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UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY,
DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Future of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations
Decade for Women

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of its resolution 34/156 of 17 December 1979, expressed its desire to see the activities developed by the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women continued beyond the United Nations Decade for Women and, in this regard, requested the Secretary-General to study that question in consultation with the Consultative Committee on the Fund and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as with other relevant United Nations agencies, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session; decided that the Fund should continue to be situated at Headquarters; and decided also to review its decision at its thirty-sixth session, on the basis of the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General on his consultations with the Consultative Committee, the Administrator of UNDP and other United Nations agencies directly concerned, as well as on the views to be submitted by Member States by 1 June 1981.

2. In accordance with the above, the Secretary-General consulted with the Consultative Committee on the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, the Administrator of UNDP and other relevant United Nations agencies 1/ on the continuation of activities developed by the Fund beyond the United Nations Decade for Women. The Secretary-General also invited the views of the Member States on the location of the Fund and the 24 replies received are reproduced in the annex to the present report.

3. Section II of the present report contains background information including the criteria and guidelines set out for use of the Fund. Section III considers the future of the Fund, in the light of consultations with the Consultative Committee and the Administrator of UNDP, as well as with other relevant United Nations agencies, taking into account the views expressed by Member States.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. The General Assembly, in its resolution 31/133 of 16 December 1976, specified the criteria for the use of the Fund's resources in the following terms:

"The resources of the Fund should be utilized to supplement activities in the following areas designed to implement the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, priority being given to the related programmes and projects of the least developed, land-locked and island countries among developing countries:

"(i) Technical co-operation activities;

"(ii) Development and/or strengthening of regional and international programmes;

1/ In this connexion, it should be noted that other United Nations bodies and organizations concerned were also consulted.

- "(iii) Development and implementation of joint interorganizational programmes;
- "(iv) Research, data collection and analysis relevant to (i), (ii) and (iii) above;
- "(v) Communication support and public information activities designed to promote the goals of the Decade and, in particular, the activities undertaken under (i), (ii) and (iii) above;
- "(vi) In the selection of projects and programmes, special consideration should be given to those which benefit rural women, poor women in urban areas and other marginal groups of women, especially the disadvantaged."

5. By the same resolution, the General Assembly established a Consultative Committee to advise the Secretary-General on the application of these criteria to the use of the Fund's resources. In the course of its meetings since it was established in 1977, the Consultative Committee has recommended a number of guidelines, which has led to the establishment of a distinctive role for the Fund among the various other funding sources of the United Nations system for international co-operation and development in relation to women's issues.

6. Regarding the kind of projects to be supported, the Consultative Committee recommended that the resources of the Fund should be a supplement to, and not a substitute for, other programmes. The Fund should serve as a catalyst for carefully selected specific projects benefiting women. Operational programmes and projects relating to rural women and poor women in urban areas should take precedence over other types of activities.

7. The resources of the Fund were considered to be particularly suitable for financing innovative and experimental activities, which might, if successful, be funded later from other sources, and for small projects that might not be acceptable to larger funds. These resources could also be used for the continuation, with a minimum of delay, of the second phase of an ongoing project.

8. By September 1981, the Fund had financed 220 projects from contributions and pledges totalling \$13.4 million, received from 74 Member States. In addition, individuals and non-governmental organizations have also contributed about \$20,000.

9. The report of the Secretary-General on the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women to the General Assembly provides detailed information on the trends in the types of projects supported and use of the Fund in recent years (A/36/646). Employment is the primary area for financing of projects. This category consists for the most part of income-raising group activities, including garment factories, animal husbandry, pottery and fish smoking and marketing. Human development activities constitute the second major category. These include training of rural trainers and pilot projects to stimulate self-reliance among communities in rural areas and urban slums. The third category, planning,

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includes both training of development planners and training for the identification, formulation, execution and evaluation of programmes and projects as well as consultancies in this area. In the field of energy, funds were committed for projects in

and for forest industry. Finally, some information activities have been financed at country and regional levels, such as research on electronics and other industries, and on law, and the publication and dissemination of research.

10. The General Assembly, in its resolution 31/133, inter alia, endorsed the arrangements to be applied by the Secretary-General for the future management of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women as set forth in the annex to the resolution. The arrangements contained in the annex to the resolution related to the procedures for solicitation and acknowledgement of pledges, operations and control, and reporting. Attention is, in particular, invited to paragraphs 2 and 4 of the annex, which delineate the responsibilities of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and of the Under-Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, and to paragraph 12 which provides that the Controller shall submit an annual report to the Assembly and, as appropriate, to the Commission on the Status of Women.

11. In an effort to facilitate a collaborative relationship for the administration of certain projects financed from the resources of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/133 requesting the Secretary-General to consult the Administrator of UNDP on the use of the Fund for technical co-operation activities, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Administrator of UNDP reached an agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding in June 1980 (A/35/523 and Corr.1, para. 7).

