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UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT
AND PEACE

Status and role of women in education and in the economic
and social fields

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. By resolution 33/184 of 29 January 1979, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare an analytical report on the status and role of women in education and in the economic and social fields for its consideration at its thirty-fourth session.
2. Pursuant to paragraph 3, a note verbale was sent to States Members of the United Nations and to members of specialized agencies requesting reports. In view of the recent transmittal by the Secretary-General of another note verbale to which was attached a comprehensive questionnaire on the implementation during the period 1975-1978 of the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, 1/ adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year held in Mexico City from 19 June to 2 July 1975, it was suggested that Governments might wish the Secretary-General to utilize their replies to that questionnaire for the purpose of preparing the present analytical report. The replies of 73 Governments, received in Vienna prior to 30 September 1979, have been taken into consideration. 2/
3. Pursuant to paragraph 4, the Secretary-General requested observations and information from all the specialized agencies and regional commissions, from 17 other bodies within the United Nations system of organizations, from 55 intergovernmental organizations and from 230 non-governmental organizations. The replies of 51 organizations, received in Vienna prior to 30 September 1979, were taken into consideration. 3/

1/ Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.76.IV.1), chap. II, sect. A.

2/ These were, by category used in the analysis, (a) countries with developing market economies: Argentina, Bahrain, Bolivia, Botswana, Cape Verde, Colombia, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, India, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen; (b) countries with developing centrally planned economies: China, Cuba, Mongolia; (c) countries with developed market economies: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia; and (d) countries with developed centrally planned economies: Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Romania. Because of delays in translation the reply of Yemen could not be fully taken into consideration.

3/ Organizations within the United Nations system which replied include the following: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; International Monetary Fund; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Labour Organisation; World Bank; International Fund for Agricultural Development; Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization; World Intellectual Property Organization; Universal Postal Union; Economic

4. In addition, observations received from non-governmental organizations concerning the implementation of the World Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year were taken into consideration. Pursuant to paragraph 6, various other existing studies and research were taken into consideration.

5. The Secretary-General hereby transmits the analytical report, which has been prepared by the Branch for the Advancement of Women in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs.

(continued)

Commission for Africa; Economic Commission for Europe; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; Economic Commission for Latin America; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; United Nations University; United Nations Fund for Population Activities; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; and International Institute for Labour Studies.

Intergovernmental organizations which replied include the following: African Cultural Institute; Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation; Central American Institute of Public Administration; Colombo Plan Bureau; Council of the Entente; Inter-American Development Bank; Inter-American Indian Institute; Latin American Free Trade Association; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization; and the South Pacific Commission.

Non-governmental organizations which replied include the following: All-India Women's Conference; Amnesty International; Asian African Legal Consultative Committee; Baha'i International Community; Commission of the Churches on International Affairs; Inter-American Statistical Institute; International Association for Social Progress; International Association of Democratic Lawyers; International Council for Building Research, Studies and Documentation; International Council of Social Democratic Women; International Council of Women; International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa; International Commission for Civil Status; International Federation of University Women; International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics; International Law Association; Soroptomist International; World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts; and World Federation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession.

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II. ACHIEVEMENT OF THE EQUALITY OF WOMEN WITH MEN IN EDUCATION

A. Women in less developed countries

1. Current situation and trends

6. Age-specific enrolment ratios for girls aged 6 to 11, broadly equivalent to enrolment in lower classes for first level education, varied considerably. Latest available statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) showed that, of the 96 countries for which information was available in 1978, ratios were less than 20 per cent in 12 countries, between 20 and 39 per cent in 18, between 40 and 59 per cent in 16 and between 60 and 79 per cent in 28 countries. Ratios were higher than 80 per cent in 22 countries, thus approaching or equivalent to those in more developed countries. For girls aged 12 to 17, equivalent to the upper classes of first level education and lower classes of second level, there was also a broad range, although values were much lower than for the age group 6 to 11. Thus, of the 95 countries for which information was available in 1978, ratios were lower than 20 per cent in 30 countries, between 20 and 39 per cent in 25 countries, and between 40 and 59 per cent in 26 countries. Only in 10 countries was the ratio between 60 and 79 per cent, and only in 4 was it higher than 80 per cent. The percentages of all girls at the second level enrolled in technical and vocational training programmes (excluding teacher training) were very low. Of the 82 countries for which information was available in 1978, in only 2 was the percentage higher than 40, and in only 7 was it between 20 and 39 per cent. In 73 countries it was still less than 20 per cent.

