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**POPULAR PARTICIPATION
AS A STRATEGY
FOR PROMOTING
COMMUNITY-LEVEL ACTION
AND
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**



UNITED NATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs

POPULAR PARTICIPATION AS A STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING COMMUNITY-LEVEL ACTION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Report of the meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Group of Experts
held at United Nations Headquarters
from 22 to 26 May 1978



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INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 6 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1929 (LVIII) of 6 May 1975, the Secretary-General was requested, in implementing the work programme and medium-term objectives of the Organization, and within available resources, to give priority, among other things, to "Promoting the exchange of knowledge and experience among countries in regard to innovative programmes and practices in furthering popular participation in development". The Secretary-General was also requested to give priority to "Research and study that will lead to the development of a viable concept of and policy measures for popular participation that will enhance its effectiveness in the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade and future global strategies".

2. In pursuance of these requests, the Secretary-General convened a meeting of an ad hoc group of experts, which was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 22 to 26 May 1978 to review the information assembled by the Secretariat, and also contained in specially commissioned case studies, on policies, approaches and measures adopted by Member States to promote popular participation in development. Ten experts were invited from eight countries, namely, Brazil, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, Senegal, Sri Lanka, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America and Yugoslavia. They served in their individual capacities and some of them had had experience in more than one country. They had a background in teaching, research, policy-making or operational activities. Representatives of the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization also attended the meeting.

3. In discussing the question of popular participation as a strategy for promoting community level action and nation development, the Group addressed itself to the following issues:

- (a) The concept and practice of development;
- (b) The nature and scope of popular participation for development purposes;
- (c) Popular participation and the new international economic order;
- (d) Popular participation and rural development;
- (e) Popular participation and development planning;
- (f) Popular participation and development administration;
- (g) Women and popular participation.

4. The sections that follow reflect the views and conclusions of the Group of Experts.

Chapter I

CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF DEVELOPMENT

A. Introduction

5. The socio-economic and political structure of a nation has a direct bearing on the level and quality of popular participation as practised by its people. Popular participation, it is recognized, makes an important contribution to development, as well as being directly influenced by it. What is significant about a country's strategy of development is that it defines, in broad terms, the opportunities and constraints affecting popular participation. No less significant is a country's level of economic development, which is a critical factor in determining the degree of participation. The achievement of higher and broader based levels of development is important because such development is a leading determinant of popular participation. Within the same country, the rate of participation is likely to vary in direct relation to a particular region's pattern of development. Higher rates of participation may be observed in the more developed regions of a society, while the rates are correspondingly lower in the less developed ones.

B. Past experience in development

6. In theory, and in practice, development has meant economic growth, measured by macro-economic indicators such as gross national product and per capita income. A country is considered to be undergoing development largely when increases are recorded by these indicators. To the extent that expansion occurs in such social services as health, education and nutrition, this is largely viewed as necessary for facilitating economic growth. It is widely assumed that economic growth is to be realized through planned industrialization, requiring varying and growing inputs of capital, technology, expertise and raw material, accompanied by selective investments in the agricultural sector - notably cash crops, which are earmarked for export. In substantial measure, the capital needed for industrialization is to be drawn from the surplus generated by the sale of cash crops. By and large, this model of development has been derived from the experience of a number of the developed market-economy countries and the planned economies of certain of the socialist countries.

C. Prevalence of the growth-oriented development strategy

7. This growth-oriented strategy has left its own characteristic imprint on the developing countries where it has been attempted. Industrialization, generally viewed as the primary vehicle for rapid economic growth, has often been pursued at the expense of development of the rural areas. In line with this, economic resources, social services and physical infrastructure have been allocated disproportionately to the urban areas, notably in their modern sectors. As a result, development has tended to benefit the inhabitants of the larger cities, often to the detriment of the people living in medium-sized and small urban centres. Under this scheme of things, the rural areas have developed something of a tributary relationship to the cities. Prices paid to farmers have been kept low in order to favour the

fast-growing industrializing urban centres. The surplus generated by the export of cash crops has, to a large extent, been channelled into industrial projects, relatively little of it being invested in agricultural programmes designed to increase food production for domestic consumption. As a result of these policies, the benefits of growth-oriented development have accrued to a relatively small number of workers, farmers and entrepreneurial élites, while little radiates out towards the rural areas where, in many developing countries, the majority of the people make their livings.

8. To the extent that there is an agricultural policy, it has promoted capital-intensive programmes and encouraged cash crops. High-technology agricultural development, often related to the "green revolution", has tended to yield disproportionate benefits to the larger landholders. The latter generally have access to credit facilities and technical know-how for the application of modern technology. As a consequence of these agro-industrial developments, a commonality of interests often emerges between urban and rural élites, who are not loath to exercise their political power to further their own interests. Implementation of land reform programmes, for example, has not progressed far in many developing countries, nor have the laws proved sufficiently effective in breaking the dominant position of the landed interests or clientelist relationships. In some countries, where agrarian reform has made progress, a new class of government officials has skilfully assumed certain of the powers of the former landlords and, under the colour of the reforms, has created new clientelist relationships with the rural poor.

9. A prerequisite of growth-oriented development is that developing societies should be aligned as closely as possible to the economic and social institutions of the developed ones. This is necessary if the modern sector of developing countries is to receive the necessary inputs in the form of the capital, technology and expertise that they are increasingly dependent upon. As this modern sector expands, the dependency relationship is reinforced. The need for additional capital and the requirement to service existing debts constrain the political leadership of developing countries to concentrate more resources on the modern sector. As the modern sector, which is directly linked to the economic institutions of the developed nations, expands, it has an almost predictable adverse effect on the traditional sectors, which command fewer resources. Thus, the conventional strategies of development have tended to perpetuate and intensify the dual nature of developing societies.

10. There is strong evidence that the skewed distribution of the benefits of development is a consequence of the inability of the mass of the people to participate in meaningful ways in decision-making processes affecting the pace and scope of development. This failure is due to a complexity of factors that will be examined in the succeeding sections. It is important to point out in this context that the conventional growth model of development has had a severely inhibiting effect on popular participation. It has intensified the centralizing tendencies within government bureaucracies, thereby widening the gap between government and the people. No less significant, it has deepened the dichotomy between the modern and traditional sectors of society, making communication and understanding between the two extremely difficult. The political and economic élites of the modern sector have acquired a disproportionate share of the benefits of development, as well as the power to make the key decisions affecting development. In contrast, the vast majority of the people live in relative or absolute poverty and have little or no influence on decisions that affect their lives.

