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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION: IMPLEMENTATION  
 OF THE DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS SEVENTH  
 SPECIAL SESSION

Integration of women in the development process  
Report of the Secretary-General

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. On the recommendation of its Second Committee, the General Assembly, on 15 December 1975, adopted resolution 3505 (XXX) on the integration of women in the development process, and thereby placed the question within a clear economic framework for the first time. In that resolution, the Assembly recognized that the World Conference of the International Women's Year had established that improvement of the status of women constituted a basic element in any development process, and urged all States to undertake the necessary changes, as appropriate, in their economic and social structures in order to ensure the participation of women, on an equal basis with men, in the development process. It also urged all Governments to give special attention to the inclusion of the question of the integration of women in the development process in United Nations conferences and meetings on matters which have an impact on the participation of women in development.

2. In paragraph 4 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare, on the basis of information received from Governments and relevant organizations of the United Nations system, as well as on the basis of existing studies, a preliminary report, for its consideration at its thirty-first session, on the extent to which women participate in fields such as agriculture, industry, trade and science and technology, with a view to making recommendations on ways and means of increasing and upgrading the participation of women therein. In paragraph 6 of the resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its thirty-first session on the implementation of the resolution.

3. Accordingly, and as of this date, the Secretary-General has engaged in consultation with organizations of the United Nations system and with Governments. He has also undertaken the necessary preliminary analysis of existing studies relevant to the preparation of the present report. In view of the complex and far-reaching scope of the terms of reference of paragraph 4 of the resolution, and pending the results of consultations undertaken, the Secretary-General is submitting the present preliminary report to the General Assembly which contains the substantive outline of the study requested.

## II. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY ON THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE FIELDS OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE, INDUSTRY, AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### A. Purpose and scope

4. The purpose of the study is to recommend policies and action programmes aimed at increasing and upgrading the participation of women in the fields of agriculture, industry, trade and science and technology, in accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 3505 (XXX). Therefore it should address itself mainly to assisting Governments and specialized agencies of the United Nations in tackling more directly and efficiently the problems of the integration of women in the development process within an economic framework.

Moreover, the study should provide an adequate basis for the establishment of specific priorities and target dates for the implementation of the action programmes recommended.

5. In so doing, the study would serve as a tool and a catalyst for relevant organizations of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to enable them to comply with the invitation contained in paragraph 3 of the resolution "to pay special attention to development programmes relating to women, inter alia, in fields of agriculture, industry, trade and science and technology".

6. It is intended to develop the study within the framework of the interagency programme for the integration of women in development called for by the General Assembly in paragraph 5 (b) of resolution 3520 (XXX) which will be presented to the Economic and Social Council at its sixty-second session. It is expected that a special task force appointed by the interested organizations of the United Nations system under the supervision and co-ordination of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs will undertake the preparation of the study.

7. This outline has been prepared on the basis of a number of selected United Nations documents and other studies and reports on women as well as on economic development, trade and science and technology. 1/

8. Although the outline covers all areas mentioned in the Assembly resolution, it emphasizes the areas of agriculture and trade since there already exists a considerable amount of knowledge and statistical data in the area of women in industry. Therefore, it was felt that the problem of women in industry should be approached rather within the framework of an action-oriented research. Further, such emphasis is in line with the recent mandates from the seventh special session

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1/ Inter alia, UNICEF report of the Conference of Ministers on Children, Youth, Women and Development Plans in West and Central Africa. Lomé (Togo), May 1972; International Review, May 1972; FAO, 1975 report on Promoting the Increased Participation of Rural Women in the Development Process (W/H9499); FAO, 1976, Summary of Discussions of the 18th FAO Conference related to Home Economics and Social Programmes (WS/H7629); UNCTAD IV: New Directions and New Structures for Trade and Development, report of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to the Conference (TD/183); UNCTAD IV: Transfer of Technology (TD/190); Gosovic Branslav, UNCTAD: Conflict and Compromise, Sijthoff-Leiden, Netherlands 1972; Cordovez Diego, "UNCTAD and Development Diplomacy", published by The Journal of World Trade Law; United Nations publication (Sales No.: E.71.II.17.18); International Monetary Fund, Surveys of African Economies, vols. 1-5, published by IMF, 1969; The Participation of Women in the Development of Latin America, ESA/SDHA/AC.10/4/Rev.1), 15 February 1976; and International Labour Organisation Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers, Report VIII, published by the ILO, Geneva 1975.