7. For ages 18 to 23, including higher second level as well as third level education, and of the 93 countries for which information was available in 1978, in only 7 were ratios higher than 20 per cent. The percentage of all women enrolled at the third level in natural sciences, engineering and agriculture was also low: of the 77 countries for which information was available in 1978, percentages were between 20 and 39 in 17 countries, but less than 20 per cent in the remaining 60.

8. The situation with regard to literacy also remained most unsatisfactory. As information depended upon censuses rather than educational systems statistics, it was much less available. Latest statistics published by UNESCO referred to various years between 1970 and 1977 and varied as to definition of the age groups concerned, although generally referring to women over 15. In addition, they were available for only 46 of the developing countries. Purely as a general indication, percentages of those illiterate were over 70 in 14 countries, between 50 and 69 per cent in an additional 6, and between 30 and 49 per cent in 13 others. ^{4/} The dimensions and dynamics of the problem may be illustrated by the situation reported by the Government of India. In 1961, 109 million women constituted 87 per cent of the total illiterate population. By 1971 this proportion had fallen to 81 per cent, but the total number of illiterate women had increased to 123 million.

^{4/} Trends and projections of enrolment by level of education and by age (Paris, UNESCO, 1977), table VII, pp. 72-81; Statistical Yearbook 1977 (Paris, UNESCO, 1978), table 1.4, pp. 52-69; table 3.2, pp. 128-176; table 4.5, pp. 252-313.

2. Principal determining factors

9. The majority of Governments with developing economies which replied to the 1979 questionnaire suggested that the level of general development was of predominant importance. Governments of the poorer countries reported that insufficiency of financial resources remained a major obstacle at all levels. Countries with greater resources experienced similar problems at second and third levels. In Colombia insufficient public resources had resulted in substantial private sector provision at second level, with associated high fees and limited access to any but higher income families. Financial constraints resulted from the over-all economic weakness of these countries, combined with their choice of inappropriate educational systems, particularly at first and general second levels. Women and girls were themselves constrained not only by the inaccessibility of services and their frequent irrelevance to the realities of daily life, particularly in rural areas, but also by their own financial limitations. As Governments were unable to provide totally free services, leaving costs of books, transport and lodging to pupils and their families, the cost factor remained a serious deterrent to girls' education (India, Paraguay, Togo). Moreover, the needs for girls' household labour, under conditions of technological and organizational underdevelopment, particularly in rural areas, remained a barrier to enrolment or imposed high drop-out rates (Colombia, India, Kenya, Nepal, Peru). In some countries early pregnancy was a major cause of high drop-out rates (India, Jamaica, Mauritania). In conditions of limited opportunities for entry into remunerative work, allocation of scarce resources to the education of women appeared inappropriate to many families (India). In these conditions, education for boys, if it could be afforded, was seen as a better investment (Ecuador, Kenya, Papua New Guinea). Consequently, cultural antipathy or antagonism to girls education was reinforced (Ecuador, India, Malaysia, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Sierra Leone, Togo, Venezuela). Opposition appeared still stronger with regard to second and higher level education, and particularly with regard to choice of technical and scientific subjects (Argentina, Colombia, India, Malaysia, Mauritania, Philippines, Sri Lanka). Thus many rural girls and women faced a vicious circle. Opportunities for educational advancement were constrained by the under-developed state of national society and by their own low health, economic and social status; yet as a result of their inadequate educational status, women remained unable to obtain improved employment and health, and consequently over-all social, political and real legal status. It is possible that the improvements noted in many countries with high levels of enrolment, lower drop-out rates and improving curricula may be partly diminished by the increased marginalization of families and by the restrictive effect upon the budgets of many Governments of their depressed economic situation.

10. With regard to illiteracy, Governments noted that adult women faced special problems in attending literacy programmes, even when these could be provided. Several cited difficulties of leaving day-long household services provision and child-rearing (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius, Philippines, Togo). The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya noted cultural opposition, particularly from husbands. Several Governments noted the difficulties associated with the existence of large populations which used languages other than those of the predominantly urban-based media and educational system (Ecuador, Peru).

