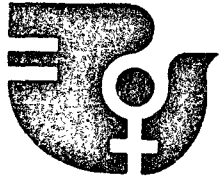




UNITED NATIONS



WORLD CONFERENCE
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR
MEXICO CITY, 19 JUNE TO 2 JULY 1975

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CONF.66/NGO/7
26 June 1975

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Second Committee
Agenda items 9 and 10

CURRENT TRENDS AND CHANGES IN THE STATUS AND ROLES OF WOMEN
AND MEN, AND MAJOR OBSTACLES TO BE OVERCOME IN THE
ACHIEVEMENT OF EQUAL RIGHTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES

THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT
PROCESS AS EQUAL PARTNERS WITH MEN

Statement submitted by International Movement Science
and Service for a Just and Free World (Roster)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement to be distributed to the World Conference of the International Women's Year in conformity with rule 54 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Conference.

STATEMENT ON WOMEN OF THE FOURTH WORLD

In nations all over the world, whatever their political system, culture and degree of economic development, a part of the population appears to be too poor to take even a marginal part in the developments of its society. Efforts to combat poverty and bring about more equality do not reach such people; neither political parties nor trade unions call for their participation.

The existence of this fourth world is not accounted for in the prevailing analyses of contemporary societies. Such analyses focus on the privileged and the underprivileged but not on those who are totally excluded. Yet, at least 15 per cent of the world's population finds itself in such conditions.

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What will be the place of fourth world women in the World Action programme? Will feminist organizations follow the example set by men who until now have fought for change? Guided by their particular ideas on efficiency, these men have considered themselves justified in leaving out those of their fellow citizens who were too humiliated and extenuated to co-operate in projects for which they had not been consulted. As a sign of this exclusion, care for the poorest throughout the world has generally been left to women. For generations, women have been the last stronghold of those citizens whose rights were not defended by men. Action in this field has generally been classified as 'marginal in societies' more important preoccupations; women and fourth world thus found themselves allied, in a common state of indignity.

Is it conceivable that women now consider participating fully in actions for peace and equality without wanting to put an end to the exclusion of millions of men, women and children throughout the world? Is it not their first task to enact the most basic rules of equality and justice? These require that those who have been most and longest deprived be first served and that the highest investments favour those who have been most dispossessed.

In defending such actions of equality, women will do more than simply co-operate with men in world affairs; they will innovate, bring about new views on priorities, revision of current analyses of social requirements, new political ideals and practice, new methods for development. To refuse this role would mean denying women's very history.

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Innovation, it is true, would have to start in our own ranks. Are we ready to accept amongst women the equality which leads us to privilege the women of the fourth world in all programmes, to call upon their co-operation and make room for their ideas and aspirations before even considering our own? The importance we attribute to their cause will be the test of our honesty and originality; it will condition the quality of our contribution toward peace and development. Most important, the fourth world offers us a unique opportunity to be united, beyond all the divisions which have been imposed upon us.