and the thirtieth regular session of the General Assembly and various United Nations conferences, such as Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and the World Food Conference, which clearly set priorities for the achievement of the basic needs of rural populations. Some of the most important resolutions are: General Assembly resolution 3522 (XXX) on improvement of the economic status of women for their speedy participation in the development of their countries, resolution 3523 (XXX) on women in rural areas, resolution 3524 (XXX) on measures for the integration of women in development; FAO resolution 2/66 on the integration of women in agriculture and rural development and nutritional policies, adopted in 1975 and FAO resolution 10/75 on the role of women in rural development, adopted in 1976. In those resolutions, all Governments and specialized agencies were urged to give priority to promoting agricultural productivity, agro-based industries and integrated rural development programmes, and Governments were requested to encourage more vigorously official and private efforts to extend to women the facilities now being offered only to men by financial and lending institutions.

9. The framework in which the outline is set takes into consideration the fact that the situation of women in agriculture is intimately related to existing local and international trade patterns and to the lack or inadequacy of relevant scientific and technological development. Thus, for example, certain primary commodity exports such as coffee, cocoa, ground-nuts, rice and cotton may have a very low price in the international market owing in part to the fact that their production involves a considerable percentage of cheap female labour. Therefore, one of the main hypotheses of the study is that certain patterns of agricultural female labour force bear an intimate relationship with certain patterns of trade which are not always favourable to the developing countries. Nevertheless, for the most part, this phenomenon has been neglected owing to the lack of attention given to women's issues as well as to the unfair treatment of women resulting from the present international economic order.

10. Another example of the interrelationship between trade and the situation of rural women is given by the adverse effects of the transfer of technology through technical co-operation programmes on the economic, social and cultural development of a particular community or country. For example, the UNICEF Conference on Women, Youth and Children, held at Lomé in 1972, reporting on the findings of a study on the impact of economic development projects on women in Central and West Africa, points out that, with only one exception, these projects have actually worsened the situation of women as well as children and young people. It is stated in the study <sup>2/</sup> that this is due mainly to the following reasons:

(a) The fundamental importance of women (mothers, girls and elderly women) in food production, a sector which receives very little assistance from the economic development operations themselves. In some regions, only women are involved in food production, except for land-clearing tasks.

(b) Economic development projects do very little to cut down on production related work particularly the transport of harvested crops or products (including

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<sup>2/</sup> See UNICEF, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

water for insecticide treatment); these tasks are usually performed by people, particularly women and young people. In practice, economic development projects increase the number of such tasks.

#### B. Substantive areas

11. The study proposes to cover each of the areas mentioned in the resolution with particular emphasis on agriculture and trade.

##### 1. Agriculture

12. In the area on agriculture, the study should focus on the following main aspects: (a) composition and characteristics of the rural labour force by sex; (b) agricultural economy and its basic structure; and (c) agricultural organization. Within each of these main aspects the following areas should be covered.

##### (a) Composition and characteristics of the rural labour force by sex

13. Age, geographical region, wage levels and differences in wage levels between sexes as well as differences in wages between rural and urban areas; types of agricultural activities performed by sex; types of cash crops and export commodities involving a significant proportion of female labour force; degree of access to and levels of skilled and unskilled labour by sex; unemployment and underemployment by sex; occupational categories by sex, according to types of work performed in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors with clear specifications about agricultural labour, handicrafts and commerce in rural areas.

##### (b) Agricultural economy and its basic structure

14. Characteristics of local economic systems of production (e.g. co-operatives, state farms, private farms, large, small and medium-sized properties and other types); predominant patterns of land tenure (large, small and medium property, percentage of arable land, of land used for cattle) and the relationship between the level of productivity of each of these patterns and the role of women; existing socio-economic infrastructure, in particular, benefits for agricultural workers, such as social security and welfare for mothers and in-job health hazard protection; types of basic commodities involving a significant percentage of women's labour, their contribution to the gross national product and prices established for their export and local consumption; minimum prices of subsistence goods established for local and national consumption; percentages by country of the total world supply of commodities produced through a significant contribution of female labour; evaluation of special projects designed to finance agricultural development by Governments, United Nations agencies and other organizations in terms of their direct, positive or adverse impact on women (e.g., terms of loans, credits for farmers, the system of preferences used in international agreements for financial assistance).

