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**World Conference
of the United Nations
Decade for Women:**

Equality, Development and Peace

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Of V.V.Nikolayeva-Tereshkova, head of the Soviet delegation to the World Conference of the UN Decade for Women (Copenhagen, July 14-30, 1980) at the general discussion on July 16, 1980

Dear Mrs. Chairperson,

Permit me on behalf of the Soviet delegation to congratulate you, and also the vice chairpersons and the speaker, upon your being elected to such posts of honour in the bureau of our Conference, and to wish you every success in performing the functions entrusted to you. We believe that the results of the work of the Conference will largely depend on the efficient work of the bureau. The Soviet delegation on their part will strive in every way for constructive cooperation so that the responsible tasks facing the Conference should be accomplished.

Mrs. Chairperson,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I think it significant that we have got together in the city where 70 years ago the second international conference of women socialists took the decision on the yearly observance of Day of International Solidarity of Women for Economic, Social and Political Equality. Since that time the women's movement has travelled a long and arduous road, become truly broad-based and spread to all continents of the globe. The UN decision on observing 1975 as the International Women's Year drew attention to the situation of women and encouraged their growing participation in social life. The world became more aware that the solution of the so-called women's questions is inseparably linked with the settlement of many acute

problems facing humankind. The motto of the International Women's Year -- Equality, Development and Peace -- became widely recognized.

One of the main tasks of our Conference consists in summing up the results of activities at the national, regional and international levels over the past five years as regards the implementation of the World Plan of Action adopted in Mexico City.

As for our country, the period since 1975 has seen a number of major events in the life of Soviet women. The new Soviet Constitution, adopted in 1977, formalized and extended the genuine equality of women with men in all spheres of social life. Article 35 of the Constitution reads that equality-- I quote--"is ensured by according women equal access with men to education and vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration, and promotion, and in social and political, and cultural activity, and by special labour and health protection measures for women; by providing conditions enabling mothers to work; by legal protection, and material and moral support for mothers and children, including paid leaves and other benefits for expectant mothers and mothers, and gradual reduction of working time for mothers with small children."

Article 53 of the Constitution stipulates that the family enjoys the protection of the state in our country, and that the state helps the family by providing and developing a broad system of child-care institutions, by organizing and improving

communal services and public catering, by providing children's allowances and benefits for large families, and by paying grants on the birth of a child.

Particular stress should be laid on the fact that these rights are not only proclaimed, but backed by tangible guarantees in our country. Here are only some of them: absence of unemployment, free education and vocational training at all levels, free health-care, social insurance, etc. The continuous concern on the part of society and the state for woman as citizen, participant in production and mother has long become part and parcel of our way of life. Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee and President of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, has repeatedly stressed the importance of this care and concern.

This year will see the completion of the social development programme for 1976-80, which has provided for quite a few improvements in the working and living conditions of women and in mother-and-child protection. Suffice it to mention that the number of places at pre-school child-care establishments has grown by almost three million over that time, and that by the end of 1980 as many as 14 million children will attend kindergartens and nurseries.

When the results of the International Women's Year were summed up in 1976, permanent deputies' commissions for women's working and living conditions and for mother-and-child protection were set up at the Supreme Soviet and at the Soviets of People's Deputies at all levels. These commissions were given extensive powers in supervising the strict observance of Soviet legislation pertaining to the situation of women,

and also the implementation of the corresponding sections of the social development programmes of the five-year national economic development plans.

Elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet, republican Supreme Soviets and local bodies of government were an important political event in the past five-year period. The representation of women in the bodies of government at all levels increased, by over 60,000 as compared with the previous elections.

I will cite only some figures to illustrate in general the role women have to play in Soviet society at the present stage. They account for 59 per cent of specialists with higher and specialized secondary education. They constitute about one-third of all Deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet and one half of Deputies to the local bodies of government. The new five-year social and economic development plan (1981-85) of our country which coincides with the second half of the UN Decade for Women and is being drafted now will provide for new improvements in the living conditions of Soviet women.

I would like to remark in this context that questions related to the role of women in the society of developed socialism are continuously studied by governmental institutions and numerous scientific and public organisations, and resolved step by step in the country's social and economic development plans with due account of both short -and longer term perspective.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The World Plan of Action and other decisions taken in Mexico City in 1975 paid much attention to the situation of women in the developing countries and called upon the world community to give effective aid to those countries on the national, regional and international levels.

The economic contacts maintained by the Soviet Union in various fields with many developing countries both on a bilateral basis and within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance help resolve major social problems related to the achievement of equality for women. Our country builds industrial projects, hospitals, schools and institutions of higher learning, and trains national personnel. Public organisations play a significant role in these activities on a par with Soviet governmental bodies. For instance, more than 800 young women from African, Asian and Latin American countries have been granted scholarships by the Soviet Women's Committee and study at Soviet institutions of higher learning to become teachers, doctors, economists, engineers and so on. All told, thousands upon thousands of women from the developing countries attend educational institutions in our country. Soviet women -- doctors, teachers and pre-school educationalists -- help women's organisations in those countries to eradicate illiteracy, to organise education in hygiene, and to set up pre-school child-care establishments. We rejoice in the progress that has been made by a number of developing countries. But this progress, apparently, could have been more impressive if all the principles laid down by the 1975 Mexico Declaration had been translated into practice in their entirety.

The 1970s saw major positive breakthroughs in world development: the European Conference was held in Helsinki, the special session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament took place, the peoples of many countries furthered their national independence, and the restructuring of international economic relations on a fairer basis got under way.

But the most reactionary forces of imperialism, bent on holding back the objective process of world rejuvenation and changing the existing balance of forces in their favour and to the detriment of international detente and the security of the peoples, adopted a course for aggravating the international situation and stepping up the arms race.