12. The management of the Fund, including the substantive review of projects submitted for funding and the preparation of reports to the appropriate intergovernmental bodies, is the continuing responsibility of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA) in its biennial work programmes.

III. FUTURE OF THE VOLUNTARY FUND

13. The Consultative Committee on the Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Decade for Women was called upon at its ninth and tenth sessions to advise on the question of the continuation of the activities of the Fund beyond the United Nations Decade for Women. The Committee noted that the General Assembly, in its resolution 34/156, "expressed its desire to see the activities developed by the Fund continued beyond the United Nations Decade for Women", but there remained differences among Member States as to how best this could be done. Based on its discussion of the future of the Fund, the Committee indicated three possible options in this regard: (a) to discontinue the Fund in the hope that its activities would be absorbed by other Funds and agencies; (b) to locate the Fund as a special fund within UNDP and (c) to continue to administer the Fund as a trust fund under the auspices of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs/CSDHA, either in New York or Vienna. At its tenth session, the

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Committee expressed the wish to have sufficient time to study the question of the Fund's future in the light of the views expressed by the United Nations family of organizations and by Member States and to resume its consideration of the question at its next session.

14. The Secretary-General invited the views of the Administrator of UNDP as well as other relevant United Nations agencies, on the continuation of the activities of the Fund. In addition, the Secretary-General sought the views of other United Nations organizations and bodies concerned, bearing in mind the nature of activities and projects thus far developed for financing by the Fund within the framework of the criteria and guidelines established for that purpose as described in Section II of the present report.

15. Replies were received from the following seven specialized agencies: the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of the United Nations Secretariat; two regional commissions, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA); eight United Nations organs and programmes: the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), and the World Food Programme (WFP); and four other United Nations entities: The World Food Council, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

16. In general, the responses were overwhelmingly in favour of continuing the activities of the Fund beyond the Decade. Twenty of the 22 replies received expressed their support or endorsement for continuing the Fund beyond the Decade. UNEP, while fully supporting the work being undertaken for the advancement of women believed that "the continuation of the Fund would be based on proof that there were programme activities requiring special funding". WIPO felt that it was not in a position to comment on the issue as it had not yet participated in specific activities of the Fund.

17. On the whole, the replies stressed four main aspects of the Fund that rendered it distinctive from other funding sources and most beneficial to meet the specific concerns in the advancement of women's status in over-all development processes.

A. Catalytic and innovative role of the Fund

18. An important factor put forward for continuing the Fund beyond the Decade was its role as a catalyst in making possible the implementation of experimental and innovative projects which addressed the needs of women, particularly in the developing and least developed countries, and which, if successful, could be replicated and expanded by Governments and/or by organizations of the United Nations system, including funding agencies.

19. The Administrator of UNDP attached "very high priority to the objective of the Fund - namely to undertake innovative activities aimed at stimulating change and demonstrating the value of full involvement of women in development assistance activities, with special consideration being given to projects benefiting rural women and poor women in urban areas".

20. ECA felt that the continuation of the Fund would allow for the maturation of existing and implementation of new effective programmes with realistic priorities based on the experience acquired during the Decade. UNICEF referred to the experience of the Fund as a "catalyst for change". WFP noted that "the Fund's role ... to fill gaps, stimulate change and to demonstrate the value of the full and active involvement of women in development should be particularly emphasized".

21. FAO stated that "by initiating and/or strengthening projects for women in all regions, the Fund has produced catalytic effects and it has motivated Governments of developing countries and non-governmental organizations as well as donor agencies to allocate technical and financial assistance to improve the working and living conditions of women in the countries". In addition, WHO stated that "there is definitely a need for a 'catalytic' type of funding, for women's projects, as it is clear that other United Nations funds will not adequately play this role in the near future. We believe, however, that in the long-term all United Nations funding bodies should include the provision of funds for programmes related to women and development". The World Bank expressed its belief that the Fund should be extended beyond the Decade "in view of the continuing need for it to seed innovative projects".

22. The replies from the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, ECA, ECLA, UNCTAD and UNESCO affirmed the essential role of the Fund in financing activities for the development and implementation of strategies and measures for improving the status of women, their contribution to and integration in development as prescribed in relevant international action programmes, namely: the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year,^{2/} the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women,^{3/} the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 35/56) and the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held at Paris from 1 to 14 September 1981 (see A/CONF.104/22).

^{2/} See Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, 19 June-2 July 1975 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.1), chap. II, sect. A.

^{3/} See Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen, 14 to 30 July 1980 (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.80.IV.3 and corrigendum), chap. I, sect. A.