D. The need for an alternative strategy

11. Given the paucity of capital and technological resources, and the scarcity of social services, a solution to the twin problems of poverty and dependency, it is increasingly believed, can be found within a general policy that places stronger emphasis on a strategy of self-reliance. Such a strategy necessarily leads Governments to capitalize on the resources that developing countries possess in greatest abundance: human resources. Under the growth-based strategy, people are primarily viewed as part of the problems of development and not as part of the solution. Resources have to be allocated to provide them with food, shelter, clothing and a broad range of social services. Within the context of a strategy of self-reliance, people, through their physical and intellectual efforts, become an important resource in helping to solve these and other problems. Such a strategy, moreover, because it is predicated on sustained collaborative relationships, can be instrumental in promoting a more participatory society. This is not to suggest that people always can or should serve as a substitute for capital. There are limits to how far labour-intensive development activities can be carried; these limits, moreover, become progressively more circumscribed as a country reaches advanced stages of development. What is desirable at the stage of development in which many developing countries now find themselves is to strike a better ratio between these two factors of production. A higher ratio of labour to capital would be more realistic in that it would take into account the greater abundance of labour and the relative scarcity of capital, as well as other expensive inputs.

E. Popular participation and self-reliance

12. A policy of self-reliance implemented at the national, regional and local levels could reduce many of the economic and social problems that inhere in the growth-based strategy of development. In the case of agriculture, self-reliance can, if combined with modern methods of production, lead to a more equitable distribution of income. The creation of employment opportunities generates additional income for the rural poor and thereby provides them with the income to buy the food they produce and secure other commodities and social services. Under a selective policy of self-reliance, consumption is closely linked to production - a practice that is central to social development. This policy contrasts sharply with the conventional growth-based strategy, which emphasizes increased production and relies upon an anticipated trickle-down effect to spread its benefits. Where this strategy has been applied in agriculture, increased production has often not led to increased consumption but rather has created a situation in which reserves of food stocks have grown without a corresponding reduction in hunger and malnutrition.

13. A strategy of self-reliance leads to increased and varied participatory modes of economic and social behaviour. The organization of co-operatives and the construction of self-help housing in rural areas and squatter settlements both reflect and advance the practice of self-reliance. There is, moreover, a mutually self-reinforcing relationship between self-reliance and popular participation. Self-reliance implies the assumption of greater initiative by people on an individual and collective basis. The prospects of this happening under such a strategy are dictated by the emphasis it places on collective relationships, which tend to compress the vertical distance between government and the people. Working independently, or through government, this approach motivates the people to be more creative in seeking solutions to satisfy their individual and collective needs. Over a period of time, it develops skills and leads to increased competence in problem-solving. Concomitantly, it promotes the development and use of indigenous resources. The significance of this for achieving greater national self-reliance cannot be underestimated.

Chapter II

NATURE AND SCOPE OF POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

14. In discussing the nature and scope of popular participation in development, it is necessary to consider the following questions: (a) the definition of the term and its parameters; (b) prerequisites for popular participation; (c) the factors inhibiting popular participation; and (d) the types, forms or different manifestations of popular participation.

A. Definition and parameters of popular participation

15. Popular participation resists a single or comprehensive definition, as its meaning can vary considerably from one country to another and even within the same country. It can best be understood in the context of a specific country and its political and socio-economic system. The following generic definition has broad applicability, because it cuts across most contexts:

(a) Popular participation entails the creation of opportunities that enable all members of a community and the larger society to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development;

(b) This definition is in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 1929 (LVIII), which connotes the voluntary and democratic involvement of people in:

"(a) Contributing to the development effort;

"(b) Sharing equitably in the benefits derived therefrom;

"(c) Decision-making in respect of setting goals, formulating policies, and planning and implementing economic and social development programmes";

(c) Participation, conceived of in this manner, establishes a linkage between the contribution people make to development through their labour and other resources and the benefits they receive for their efforts: citizen participation in decision-making at the local, regional and national levels can serve to bring about a fair relationship between people's contributions and benefits;

(d) Variations in the nature of popular participation will be affected by a nation's economy, policy and administrative structure, as well as the socio-economic characteristics of its population; no generalized procedure or process is involved. Popular participation is more than a technique, it is a crucial element in ensuring a beneficiary-oriented developmental process.

B. Prerequisites for popular participation

16. A necessary condition for the effectiveness of popular participation in development is its endorsement as a national policy. Popular participation in development increases in scope when the Government and other national institutions go beyond this "acceptance in principle" and give it political legitimacy and legal standing by facilitating its inclusion in development activities. In promoting popular participation, Governments must be prepared to accept its consequences, among which could be a realignment of political and economic power at the local, intermediate and national levels.
17. As a minimum requirement, a programme of popular participation, in order to maximize the ability of the large mass of the population to contribute to development entails the creation of: (a) an organizational base; (b) autonomy of citizen initiation in local decision-making; (c) an efficient information network; and (d) material and technical support.
18. In most settings, people need to organize themselves into groups and associations in order to achieve the goals of popular participation. Without an organizational structure, participation can turn into an ad hoc venture, with little follow-through, or can fall prey to outside manipulation. Such a structure can serve as a motive force because popular participation is, as a rule, neither a self-initiating nor a self-sustaining process. Participation by civilians in autonomous organizations often results in the acquisition of skills and information that enhance their individual effectiveness in participatory processes.
19. The autonomy of citizen initiation in local decision-making is very important because it allows the people to work towards goals that respond to their individual and collective needs. The matter of organizational autonomy raises controversial issues because of the continuing need to strike an acceptable and workable balance between central direction and local initiative in identifying needs and priorities. In seeking such a balance, designers of popular participation programmes should bear in mind the main purpose of local autonomy in decision-making, which is to promote self-management and self-confidence, as well as initiative and creativity at the local or group level.
20. A comprehensive and free flow of information is necessary for citizen participation in development. In the absence of information, people are unlikely to be motivated to participate; participation under such circumstances, moreover, is not likely to be rational or meaningful. Thus, in designing a programme for popular participation, consideration must be given to the establishment of reciprocal information networks linking horizontal and vertical dimensions. Basically, three types of information are involved: (a) ideological or "normative" information, which calls for a popular commitment to policies of change and development; (b) technical information, which aids people to acquire the skills and competence necessary to handle development programmes; and (c) managerial/administrative information, which helps the people to programme their day-to-day activities.
21. Material support is essential to ensure full participation by people who lack the means to organize and sustain their activities. This is particularly true for civic, community and social organizations, which, because they often cater to the needs of poor people, require greater financial and technical assistance. Such aid is necessary to promote a more active economic role for

the poor in development. Those living at the poverty or subsistence levels are least likely to risk their meagre resources in innovative activities. They are dependent upon State assistance if they are to undertake new or participatory forms of activity alongside other members of society. Technical assistance should also be included, to strengthen people's capacity to engage in productive economic and social programmes.

C. Factors that inhibit popular participation

22. Since any programme of popular participation entails, by definition, a sharing of power - both political and economic - between men and women and between various groups and communities in society, the potential forces operating against popular participation are not insubstantial. Four broad types of constraints can be identified: (a) those arising from the way popular participation is defined in a specific context; (b) those relating to the nature of the economy and polity; (c) those relating to the social and demographic characteristics of the population; and (d) those emanating from the external socio-economic environment.