3. Ways and means of improvement

11. With regard to first level education, all Governments reported extending facilities and personnel within free public systems, and provision of subsidized or free peripheral services and facilities, such as meals, books, equipment, transport, lodgings and scholarships. Governments of countries in which first level education was already fairly well established were frequently concerned with improving access to the least advantaged sections of the population, notably in rural areas (Honduras, Mauritius, Paraguay). In India, 90 per cent coverage by 1983 and 100 per cent coverage by 1990 in elementary education were envisaged as part of the minimum needs programme of the Five Year Plan. Other Governments reported such specific measures as giving increased attention to health and nutrition, particularly in pre-school facilities (Colombia); modifying taxation systems to favour families with school children (Botswana); and introducing use of a script to fit societal reality (Somalia). Several Governments considered that over-all development would best resolve basic obstacles, particularly in rural areas (Botswana, Philippines, Somalia). Others reported policy reforms in order to make education more relevant to societal realities and hence more attractive to many families (Colombia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Togo). In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, societal prejudice against women's education had been particularly strong, and the Government noted the emphasis which it currently attached to public education to overcome this obstacle.

12. Less than half of the Governments with developing market economies which replied to the 1979 questionnaire had compulsory education. Even when enrolment remained only moderate or low, it was considered that legal compulsion would be inappropriate and possibly counter-productive in the absence of means to ensure access to adequate facilities.

13. The situation with regard to co-education at first level varied substantially. A number of countries reported that this had been long established (Argentina, Botswana, Mauritius, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, Togo). Others noted that already high proportions of co-educational facilities were still increasing (Ecuador, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone). Others reported that adoption of co-education depended upon local views (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), was encouraged although still not widely adopted (Malaysia, Mauritania), or had been recommended by advisory commissions on women's affairs, but not yet broadly applied (India). In Nepal cash rewards were given to schools enrolling the highest number of girls.

14. With regard to education at the second and third levels the majority of Governments indicated that priority had been given to an expansion of facilities equipment and personnel, notably in the area of technical and scientific education, and many indicated attachment of very high priority to such programmes (Dominican Republic, Haiti, India, Malaysia, Mauritius, Paraguay, Sri Lanka). Of importance also were modifications in the educational system, ranging from system-wide reforms which included improved technical and scientific education for women (Colombia) to more specific action. Thus, in Argentina, formerly segregated systems of professional and industrial schools had been integrated into a national system

of technical education, and a working group had been established in the Ministry of Education to co-ordinate programmes relating to the United Nations Decade for Women. In Sri Lanka and Lebanon revisions of second level curricula had been undertaken. In Malaysia a report on income generating skills for women had been prepared, and in Madagascar a report had also been prepared on the special problems facing girls. In India an advisory National Council for Women's Education had been established. In Tunisia measures had been taken to improve the integration of education, training and management of the economy. Many Governments emphasized co-education and integration of programmes.

15. Many Governments reported affirmative actions to encourage women's fuller and more effective participation. Kenya had taken action to ensure that the proportions of women receiving scholarships was higher than for men, that accommodation was provided less expensively for women students and that lower entry qualifications might be acceptable. Sri Lanka took special measures to open more public sector jobs to women and then to provide on-the-job training. On-the-job training was reported to be effective in Mauritius, particularly in the context of substantial expansion in women's industrial employment, and in Papua New Guinea. Jamaica reported youth guidance services and integrated programmes to assist students having dropped out as a result of early pregnancy. India emphasized the need to support specific training and education programmes for women by measures assuring a more positive context. Although acknowledging the importance of direct and supportive actions, a number of other Governments indicated that they considered over-all economic development to be the basic means of bringing about improvement (Argentina, Ecuador, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya).

16. In most of the developing countries whose Governments replied to the 1979 questionnaire, progress had been made recently in the establishment or strengthening of institutions responsible for mass literacy and adult education programmes. Substantial nation-wide programmes had been undertaken (Argentina, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, India, Jamaica, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Sierra Leone). Specific measures included use of public broadcasting services (Haiti, Jamaica, Mauritius, Paraguay, Sierra Leone); use of languages or scripts more appropriate to the target population (Haiti, Peru, Somalia); subsidy of participation of rural women's organizations (Haiti, Republic of Korea); community education (Jamaica) and extension of compulsory education (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius, Republic of Korea). Although these affected both male and female populations, it was felt that the greater proportion of beneficiaries would be women.

17. In order to support national efforts to resolve what it described as a "glaring inequality between men and women" in the field of education, UNESCO has been engaged since 1967-1968 in a long-term programme oriented towards the objectives of both equality between women and men in the exercise of the rights and responsibilities within the community, and in particular equality of education, and also socio-economic change and integration of women in the over-all development effort, especially through the improvement of their participation in education. 5/

5/ Contribution of UNESCO to this report, and "UNESCO's contribution towards improving the status of women", Report by the Director-General (General Conference, Twentieth Session, Paris, 1978) (20 C/17).

