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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE
STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Note verbale dated 20 October 1981 from the Permanent Representative of
Czechoslovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, upon request of the respective Czechoslovak authorities, has the honour to transmit to him in an attachment to this note the text of two documents: Appeal to Women of the World (annex I) and a Declaration entitled "Equality, National Independence, Peace" (annex II), adopted by the World Congress of Women at Prague on 13 October 1981. The documents were adopted by the World Congress of Women held at Prague from 8 to 13 October 1981.

The Permanent Representative would be grateful to the Secretary-General if the two above-mentioned texts were circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 58 and 88.

ANNEX I

World Congress of Women
Equality, National Independence, Peace
Prague, CSSR
8-13 October 1981

APPEAL to Women of the World

The danger of nuclear war overshadows as never before the whole of humanity. It threatens every woman, every man, your child every child.

It is brought about by the arms race instigated by governments aspiring to military supremacy, by those who make fantastic profits from the deadly arms business.

The deployment of new missiles in Western Europe and the production of the neutron bomb will lead to a qualitatively new and more dangerous round in the arms race. Time is running out.

The arms race threatens to accelerate to the point of no return. As a first step, it is necessary to ban the neutron weapons, to stop the build-up of nuclear weapons in Europe and the start serious negotiations for their reduction.

It is necessary not to allow that production and proliferation of nuclear arms in the Middle East, Africa and other continents; the nuclear bases should be dismantled; the use of these weapons and other weapons of mass distribution must be condemned as a crime against humanity. All existing stockpiles of this weapon should be destroyed as steps towards general and complete disarmament.

One million dollars is spent every minute on armaments. Millions of people - women and children - suffer, starve and die as a direct result of the diversion of resources to the arms build-up. This build-up daily robs people of food, clothing, hospitals, schools and jobs. The huge military spending deprives women of the conditions necessary for the promotion of their rights.

The arms build-up must be stopped

The danger of nuclear catastrophe is intensified by the expansionist ambitions of those who, believing that whole regions of the world should serve their selfish interests, create and aggravate hotbeds of tension and armed conflict. International peace and security are endangered by those who seek to prevent countries that have

broken the yoke of colonial dependence from living in peace. Acts of aggression are perpetrated against them and against people who struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination, national independence, and social progress. Armed terror is unleashed even against people who are deprived of their homeland. THIS MUST BE STOPPED. All forms of injustice, racial and colonial oppression and suppression of peoples must be wiped from the face of the earth.

Nuclear war can and must be prevented

It is more imperative than ever before that conflict situations in the world be settled by finding political solutions through negotiations and not by military means.

Never before has there been such a strong movement throughout the world for peace. It is essential for the survival of our children and all humanity that this movement be still more powerful and united and become an invincible force.

Women are the majority of the population of the world. Whether our children inhabit a peaceful world or all life on our planet is exterminated by nuclear war depends also on us, women.

Time does not wait

We alert and call upon the women of the world to use all possible means - letters, resolutions of meetings and demonstrations, petitions, marches, appeals - to demand that leaders of states and governments take practical measures:

- to stop the arms race and all forms of aggression
- to start negotiations immediately for political settlement of explosive international problems.

Let us make International Women's Day, 8 March 1982, a day of struggle of women all over the world against the threat of nuclear catastrophe.

Let us raise our voices and make ourselves heard even by those who prevent to be deaf. Let us act together. United we can save our people and the whole humanity.

ANNEX II

WORLD CONGRESS OF WOMEN
Equality, National Independence, Peace
Prague 8 - 13 October 1981

DECLARATION

of the World Congress of Women "Equality, National Independence, Peace", Prague, October 13th, 1981.

We, the participants in the World Congress of Women "Equality, National Independence, Peace", leading representatives of political life and members of governments and parliaments, working women and rural women, representatives of science and culture, mothers and young women represent 132 countries, 234 national organizations and 90 international organizations.

We express the will of millions of women of different political, religious, and philosophical convictions, who reflect the opinion of a wide range of social forces. Important work was done in the preparations for the Congress on all continents. Wide sections of women were mobilized and supported by public opinion in many countries.