23. The Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and ECLA noted the importance of the resources of the Fund for the implementation of projects/ programmes to help realize the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women. In addition, the Department stated: "In view of the long-term nature of these objectives, many of which were reflected in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, funding to achieve these goals would be needed well beyond 1985". ECA also noted that the Fund projects financed "are catalytic and remain in line with the goals of a new international economic order and the International Development Strategy". UNCTAD noted that "continuation of the activities by the Voluntary Fund would help to ensure that women are enabled to make their vital contribution to the national actions and efforts in the least developed countries that will be prescribed in the New Programme", while UNESCO proposed "that the Fund play a role in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women".

B. Need for a special fund

24. Many of the responses stressed the continuing need for the resources of the Fund to finance much needed programmes aimed at women's advancement in the absence of other more immediate or permanent resources.

25. The Administrator of UNDP stressed the importance of continuing the Fund beyond the United Nations Decade for Women "... considering the great unmet needs of women in developing countries and the untapped potential which they represent in terms of economic and social development of their countries".

26. The Department of Technical Co-operation for Development felt that "in the absence of more permanent and integrated arrangements to provide resources on a predictable, continuous and assured basis for this as well as other development needs accorded high priority by our intergovernmental legislative bodies", it supported continuation of the Voluntary Fund.

27. ECA pointed out the continuing need for "deliberate programmes to utilize and upgrade the skills of half of the population group which had hitherto been either ignored or neglected, if significant development is to be resuscitated in the /African/ 'region'". A resolution calling for the continuation of the Fund beyond the Decade had been adopted by the representatives of 32 African Governments at the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women held at Lusaka in December 1979.

28. UNIDO mentioned "the increasing budgetary constraints affecting their work, particularly in fields like integration of women in development". The continuation of the Fund beyond the Decade should provide additional resources for programmes for the integration of women in the industrialization process. WFP stressed the importance of the Fund and WFP assistance for "supporting innovative and pilot projects for women's advancement as more conventional forms of financial assistance may not be forthcoming".

29. UNESCO and ILO both referred to the "flexible" nature and immediate responsiveness of the Fund which had expedited the implementation of projects. ILO stated that "... because of the long delays involved in multi-bilateral programming or ... for other reasons, still many badly needed projects for women

would not have materialized without the assistance of the Fund". The resources of the Fund have enabled it to implement projects for which it would have been difficult to find alternative resources. ILO was convinced that the situation of women in the world, which was deeply rooted in tradition as well as in the over-all economic and social development strategies, would change only very slowly. Thus "special programmes and projects for women would continue to be an acute need beyond 1985".

C. Co-ordinating and integrating role of the Fund

30. The consultations underlined the importance of continuing the Fund for its present and potential contribution to the further development and strengthening of interorganizational working relationships/programmes to benefit women. The Administrator of UNDP noted that "as more Resident Co-ordinators are appointed, it will be possible to foresee better co-ordination between the activities of UNDP, the Fund and other members of the United Nations family -- a factor of particular importance to the Fund when it looks to larger sources of funding to follow up on innovative activities and initial phases of projects which it supports". In this connexion, he was "pleased to note that follow-up funding has recently been obtained for Fund-initiated projects from both the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) and the United Nations Interim Fund for Science and Technology for Development which are administered by UNDP".

31. The Department of Technical Co-operation for Development noted that "in its technical co-operation activities to promote women's participation in development, it co-operates closely with the activities of the Voluntary Fund, and the Fund's complementary financing provides an important means of making possible the many-faceted inputs required for effective action. FAO noted that it had been "closely associated with the development of the Fund and had also assisted the Fund in connexion with projects for women in developing countries".

32. UNICEF noted that it had continued to "co-operate and collaborate with the Fund in joint exercises - involving referrals, project formulations, reviews and project appraisals as well as consultations of ongoing and proposed projects". In addition, UNICEF noted that it "and the Voluntary Fund, along with other funding organizations, such as WFP, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP and FAO, have been working together in an ad hoc working group with the intent of designing, through interagency co-operation, strategies by which the support of women can have a measurable influence on the achievement of development goals". UNFPA noted that "during the last few years there has been close co-operation between the Voluntary Fund and UNFPA. This co-operation has been mainly at the working level, including the exchange of information on subjects of mutual interest and comments on project requests in the areas of advancement of women and enhancing their integration in development and population-related activities".

33. It was generally felt that the continuation of the Fund should facilitate such existing collaboration efforts and initiate others where these were not yet fully operational. With regard to the latter, WFP stressed the essential condition that, in continuing the Fund beyond 1985, "close working relationships

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are established between the Fund and other organs of the United Nations system, including WFP, so that all available resources could be combined in projects of common interest and priority for the advancement of women and for enhancing their contribution to the development process". WFP felt that "the functions of the Fund could be considerably enhanced if the resources of the Fund are effectively linked to other development resources". It particularly stressed the "multiplier effect" of co-ordinating the Fund and WFP assistance, stating that "both sources can have a mutually fortifying catalytic role, because of their close similarity of priority objectives and interest".