In its contribution to this analytical report the World Bank also noted that its loans in the education sector addressed factors such as limiting access of females to schools, their regular attendance and their progression through the education system (societal and parental attitudes); location of schools; boarding facilities for students and female teachers; training of female teachers; curriculum reform and diversification; remedial education to compensate for non-enrolment or irregular attendance and early drop-out among females; and the availability as to time and location, as well as to content, of vocational training for women, both for self-employment and for the job market. The Bank pointed to correlations between education and fertility, and the limits imposed on women's economic and social choices by family demands. The relevance of studies on fertility, nutrition and basic needs strategies was noted. The Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development held at Rome from 12 to 20 July 1979 called upon Governments to consider action to ensure educational opportunities of similar quality and content for both sexes; to provide special incentives for increased enrolment in schools and training programmes; and to establish and strengthen non-formal educational opportunities for rural women. 6/

B. Women in more developed countries

1. Current situation and trends

18. The countries with developed market economies, for the most part, have enjoyed long periods of high enrolment, at least at first and second levels. However, enrolment levels still fall significantly at the upper second and third levels. Thus, according to the latest available comparable statistics published by UNESCO, relating in general to 1975, gross enrolment ratios for girls aged 6 to 11 were over 80 per cent for 34 out of the 35 more developed countries for which information was available. For girls aged 12 to 17, in the 32 countries for which information was available, gross enrolment ratios were over 80 per cent in 14 countries, between 60 and 79 per cent in 9 countries and less than 60 per cent in only 9. However, in only 10 of the 30 countries for which information was available were gross enrolment ratios for young women aged 18 to 23 over 20 per cent. In particular, enrolment was very low in technical and scientific areas. Thus with regard to girls enrolled at the second level who were in programmes of technical and vocational training (excluding teacher training), of the 24 countries for which information was available, proportions were less than 20 per cent in 16. At the third level the proportions of all women enrolled who were in programmes of natural sciences, engineering and agriculture were less than 20 per cent in 25 of the 35 countries for which information was available. 7/ Thus, of the Governments replying to the 1979 questionnaire, all noted that proportions of women among students in second level technical training in industrial and agricultural skills were less

6/ Report of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Rome, 12-20 July 1979, (WCARRD/REP), part one, Programme of Action, sect. IV.D.

7/ Statistical Yearbook (Paris, UNESCO, 1978), table 3.2, pp. 128-176; table 4.5, pp. 252-313; table 5.2, pp. 368-406.

than 20 per cent, and mostly less than 10 per cent, although recent rapid progress was reported in certain countries, notably the United States. Sweden and Norway noted that to a very substantial extent study and occupational choices still followed traditional sex role stereotypes.

19. The four Governments of countries with developed centrally planned economies which replied to the 1979 questionnaire indicated relatively high but still less than equal proportions of women students. The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic reported that the proportion of girls out of all students at second level concerned with industry, construction, transport and communications was 50 per cent in the 1977/78 academic year, compared to a proportion of 73 per cent in education and art. At higher educational establishments the proportions were 41 per cent and 72 per cent for these two fields respectively. In Hungary percentages of girls enrolled at the second level in technical and vocational training in industry was 18 per cent in 1978/79, compared to 75 per cent in trade, marketing, co-operative methods and catering. The German Democratic Republic reported that there had been a substantial recent increase in the proportion of women among students enrolled in mathematics and natural sciences (40 per cent) and technical sciences (28 per cent). Thirty per cent of the students in engineering schools were women.

2. Principal determining factors

20. The Seminar on the Participation of Women in the Economic Evolution of the Economic Commission for Europe region, held in Paris in July 1979, concluded that participation in education and training had increased in all countries, but that in some, education for women had been often less well related to the labour market demand that had been that for men. In many countries women still left the education system with lower qualifications and with a narrow range of subjects than men. In spite of constitutional guarantees, in practice girls and boys had not yet achieved equality (ECE/SEM.5/9, para. 19).

