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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997\*

MAJOR PROGRAMME V. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Programme 27. Advancement of women

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\* The present document contains programme 27 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The complete medium-term plan will subsequently be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1).

## PROGRAMME 27. ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

### A. Programme

#### 1. General orientation

27.1 The general mandate for the programme on the Advancement of women stems from the second preambular paragraph of the Charter of the United Nations, which reaffirms faith in the equal rights of men and women and Articles 1 and 55, which state that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to promote universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of any kind, including distinction as to sex. On that basis, the Commission on the Status of Women was established by the Economic and Social Council by its resolution 11 (II) of 21 June 1946 to prepare recommendations and reports to the Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. The Commission was also to make recommendations to the Council on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights with the object of implementing the principle that men and women shall have equal rights, and to develop proposals to give effect to such recommendations. The legislative authority of the programme was further elaborated in subsequent successive resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women. The promotion of equality between men and women was established progressively in a series of international instruments, the most recent of which is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 and which entered into force on 3 September 1981.

27.2 Advancement of women was given its broadest programmatic expression during the United Nations International Women's Year (1975) and the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1976-1985), culminating in the endorsement by the General Assembly, in its resolution 40/108 of 13 December 1985, of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000. The resolution emphasized the central role of the Commission on the Status of Women in matters related to the advancement of the status of women, called upon it to promote the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and urged all organizations of the United Nations system to co-operate with the Commission. In order to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, the Commission, at its session in 1987, established new procedures and a long-term programme of work, including priority themes to be discussed at its sessions until 1992. The Commission will consider the issue of the priority themes to be discussed at its sessions from 1993 to 1996 at its thirty-fourth session in 1990. In order to co-ordinate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies by the organizations of the United Nations system, the system-wide medium-term plan for women and development for the period 1990-1995 was agreed upon by the Economic and Social Council by its resolution 1987/86. The Council designated the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations office at Geneva as the focal point for the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan.

27.3 The ultimate objective of the international community as expressed in the resolutions of the legislative bodies and in various legal instruments is to achieve equality between men and women in all spheres of human activities. Until this objective is achieved, the programme will aim specifically at:

(a) Promoting and monitoring the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, which should result in the elimination of all forms of inequality between men and women, and in the complete integration of women into the development process;

(b) Assisting State Parties in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and promoting the adherence to the Convention of those States which have not yet done so.

27.4 Despite the adoption of a number of international instruments pertaining in whole or in part to women and to the positive changes that resulted from the implementation of those instruments, and the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, including the three world conferences held at Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985), de jure and de facto discrimination against women continues to exist in many countries and areas. The obstacles to the establishment of genuine equality between women and men and to women's full participation in the economic, social, political and cultural spheres, including in the attainment of peace, are many and varied in nature. Their elimination will involve dealing with all aspects of women's life and will imply further major changes in the legal and attitudinal bases of the relations between men and women in all societies.

## 2. Overall strategy

27.5 The programme will be implemented by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Office at Vienna, which has been designated focal point for activities of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations system concerned with the advancement of women. Support of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly is the fundamental means for achieving these objectives through the provision of policy analysis outlining the issues relating to the advancement of women identified in the long-term programme of work of the Commission and other legislative mandates. This involves the preparation of substantive input to the discussions by these intergovernmental bodies, collection and dissemination of information, maintenance and use of statistics, monitoring of national policies and policy studies undertaken in universities and by governmental and non-governmental organizations and research institutes.

27.6 The strategy also includes the provision of technical and substantive servicing to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the processing and analysis of reports of States parties. For the second quinquennial review and appraisal, the strategy will include assisting Governments and non-governmental organizations in their preparation for the proposed 1995 World Conference on Women, as well as preparing and servicing the Conference.

27.7 In order to harmonize action at the international and national levels, especially by national machineries for the advancement of women, governmental and non-governmental organizations, these institutions will be provided with information in an accessible form on the results of policy analysis done at the international level, with available statistics and bibliographical information on work done within the United Nations system. Advisory services will also be

provided, on request, to Governments. Regional and interregional seminars on essential issues for the advancement of women will be organized, including on the implementation of the Convention, specific development problems and the functioning of national machinery.

27.8 This programme is closely related to all other programmes of the medium-term plan and to the medium-term plans of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system through the system-wide medium-term plan for women and development. On that basis, co-operation and co-ordination will be maintained with all departments and offices of the United Nations and the secretariat of the organizations of the United Nations system engaged in work related to the advancement of women. This will take place through the network of focal points of the United Nations Secretariat and specialized agencies and bodies, whose work is reported in biennial monitoring reports and updates of the cross-organizational analysis on the advancement of women. It will also take place through the annual ad hoc inter-agency meetings on women, which are held under the aegis of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination.