34. UNESCO "would appreciate closer co-ordination and collaboration between the Fund and agencies at all stages of project planning and implementation". IFAD "reaffirmed its belief in the need for Governments and the United Nations agencies to work towards a technically sound basis of intersectoral development assistance at the level of the rural household and the rural community". IFAD looked forward to "its continued association with the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women as the United Nations agency having a primary and catalytic role in this important task", that is, "to achieve an integrated and technically sound basis for rural development in support of and in partnership with rural women".

D. Assistance to women at the "grass-roots" level and to low-income women

35. Several responses addressed themselves to the vital importance of the resources of the Fund for continuing efforts to reach women at the village level or "grass roots" and, in particular, to enhance the position of rural and poor urban women in the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries.

36. In this connexion, the Administrator of UNDP noted the "special consideration being given to projects benefiting rural women and poor women in urban areas".

37. ECA pointed out that the "importance of the projects funded by the Fund go beyond the Decade as their targets are grass-roots rural communities". Similarly, UNICEF, WFP, WFC and IFAD referred to the need for continuing work to improve women's roles in agricultural production and development, including the food sector.

38. UNICEF welcomed the increasing accessibility of the resources of the Fund to "village-level organizations and the least developed, the most seriously affected, the land-locked and island developing countries". UNICEF supports "rural and community development and training of trainers particularly for rural extension work for agriculture and animal husbandry and appropriate technology". It noted that the resources of the Fund had supported "income-generating projects for women, which had the potential of making a positive impact on the welfare of the family, in particular, children". UNICEF also noted "the timeliness of Voluntary Fund support for energy conservation and projects to ameliorate the burdens of rural women".

39. UNESCO proposed that "the Fund give priority to rural women". IFAD emphasized "its conception of women's involvement in agricultural product as an aspect of the coherent and integrated nature of women's responsibilities which women bear in agricultural development as being fundamental both to family and community welfare and to national economic well-being".

E. Other aspects

40. Some of the responses also reflected the view that the resources of the Fund were essential for strengthening projects for women's advancement not only in the rural development sector, but also in such sectors as "the integration of women in the industrialization process", which, according to UNIDO, had not received adequate attention in the activities of the Fund; and, in the opinion of UNHCR, for "responding to the needs for humanitarian assistance with more and more emphasis on groups with special needs, particularly women refugees" as a result of persisting "refugee-producing events".

41. INSTRAW commented that "the continuation of the Fund could be of great support for the future work of INSTRAW, particularly in view of General Assembly resolution 35/78 of 5 December 1980, since it could join forces with the Fund for developing specific action-oriented research and training programmes in the field of technical co-operation for development". Similarly, UNESCO proposed that the "Fund could consider research projects on conditions of women for funding".

42. WHO noted that "although funding in the health field is at present not a priority for the Voluntary Fund, because of UNFPA interest in health-related projects for women, we believe it would be necessary for the Voluntary Fund to reconsider its criteria for eligibility for funding, in the event that UNFPA does not continue financing those projects in the future".

43. Other suggestions in addition to those already mentioned above were put forward for improving the impact of the Fund in the future. ECLA noted that "the experience acquired ... and considerable development of activities in the field of the integration of women should be taken into account in the reformulation of its structure and activities, as well as the definition of specific priorities". WFP urged that "in the continuation of the Fund, its regulations and procedures should permit the channelling of additional resources to operational projects exclusively or primarily oriented to promoting the advancement of women in development in a significant way".

44. ILO suggested that "it may be necessary to review the procedure of appraisal and approval of the Voluntary Fund projects in order to take greater account of each agency's field of competence". In supporting the principle of continuing the Fund beyond 1985, UNESCO recommended that "the method of requesting its assistance be simplified and proposed that the consultation mechanism as outlined in the annex to General Assembly resolution 31/133 should be observed".

45. In the light of all the consultations held, it is recommended that the Fund be continued beyond the United Nations Decade for Women. The General Assembly may wish to take a decision in this regard at its thirty-sixth session.

46. In this respect, it will be recalled that the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1980/37 of 2 May 1980, has already recognized the importance of continuing the activities of the Fund beyond the term of the Decade. Furthermore, the General Assembly, in its resolution 34/156, has also expressed its desire to see the activities developed by the Fund continued beyond the Decade.

47. The following points underline the need for continuing the Fund beyond the United Nations Decade for Women:

(a) The importance of the activities developed by the Fund stems from the catalytic action provoked by their operation. Actually, the Fund has often served to stimulate action for the advancement of women. A total of \$3.8 million is known to have been invested in 1981 for follow-up activities by intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies as a result of an initial investment of \$444,200 provided by the Fund for pilot stages of projects. Thus, the resources of the Fund appear to be essential for the implementation of innovative, experimental and catalytic projects which, when successful, will stimulate wider efforts to enhance the participation and integration of women in the development process through operational activities at the country level.