All this has been done at a time when hunger, disease and illiteracy are widespread in the world, and when, according to UN expert estimates, a mere 8-10 per cent of the world's military spending would be enough to eradicate them. But instead of the earliest possible rerouting of military spending to peaceful purposes, so much needed by the peoples, instead of schools, hospitals, kindergartens and new apartments, imperialism and NATO produce new missiles, tanks, aircraft, warships and other means of warfare. Instead of conducting a dialogue for extending detente, mutual understanding and mutually beneficial cooperation, these circles and their accomplices are trying to revive the cold war spirit and to sow the seeds of disunity and alienation.

This political course seriously hampers the accomplishment of the important tasks of the UN Decade for Women.

Peace and disarmament! These words express the pressing need of our days. They come from the heart of the mother, who is worried by the future of her children; from the heart of a girl, who dreads to lose the boy she loves in a war; the heart of a wife, who is afraid of being parted forever from her husband.

I would like to remind you that in the course of our businesslike discussions in Mexico City we stressed the relationship between the struggle for peace and disarmament and the struggle waged by the peoples for national independence and against intervention in their internal affairs, aggression and all forms of enslavement and diktat, on the one hand, and the situation of women in society and possibilities for their equal development, on the other. Today, as you well know, this question is acquiring particular importance.

There is no more important task for women and men in all countries than that of struggling against the threat of war and the arms race and for a lasting world peace and for a life of peace and happiness for our children!

We highly appreciate the success of the Conference in Mexico City and all constructive achievements of detente in the 1970s.

We are convinced that there are practical conditions for preserving the climate of cooperation and detente as the leading tendency in world politics.

The women of the world can and should prevent the flames of another world war from engulfing our planet and jeopardising the very existence of our civilization.

Taking guidance from the peaceloving principles of the foreign policy of the Soviet state, formalized in the Constitution of the USSR, and also from the goals formulated in the Programme of Further Struggle for Peace and International Cooperation and for the freedom and independence of the peoples, adopted by the 25th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party,

Soviet women, like all Soviet people, vigorously work for disarmament and for strengthening international peace and security. We oppose hegemonism, colonialism, neocolonialism, racism, racial discrimination and apartheid, aggression, and all forms of foreign domination. We advocate the political settlement of all conflict situations in the world.

The Soviet Union does not threaten anyone, nor seeks military superiority; we do not need the land or natural resources belonging to other peoples; we have no classes or social groups that would earn profits on the arms race.

Over the past decades the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community have made many realistic proposals for disarmament and for strengthening peace and the security of the peoples. The Declaration adopted by the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Countries last May contains a practical programme of measures, the implementation of which could help eliminate seats of tension and tendencies of international development that are dangerous to all peoples. The implementation of these proposals, in our view, could have a major positive effect on the achievement of the objectives of the UN Decade for Women.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the view of the Soviet delegation, the many documents, including the draft Programme of Action, tabled at the Conference in keeping with its agenda, provides a good basis for the constructive work of the Conference. We hope for the fruitful co-operation of delegations in working out joint decisions in the interests of achieving the objectives of the UN Decade for Women on the principles of the 1975 Mexico City Declaration.

During our Conference, there will take place the formal ceremony of signing the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the 34th UN General Assembly Session. Bearing in mind that the coming of this document into force will undoubtedly facilitate the implementation of the main objectives of the UN Decade for Women -- Equality, Development and Peace -- the Soviet delegation consider it very important that the Conference calls upon all countries which have not yet done so to join the Convention and take every necessary measure for its effective observance.

Thank you.

MESSAGE FROM LEONID BREZHNEV TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE
WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN
COPENHAGEN

On behalf of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics I cordially greet the participants of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. The designation of 1975-1985 as the Decade for Women by the United Nations testified to the growing role and responsibility of women in social development and their desire to make a substantial contribution to the achievement of genuine equality and the right to a life of peace free from social oppression and economic exploitation. In many countries of the world women are playing^{an}/increasingly active part in public life making a creative contribution to the material, social and spiritual progress of mankind.

A meeting of the women of the world under United Nations auspices assumes particular importance at this difficult juncture in international affairs, especially in view of the need to focus the attention of the governments of all countries and social and political forces of all persuasions on preserving détente as the dominant trend in world affairs and stopping the disastrous arms race. We in the Soviet Union have always attached the greatest importance to solving the most vital problem of our time - that of averting the threat of nuclear war and stopping the arms race in all its forms. To that end we are always prepared to negotiate provided that the principle of equal security of the parties is strictly respected.

The peaceable Leninist foreign policy pursued by our socialist State has always been unwaveringly directed towards strengthening peace among peoples and upholding the principle of the peaceful coexistence of States with different social and political systems. We steadfastly follow that course in all spheres of international affairs and resolutely support the establishment of sound political and economic foundations for the integrity and independence of the

States of Africa, Asia and Latin America. We firmly support the struggle against neo-colonialism, racism and apartheid, all forms of coercion and discrimination and all hegemonistic pretensions to world domination. Only if peace is preserved and the security of nations strengthened can the hopes of ensuring equality for women and happiness for their families and children be fulfilled.

One of the great achievements of the Soviet people, and of the truly socialist system in our country, is genuine equality of women in all spheres of political, social and cultural life, which is constantly enhanced by the efforts of the State to improve their conditions of work, daily life, recreation and motherhood. In our country, for the first time in the history of mankind, women are able to combine harmoniously full participation, to the extent of their capabilities, in all spheres of social development with bringing up children. Our multinational socialist State will continue to strive to ensure that women, as equal members of our society, have the best possible conditions for living, working and developing their personality.

I hope that your Conference will successfully accomplish the noble tasks assigned to it.