23. The usefulness of popular participation can best be defined in terms of its scope and results over a period of time. A narrow and short-term approach tends to focus on immediate achievement of a higher output from specific programmes. Such "extractionist" forms of participation are to be discouraged if they do not deal with the larger and longer-term problem of alienation of people from the development process, nor can they deal with the complex issues of providing for an efficient and equitable delivery of social services while allowing increased citizen participation in the planning, execution and delivery of such services. A long-term perspective, on the other hand, recognizing the importance of establishing an institutional framework for participation, is better able to take these issues into account.

24. Participation is difficult to achieve where extreme disparities exist in wealth, income, power and status. It is also severely inhibited when the economy is largely in the hands of relatively few private individuals, particularly if the State machinery lacks the effective means to distribute resources. Thus, when economic wealth and political power are the monopoly of relatively few people, the people are not in a position to bring the weight of their numbers to bear on the system by making it more responsive to their needs. Similarly, participation becomes blocked when the economy is controlled by a rigidly centralized State.

25. Deep divisions within society along lines of ethnicity, languages, sex and age may also impose constraints on popular participation. A workable organizational base has to be developed to integrate all these groups into the development process. Demographic factors, notably skewed patterns of settlement, may inhibit the participation of large sections of the population. The wide dispersion of the population over rural areas, or excessive concentrations of the populace in large urban agglomerations may result in reduced participation. Patterns of settlement on a scale that preserve the sense of community are, on the other hand, more likely to promote a greater degree of citizen participation.

26. The nature of a country's political economy and the degree of self-reliance it has achieved will determine its susceptibility to the vicissitudes of international economic order. This, in turn, could substantially affect the pattern and level of popular participation. Heavy dependence on foreign

investments and credits, and on exports, may limit the amount of funding the national Government can make available to participatory organizations. Similarly, transnational corporations may exert an inhibiting effect on citizen participation, either directly or through the political authorities in power. Decisions affecting national development are made, in the former instance, by heads of such corporations operating at the home office or, in the latter case, by business officials in the host country, acting under the instructions of the parent organization. That the external economic environment could adversely affect the participatory process is a matter of serious concern. This is an area where insufficient information is available. Further research on this subject could shed new light on the role that international economic forces play in affecting popular participation at the national level.

D. The typology of popular participation

27. The above factors and constraints suggest that popular participation manifests itself in different forms from country to country and among different groups and strata within society. Relying upon case studies from various countries, popular participation can be categorized in terms of how it is initiated: (a) spontaneous participation (voluntary, base-up, without external support); (b) induced participation (sponsored, mandated and officially endorsed); and (c) coerced participation (compulsory, manipulated and contrived). The first comes close to an ideal mode of participation, as it reflects a voluntary and autonomous action on the part of the people to organize and deal with their problems unaided by government or other external agents. The induced form of participation is the most prevalent mode to be found in developing countries. This is so because, in many societies, the Government has a central role in initiating popular participation and institutionalizing it. It has done this through such strategies as motivating and training local leaders to assume leadership roles, establishing self-management and co-operative organization, and promoting civic and community bodies. Coercive forms of participation, although sometimes indistinguishable in form from the induced type may, at least in the short term, yield immediate results; in the long run, popular participation that is forced and lacking in public support will turn out to be counter-productive and erode citizen interest in becoming involved in development activities.

Chapter III

POPULAR PARTICIPATION AND THE
NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER

28. The Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order is contained in General Assembly resolution 3201(S-VI), which was adopted by the Assembly at its sixth special session in 1974. The resolution lays down the principles on which the new order should be founded. At the same session, the Assembly adopted resolution 3202(S-VI), setting forth the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. The actions proposed dealt with a broad range of issues, including raw materials, food, general trade, the international monetary system, transfer of technology, regulation and control of the activities of transnational corporations and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations system in the field of international economic co-operation. As a follow-up to the resolutions of the sixth special session, the General Assembly convened a seventh special session in 1975 and adopted resolution 3362(S-VI), which dealt with development and international economic co-operation. It is this resolution that is most likely to provide opportunities for a popular participation input which could have a role in the formulation and implementation of a new international development strategy. The Group of Experts took it upon itself to consider how the new international economic order could be strengthened by popular participation at the national as well as at the international level, and how it could stimulate broader participation by the people in contributing to it and also sharing in its benefits.

29. Although the objectives of the emerging new international economic order have been stated clearly, basic issues as to its form and character have yet to be resolved. In consequence, the concept and practice of popular participation will remain uncertain until greater clarity and meaning are given to the new international economic order. If the latter is to conform to certain of the commitments of the international community, it will have to be characterized by a more equitable sharing of benefits both between and within nations. A key factor to eliminating world poverty and hunger and creating a sense of human dignity, as well as a key outcome of the new international economic order is the "unblocking" of the obstacles to popular participation that are to be found in communities, whether this be at the local, national or international level.

30. Any development model based on participation by the privileged elements of society, with limited or no participation by the deprived groups, should be rejected. What is needed is a shift away from such a model and a reorientation of outlook so that participation by the deprived elements of the population extend not only to contributing wealth created through their labour but to partaking in decision-making and sharing more equitably in the benefits accruing from development.

31. Achieving full participation along these lines by the poor in the development process will necessarily require a change in the domestic political institutions, hand in hand with change in the international economic order. Any change in the international economic order that serves to reinforce existing inequalities between the privileged and poor is not welcome. It serves little purpose to argue whether the international economic order should be changed before existing national economic systems are restructured or vice versa. Undoubtedly change at both planes has to occur simultaneously, since many national economic systems are analogous to the existing international economic

order, if not, to a certain extent, extensions of it. Given the commitment of the developed countries to such objectives as elimination of hunger and poverty, greater employment, housing, income distribution etc., it is most likely that they will look for concomitant changes in the internal economic and social orders that will both strengthen and benefit from the new international economic structures and relations. Developing countries, for their part, may interpret such insistence on change at the national level as interference in their internal affairs and as an attempt by the developed countries to avoid the obligations they are being asked to assume under the proposed new international economic order. In the meantime, developing countries, under their technical assistance programmes to one another, should include the exchange of information and experience as an integral part of such programmes.