21. All of the Governments of countries with developed market economies replying to the 1979 questionnaire reported that the major obstacle to achievement by women of full equality with men in education, in particular at the second and third levels and in technical and scientific studies, was the still extremely strong general prejudice within society as a whole. Many noted that differences in upbringing and attitudes were still inculcated by parents and maintained by substantial proportions of teachers and even occupational counsellors (Australia, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States). In Australia one investigation had concluded that parental influence was dominant in this regard. Many Governments noted the strong reinforcing contribution of the contemporary highly differentiated structure of the labour market. Girls and young women did not seriously attempt to change their educational careers because they were aware of the difficulties they would face later of achieving entry into the labour market. Finland noted that, in spite of substantial progress and awareness, sex role stereotypes continued to exist within school materials even at the pre-school level. Denmark noted a further self-reinforcing feedback factor in the fact that participation in adult education programmes was more likely by women with higher second and third level education. Iceland pointed to a further

feedback effect within adult education, where on-the-job training, attended mostly by men, was better developed and more relevant than general adult education, attended mostly by women. Other obstacles were reported: insufficient awareness by girls and women of opportunities, and insufficient child care facilities for adult education programmes (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States); insufficient transportation facilities, particularly relevant to rural adult education programmes (United States); reduced financial support offered to married women, on the assumption that support would be available from husbands (New Zealand); the system of subsidies which in practice mitigates against older married women wishing to return to study (United Kingdom); and the general difficulties of combining family, professional and educational interests (Federal Republic of Germany).

22. In certain of the countries with developed market economies cultural factors were still strongly biased against education of girls and women, particularly at higher levels and in fields considered predominantly masculine. Lower than average levels of general economic development, existing at least until recently, had contributed to a structure of the labour force and a range of occupations less open to entrance by women than in other countries. In a number of cases these two negative factors had combined (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain).

23. The four Governments of countries with developed centrally planned economies replying to the 1979 questionnaire noted that a most significant determining factor had been close planning between employment sectors and the educational system. This had made possible effective guidance of girls and women into training areas which would lead to employment in previously non-female occupations. However, general negative attitudes and the feedback effects of insufficient previous educational preparation on the one hand, and still substantial sex-stereotyping within the employed population on the other hand, were acknowledged.

3. Ways and means of improvement

24. In the countries with developed market economies, educational systems were well established, and in general terms financial resources, facilities and personnel were readily available. However, in some countries, significant attempts were still being made even at the first and second levels to overcome factors causing inequality. Thus, in Belgium, vigorous efforts during the last 10 years were made to extend co-education to all parts of the first level of the public school system, and thereafter to the confessional school system. Japan had largely overcome the pre-war situation, characterized by relatively limited participation by women at the second and third levels generally, by a combination of over-all societal changes and allocation of considerable resources to extension and improvement of the educational system.

25. The greatest efforts had been devoted, however, to overcoming occupational and related educational stereotypes, thereby increasing the involvement of girls and women in technical, scientific and managerial programmes, primarily at the second and third levels, and in adult education. In several countries basic legislative revisions and amendments had been undertaken since 1975 (Belgium, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, United Kingdom, United States). The establishment of agencies

responsible for research, monitoring and policy formulation in the educational sector had been of the greatest importance in some countries (Belgium, Denmark, United States). The Netherlands pointed out that until recently the Government had believed that spontaneous changes would remove problems of unequal participation; it later believed this to be unlikely and was undertaking a review of the situation.

26. For those countries in which cultural attitudes and economic structures had not been highly favourable to women's education until recently, Governments reported substantial efforts to improve accessibility, ensure attendance and improve quality. In Greece the period of compulsory education had been extended. Substantial attention was being paid to technical and vocational training, considered to be an aspect most in need of attention, and one which afforded a key to achievement of equal access to all forms of employment. Proportions of girls enrolled in industrial, agricultural and technical courses were extremely low. A vicious circle still existed: because of the unequal and highly sex-stereotyped character of the labour market, employers did not call for female entrants in any but traditional occupations; consequently there was no demand on the part of girls, and no emphasis upon the part of educational authorities. However, some Governments were making energetic attempts to resolve this problem. In Greece, in 1977, the whole area of technical and vocational training had been incorporated for the first time within the public educational system, with consequent offer of free education under improved curricula conditions. In 1978 San Marino replaced an existing sex-stereotyped system by one with no sex differentiation and including a revised curriculum. Ireland carried out administrative measures, including application of compensatory quotas and targets, to increase provision for training in previously male-dominated high skill areas. At the third level most Governments, and notably those of Spain, Greece and Ireland, reported greatly reduced participation by women and a still substantial bias in choice of courses. Very small proportions of women were engaged in scientific and technical subjects in universities and colleges.

27. Efforts to improve provision of adult education were being made in order to overcome existing inequalities. Governments reported difficulties experienced by women, particularly in rural areas: time was taken up in domestic activities, and transportation was inadequate. Traditional views of the role of women remained strong (Austria). Ways and means which were reported included expansion in the range of courses (Greece); development of a system of sabbatical leaves (Austria); and constitutional guarantees for the development of appropriate policies (Spain).