In the course of our Congress we endeavoured to take into account as much as possible collective experience the desire to make a creative contribution to the struggle of the peoples for peace, national independence and democracy, and the demand that genuine equality and the right to live in peace be assured. The constant cooperation and joint or parallel actions of the representatives of the heterogeneous movement of women of all countries and continents are of vital importance for achieving that great aim.

Our Congress is taking place within the context of a serious deterioration of the international situation and a growing threat of war.

The enormous increase in the arsenal of nuclear weapons has reached a critical point. The plan of the USA to station new medium-range nuclear missiles in some countries of Western Europe, the production of the neutron bomb, the aim of achieving military superiority, the attempts to create new military blocs and military alliances and to extend those already existing and the development of a network of

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foreign military bases are extremely dangerous moves in the direction of a continuous acceleration of the arms race, which can lead to an international confrontation.

Irresponsible doctrines are being advanced, it is alleged that the neutron bomb is "humane", that a "limited nuclear war" is "possible", "admissible" and "inevitable" and that it could be "won". All this is absolutely wrong. Any "limited" nuclear war would inevitably escalate into a world nuclear war, the results of which would be fatal for all nations and countries and the whole of mankind.

Tension is being artificially increased. Entire regions of the world are being declared "vital interest zones"

by countries motivated by expansionist ambitions situated tens of thousands of miles away from them. The right of the nations to free choice of their own way of development is being violated, there is interference in the internal affairs of other countries; frontier conflicts are being provoked between neighbouring states; acts of aggression are being committed and foreign territories are being annexed in the Middle East, in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Open support to the most aggressive reactionary, dictatorial and racist regimes, regimes that practise the policy of apartheid and those that occupy foreign territories by force of arms is encouraging their expansionism and inciting them to continue the brutal suppression of freedom and human rights in their respective countries.

The creation of new centres of tension and armed conflicts and the maintenance of those already existing constitutes a direct threat to world peace.

The arms race calls for vast human and material resources and is causing enormous deficits in the social, economic and cultural development of the whole of mankind.

Aware of our responsibility for the life of our generation and future generations we call on the women of the whole world and on all men of good will to recognise and understand the irrefutable truth that there is an acute danger of the total annihilation of the very

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roots of human civilisation.

In our time the danger could easily become reality and irrational political actions as well as the declared readiness to use armed force as a means of settling international conflicts, considerably increases that danger.

All men and women of good will, irrespective of their political convictions, religious beliefs or social status, must make every conceivable effort to prevent the crime of war.

We, the delegates of the World Congress of Women, call on parliaments and governments to undertake measures commensurate with the extremely acute danger threatening us. We call on them to reject the latest armament plans and ban all nuclear weapons, including the neutron bomb; conclude an agreement on the prohibition of the use of these weapons as an immediate measure; to take the necessary steps to outlaw all weapons of mass destruction; to reduce military arsenals and expenditure; to dissolve military blocs and alliances; to eliminate foreign military bases and to withdraw troops from foreign territories; to put an end to the attempts to prevent the peoples' progress towards their national and social liberation by force; to abandon the policy of confrontation and to open negotiations immediately in order to prevent a new round in the escalation of the thermo-nuclear missile race, with the ultimate aim of total and universal disarmament.

We call on the United Nations and its member states to dedicate all their energies to the fulfilment of their primary obligation: to preserve and consolidate peace, to avert the threat of the extermination of mankind in a nuclear conflagration. These vital issues must be resolved at the Second Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament. No aim is more responsible and noble. The tragedy of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki demands that we act without delay.

We appeal to the reason and conscience of the participants in the 36th Session of the UN General Assembly to act before it is too late to stop those who play with the destiny of mankind in order to assert their selfish interests and aims of world domination, and are

even ready to risk a still more horrible nuclear catastrophe. Warn them that the first one to use nuclear weapons will be convicted of a crime against humanity!

We are convinced that it is possible to safeguard peace if we put up a resolute fight for it. The sum total of the actions carried out by the social organizations and forces can and should be an important part of this noble endeavour.

The development of events in the seventies demonstrated that détente, peaceful coexistence between countries of different social systems and broad international cooperation constitute the highway to peace.