32. The new international economic order can become more responsive to the needs of the less advantaged groups by assuring their full participation at all levels in its formulation and implementation. This will necessarily mean that popular participation will operate at the international as well as the national level. The people, through organized means, can bring pressure to bear in order to influence the content of the new international economic order, and multi-lateral and bilateral development efforts should seek to induce changes at the national level that are consonant with the aims of promoting greater citizen participation in the benefits of development. In the first instance, popular participation could be directed at the international level by forming pressure groups that operate at the international level, such as those that challenge multinational corporations, by organizing the "twinning" of cities and educational institutions, and by promoting actions by international non-governmental organizations. A system should be developed analogous to those in the areas of trusteeship and human rights, allowing community organizations to present their views before international organizations on development programmes and to assess their impact on the poorer elements of society. Through such efforts it is hoped, among other things, to induce international development organizations to support national programmes that enjoy broad-based support of the poor or whose benefits would accrue mainly to them. Admittedly, this is unlikely to happen in the near future, as there is little public awareness of the impact of the international economic system on national development. As public consciousness in this domain develops, there will almost certainly be efforts by national popular organizations to bring about changes in the activities of international bodies consistent with the objective of promoting a more equitable distribution of income and wealth. Already, there is a growing awareness in certain developing countries of the role that transnational corporations play in shaping national development.

33. Conversely, international development programmes of a bilateral or multi-lateral nature should encourage popular participation in the recipient country to ensure a more equitable distribution of the benefits arising from such programmes. Certain developed countries have included provisions in their foreign assistance programmes, whose aim is to foster the growth and development of popular organizations. The Economic and Social Council resolution 1929 (LVIII) recommends, inter alia, that "the United Nations Development Programme, the specialized agencies, particularly the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and other international technical and financial assistance programmes and agencies, consider popular participation as a distinct category for the purpose of technical co-operation and encourage Member States to request development assistance in this field".

Chapter IV

POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

A. The backward state of rural areas

34. One of the primary issues in national development is change in the rural areas. Most people in developing countries live in rural areas, and most of the world's poverty is centred there. In large measure, this situation is a consequence of the already existing harsh conditions of poverty, which continue to persist as a result of government policies that tend to promote or to favour the modernizing sectors of rural societies. As a result of these policies, food production has declined in many developing countries and, even where it has increased, remains inaccessible to the rural poor; inadequate investment in rural industrialization and agriculture has led to increased poverty among the rural migrants to the already overcrowded slums and squatter settlements in urban centres. Declining food production has also adversely affected industrial growth. Governments in many countries have had to allocate scarce foreign exchange to the purchase of food, while the growing impoverishment of the rural population has limited its ability to function as an effective market for domestic industries.

35. These developments, it is increasingly acknowledged, require a greater investment in, and concern for, rural development by government. Such a change in development policies, which is in evidence in a number of developing countries today, could lead to increased production of food and jobs, expand employment opportunities, reduce rural poverty and lessen dependence on foreign international centres. What is necessary is the formulation and implementation of an integrated approach to rural development, entailing improvements in the economic, social and cultural aspects of life. This broad view of rural development, focusing on the quality of life in its entirety, should replace the narrow aim of immediate material pay-offs. A balance should be sought between material and non-material values and between short-term and long-term gains in devising rural development programmes.

B. Involving the poor in development

36. A comprehensive conception of rural development such as this can only succeed if all the rural people are involved in the formulation, execution and evaluation of development programmes. Thus, the question of popular participation becomes one of the major factors in promoting and sustaining broad-based rural development. This entails the establishment of procedures and structures which enable the rural populace to articulate their needs, identify priorities, participate in development programmes and enjoy the fruits of their efforts.

37. It should be emphasized that giving decision-making power to the rural population often entails the reduction of the power hitherto wielded by the more privileged bureaucracy and the urban and rural élites. Although having different territorial bases, these two élites often have a commonality of interests that transcend their differences. As a result, they often act in concert to block the implementation of agrarian reforms and other benefits that would confer increased benefits and greater power on the rural poor. Through their economic and political influence, these élites are able to block greater participation by the poor in local elected assemblies, as well as in agrarian and other reform programmes. More subtle, but no less significant, is

their ability to co-opt local leaders through offers of jobs and material resources. These factors should be taken into account in devising strategies and formulating development programmes that can be expected to lead to increased participation by the rural poor in rural development.

38. In order to maximize the benefits to the rural poor, popular participation should be emphasized in the areas that strongly affect their economic well-being and social status. These include:

(a) Pricing policies for crops: the object of these policies should be to increase the production of both food and cash crops, to provide a reasonable income to the small landholder and farm worker and to ensure that sufficient food is made available to the poor to meet their basic needs. This could be accomplished through a policy of higher food prices to farmers, combined with subsidies, to ensure that essential foods are within reach of the poor.

(b) Agrarian reform: measures should be adopted to ensure that the poor have a meaningful role in the formulation and implementation of agrarian reform programmes. Popularly organized local institutions, such as co-operatives and peasant groups, should be invested with the authority to carry out these reforms.

(c) Community development: the poor should be assured of a proper role in community development activities. In the use of voluntary labour for the construction of physical and social infrastructure, the poor should have an effective voice in determining priorities and apportioning benefits.

C. Strategies for intervention

39. Rural development requires a national plan of action of policies, plans and strategies that assign priority to the development of the rural areas. Investments in industry and physical and social infrastructure should be centred in larger measure in rural areas. A pricing policy for food commodities should be developed that promotes both increased production and consumption. Under certain circumstances, rural development may have to be based on alternative development models of short-term and intermediate-term duration that emphasize those aspects of development which focus on equity in the distribution of goods and services. It could require major structural changes, such as agrarian reform, as well as the introduction of income policies that will favour increased food consumption by the poor. It may also require human settlement planning designed to bring about a more harmonious balance between population distribution and the resource potentials of different geographical areas. For more effective results, these actions should ideally form part of a larger integrated rural development approach that involves a broad mix of agricultural, credit, marketing, technological and social services. To be effective, these programmes should be planned and implemented in such a way that all activities are complementary and optimally sequenced. All integrated approaches imply that there will be working co-ordination mechanisms both at the national level and at the point where services are delivered.

40. If popular participation for the development of the rural areas is to be meaningful, it must have an impact at the national level where development planning takes place, and at the local and intermediate levels where services are organized and distributed. For the rural poor, effective participation at the national level poses severe challenges because of their organizational and political weaknesses at this plane. Even in countries where the organizational activities of the rural poor reach up to the national level, they are generally

no match for the more powerful urban élites. These issues aside, there is yet another question of how the preferences of the rural poor can be articulated within the context of development planning, whose complexities do not readily lend themselves to popular discussion and decision.

41. If the rural poor are to come to grips with these organizational, political and technical problems, they must come up with suitable strategies. This entails considerable efforts, if only because the rural poor are often tradition-bound and commonly do not constitute a socially and politically differentiated mass of people. They are often riven by occupational, ethnic, geographical, racial and linguistic differences, making it difficult to develop common policies. As will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters on planning and administration, the following strategies should be pursued in promoting popular participation for rural development.

