework of a more general struggle to defend human rights and fundamental freedoms. This main concept should therefore shape the declaration, which could also include other aspects of the struggle for the promotion of human rights.
4. It is the opinion of the Portuguese Government that the text of any such draft declaration needs extensive negotiation in order to accommodate the points of view of different Member States, and meet with general consensus.
5. In addition to proposals that the Portuguese delegation will forward during the discussion of the text of the draft declaration, the Portuguese Government proposes the following amendments:

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(a) Third preambular paragraph

Add the word "cultural" after the words "public offices in the".

(b) Add a new paragraph after the third preambular paragraph reading as follows:

"Having in mind that the above-mentioned access depends, to a large extent, on the achievement of a balanced and equitable distribution of roles between women and men in the society as a whole and particularly in the family, which means important cultural changes"

(c) Fifth preambular paragraph

Replace the words "are fundamental and indispensable prerequisites" by the words "are important factors".

(d) Delete the sixth, seventh and eighth preambular paragraphs.

(e) Ninth preambular paragraph

Replace the words "in various parts of the world" by the words "in all countries of the world, as the lack of equality at the highest political decision everywhere clearly shows".

(f) Ninth preambular paragraph

Replace the words "of vital international problems" by the words "of vital national and international problems".

(g) Delete the eleventh preambular paragraph.

(h) Part I, article 2

Replace this article by the following:

"The above-mentioned equal participation of women depends, to a large extent, on a balanced and equitable distribution of roles between women and men in the society as a whole and particularly in the family".

(i) Part I, article 3

Replace the words "to create essential prerequisites" by the words "as important obstacles".

(j) Part II, fourth subparagraph

Delete the words "and to influence the work of mass media accordingly".

(k) Delete the fifth subparagraph of part II.

UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

[Original: Russian]

[28 September 1981]

1. The question of the need to elaborate a draft declaration on the participation of women in the struggle for the strengthening of international peace and security and against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, foreign aggression, occupation and all forms of foreign domination has been considered on a number of occasions at sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women. Such an important international forum as the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, held at Copenhagen in 1980, pronounced itself in favour of the adoption of a declaration on this subject.
2. The Ukrainian SSR fully and entirely supports the idea of the adoption of such a declaration. At the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.3/35/L.17, containing a draft of this declaration
3. In the opinion of the Ukrainian SSR, the draft declaration could be adopted in the form in which it appears in document A/C.3/35/L.17.
4. The Ukrainian SSR expresses its confidence that this draft declaration will be approved during the forthcoming thirty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly, as required by the decision adopted at the thirty-fifth session.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

[Original: English]

[1 July 1981]

1. Upon instructions from my Government I wish to inform you that the draft declaration in its current substance reflects the Government's stand on the issues raised.
 2. The Cameroon Government therefore has no other suggestions and comments on the matter.
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