(b) The need for special resources such as those of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women to stimulate change and demonstrate the value of the full and active involvement of women in development is expected to persist beyond the end of the Decade in the light of the constraints that will most likely prevail upon the availability of assistance for the benefit of women from other sources. Until such time as organizations and agencies of the United Nations system are able to generate resources commensurate with the needs expressed by Governments for supporting activities benefiting women in their countries and have the ability and will to respond to such requests, the Fund will continue to perform a most needed and valuable function.

(c) The Fund is of vital importance not only for supplementing efforts undertaken by various United Nations agencies, organizations and bodies in their respective fields of work but also for strengthening interagency co-operation in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women and of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1980/3 of 16 April 1980, "urged the specialized agencies and United Nations bodies to increase their co-ordination and co-operation, using the interagency programme for the United Nations Decade for Women and the Advancement of Women Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat as effective mechanisms. The resources of the Fund could advantageously be used for financing interagency projects envisaged within the framework of interagency programmes, which would benefit women in accordance with its criteria.

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(d) The Fund has a vital role to play beyond the United Nations Decade for Women, which will allow not only the implementation of operational activities (including advisory services) to support efforts at national, regional and international levels for the advancement of women but also the development of new and effective programmes based on realistic priorities firmly grounded on the experience acquired during the Decade, and within the framework, objectives and priorities of the Programme of Action of the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women at national, regional and international levels. In addition, the continuation of the Fund beyond the Decade would be essential to supplement measures to achieve the goals for women's integration as set out in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. It is anticipated that beyond the end of the Decade, in 1985, the activities of the Fund will be responsive to needs of Member States to be expressed at the 1985 World Conference and to related resolutions subsequently submitted to the General Assembly for adoption. A decision at this stage in favour of the continuation of the Fund beyond 1985 would therefore be desirable.

(e) It should be noted that the priorities of relevant programmes and strategies are reflected in the United Nations programme for the advancement of women. Future activities in the programme for the advancement of women, expected to be reflected in the proposed medium-term plan for 1984-1989, will focus on:

- (i) Needs of the women of least developed and other developing countries, women at the grass-roots level and low-income women, particularly with respect to employment and income-generation, improvement of skills and other activities aimed at improving self-reliance;
- (ii) Women in the rural areas and low-income women in urban areas, particularly in countries where the pressure of rural-urban migration, unemployment and underemployment has resulted in many women living and/or working in abject conditions;
- (iii) Special concerns for women within global priority areas such as energy, food, and industrialization. Activities in these areas will aim at improving working and living conditions of women through the development and use of appropriate measures, including technology and through their equal participation with men in the development process;
- (iv) Methods for strengthening national planning and managerial capacities through training, workshops and advisory services to develop national personnel through improved knowledge and skills and through identification and implementation of measures, including legislation and administrative mechanisms, policies and programmes, for enhancing the participation and integration of women in over-all national development plans and processes. Such activities should include methods for strengthening the capacities of Governments to implement and monitor measures for advancing the status of women as laid out in relevant international instruments and standards adopted for this purpose, for example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which entered into force on 3 September 1981.

(v) Effective follow-up to implement international instruments which aim at improving the participation of women in programmes for the strengthening of peace and international co-operation.

(vi) Strengthening programmes aimed at the provision of assistance to migrant, refugee and displaced women.

48. The continuing interrelationship between the activities financed from the resources of the Fund and the regular work programme on the advancement of women would be facilitated by the physical integration of the managerial aspects of the Fund and programme activities within the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna. The activities financed from the resources of the Fund and those in the work programme of the Branch for the Advancement of Women of CSDHA are mutually reinforcing.

49. The question of the Fund's location has been referred to Member States in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/156. Replies were received from 24 Member States, out of which 12 expressed the view that the Fund should remain in New York, 4/ 11 wished the Fund to be located in Vienna, 5/ and one wished to make no comment. 6/

50. It may be recalled that, following General Assembly resolution 31/176, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which has the responsibility for the management of the Fund, moved to its new location in Vienna in 1979. However, pursuant to resolution 34/156, the Fund remained administratively located at New York Headquarters, and some of the staff responsible for such functions were not relocated to the Centre in Vienna.

51. Thus a situation has obtained where the administrative location of the Fund was partially separated from its substantive management, which is vested in the organizational unit responsible for the programme on the advancement of women, of which the activities financed from the Fund are an integral part.

52. The geographical separation of the staff responsible for the co-ordination activities of the Fund at Headquarters in New York from the Centre in Vienna does not facilitate adequate feedback and mutual reinforcement between operational and other substantive activities, nor permit the required degree of policy co-ordination and supervision by the management of the Centre. The relocation of the remaining staff to Vienna would enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the activities of the Fund through feedback and linkages between projects financed from the Fund and the over-all programme on the advancement of women, and through increased administrative and substantive support and supervision by the Centre.