(c) Agricultural social organization

15. In this area the study should focus on the extent to which women participate on an equal basis with men in co-operatives, trade unions, other local rural grassroots organizations; vocational training and local United Nations projects with a view of assessing their impact upon women.

2. Trade and financing

16. The main areas of study should be: (a) the interrelationship between women's agricultural wage patterns and trade; (b) equal access to credit and loans; (c) the process of transfer of technology: its impact on women as well as the nature and level of women's participation in that process; (d) the participation of women in highly qualified training programmes in the areas of international economics and trade.

(a) Assessment of the interrelationship between women's agricultural wage patterns and trade

17. This assessment should be done with a view to measuring the extent to which the female labour force affects the economic basis of the over-all terms of agreements for the exchange of basic commodities between countries. For example, lower wages paid to women in certain areas of production might help to maintain lower prices for a particular commodity in the international market. However, low wages paid to women might also be the result of price fluctuations suffered by commodities in the international market. Thus, for instance, the price of cocoa has fluctuated quite drastically in recent years from 117 US cents per pound in 1974 and 64 US cents a year later. <sup>3/</sup> Cocoa is mainly supplied by West African countries where the participation of women in agriculture is estimated by the Economic Commission for Africa to be around 70 per cent (Ghana with 31 per cent of cocoa's world supply; Nigeria 23 per cent and Ivory Coast 12 per cent.) <sup>4/</sup>

(b) Credit and loans to women

18. It is important to examine the process of selection and granting of credit and loans to finance development projects, in order to ensure equal access to these benefits for women, and in particular rural women, and guarantee their actual participation.

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<sup>3/</sup> See Development Forum, vol. IV, No. 3, April 1976, p. I of its Supplement on UNCTAD IV.

<sup>4/</sup> See InterDevelopment Bank News (IDB News), vol. a, No. 11, December 1975, p. 6 and The U.S. and World Development Agenda for Action 1976, published by Praeger Publishers for the Overseas Development Council and by Roger D. Hansen, p. 168, table B-16. In the production of cotton which is well known to involve a large percentage of female labour Egypt contributes 13 per cent of the total world supply and the Sudan 7 per cent. For coconut oil, the Philippines produces 15 per cent of the total world supply and Sri Lanka 12 per cent. For ground-nuts, Nigeria produces 19 per cent of the total world supply and the Sudan 10 per cent.

(c) Transfer of technology and women

19. The process of transfer of technology from developed to developing countries has to be studied from the point of view of the patterns of preference systems established between the interested parties which might have an adverse effect on women, particularly in the developing countries. For example, a technological improvement might be acquired because it can help to increase production as demonstrated by high GNP levels. However, this might neither necessarily increase the levels of employment especially among women nor the production of basic goods for internal consumption and self-sufficiency.

(d) Participation of women in highly qualified training programmes in the areas of international economics and trade

20. Fellowships and training course programmes offered by Governments, United Nations agencies and other organizations should be scrutinized to ensure that women do benefit from them especially with a view to offer them better chances to become more involved at the highest levels of the decision-making process at the national and international levels (e.g., GATT fellowship programmes in existence since 1955 in the areas of economic and technical training offered to people from developing countries with responsibilities in the formulation of foreign trade policies; courses given by IMF, the World Bank, IDB and UNITAR).