### 3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

27.9 The subprogramme structure follows the main components of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and consists of one subprogramme for each of the co-equal objectives along which the Strategies are organized, which are (a) equality, (b) development and (c) peace. It also contains a fourth subprogramme whose concern is to ensure the consistency and interrelationship among the various activities to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The subprogramme provides for their monitoring, review and appraisal and the necessary services for this at the national and international levels.

27.10 The Economic and Social Council, by its resolution 1989/30, decided that subprogramme 4 on monitoring, review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies should be given high priority and that the highest priority be accorded to addressing the fundamental needs of women in developing countries, particularly in such sectors as literacy, education, employment, health and population, with a view to ensuring their full integration into the development process and full participation in decision-making. On that basis, the order of priority among the subprogrammes is subprogramme 2 on development and then subprogramme 4 on monitoring, review and appraisal followed on a co-equal basis by the subprogrammes 1 on equality and 3 on peace.

#### B. Subprogrammes

##### SUBPROGRAMME 1. EQUALITY

###### (a) Objectives

27.11 The legislative authority for the present subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 34/180, 40/108, 40/204 and 41/108; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1983/27, paragraph 2, 1984/14, 1987/3, paragraphs 11 and 12, 1987/19, paragraph 3, 1987/86 and 1988/30, paragraphs 7 and 11 to 13; Commission on the Status of Women resolution 2 (1987), paragraphs 1 and 2; the Nairobi

Forward-looking Strategies, paragraphs 43 to 59, 309 to 316, 345 to 355 and 366 to 368; and the System-Wide Medium-Term Plan for Women and Development, subprogrammes 1.1 and 1.2.

27.12 Despite progress made in repealing discriminatory laws and enacting new legislation, further measures are necessary to guarantee equal rights for women and men. Member States need comprehensive information on existing international standards pertaining to the status of women and policy measures based on the analysis of current discriminatory legislative provisions and practices in the social, economic, cultural and political spheres. While many countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, others have not done so. In addition, the delays in the reporting on the Convention by many States parties means that they might need assistance in the preparation of their national reports. In addition, many Governments are undertaking innovative legal and administrative steps to eliminate de jure and de facto discrimination which are not widely known and which could benefit other countries facing similar problems. Finally, it is clear that women's access to decision-making is inadequate, but the extent of the problem and the progress being made at national levels to overcome it are not systematically known.

27.13 In the light of the above, the objectives of subprogramme 1 are as follows:

(a) To promote the implementation of international standards set forth in international conventions, declarations and recommendations as they pertain to women, in particular, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women;

(b) To achieve significant progress in the ratification of international instruments concerning the status of women, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(c) To strengthen the commitment to establish, modify, expand or enforce a comprehensive legal base for equality of women and men;

(d) To increase the awareness of Governments and the public of international standards, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women concerning the status of women and to promote compliance with those standards in national legislation and policy;

(e) To develop guidelines on the study of sex stereotyping at the national level and on the development of techniques and action programmes to combat it;

(f) To facilitate reporting by States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and review by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;

(g) To assist Member States in bringing national legislation into conformity with international standards;

(h) To establish regular monitoring of the extent and level of women's participation in decision-making in the public sector at the national and international levels, and of the provision of and access to the means that will enable women effectively to assume responsibilities in decision-making processes.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

27.14 In the period 1992-1997, the Secretariat will monitor, review and appraise on a regular basis the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women through national reports in accordance with the Convention. States parties will be assisted in the process of preparation and presentation of reports through the servicing of annual meetings of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the biennial meetings of States parties. The results of these meetings will be disseminated through publications and reports. In addition, guided by follow-up recommendations by the Commission on the Status of Women, studies will be undertaken. These will be integrated into the preparation for priority theme discussion by the Commission on the Status of Women on elimination of de jure and de facto discrimination against women in 1992 and its follow-up.

27.15 Training seminars will be organized and advisory services provided to Governments upon their request on (a) reporting in the context of the Convention and (b) on national legislation in order to bring it into conformity with international standards. On the specific question of the interrelationship between the image and reality of discriminatory practices such as sex stereotyping, particularly in the media, an early effort will be made to present the "state of the art" in global knowledge of these phenomena in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Department of Public Information and non-governmental organizations. Depending on the priority themes that might be selected by the Commission, work would continue to identify the complex set of prejudices affecting the advancement of women, multiple roles of women and the double burden of women in family and society by identifying facts and public policies regarding family responsibilities, for presentation in reports and publications.