28. In the countries with developed centrally planned economies emphasis had been upon technical and particularly organizational changes designed to improve quality and to orient programmes towards effective participation in society. In the German Democratic Republic introduction of a 10-year polytechnical secondary comprehensive school system was reported as a major advance, and in Romania a new and comprehensive education law was introduced in December 1978. Improvements in technical and scientific orientation at the second level were cited by the German Democratic Republic as the basis for progress at higher levels. Vocational and technical training was provided to adult women during working hours without loss of pay, and Romania also emphasized training at the place of work as a means of upgrading women's employment status.

29. Thus, education is clearly a prerequisite for women's achievement of equality with men in all economic and social fields as well as a means of self-fulfilment in itself. UNESCO, in its contribution to this analytical report, stated that:

"Educational problems are indissolubly linked to societal and development problems, and as such constitute an essential aspect of world problems and the search for a more equitable and human world order. These problems should be placed 'within the context of the two-way relationship between society and education', in as much as education must necessarily be regarded both as determined by the social, economic and cultural environment and as an instrument for the promotion of change and development."

Girls' and women's greater participation in education is limited by their own depressed condition and by the over-all context of insufficient and distorted national development; yet, participation in all economic, social and political fields by women having more appropriate educational status is essential for solution of developmental problems and for improvement of their own status. UNESCO studies have shown that in order for both girls and women to participate in education, household work and child-care need to be reduced. To participate effectively themselves and to ensure an undamaged mental development for their children, women's health must be improved. 8/ At the same time women and the community must feel their commitment to education and training to be worth the effort, enhancing their real economic and social opportunities. Programmes must be appropriate to the tasks which women must perform within development. Effective provision of appropriate general education for women, firmly oriented towards the actual and potential environment within which they will participate in the solution of developmental tasks, is essential, as is access to appropriate concentration in key subjects - science and technology, including advanced agricultural training - at the third level. Accordingly, women need to be fully represented in the formulation of education and technical training policies. 9/ Moreover, only if women have significantly higher educational status will effective transfer of appropriate technology to all of their activities be possible. 10/

8/ "Comparative report on the role of working mothers in early childhood education in five countries" (ED-78/WS/71), (Paris, UNESCO, 1978), mimeographed. Identified by UNESCO as part of its contribution to the preparation of this analytical report.

9/ Final report of the expert meeting on educational and vocational guidance for girls and women, UNESCO, Paris, 6-10 September 1976 (ED-76/CONF.636/5). Identified by UNESCO as part of its contribution to the preparation of this analytical report; "Review and analysis of agrarian reform and rural development in the developing countries since the mid-1960s" (WCARRD/INF.3), pp. 69-78.

10/ "Towards the technological transformation of the developing countries" (TD/238) (Geneva, UNCTAD, 1979); "Technology planning in developing countries" (TD/238/Suppl.1) (Geneva, UNCTAD, 1979). The former document was identified by UNCTAD as appropriate for examination for the purpose of preparing this report.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF THE EQUALITY OF WOMEN
WITH MEN IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD

A. Women in less developed countries

1. Current situation and trends

30. Statistical information is inadequate. However, according to estimates prepared in 1978 by the Population Division of the United Nations, in 53 of the 82 developing countries for which information was available over 60 per cent of women aged 15 to 59 resided in rural areas. Among the 37 developing countries for which information was available the percentage of women aged 15 to 59 employed in predominantly urban occupations was less than 20 in 23 countries, and in none was it over 50 per cent. 11/ Only in 10 of the 40 countries for which information was available were proportions of women greater than 15 per cent of the total employed in administration and management. Only in 15 out of 43 countries for which information was available was the proportion of women greater than 20 per cent of the total employed as production and related workers and as transport equipment operators and labourers. 12/

31. In its observations submitted for the purpose of preparing this report, the International Labour Organisation noted that women continued to manage the subsistence economies of developing countries, and, moreover, that with traditional technology women were often the poorest among the poor, the most economically vulnerable, and were almost always to be found at the bottom of the occupational ladder of most economies and last in line as recipients of benefits derived from economic advance. In most rural areas women were seriously over-employed, undertaking concurrently the provision of household services, child-bearing and rearing, numerous family and community responsibilities and work in handicraft manufacture, local trade and agriculture, as well as producing and preparing almost all food consumed. Their situation was indeed ironic at a time when under-employment and unemployment were widely considered to be characteristic of developing countries. A vicious circle affects the majority of women: insufficient education and training, poor health and constant pregnancy lead to low social, political and economic status which in turn constrains their escape from poverty, ignorance and disease. The particularly serious condition of women in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia was described in the contribution of one non-governmental

11/ Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1977 and 1978 (Geneva, International Labour Organisation, 1977 and 1978); Demographic Yearbook 1975, 1976 and 1978 (United Nations publication: Sales Nos. E/F.76.XIII.1, E/F.77.XIII.1 and E/F.76.XIII.1); and estimates of the United Nations Population Division. Included in predominantly urban occupations are categories 0-5 and 7-9 of the International Labour Organisation's classification.