4/ Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Denmark, Indonesia, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

5/ Austria, Cuba, China, Egypt, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Japan, Philippines, Romania and Turkey.

6/ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

53. In addition, there are other advantages. The managerial and substantive requirements of the Fund's operations would be facilitated through the ready access to the support available in the Centre in Vienna. To that extent, pressure on the staff currently servicing the Fund and the administrative, managerial and operational resources and accompanying costs could be reduced. Furthermore, the expected increase in the scope of the Fund's operations through the remainder of the United Nations Decade for Women and beyond might not entail additional staffing costs as management would be provided by CSDHA.

54. As is evident, the Fund's activities are essential for achieving the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women, in implementing the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade, and integral to the continuing programme for the advancement of women, the responsibility for the implementation of which is vested in CSDHA in Vienna. It would therefore be logical and desirable that the operations of the Fund be fully integrated within CSDHA in Vienna.

55. It is anticipated that there will be no significant procedural or administrative factors which could reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of the Fund's operations when it is located in Vienna. This is also supported by the experience of other United Nations trust funds such as the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control and the United Nations Industrial Development Fund currently located in Vienna. Every effort will be made to ensure that the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women are maintained and even enhanced upon relocation to Vienna in full and continuing co-operation with other United Nations bodies and organizations concerned, including UNDP.

56. All necessary measures will be taken to ensure that, through proper timing and modalities of the relocation, there will be no disruption of the Fund's activities.

ANNEX

Replies from Governments to paragraph 6 of resolution 34/156
concerning the location of the Voluntary Fund for the United
Nations Decade for Women

/Original: English/

AUSTRALIA

Australia would prefer the Voluntary Fund for Women to remain in New York to enable proper co-ordination with UNDP and UNICEF and to facilitate administrative oversight of Fund projects by UNDP.

AUSTRIA

/Original: English/

1. The Austrian Government has constantly taken the position that the Fund is an integral part of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and should therefore be moved to Vienna without further delay. The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and, subsequently, the General Assembly have on various occasions reaffirmed the role of CSDHA to provide the focal point within the United Nations system for all activities related to social and humanitarian matters.

2. Therefore, it only seems logical that the Fund, which represents an important component in the women-related activities of the Centre, is fully incorporated into the Centre. In the view of the Austrian Government, co-ordination with UNDP could easily be provided also from Vienna. Moreover, co-operation with other specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations can be managed from Vienna without any problems.

BELGIUM

/Original: French/

It is essentially considerations of efficiency which lead the Belgian Government to reiterate its position in favour of locating the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women at Headquarters, in New York. The technical co-operation activities for which the Fund is used require close co-operation with United Nations agencies and bodies active in this field, particularly the United Nations Development Programme, which administers a major part of the Fund's expenditures. Moving the Fund away from New York would, undoubtedly, lead to delays in the execution of projects and would render more difficult the Fund's role in the support of pilot projects, often of modest size, which must not duplicate

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activities already undertaken by other agencies. Symbosis with the agencies established in New York has also enabled the Fund to make do with a light administrative structure. This would undoubtedly have to be strengthened in the event of relocation, which would lead to an increase of the administrative costs to be borne by the Fund.

BOLIVIA

/Original: Spanish/

With reference to resolution A/34/156, I am pleased to express to you Bolivia's agreement for the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women continuing to be situated at Headquarters.

CUBA

/Original: Spanish/

The Government of Cuba states that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women was established for the purpose of complementing, with financial and technical support, the activities for the development of women during the Decade. All the work which is being done in this regard is handled by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, located in Vienna, which has a branch devoted especially to women. It is thus impossible to detach the Fund from the Centre, since they must necessarily work together. The Cuban Government supports the location of the Fund in Vienna, which would facilitate the development of its activities and the fulfilment of the objectives for which it was established.

CHINA

/Original: English/

The Chinese Government supports the decision to transfer the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women to Vienna.

DENMARK

/Original: English/

Denmark maintains its views regarding the location of the Fund at Headquarters based on close contact with UNDP, which is of the greatest importance for the activities of the Fund. An improvement of the present economic situation where only a small number of countries contribute to the budget seems impossible without the Fund being in close contact with the UNDP headquarters.

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EGYPT

/Original: English/

The Government of Egypt supports the transfer of the above-mentioned fund from New York to Vienna.

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

/Original: English/

The Government is of the opinion that a major role has been assigned to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, particularly in connexion with the co-ordination of projects and activities financed by the Fund. In connexion with the Centre's transfer from New York to Vienna, a number of States and representatives of the United Nations Secretariat have advanced the request that the Fund should likewise be situated in Vienna. In addition, since the Fund is an integral part of CSDHA, it is logical to have it situated at the same location as the Centre.