3. Industry

21. It is a well-documented fact that there is a generalized pattern of female labour concentrating within the tertiary sector of the economy (services) and in light industries, in most developing countries and in a good number of the developed countries as well. Therefore, this section should focus on applied research and practical action, rather than on research based on pure statistical analysis, in order to help to bring about positive changes in this pattern for the benefit of women. It is therefore proposed that this section concentrate on identifying and proposing action-programmes in the following main areas:

(a) Regular review of enforcement of protective legislation for women workers and mothers in particular, without jeopardizing any of their rights relating to work on an equal basis with men;

(b) Implementation of projects within trade unions and other relevant organizations to eradicate differences of wages between men and women workers in order to implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;

(c) Evaluation of existing projects and development of new ones to upgrade women's skills in specialized jobs in industry;

(d) Development of special studies on the participation of women in small and intermediate types of industry in rural areas (e.g., agro- and cottage industries and others);

(e) Promotion of special efforts to increase the upward socio-economic mobility of women throughout all occupational categories in industry. For instance, special attention should be paid to career development programmes for women, including in-job-training programmes and to the removal of obstacles to their career mobility such as the lack of day-care centres, the lack of easy transportation to the place of work, the lack of adequate counselling and the lack of men's participation in discharging family responsibilities. To achieve these ends, the mass communication media should be used extensively.

#### 4. Science and technology

22. In this section, it would be desirable to emphasize the development of basic and applied intermediate technology for agriculture, and the socio-economic and cultural problems actually generated by the transfer of technology from developed to developing countries. The study should include statistical data on the following general areas:

(a) The extent to which technology is benefiting women, especially in rural areas and certain modern sectors of industry (for instance, the extent to which technology has been absorbing and/or creating new skills for women, new training opportunities, new and better jobs);

(b) The extent to which the indiscriminate use of technology tends to diminish or increase the burden of production related work to be performed by women such as the transportation of crops and water which are not remunerated;

(c) Development and use of intermediate agricultural technology to generate new sources of energy. Since women in rural areas are over-burdened with the task of actually substituting for technology itself wherever modern technology is not introduced, it is important to assess which types of energy sources are available to rural communities and which ones should be developed (e.g., electric power and other types such as draft animal and mechanization and other specific technological improvement to generate cheap energy and decrease women's overwork without pay);

(d) The interrelationship between technology and women's migration to cities with a view to assessing the effect of the introduction of technology on women's employment in both rural and urban areas;

(e) The extent to which technological research is being aimed at fulfilling certain specific needs of farm women regarding assistance to increase food production for cash crops and/or export and subsistence through the introduction of applied technology in the area of agriculture per se as well as in the areas of credit and finance.

#### C. Implications for policy-making and action programmes

23. The final conclusions and proposals of the study will be of benefit primarily to the developing countries, especially to the poorest among them and, within them, to the most disadvantaged segments of the population. Therefore, the study could



be considered as an important input to the solution of much wider world problems and to the achievement of targets established by Governments for economic and social development. Thus it will have far-reaching implications in areas which are of immediate and deep concern to the international community at present, such as: the increase of food production, the development of a new world economic order which will not overlook women, the increase of self-reliance through the development of new sources of energy and intermediate technology and the elimination of poverty and unemployment.

24. Further, the study, by way of dealing with the specific issue of women as human resources, shall supply evidence in support of the not as yet fully acknowledged link between sex discrimination and economic discrimination.

25. Because this study would have been prepared within an interagency framework where UNCTAD is expected to play an important role, it is anticipated that this experience will enhance the willingness of the United Nations agencies and Governments to pay more and systematic in-depth attention to the need of improving the status of women as a basic element in the development process, ensuring the participation of women on an equal basis with men in that process in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3505 (XXX).

26. Finally, the policies and action programmes proposed in the study should concentrate on the following priorities:

(a) To encourage equal access to co-operatives for farm women;

(b) To develop and ensure equal access to credit and loan systems for women, especially in the rural areas;

(c) To revise prices of commodities which significantly depend on cheap and/or non-remunerated female labour so as to establish fair wages and improve the terms of international trade agreements;

(d) To stimulate the participation of women in decision-making in economic areas by increasing their representation within trade unions, political parties and other national and international organizations which have a say in issues of economic development;

(e) To encourage the de jure and de facto implementation of all the ILO international instruments of special interest to women workers;

(f) To ensure the eradication of economic exploitation of women and children who perform agricultural tasks without pay;

(g) To promote the participation of women at all levels of technological development both in basic and applied technology with special emphasis on:

(i) Intermediate agricultural technology;

(ii) Water supply systems, sanitation, sewage and related technology;

(iii) Technological training for international commerce and trade.