(a) Formation of organizations: the rural poor should organize at the local, intermediate and national levels. Such organizational activities help to increase the sense of individual efficacy and allow the rural poor to deal on more equal terms with the rural and urban élites and the bureaucracy which, all too often, tends to identify with the interests of these modernizing élites. These groups can also perform useful work by minimizing interagency rivalry in implementing an integrated rural development programme. Active participation by the people can be one way of obliging competing government agencies and private organizations to adopt a more co-operative relationship. For these bodies would then be dealing with the rural population as organized groups rather than as isolated individuals. Through collective action, the rural poor can press the Government to devise comprehensive pricing policies as an incentive for increasing food production and consumption and to implement land reform legislation.

(b) Training for participation: considering the multiplicity of skills that are needed to initiate and carry on popular participation, it is essential to strengthen the capacity of the rural population to function in this area. Providing training for local and community leaders is therefore an indispensable element in promoting popular participation. The rural poor should be encouraged to acquire skills in such areas as self-management, co-operatives, negotiating with the bureaucracy and organizing community groups. Training should be directed towards promoting local self-reliance. Thus, popular participation in the rural areas can be strengthened by encouraging the better use of local technologies and the use of local resources for the establishment of cottage industries and crafts. These industries should, as far as possible, be complementary to urban industry.

D. The role of government

42. For the poorest elements of a community, the Government should provide assistance to enable them to start up participatory activities. This can take the form of subsidies, credit and extension services as well as training. Such assistance should not be of a magnitude or duration where it encourages dependence on government; assistance should be given on condition that the people involved reciprocate in terms of contributing part of their resources. Experience has shown that subsidies of an unconditional and generous nature increase peasant dependency on government without reducing poverty or raising productivity.

Chapter V

POPULAR PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

A. The limited role of participation in planning

43. A common feature of development planning in many countries is to provide for popular participation in the planning process. Planning is the process of making choices of goals, policies and strategies and working out specific plans and programmes for achieving desired goals. The nexus between planning and participation is important, given the objective of transferring resources to the poor. Through popular participation, the people can become a political force in shaping overall development strategies. Participation can make the planning process reflect "grass-roots" thinking and thereby give it a stronger popular base. It could also provide a framework for mobilizing local resources for development programmes. How can the poor participate in planning to implement redistributive programmes, including shifts in investment from urban to rural development, from physical to human capital, from capital-intensive to labour-intensive activities and from the production of non-essential consumer goods to those which are deemed vital? In actual practice, in many countries, the planning process is not accessible to the majority of the deprived population. Even when taken seriously, popular participation is ordinarily limited in its jurisdictional scope and restricted in its application. The nature of participation in most planning exercises is consultative; popular preferences are generally not binding on planners, who tend to view them as only part of their general guide-lines.

44. By and large, popular participation does not reach up to the political level, where alternative priorities are debated and decided upon. Critical choices concerning the determination of priorities, mobilization of resources and distribution of benefits are invariably made at the national level. These decisions, as has been previously noted, are often reflective of the development priorities of the modernizing élites; not uncommonly, they are shaped by the requirements of the international economic system, which insist on debt repayment and tightened fiscal policies as conditions for new loans and credits. Thus, popular participation at the national level - where it is weakest - can have little, if any, real impact on planning at the national level. Whatever influence popular participation can have is at the local and intermediate levels. Yet, in these very areas where participation is strongest, the planning function is weak. Planning, to the extent that it exists at the local level, is geared towards carrying out decisions that have already been decided upon at higher levels of decision-making authority. Locally, popular participation can have a role in implementing planning. This can prove significant, considering the practice of planners in not a few countries to set broad guide-lines and leave the implementation of the plan to local and regional bureaucratic and party officials.

45. What accounts for the limited role of popular participation in the planning process? Answers have to be found if planning is to be made more responsive to the needs and aspirations of all groups of society, whether rich or poor, urban or rural, worker or farmer. Governments are in need of such information because many of them are formally committed to the concept of citizen participation in planning and are anxious to give effect to it.

Involvement of the people in planning has to be done in ways that ensure that popular participation becomes an instrument for redistributing the benefits of development. Although it is scarcely possible to provide definitive answers to this question, there are a number of factors that can be identified as being responsible for limiting the influence of the masses of the population in planning.

B. Blockages of popular participation in planning

1. Centralization of the planning process

46. In virtually all developing countries, the planning apparatus has become highly centralized. The planning office, not uncommonly, is lodged in the office of the national chief political executive, who may even have a direct role in its operations; by and large, the operations of national planning agencies are not decentralized and resist efforts to bring about such a devolution in management and functions. The effect of this is to restrict the influence of community-level groups on the planning process, which is often not adapted to respond to citizen feedback in formulating and implementing plans. Under these circumstances, centralization has stifled popular participation in planning. It has increased the vertical distance between planners and the broad mass of the population. Under the impact of these centripetal forces, micro-level planning has little scope or application, or simply serves as an instrument to extract labour and other resources from the poor.

2. Complexities of the planning process

47. Development planning is a complex process and does not readily lend itself to citizen involvement. It can be broken down to include the following discrete operations:

- (a) Identification of societal goals and popular needs;
- (b) Establishment of an order of priorities that is economically feasible and politically supportable;
- (c) Procurement of the necessary financial and material support for the plan;
- (d) Execution of the plan in a harmonious manner;
- (e) Evaluation and monitoring of its operations.

48. If popular participation is to prove successful, it must involve the people in significant ways in all of these processes and at all levels of government - although not necessarily in the same way. Participation has to be continuous over a period of time and to be based on relevant information.

3. Lack of information and technical data

49. Each of the operations described above can only go as far as available data allow. In most developing countries, such information is sorely lacking and even the information that has been collected and analysed has

not, for the most part, been disseminated to the people in ways that are comprehensible to them. In saying this, a distinction has to be made between the data needs of the planners and the information requirements of the public. The former require precise and up-to-date data, while the public, if it is to serve its own interests and those of the development process, is in need of general information that can assist it in guiding planners and monitoring their activities. Such information would allow people to participate in decision-making processes in a more rational manner. The information should help to motivate people to participate as well as inform them.

4. Costs of popular participation

50. The costs of popular participation, at least over the short term, are not insubstantial and can have an immediate effect on the planning process at the national, regional and local levels. These costs can take different forms, such as increasing the time needed for both the formulation and implementation of plans. The effects of this can be felt in increased costs, lengthened periods for plan preparation and possible compromising of quality standards. Benefits, on the other hand, are usually slow in coming and are not always quickly perceived or necessarily attributed to popular participation.

5. Attitudes of planners

51. Planners, as a group, are resistant to popular participation. In part, this attitude stems from their professional training, which emphasizes the paternalistic notion of working for people and not with them. This training also tends to portray planning as a "value-free" or politically neutral exercise. Given this outlook, the projection of popular preferences into the planning process can only serve to politicize it and cast it off from its professional moorings. Planners often impute to the poor a "present-oriented" mentality, assuming that their concern for everyday survival makes it impossible for them to project beyond current needs and problems. Increasingly, planners are becoming sensitive to the need for some forms of participation, if only for securing information or consulting the public as to their preferences.