The peoples of the world are for friendship, for mutual respect, for equality and justice. These noble aims should also be served by the pen of journalists and writers, by the television screen and the camera of film-makers.

We condemn the aggressive and warmongering circles who use the mass media to increase war hysteria, and intense campaigns to promote the cold war and the idea of the inevitability of war, hostility and mistrust among nations.

The promotion of détente and friendly relations within the international community not only serves to reduce the danger of a new war, but also exerts favourable conditions for the solution of numerous social problems, including that of the equality of women.

Million of women have won and are exercising their economic, social and political rights. Millions are fighting to obtain and assert them. The political and social power of women in the world is growing with every passing day.

The UN proclamation of the International Women's Year 1975, the Declaration and World Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference of Mexico and the proclamation of Decade for Women 1976 - 1985 called the attention of governments and international governmental and non-governmental organisations to the problems of the emancipation of women all

over the world.

One of the main achievements was the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women by the UN General Assembly in 1979.

In a number of countries national legislation on the rights of women in society and the family was improved and national programmes for achieving the aims of the Decade were adopted.

However, there are still serious obstacles to the achievement in practice of women's equality.

In most countries of the world the economic crisis, enormous military budgets, cuts in social services, galloping inflation and increased unemployment have brought about a serious determination in the living standards of the people. In these conditions discrimination against women is particularly acute in the sphere of labour relations. Women are among the last to be hired and the first to be dismissed, and they have the worst working conditions. Women constitute a large proportion of the unemployed and of the unskilled labour force and their opportunities for vocational training and access to positions of responsibility are very limited. They receive less wages and unemployment and sickness benefits than men.

In a climate of war psychosis, attacks on the democratic rights of workers, the revival of the most reactionary forces and the emergency of new fascist and militarist groups, women are frequently the victims of despotism and violence.

In most developing countries, the situation of women is negatively influenced by the absence of genuine progress towards the establishment of a new international economic order, sabotaged by those powers and transnational corporations that are unwilling to lose their privileges and advantages. National programmes for the improvement of the living conditions of women and children are not being fulfilled.

In a considerable part of the world the plight of rural women is extremely grave. Although their work is of social and economic value they do not receive the least assistance and protection. Lack of rights,

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poverty and ignorance is their lot.

The situation of women and children in countries with racist and dictatorial regimes and in countries suffering under armed aggression and foreign occupation is particularly difficult. Thousands of women and children are being killed by bomb. Tens of thousands are being turned into widows and orphans. Thousands are being mercilessly tortured and thrown into jail. The living conditions of women subjected to the disgraceful system of apartheid and in refugee camps rob them of their human dignity, inflict suffering on them and are a violation of their most elementary rights. In a number of countries millions of people, in the first place women and children, are affected by racial discrimination. The United Nations Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children living under extremely harsh conditions is being grossly violated.

We, the participants in the Congress, are convinced that to attain the genuine equality of women on the basis of democratic principles and respect for human rights and to implement the aims and tasks of the Women's Decade it is necessary:

- to ensure a stable peace; to revive the process of detente, and to put an end to the arms race, progressively reduce military expenditure and use the funds released for peaceful purposes;
- to respect the sovereign right of all nations to independent development and their right to control their own resources; to establish a new, just international economic order; to eliminate all forms of injustice and racial and national oppression;
- to ensure democratic rights in all areas of social life and the development of social progress;
- sign, ratify and unconditionally apply the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other international documents confirming their rights;
- recognition of women's equality in the national constitutions and other legislation; ensure that the school provides education in a spirit of peace and promotes the principles of equality. The mass media, with their great influence on public opinion, have to contribute to this goal;
- to make the State and society responsible for the creation of conditions which guarantee equality for women to elaborate concrete governmental

programmes for the achievement of the aims of the Decade.

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We, the delegates of the World Congress of Women, call on the UN, the governments, Parliaments, trade unions and all social organizations to take action to ensure that working women, rural women, housewives and representatives of the intelligentsia are accorded a worthy and equitable place in society and the family and equality of rights and duties; this would promote the full development of their abilities and talents for the benefit of their countries in conditions of democracy and national independence.

PEACE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PREREQUISITE FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF OUR OBJECTIVES!