12/ Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1977 and 1978 (Geneva, International Labour Organisation, 1977 and 1978), table 2.B.

organization to this report 13/ as well as by the International Labour Organisation on the basis of its own special reviews.

32. The majority of the Governments of countries with developing market economies which provided information anticipated substantial increases in employment outside the household and subsistence agriculture: in labour-intensive and export-oriented plants producing textiles, clothing and electronics (Haiti, Mauritius, Malaysia, Singapore); in governmental and commercial services; in education, health and social services; and in income-generating rural employment (Jamaica, Sierra Leone, Tunisia).

2. Principal determining factors

33. In recent years, it has become increasingly recognized that numerous factors stemming from the broad societal structure of most developing countries, and from the nature of their relationship with the international economic order, have direct implications for the level of equality of women with men in the economic field. Certain determining factors have been identified as having been inherited from inequalities inherent in indigenous society and being insufficiently resolved and in some cases actually strengthened by integration of these countries in the world economic system. Other factors were introduced by that system, and many of these have persisted since political independence. Still others have arisen from recent developments within the world economic system. The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa concluded that inequality results basically from developmental distortions caused by the nature of integration into the world economic order. 14/ On the basis of this and other studies submitted for the purpose of preparing this analytical report 15/ an analysis may be made of the principal underlying factors affecting the situation in Africa.

34. Rural women's previously substantial access to land, labour and technology and control over surpluses were seriously eroded. Rural development policies were strongly biased in favour of men. The requirement that women cultivate cash crops was often added to their role as food producers, processors and preparers. Burdens

13/ H. Bernstein, For their triumphs and for their tears: conditions and resistance of women in Apartheid South Africa (London, International Defence and Aid Fund, 1978).

14/ "The New International Economic Order: What roles for women?" (E/CN.14/ATRCW/WD.3).

15/ The State of Food and Agriculture 1977 (Rome, FAO, 1978), pp. 2-4/2-11; D. Bazin-Tardiue, "Integration des femmes dans la réforme agraire et le développement rural dans les pays africains francophones au sud du Sahara" (FAO-ESH-ARRD/CS/41); J. Ritchie, "The integration of women in agrarian reform and rural development in the English-speaking countries of the African region" (FAO-ESH-ARRD/CS/35); M. Carr, "Appropriate technology for African women" (ECA/SDD/ATRCW/VTGEN/78); H. Kebede, "Improving village water supplies in Ethiopia: a case study of socio-economic implications" (ECA/SDD/ATRCW/VTWATER/78).

of providing household services were scarcely relieved, with resultant strain upon their health and limitation of their productivity and, hence, their economic status. Urban activities were severely damaged by metropolitan competition. Employment in metropolitan areas was mainly limited to relatively unskilled jobs under poor and unequal conditions. Capital intensive development strategies and the difficulty of combining full-time work with household service provision and child-bearing and rearing made the situation still worse. Compensatory and supportive services were insufficient. Protective legislation often militated against increased employment. Domestic work was often made difficult by inappropriate planning and the virtual exclusion of women from local decision making. Infrastructure and services were inadequate. Inflation, depressed incomes and the unfamiliarity of the urban environment added to physical and mental strains.

35. In many Asian countries similar negative factors were reported, and recent agrarian reforms, including technological developments such as expansion of high-yield rice production, appear to have reinforced pre-existing constraints. Many women were employed in plantations. Significantly marginalized, rural women migrated in very large numbers to major urban centres, to be employed largely in informal sectors and in poor conditions because of the very high rates of male unemployment as well as societal prejudices. 16/ In Central and South America the structure of the rural economy, notably the system of land tenure, was reported to be basically responsible for the extreme marginalization of many women. Recent economic changes have further denied women access to the factors of production in many countries. Women, more than men, migrated to major urban centres. Here societal prejudices and capital-intensive industrialization, together with very high rates of inflation, seriously depressed women's living standards and limited their equality with men. 17/