6. Popular resistance to participate

52. Popular participation is not a spontaneous phenomenon that occurs in the normal course of events. It requires an investment in time and energy and a willingness to forego other activities. The effort is even greater for the poor; the widespread incidence of hunger, malnutrition and physical disability, as well as the debilitating effects of powerlessness, often make it difficult to arouse them from their apathy and indifference to development issues. The poor, as has already been noted, are not a homogeneous grouping possessed of common interests and aspirations. Very often, they are inadequately organized to defend their common interests and generally do not have access to information on which to make sound judgements about community needs.

C. Strategies for promoting popular participation in planning

53. Popular participation in development planning cannot become much of a reality unless strategies are developed to deal with the constraints. These strategies have to deal with the institutional, behavioural and informational constraints at the national, local and intermediate levels. The following recommendations should be considered as ways of promoting the concept and practice of popular participation in planning.

1. Decentralization of planning

54. The machinery of government planning has to be made more accessible to the population at large. Planning should be decentralized from the national level - where it is generally centred - to the local and intermediate levels. In practical terms, this means that part of the planning machinery, along with personnel and functions, has to be transferred to lower levels of political authority. In the absence of specific measures to accomplish this, decentralization is likely to be held back by the very forces that promote centralization. Local and intermediate-level planning bodies should be invested with appropriate legal powers, financial resources and trained personnel so as to ensure their effective operation. Operating at the community level, planners can be more responsive to the preferences of the people, who are now better able to make a direct impact on the planning process. This can go a long way towards helping to establish popular participation as an important organizing principle in planning.

2. Training for popular participation

55. Planners. Given the attitudes of planners towards popular participation, programmes should be undertaken to enable them to work with people in a constructive manner. This could be done by: (a) introducing courses in schools of planning on the uses of popular participation in planning; and (b) establishing in-service training courses and conducting workshops and seminars on the subject, with the participation of community leaders.

56. People. The people within the community, notably its leaders, have to become familiar with the tools of planning. The aim is not to make local leaders into planners, but to educate them to work with planners in ways that will permit them to become effective spokesmen of their constituents. In keeping with this, community leaders should receive training in: (a) the rudiments of planning; (b) concepts and practices of development; (c) collection, dissemination and uses of data; and (d) techniques of community organization.

3. Strengthening communications systems

57. Information systems should be developed for the dissemination, collection and evaluation of data that are necessary for local and intermediate-level planning. Communication should be a two-way process between planners and people, so as to ensure that planners are familiar with the public's preferences and the people are made aware of the constraints, as well as the opportunities, that effect the planning process. Efforts should be made to encourage the establishment of local newspapers, periodicals, radio stations and other media of mass communication.

These could be placed in the service of development. In conformity with this purpose, local technology should be used for the strengthening of local media. Information, moreover, should be disseminated using local dialects and languages, so that the media can truly reflect the concerns of the community and become instrumental in its development. In many countries, this would require thorough changes, replacing the language and culture identified with former colonial rulers by indigenous languages and culture.

4. Promoting an active role for government in popular participation in planning

58. There should be a close working relationship between government and citizen groups in the planning process. The planning process cuts across multiple administrative, sectoral and geographical jurisdictions and seeks to co-ordinate the activities of both the public and private sectors. Through careful and sympathetic government interest in popular participation, citizen groups can deal with planning bodies in a co-ordinated and systematic way. Government support can be additionally helpful by:

(a) Providing citizen groups with material support, training and information;

(b) Serving as a countervailing force to the planning bureaucracy in the event that it actively opposes popular participation;

(c) Projecting a vision of the kind of society it hopes to create for the people.

Chapter VI

POPULAR PARTICIPATION AND
DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

59. The public bureaucracy ranks high as one of the major institutions within a country for promoting national development. It is generally strongest at the national level and its power tends to be weaker at the local and intermediate levels of government. In many developing countries, the bureaucracy has acquired particular importance by virtue of its being the most cohesive body within society, often rivaling in influence the leading political party. Within broad, but not always well defined, limits, it enjoys considerable discretionary power in implementing development plans and programmes, allocating benefits and assigning costs. Given the practice in many developing countries for administrators to be recruited from the ranks of the advantaged classes and ethnic groups or to identify with their interests, there is always the possibility they will not at all times exercise their powers in a manner consistent with the best interests of the mass of the population. Largely for these reasons, advocates of popular participation view the administrative process as a natural area in which to carry on their activities.

A. Benefits of popular participation in administration

60. Involvement of the economically and socially deprived elements of the population in the administrative process can substantially benefit both those members of the population and the programme administrators, as well as proving beneficial to the programmes themselves. For the poor, participation in the administrative process is important because of the impact that development programmes have on their daily lives. They can bring to this task useful information and insights into the kind of services that are needed and, as a result, provide an important input into the administrative process. Such participation can also turn out to be a valuable source of political support for administrators wishing to maintain high standards of specialized services for the community or to institute innovative programmes. These benefits of participation - information and community backing - are often enough to win over programme managers to supporting popular participation. Properly handled, popular participation in administration can help to generate community consensus for development programmes or, at a minimum, reduce public opposition or apathy.

61. Through organized community action, the poor, by the weight of their numbers, can be instrumental in holding in check the special interest groups that actively seek to influence administrative decisions for their own benefit. In many developing countries, it is not uncommon for senior administrators to administer programmes in ways that redound to the benefit of the modernizing élites. There is much evidence, for example, that the circumvention of land reform legislation is as much due to the complaisant attitude of the bureaucracy as to the legislation that provides escape clauses or loopholes for land-owners. Thus, popular participation can make administrative officials more accountable for their actions and, hence, more responsive to the interests of the poor.

62. Popular participation in administration can prove important in helping society to achieve a greater degree of self-reliance. It could oblige administrators, whose educational and class background often impels them to solve economic and social problems through a greater use of modern technology, to opt for solutions based on locally available methods. Often cut off from their own culture and traditions, administrators tend to deprecate indigenous approaches to problem-solving based on locally available materials and indigenous technologies. Self-help housing, for example, based on local methods and materials, is often slighted by housing administrators in favour of capital-intensive technology and imported construction materials. Similarly, administrators prefer the exclusive use of mass media, such as radio and television. Although such systems can reach large numbers of people, they make communication, in effect, a one-way street. The people are reduced to being passive listeners and viewers and are unable to communicate their ideas and information to policy-makers. These capital-intensive forms of communication are likely to discourage community-based media. The latter could help open the way to developing techniques for two-way methods of communication, which could take into account the public's preferences as well as transmit the ideas and information of public officials. Thus, citizen involvement in administration could promote an integrative rather than a dichotomous balance between modern and tradition-oriented forms of development.

