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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION: EFFECTIVE  
 MOBILIZATION AND INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Comprehensive outline of a world survey on the role of women in development

Report of the Secretary-General

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report, prepared in accordance with paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 35/78 of 5 December 1980, presents a comprehensive and detailed outline for an interdisciplinary and multisectoral world survey on the role of women in over-all development. It takes into account the Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (Copenhagen, 14-30 July 1980) 1/ and the recommendations relating to women and development emerging from conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations or specialized agencies (A/CONF.94/19). It also takes account of the following sources: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180); the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 35/56, annex); the tentative graphical depiction of interdependencies between development processes and the condition of women in developing countries, which forms an annex to the Secretary-General's report to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session on the effective mobilization and integration of women in development (A/35/82); the classification system used in the maintenance of the data bank on the status of women maintained by the Secretariat; and the suggestions of specialized agencies and other United Nations organizations concerning the scope and contents of the questionnaire to Governments which constitutes the 1980-1981 round of the Integrated Reporting System on the Status of Women.

## II. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE WORLD SURVEY

2. General Assembly resolution 35/78, calling for preparation of a comprehensive and detailed outline, is concerned with the effective mobilization and integration of women in development. In the operative paragraphs of the resolution, the Assembly welcomes the previous inclusion of provisions relating to the integration of women in over-all development in global and sectoral development strategies and policies, including the International Development Strategy itself; endorsed the resolution on women and industrialization adopted by the Third General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, held at New Delhi from 21 January to 9 February 1980; 2/ and urged the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, as well as the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system concerned with the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, to take fully into account the needs and concerns of women. It further called upon the United Nations system to give sustained attention to the integration of women in the formulation, design and implementation of development projects and programmes, in the context of the implementation of the International Development Strategy.

3. The directives given in General Assembly resolution 35/78 indicate that the

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1/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.80.IV.3 and corrigendum.

2/ See ID/CONF.4/22 and Corr.1, chap. IV, sect. B.

survey should analyse the nature of the role of women in societal development and the factors determining the nature of their role, and particularly as regards those responsible for its current ineffectiveness. It should identify the potential for increased effectiveness if negative factors were removed, limited or adequately compensated for, as well as the best means for achieving such an improvement. In order that policy-makers may realize the enormous potential contribution which an improvement in the role of women might make to the solution of development problems, an attempt should be made to evaluate the restraints which the current ineffective contribution of women impose upon development in many countries.

4. An identification of the means whereby women may improve their contribution to societal development requires an analysis of the causes of the current ineffectiveness and distortion of the roles of women. Some of these causes are to be found in self-supporting and self-depressing conditions. For example, limited education results in poor conditions of employment, which in turn cause poor health, low social status, a high birth-rate, and limited education. Thus, the world survey should examine the situation of women and its causes, with a view to explaining the role of women in development.

5. The status of women has both direct and indirect effects on the role that women are able to play in over-all development, and therefore has significant implications for the process of development itself. Conversely, the development situation further limits and determines the status of women. The status and role of women are obviously not the only factors determining the nature of over-all development. Neither is the current development situation the only determinant of the status of women. Attitudes and values inherited from the past play an important and sometimes decisive role. Yet the relationships between the status of women and the development process are clearly strong and must provide a basic theme in the organization of the world survey. This is compatible with the request to the Secretary-General in General Assembly resolution 35/78, in co-operation with the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations, to continue the efforts to assess the effects of the current international economic structures on the economic and social situation of women in areas such as trade, technology transfer, agriculture and food prices, and industrialization.

6. Following the lines indicated above, it is proposed to present the world survey in two parts: the first part would focus upon the current role and status of women in the context of the development process; the second part would be centred around the most significant aspects of the situation of women and of its determinants.

7. In the first part, a comprehensive approach would not exclude selectivity in the identification of issues. Because of the need to analyse and describe relationships between women as individuals and the total societal environment, it is proposed to emphasize the rural and urban sectors, rather than agriculture, industry and services, or primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. The fact of living in a rural rather than an urban environment, even in a developed country where in many respects the difference between rural and urban life is diminishing, has more fundamental importance for a woman than her engagement in agricultural or

industrial activities. Thus the most important elements in the role of women in the development of rural societies would be examined together, whether they are concerned with agriculture, rural industrialization or the provision of rural services.

8. Attention would be given both to current trends and to the prospects for the near future, and specifically to the situation that might arise if there was substantial progress in the achievement of the goals of international and national strategies for the advancement of women, with consequent changes in their production and consumption patterns.

9. Attention would also be given to the implications of limited participation by women in political life, in policy formulation and planning, and to the fact that most policies are formulated with very little regard to their effect on women.