27.16 Based on the follow-up to priority themes relating to participation discussed by the Commission, efforts will be made to improve global monitoring of the participation of women in decision-making by (a) reviewing sources of information, (b) defining what should be monitored by establishing standards and indicators and defining functions, roles and levels of authority that should be included and (c) identifying and reporting on the setting of targets and measures for their implementation at the national and international levels, including in the organizations of the United Nations system. This should lead to a comprehensive report for 1995 as part of the review and appraisal process.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. DEVELOPMENT

(a) Objectives

27.17 The legislative authority for the present subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 40/108, 40/204, paragraph 3, 44/77, paragraph 8, 44/78 and 44/171, paragraphs 1 to 3, 6 and 10; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1987/24, paragraphs 1 to 4, 1987/86, paragraph 1 and 1989/37; Commission on the Status of Women resolution 4 (1987), paragraphs (b), (c), (d); the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, paragraphs 107 to 124, 228 to 231, 309 to 316, 322 to 327, 337 and 345 to 351; and the System-Wide Medium-Term Plan for Women and Development, subprogrammes 3.4, 4.2, 5.3, 6.1 and 6.4.

27.18 The full participation of women as agents and beneficiaries in development requires accurate knowledge of their role and potential and of successful policies to achieve it. While considerable progress has been made in providing information about this through such vehicles as the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 1/ and its first update, the studies to date merely provide a backdrop for the more detailed analysis which can lead to the elaboration of more concrete policy measures. The interrelationships between the goals of equality and peace, the effects of sharing parental duties on women's participation, and the participation of women in economic decision-making are some major areas where information needs have been identified. In addition, global knowledge of the role of women requires taking advantage of all available research, particularly that collected by national machineries. The need for a functioning research and information network has already been stressed. It is particularly important to identify and meet the fundamental needs of women in developing countries, particularly the least developed countries.

27.19 The objectives of subprogramme 2, therefore, are:

(a) To assist in the formulation of national plans, programmes and projects based on a comprehensive analysis of the interrelationship of factors linking women and development in terms of both women's contribution to development and the impact of development on women, taking into account the effects of emerging global economic trends on women and the need to address the fundamental needs of women in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries;

(b) To apply innovative methods of research and analysis to emerging women's issues as a basis for developing policies and programmes at the national, regional and interregional levels to promote the advancement of women and greater equality between men and women;

(c) To assist all national machineries and regional and national research institutions in studying the effects of global and regional development trends on women's roles in development;

(d) To develop and co-ordinate system-wide approaches to women and development, particularly in updating the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development;

(e) To encourage international non-governmental organizations to involve women in their functions and to encourage women's organizations and all appropriate governmental bodies in various countries to involve women in discussions and studies on various aspects of decision-making for development.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

27.20 In the period 1992-1997, the work of the Secretariat will centre on the preparation of the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development. This update will emphasize the study of women's roles in development over time and in different cultures and regions and the interrelationships among the main goals of the Forward-looking Strategies. It will include efforts to develop methods for cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary research on interrelationships between economic, social and political aspects and will emphasize women both as agents and beneficiaries. The work will be done on the basis of inter-agency co-operation.

It should also involve support to national machineries through further development and elaboration of the existing women's data base and a network of information exchange on research results.

27.21 Specific work in support of the Commission's consideration of priority themes in development will continue, including the preparation of studies on the integration of women in the process of development and subjects for subsequent years as determined by the Commission. The work will include conceptual work for the analysis of the participation of women in economic decision-making. In conjunction with work on the role of women in society and of social support structures to permit women's full integration in the economy, studies will continue as a follow-up to the discussions of the priority theme on that subject held by the Commission on the Status of Women at its 1989 session and on the basis of priority themes for 1993 and beyond. Among possible topics to be examined will be the relationship changes in family patterns and women's advancement, access to credit and financial resources by women and the role of support structures. Assistance will continue to be given to Governments, and in particular, national machineries, through training seminars, advisory services and support to efforts to incorporate women's concerns into national planning and programming.

### SUBPROGRAMME 3. PEACE

#### (a) Objectives

27.22 The legislative authority for the present subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolution 40/108; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1987/24, annex, 1988/27, paragraph 4 and 1988/28, paragraphs 1 and 5; Commission on the Status of Women resolutions 1 (1987) and 32/3; the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, paragraphs 239 to 262, 309 to 316, 354 to 355 and 356 to 365; and the System-Wide Medium-Term Plan for Women and Development, subprogrammes 3.4, 4.1, 4.2 and 6.1.