GERMANY, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF

/Original: English/

The Government supports the establishment of the Voluntary Fund at the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna. This would be the best way to ensure well-co-ordinated and rational work of the United Nations institutions competent for women's affairs and would also lead to an economical use of the funds available.

INDONESIA

/Original: English/

The Government of Indonesia supports the view that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women continue to be situated at Headquarters. This view is, among others, based on the fact that several developing countries do not have their own permanent representation offices in Vienna, which constitutes a problem for communications with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in matters relating to the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women.

ITALY

/Original: English/

The Italian Government has given careful consideration to the question of the eventual transfer of the Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Decade for Women to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna and has reached the conclusion that it would be preferable for the time being that the Fund continue to be situated at Headquarters in New York. In the view of the Italian Government, the Fund greatly benefits from its current location, which facilitates contacts and co-ordination of activities with other United Nations agencies, such as UNDP, UNICEF, etc., whose assistance is of the utmost importance for the success of the programmes sponsored by the Fund. Moreover, the Fund is temporary in nature and its transfer at a stage when the period for which it was established (1975-1985) is approaching its end, while placing a burden on its limited financial resources, seems likely to have disruptive effects on its activities which would not be compensated by the advantages of its incorporation within the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Finally the limited diplomatic representation of developing countries in Vienna would create considerable difficulties for the Fund in maintaining regular contacts with the countries which are the beneficiaries of its programmes.

JAPAN

/Original: English/

The Government of Japan is of the opinion that activities for implementing the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, including those related to the Voluntary Fund for the Decade, should be carried out in an integrated manner by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Therefore, the Government thinks that the appropriate location for the Fund would be Vienna.

JORDAN

/Original: English/

It is my pleasure to convey to you the endorsement of the Government of Jordan of the contents of your letter and that the proper location of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women should be in Vienna with the hope that the new location of the Fund will not negatively affect the activities and programmes of the Fund with various developing countries and its close co-operation with UNDP and UNICEF.

LUXEMBOURG

/Original: French/

Luxembourg considers that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women should remain in New York for the remainder of the term for which it was established (1975-1985), rather than being transferred to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna at such a late date. Experience has shown that the Fund benefits greatly from its New York location, which permits immediate contact with UNICEF and, in particular, UNDP. The assistance provided by these organizations is essential to the proper operation of the Fund, and a transfer to Vienna might impair its efficiency. Moreover, as some developing countries, for which the Fund's assistance is intended as a matter of priority, are not represented on a permanent basis in Vienna, it would be difficult for them to have the necessary contacts with the Fund. Lastly, considerations of a financial order make a transfer seem undesirable.

NETHERLANDS

/Original: English/

1. The Government strongly maintains its views that the interests of the Fund and its beneficiaries are best served by a continuous and permanent location in New York. Among the benefits derived from its location are the day-to-day contacts with UNDP, UNICEF, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and other United Nations agencies as well as non-governmental organizations.
2. Although the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs is the focal point of the Decade, it cannot provide the needed technical and country-level assistance and advice which is available from various United Nations agencies in New York. The Fund has been making extensive use of the UNDP network of field offices and most of its funds are now processed through UNDP. The transfer will negatively affect the speed and efficiency of the Fund.
3. The Government will not support initiatives to effect a transfer to Vienna since the Fund was set up for a limited period of time and primarily designed to stimulate innovative and experimental activities, which make a transfer undesirable when we are beyond the halfway mark of the period for which it was established.
4. The Government believes that the interests of women in developing countries are best served if, by the end of the Decade for Women, existing United Nations agencies have integrated the activities of the Voluntary Fund into their regular programmes. To this end, the Government has made considerable financial contributions to specific women's projects of ILO, UNICEF and other agencies. If at the end of the Decade the General Assembly would decide that the activities of the Fund cannot yet be discontinued completely, the Netherlands would favour an integration of the Fund in UNDP.

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NEW ZEALAND

/Original: English/

1. New Zealand has noted that the Fund works in close contact with other offices in New York, particularly that of UNDP, but also of UNICEF and others. It believes that the opportunity for such close co-operation provided by its location in New York is important to the Fund's effective operations. In the view of the New Zealand Government, this access to the experience and expertise of other bodies is an asset, the value of which would be diminished by a shift to Vienna.
2. It is noted, further, that the projects supported by the Fund are for the most part situated in developing countries, especially the small land-locked and island countries. Many of these countries do not have Missions in Vienna, while most of them maintain posts at United Nations Headquarters in New York. It would therefore facilitate contacts between the Governments of countries that may derive benefit from the Fund and its Administrative Office if the Fund continued to be located in New York.
3. New Zealand considers that the office of the Voluntary Fund should be retained at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The matter could, perhaps, be reviewed when the future of the Fund beyond the end of the Decade for Women in 1985 is considered. In the event that it should be considered that the Fund should remain in being there are various questions that would need to be examined before a decision is taken on the matter. These might include the merits of relocating the Fund's activities within the United Nations Development Programme, or continuing it in its present form under the aegis of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

PHILIPPINES

/Original: English/

The Philippines supports the transfer of the unit of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs concerned with the Voluntary Fund from New York to Vienna. This unit is an integral part of the Centre and the move would enable the Centre to achieve greater co-ordination of activities financed from the Voluntary Fund.