10. The second part of the world survey, concerned with the status of women, would be organized from the viewpoint of the individual life cycle. Rather than using such categories as "economic", "social" or "political", the topics would relate to major concerns at successive phases in the life cycle. These concerns should be common to all cultural contexts. As in the first part of the survey, a comprehensive approach should lead to a selection of the topics considered to be the most significant in current circumstances. In the light of the recommendations contained in the resolutions of the World Conference and the emphases in the Programme of Action, particular attention would be given to health, education and employment.

11. Only after preliminary phases of the analysis have been undertaken will it be possible, however, to determine precisely which aspects should be emphasized in the final report, taking into consideration the existence of complementary studies, the need to focus upon possibly new and emerging problems, and the advice provided by other bodies working in the same field.

12. A summary of the principal findings and conclusions drawn from the survey would be given in an overview. It would identify the main implications for the further formulation and adjustment of global strategies concerned with the role of women in development.

13. Each of the chapters would be divided into sections concerned with countries in more developed regions and with countries in less developed regions. The latter group of countries would be further subdivided into relevant categories, in accordance with current practice in the United Nations system. Where appropriate, groups of countries having different political and social systems would be discussed separately and an effort would be made to reflect, in the grouping of countries, the critical importance of socio-cultural factors in an analysis of the role of women in over-all development.

### III. PROPOSED OUTLINE OF THE WORLD SURVEY

14. It is proposed that the world survey be structured along the following lines:

Preface

Overview

#### Part One

##### THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OVER-ALL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- I. The relationship between the situation of women and the processes of economic and technological change

Women and the transformation of the structures of production (large- and small-scale industries, production, consumption and conservation of various sources of energy, water, land and other natural resources, protection of the natural environment

Women and changes in consumption patterns

Women and the dissemination of techniques and know-how

Women and the distribution of income and opportunities among households and social groups

- II. The situation of women in the light of salient issues relating to rural development

The actual and potential role of women as producers and consumers in the rural sector: in agriculture, forestry and fisheries; in rural industries; in rural services

- III. The situation of women in the light of salient issues relating to urban development

The actual and potential role of women as producers and consumers in the urban sector: in industry, in urban services in the informal urban sector, (with special reference to tourism and cultural services)

#### Part Two

##### SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN AT DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE LIFE-CYCLE

- IV. Salient issues of importance to women of all ages: human, social and cultural rights, legal status and health

- V. Salient issues of concern to girls and younger women: with special reference to education and training
- VI. Salient issues of concern to mature women: with special reference to employment, the family and participation in social and political life
- VII. Salient issues of concern to older women

#### IV. ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR PREPARATION OF THE WORLD SURVEY

15. The Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs is responsible for both the organizational and the substantive aspects of preparation of the world survey. This activity, forming part of the regular work programme of the Centre during the 1980-1981 and 1982-1983 programme budget periods, will constitute an integral part of the work proposed for the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989.

16. For the preparation of sections for which available information is insufficient and for which further review and research are necessary, consultants would be engaged to prepare drafts within the provisions in the programme budget estimates for 1982-1983. Because of the multisectoral and interdisciplinary nature of such a survey, it will, however, be necessary to draw upon the expertise not only of a wide range of agencies and organizations within the United Nations system, but also of external organizations and institutions. It is envisaged that early in 1982 all organizations concerned will be provided with the present report and with the comments and recommendations of the General Assembly thereupon, together with a more detailed outline of the world survey prepared on the basis of the General Assembly's recommendations. These could also be made available to the Commission on the Status of Women at its twenty-ninth session in February-March 1982. Organizations will be invited to send, if they wish, specific suggestions concerning the contents, structure and emphasis of the world survey. A final detailed outline will be prepared, subsequent to the twenty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission and of interested organizations.

17. Throughout the period of preparation of the survey relevant agencies and organizations will be asked to submit newly completed studies and current information, as these become available, to bring up to date their earlier contributions to the biennial review and appraisal exercise in September-October 1981 and their mandated reports to the Commission on the Status of Women and to the Economic and Social Council early in 1982. The material and suggestions provided will be combined with the information obtainable from the major source, the data bank on the status of women maintained by the Secretariat, for the purpose of preparation of the drafts of the various chapters and actions. It is important to note that the information comprised in this data bank includes the already substantial contributions of specialized agencies and other United Nations organizations, intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system, and non-governmental organizations, as well as of Governments and other institutions and of individuals. Consequently it is not

envisaged that any substantial request for information will be made to Governments. At that time also an assessment will be made of the aspects requiring the assistance of consultants or the comments of specialists within and outside the United Nations system.

18. As they are completed, drafts of each of the sections of the survey will be submitted to the relevant specialized agencies and other United Nations organizations for their comments. On the basis of these comments and of the most recent information available in the data bank, a final draft will be prepared which will be submitted by the end of 1983 for editing, translation and reproduction according to normal procedures. It is anticipated that the publication date will be around the mid-point of 1984. This will allow for dissemination of the survey as a United Nations sales publication, during the period preceding the proposed 1985 World Conference to review and appraise the United Nations Decade for Women.

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