B. Costs of popular participation in administration

63. This form of participation is not without its costs, which, under certain circumstances, can outweigh anticipated benefits. Indiscriminately used, popular participation in administration could adversely affect the morale of administrators and impair their effectiveness. Clearly, there is a need to train administrators to work with people within the context of popular participation, as well as to prepare people before they can undertake such tasks. The more complex the administrative task, the greater the need for prior training.

64. Involving the people in administration necessarily increases the costs - at least in the short run - of programme implementation. This is because it increases the time required to carry out programmes and, possibly, reduces their quality. Through proper management, these costs should be reduced over a period of time. The more immediate costs should be weighed against the beneficial aspects of popular participation noted in section A above. One of the difficulties in measuring one against the other is the inherent tendency for costs to occur within the short run, while benefits often take some time to manifest themselves. Benefits, moreover, are not easily measurable as they take such forms as improving the subjective effectiveness of individuals and groups or improve community attitudes toward development programmes. Although of crucial importance, these benefits generally surface over the intermediate and long-term, nor are their advantages subject to the calculus of cost-benefit analysis.

65. Large-scale popular participation can place heavy demands on the administrative system and impair its efficiency to perform. This kind of overload can be prevented or minimized only if the system and its managers are prepared to adapt themselves to the requirements of popular participation in administration. This will require training of officials and community leaders in working with each other and the introduction of new techniques that will accommodate the administrative structure and process to popular participation. This kind of preparation can forestall unrealistic and unrealizable expectations for popular participation on the part of administrators and the people.

C. Obstacles to popular participation in administration

66. Despite the benefits that popular participation is known to yield both to the economically and socially deprived and to programme managers, it has not been widely applied in development administration. The reasons for this are not too dissimilar from those that account for the limited progress of participation in planning. Basically, these are: (a) centralization of administrative structures and process; (b) the non-supportive attitude of administrators; and (c) the limited capacity and interest of the people. These factors have a mutually reinforcing effect and tend to encourage the belief that this form of citizen participation is undesirable, if not impracticable. This view is further reinforced by an absence of official policy on the subject, which could strengthen the hand of the proponents of popular participation.

1. Administrative centralization

67. With few exceptions, the structure and process of administrative centralization in developing countries has been carried forward to a high degree. This trend, which parallels a similar development in planning, is seen as being in keeping with the needs of the modern sector, which subordinates claims of equity to administrative efficiency. Under centralization, the locus of administrative power is moved up to the national level. The local administration, starved of resources and personnel and hemmed in by constitutional restrictions, tends to become an instrument of higher levels of administrative authority. So deeply entrenched is this scheme of things that periodic efforts to reverse the process are frustrated by the bureaucracy. Popular participation in administration at the national level poses severe difficulties because of its relative inaccessibility to the vast majority of the populace. There is little possibility of counterbalancing this by increased participation at local and intermediate levels of administration, given the latter's circumscribed power and paucity of resources.

2. Negative attitude of administrators

68. Although often supportive of some forms of popular participation, administrative personnel, as a group, are in general opposed to it. Generally, there is little in their formal training to familiarize them with the concept and practice. The introduction of untrained personnel into the administrative system, it is commonly accepted, would undermine its professional basis, politicize its operations and impair programme operations. In part, such views are not unrelated to bureaucratic concerns of self-interest. Introduced on a wide and meaningful scale, popular participation could weaken the power of the bureaucracy as an instrument of development, as well as downgrade its status in society. On the other hand, administrators can be rightfully concerned about the impact of participation on programme effectiveness and efficiency, for which they are responsible. Administrators tend to favour integrative and co-ordinative mechanisms to promote programme efficiency and these provide little scope for public participation. They are also concerned lest popular participation raise the public expectation for services that cannot be met by available resources. The popular reaction to this, which is not likely to be long in coming, can range from apathy and withdrawal to strong demonstrations and violence.

3. Limited capacity of the poor to handle administrative matters

69. The masses of the people in developing countries are absorbed by the daily challenge of survival, which makes it difficult for them to become closely involved in issues of public concern. Lack of education, a high incidence of health problems and widespread poverty tend to perpetuate this situation; and, although the population at large tends to have a better understanding of its true interests than is normally attributed to it, it is dependent on government administrators who are all too often insensitive to its true needs or insufficiently attuned to its interests. This dependence is intensified by the lack of effective community organizations that can be instrumental in defining and advancing the collective interests of the poor. In the absence of corrective measures, popular participation in administration, under these circumstances, is likely to be manipulative in nature.

D. Strategies for promoting popular participation in administration

70. Considering the various obstacles hindering the promotion of popular participation in administration, appropriate strategies have to be devised to overcome them. In the light of their complexity, and the lack of resources - political as well as economic - to deal with them, multiple strategies have to be employed that require proper timing. In this regard, the Government, in collaboration with advocates of popular participation, should co-ordinate its activities to promote those strategies that will give maximum effect to citizen involvement in participation. The following strategies should be given strong consideration in promoting this objective.

1. Establishment of a firm legal basis

71. Appropriate legislative or judicial action should be taken to remove the statutory and legal obstacles to participation by the economically and socially disadvantaged in administration. The importance of this cannot be overestimated because, to a large extent, administrative practices are regulated by legal codes. In the absence of a firm legal basis, the poor will have an even harder time gaining access to the administrative process. To be as effective as possible, these rights should be established by the most authoritative political source in the country. Legal or administrative regulation providing for participation should be devised so as to ensure maximum co-operation by the bureaucracy. This could best be done by devising popular participation practices in ways that are most supportive of the administrative system and do not compromise its purpose.

2. Recruitment of disadvantaged people into the bureaucracy

72. Disadvantaged groups are often underrepresented in the bureaucracy because of discriminatory practices and/or the lack of education. As a result, the special needs of these people are not understood or are slighted by the administrative system, which, to a large extent, recruits its cadres from the middle class. In recruiting for the administrative services, special measures should be adopted to ensure that people from the disadvantaged elements of society gain employment in proportion to their numbers in the population. This could be achieved through special educational programmes or by setting aside a number of posts within the administrative services for the disadvantaged.

3. Decentralization of the administrative structure

73. Decentralizing the top-heavy administrative structure that is widely found in developing countries is an important, although insufficient, condition for promoting popular participation in the administrative process. This requires that government be strengthened at the local and intermediate levels and that it be made accessible to the people. These lower levels of government should be given independent sources of financial and legal powers, consistent with the country's constitutional system. The system, as a result, will not only become more accessible to the poorer strata of the population but will be invested with a modicum of power to deal with their problems. In devolving power to the village and district levels, participatory institutions should, wherever possible, be integrated into the formal administrative and planning processes.