ROMANIA

/Original: French/

The Government of Romania has adopted a positive attitude regarding the establishment in Vienna of the headquarters of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women.

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SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

/Original: English/

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wishes to make no additional comments or express any other views on resolution 34/156.

SWEDEN

/Original: English/

When the issue was discussed in the General Assembly in 1979, Sweden held the view that the Fund should be located in New York. This solution is for several reasons still considered to be the most appropriate one. The Fund collaborates to a great extent with UNDP but also with UNICEF and UNFPA. This collaboration is facilitated if the Fund is administered in New York. The Swedish Government furthermore considers it an important task of the Fund to stimulate other major agencies to take into consideration, to a greater extent, the effect of development assistance on the situation of women. A further aim should be to establish still closer links between the activities of the Fund and UNDP. Those goals will be facilitated if the Fund also in the future is being operated from New York.

TURKEY

/Original: English/

The Government of Turkey supports the view that the Fund should be moved to Vienna as its activities constitute part of the functions of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Furthermore, the relations between the Fund and UNDP, being at the field level, are considered limited, while United Nations organizations such as FAO, ILO, UNESCO and UNIDO are either in Vienna or closer to Vienna.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

/Original: English/

1. The United Kingdom Government is strongly of the opinion that the unit responsible for the Fund should remain in New York. Operational efficiency must be the paramount concern in determining the location of the Fund.
2. There are a number of factors which clearly indicate that the Fund can be more effectively administered in New York than in Vienna. These include the following:

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(a) The processing of projects (and other aspects of the administration of the Fund) involve a large number of communications between the responsible office and other offices and organizations; a very substantial proportion of these communications (letters, memoranda, telephone calls, personal visits) is with offices, organizations and individuals within New York.

(b) About 70 per cent of the Fund money is now processed through UNDP in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations and UNDP, which relates to country-level projects; even if disbursements through United Nations channels were made from Vienna, rather than through the Office of Financial Services in New York as at the present, the proportion of money being administered by UNDP would remain not less than 70 per cent, and the need for close and regular communication with UNDP would remain correspondingly great.

(c) Although all projects submitted to the Fund have women as their beneficiaries, consideration and evaluation of most of these require the ready availability of technical advice and expertise, much of which is country, rather than sex related. The Branch for the Advancement of Women may be the "focal point of United Nations activities in the field of women and development" (as mentioned in the Aide Memoire) but its competence to assess technical aspects of applications submitted to the Fund does not necessarily follow from this. In fact, the combined resources of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (both in Vienna) could not possibly provide the range of competence for the technical appraisal of projects which is available in New York through UNDP, UNICEF, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, etc.

(d) Given the nature of day-to-day communications involved in the administration of the Fund, a move to Vienna would inevitably lengthen the time taken to process projects; this would add to costs. In addition, because the Fund absorbs its own staff costs it would have to bear the extra expenses of maintaining staff in Vienna rather than in New York.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

/Original: English/

1. The United States believes that the continued success of the Voluntary Fund would be facilitated by retaining its administrative offices in New York. We question the advisability of relocating this entity since it is operating effectively at its present location, especially since the proposed transfer would entail certain costs. The transfer would obviously require an interruption in the Fund's operations. Following the World Conference of the International Women's Year in Mexico City in 1975, a considerable period of preparation was required before the Fund could actually begin disbursement of funds in support of projects. Since the Fund is expected to operate for a limited period, possibly until the end of the United Nations Decade for Women in 1985, the transfer would represent a serious disruption of the Fund's activities for a significant period.

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2. We recognize the need for co-ordination of the Fund's activities and the contribution that close proximity can make to that goal. However, we believe that given the nature of the Fund's activities, it is essential for the Fund to be in close proximity to other United Nations development assistance agencies. This is particularly true in relation to the United Nations Development Programme, whose top management is located in New York and which takes an active role in co-ordinating project proposals, disbursing funds and monitoring progress at the country level. We do not believe this close and effective arrangement, which permits a considerable saving of administrative costs, could be maintained by correspondence as has been suggested. In fact, we propose that the eventual integration of the Voluntary Fund is the most appropriate means of continuing its activities beyond the United Nations Decade for Women.

3. We suggest that co-ordination with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA) could be handled by the liaison position which was established by General Assembly resolution 35/136. It is our understanding that at the present time several of the positions in the Advancement of Women Branch of CSDHA are vacant. We would like to see that office, as the focal point of activities related to the United Nations Decade for Women, strengthened before additional functions are transferred to Vienna.