27.23 The issue of peace is inextricably connected to the issues of equality and development. The interrelationships must be carefully explored in order to ensure the consistency of policies. Among the issues on which more information and analysis is required is the role of women in decision-making for peace, policy measures relating to violence in society - including the family, and various measures to promote disarmament and peaceful resolution of disputes among nations.

27.24 The objectives of subprogramme 3 are:

(a) To implement provisions of the Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation (General Assembly resolution 37/63 of 3 December 1982);

(b) To encourage women's organizations and all appropriate governmental bodies in various countries to involve women in discussion and studies on various aspects of decision-making for development, which is inseparably linked to equality and peace, in order to foster understanding and friendly relations between people and nations;

(c) To promote the dissemination of information on the participation of women in promoting international peace and co-operation;



(d) To monitor, on a regular basis, both the manner and extent to which women participate in the decision-making process for peace;

(e) To encourage, strengthen and co-ordinate research on women and peace, including the concerns caused by violence against women within the family and society at the national, regional and international level.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

27.25 Work on peace at the international level will initially centre on women's participation in decision-making on peace and disarmament, which is the priority theme for the Commission in 1992. In addition, efforts to increase education for peace, as a follow-up to the priority theme on peace discussion in 1988 will include steps to develop a co-ordinated approach within the United Nations system, especially through regional focal points (either intergovernmental organizations or non-governmental organizations) as may be guided by the Commission in its recommendations. Work will continue to examine the issues of women in specific conflict situations, as a follow-up to the 1990 priority theme, and in relation to parallel issues under the theme of equality, such as vulnerable women. In terms of the issues of violence against women, follow-up to the 1988 priority theme will be undertaken, including examination of the relationship between different levels of violence.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. MONITORING, REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

(a) Objectives

27.26 The legislative authority for the present subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 40/108 and 44/77, paragraphs 2, 8, 10 and 16; Economic and Social Council resolutions 1987/18, paragraphs 1 and 4, 1987/22, annex, 1988/22, paragraphs 1, 3 to 5, 8, 10 to 12 and annex, and 1989/30, paragraphs 3 and 5; the Commission on the Status of Women resolution 4 (1987), paragraph (e); the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, paragraphs 309 to 321, 338 to 344, 366 to 369 and 371 to 372; and the System-Wide Medium-Term Plan for Women and Development, subprogrammes 5.2, 6.2 and 6.3.

27.27 The impetus and relevance of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies requires a careful effort at monitoring, reviewing and appraising progress. Without that effort, the importance of advancement of women in public policy and in concrete programmes might be reduced, ineffective programmes perpetuated and new, promising initiatives go unnoticed by the international community. The basis for monitoring, review and appraisal must be national machineries for the advancement of those women, whose level of development is uneven and who currently lack systematic means to exchange information. The flow of information between national and international levels is similarly uneven and unsystematic.

27.28 The objectives of subprogramme 4 are:

(a) To monitor the overall implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies by undertaking comprehensive reviews of action taken, resources allocated and progress achieved in developing and implementing international and national policy guidelines for the advancement of women;

(b) To strengthen networks for the exchange of information on women among Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, researchers and activists, and to promote more effective communication and co-operation between them;

(c) To establish a system for collecting and updating information from countries and the United Nations system for the review and appraisal of national experience in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(d) To assist Member States in establishing and strengthening national machineries, particularly in developing their monitoring and review and appraisal functions.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

27.29 The biennial monitoring exercises, based on assessment of the extent to which activities related to the advancement of women are included in the work of the organizations of the United Nations system, annual substantive monitoring in the context of the priority themes discussed by the Commission on the Status of Women and quinquennial reviews and appraisals will be conducted, based on a system of questionnaires, statistical reporting and analysis of information produced at the national and international levels. It will include preparing for and servicing the proposed 1995 World Conference on Women.

27.30 Efforts will be made to strengthen national machineries, including preparation of guidelines in the light of the follow-up to the discussion of the priority theme on national machineries by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1988. They will include the development of bibliographical information systems and dissemination of information on national and international experience to interested national machineries, the sponsoring of training for national machineries where requested and organization of meetings of non-governmental organizations. Exchange of information about the activities of national machineries will be a regular feature of Women News and Women 2000.

27.31 Efforts to increase interaction between Governments and non-governmental organizations at the international level will centre on helping non-governmental organizations to organize activities in connection with the annual sessions of the Commission in terms of the priority themes in the proposed 1995 World Conference on Women, preparing information kits on selected priority themes during the period based on their particular relevance and importance for use in training and orientation.

Notes

1/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.IV.3.

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