4. Research for developing innovative forms of participation at the local level

74. Popular participation in the administrative process holds out the promise of achieving the best results at the local level of government. The decentralization of administrative institutions, accompanied by a devolution of power, is a powerful lever for inducing increased participation. There is a need for more research and a greater understanding of how to strengthen the interface between decentralization and popular participation. Can decentralization reach down to the neighbourhood and block levels, and can it be made to be sufficiently functional in such matters as the delivery of essential community services? Answers to these questions can help policy-makers to meet the requirements for increased decentralization of decision-making and the need to centralize the financing of a large number of public services and the effective utilization of scarce resources.

5. Organization of community groups to deal with the bureaucracy

75. Increased popular participation could be promoted through community groups as well as local, regional and national chapters of grass-roots organizations. Such groups, which are common to pluralistic societies, should be encouraged to carry on an active interchange with agencies of government at all levels in matters affecting their interests. In this regard, co-operatives and rural labour associations have played an important role in shaping agrarian laws and programmes of agrarian reform. These groups should also have the right to oversee the activities of administrative agencies in order to draw attention to possible abuses in the administration of laws and regulations. In this respect, they could assume certain of the functions of an ombudsman, where such an office does not exist, or work in collaboration with it in those countries which have provided for it.

6. Training government officials and people's organizations to work co-operatively

76. Effective training programmes are helpful in providing a sound basis for popular participation in administration. Such training could impart skills to administrators and people's organizations alike in working co-operatively in an administrative environment. It could also reduce the social distance between the two sides and thereby allay the mutual mistrust that tends to arise in participative arrangements. Building up the capacity of local leaders to deal with administrative matters could strengthen programme efficiency, which would help to reduce bureaucratic opposition to participation. In turn, this could encourage a more forthcoming attitude by administrators towards participation in administration, in ways that could satisfy the participants' desires for equity without compromising programme efficiency and the status of the administrators.

Chapter VII

WOMEN AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

A. Underparticipation by women in society

77. Nations individually, and the international community collectively, have long been concerned by the fact that women, who constitute half the world's population, have been debarred through various discriminatory practices from playing their rightful role in their countries. These discriminatory practices against women are deeply rooted in legislative enactments, cultural biases, moral views and prescriptive behaviour. These mutually reinforcing constraints, which vary from country to country and even among different groups within the country, sharply limit women's opportunities for self-improvement and self-expression. Laws governing inheritance and ownership of property often discriminate against women. They receive proportionately far fewer economic and social benefits, even when gainfully employed. Their counsel and experience are generally unsought or unwanted and, as a result, their opportunities for participating in decision-making processes are narrowly circumscribed.

78. Present trends, however, which are evident in developed countries as well, indicate that the failure to integrate women fully into societies' advancement is conducive to cultural dislocation, uneven population growth and loss of labour power as women's traditional skills and activities become downgraded. A new model then, different from that followed in Western industrialized countries, is needed to envisage women's role in society and their involvement in developmental affairs. This concern culminated in the proclamation of 1975 as International Women's Year, (see General Assembly resolution 3010 (XXVII)). The World Conference of the International Women's Year, which was held that year at Mexico City, highlighted the constraints that prevented women from participating more actively in the development process and recommended measures that should be taken at national and international levels to strengthen women's role in national life so that a greater number of women have access to education, employment and leadership positions. 1/

79. The participation of women in the development process does not only mean the progressive reduction and elimination of hunger, malnutrition, unwanted pregnancies, sickness and ill-health, illiteracy, unemployment or total dependency. The psychological barriers that have built up in the minds of many of the women themselves have also to be eliminated. Women should be helped to analyse their own lives, gain insight into human relationships and broaden their understanding of the political, social and economic processes which affect them. Full participation of women in public affairs and in development activities cannot come about until women gain confidence in

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

themselves and in their capacity to change, and to make changes in their lives by organized action that will enable them to gain new skills and knowledge that will open up new opportunities for them to be involved more meaningfully in the development process. Effectiveness would be enhanced by organizing around immediate concerns stressing solidarity along ethnic and class lines.

80. Considering the fact that discrimination against women has been qualitatively different from that to which other groups in society have been subjected, women's ability to become integrated into the development process is a function of their capacity to organize into effective groups in the economic, social and political spheres. Community development, for example, has emphasized how the organization of women's groups can strengthen their role in society. Properly managed, such groups could impart to women a greater sense of self-assurance and the necessary skills to become effective participants in developmental programmes. In a growing number of countries, such groups have worked effectively for greater legal, social and economic rights. Government support for women's organizations and its recognition of the need to meet their demands may be very effective in increasing the consciousness of women.

B. Strategies for promoting greater participation
by women in development

81. It is important that Governments should recognize the potential contribution that women can make to economic, social and political developments in their countries and that they should take positive action to eliminate those practices which are discriminatory and provide conditions for maximum involvement of women in development activities. Thus, government has a decisive role in implementing policies that favour women if an improvement in their condition is to be ensured. There are examples in developing countries where women are rapidly achieving greater equality in and having access to economic opportunities as a result of deliberate actions by the Governments. In summary, the following strategies should be considered for adoption by Governments to promote the participation of women in development.

(a) Legal and traditional constraints that exclude women from participating in economic, social and political processes should be abolished. Appropriate legislative action should be taken to ensure that women have the same rights and obligations as men to compete for job, educational, civic and political opportunities.

(b) The entry of women into the country's political system at the national, regional and local levels should be facilitated.

(c) More employment opportunities for women should be created so as not to lose their labour when women's traditional economic activities in rural economies decline. In incorporating more women into the modern sectors of the economy, attention must be given to providing them with access to the higher echelons of employment. Measures must be taken, though, to avoid tokenism and to avoid favouring only the élite among women. As a basic policy, legislation ensuring equal pay for equal work must be enacted. Since women are often barred from participating in political and community activities because of the time they have to devote to household and family duties, child-care centres and other related services should be provided by the Government

as well as by private welfare services. A network of social services available to working parents should be expanded, to enable women to combine employment and motherhood more easily.

(d) Women should be helped to organize and advocate the adoption of policies, programmes, and strategies that they feel are necessary for their advancement.

(e) The necessary action should be taken to extend the benefits of the co-operative movement to women, encouraging them to participate actively not only as members but also in management posts and elected offices. It is also recommended that action be taken to ensure that national parties and political groups nominate women for political positions.

(f) To compensate for past discrimination, it may be necessary, under certain circumstances, to go beyond a policy of assuring equal opportunities for women. For reasons pertaining to a lack of education, poor health and low social status, women may not initially be able to compete with men on a basis of equality. It may be necessary to allocate to women a specific number of jobs in designated fields, or places in training programmes. This preference in treatment may be necessary until women can compete on a more equal basis with men.

(g) Extensive educational programmes are necessary to remove the psychological barriers, as well as the traditional constraints, that block women's participation in development.

(h) Institutional and organizational measures should be introduced that will enable women to participate meaningfully in various policy and programme measures affecting development, not only in questions of direct concern to women and their advancement, but also in questions of national economic and social progress that indirectly have a bearing on women's status in society.

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