16/ The State of Food and Agriculture 1977 (Rome, FAO, 1978), pp. 2-12/2-23; F. Hansell, "Review of conditions affecting the integration of rural women in development in ten countries of FAO's Asian and Far East and Near East regions" (FAO-ESH-IRWD/77/1); I. Palmer, "The integration of women in agrarian reform and rural development in Asia and the Far East" (FAO-ESH-APRD/CS/37); R. P. Devadas, "The integration of women in agrarian reform and rural development in India and Sri Lanka" (FAO-ESH-ARRD/CS/34); "Report on the Roundtable discussion on participation of women and their emancipation through the application of science and technology to development, Bangalore, India, 3-5 July 1979" submitted by ESCAP as a background document to the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, Vienna, Austria, 20-31 August 1979 (A/CONF.81/BP/ESCAP).

17/ The State of Food and Agriculture 1977 (Rome, FAO, 1978), pp. 2-26/2-39; D. Orlansky and S. Dubrowsky, The effects of rural-urban migration on women's role and status in Latin America (Paris, UNESCO, 1978), submitted by UNESCO as part of its contribution to preparation of this analytical report; "Report of the regional conference on the integration of women in economic and social development of Latin America, Havana, Cuba, 13-17 June 1977" (E/CEPAL/1042/Rev.1); "The situation of children in Latin America" (E/ICEF/LATAM-79/2); Cynthia Hewitt de Alcántara, "Modernization and the changing life chances of women in low-income rural families" (E/CEPAL/L.197).

36. The culturally segregated but economically valued status of women in Islamic countries has undergone very rapid change. In urban areas, notably in oil-producing countries, living standards and conditions of employment have improved radically, but women's access to employment has been strongly influenced by cultural preferences. 18/

37. The major problems identified by the Governments of developing market economy countries replying to the 1979 questionnaire consisted of broad contextual factors. Fifteen assigned great importance to broad societal prejudices, and three of these specifically identified the fact that policy makers and planners themselves still did not consider the problem to be urgent. The opposition of employers and the insufficient support of trade unions and co-operative organizations were identified by 9 Governments. Women's inadequate education and training (identified by 8 Governments), women's own acceptance of prejudice (4 Governments) and the problems of combining other employment with household and particularly with child-rearing functions in circumstances of inadequate services (8 Governments) were identified. The hostile nature of the broad economic structure of national societies was also noted. Among other factors, the following were cited: high male unemployment (Botswana), the nature of land ownership (Colombia), the excessively capital-intensive nature of development (Philippines), the over-all dependency and under-development which constrained industrialization (Panama), and the dominance of urban metropolitan centres (Bolivia, Uruguay).

3. Ways and means of improvement

38. With regard to their over-all approach to policy formulation and plan preparation in this field, 18 of the Governments considered that general provisions, not specific to women, within national development strategies and plans, supported by comprehensive labour legislation, were an adequate means of achieving equality of women with men. Observations of other Governments suggested, however, a clear trend towards more specific arrangements. In some cases, analysis and programme proposals concerning women were inserted already within sectoral policies and plans; in others, explicit policies concerning women's employment were formulated, taking the form of separate sectoral plans; finally, such specific plans were or would be incorporated within the new round of development plans for the period to 1980. This trend may be considered significant, as, other things being equal, it would appear more likely that priority would be given to the solution of problems of women's unequal economic status where separate and specific provisions are made in a national development plan.

39. The ways and means of achievement of equality of women with men in access to all types of employment which were identified by these Governments were primarily of a medium and short-term nature and did not call for substantial economic restructuring. Fifteen Governments were improving education and vocational training and 10 were reforming land tenure, including modifying existing reform programmes recognized as prejudicial to women. Eighteen were supporting small-scale

18/ H. A. Dawood, "Integration of women in rural development in the Near East region" (FAO-ESH-ARRD/CS/16).

entrepreneurial endeavours, and 18 were upgrading skills by means of on-the-job training. Other widely favoured actions including supporting co-operatives (13), reducing household burdens by providing improved services and utilities (9), and improving child-care facilities. With regard to longer-term aspects, a few identified the need for over-all improvement in technology and, hence, productivity. Panama noted the relevance of the impact upon the national economy of its dependency upon the international economic order, implying that only with substantial structural change would short-term efforts meet with success.

40. All Governments observed that equality in working conditions and the right to maternity protection were already substantially guaranteed by existing legislation. However, certain Governments noted that large proportions of women in domestic service remained inadequately provided for in the law (Colombia, Jamaica), and others noted that women in the unorganized sector were not sufficiently protected (India, Philippines, Sri Lanka). The difficulty lay rather in translating legal into real equality. Of interest may be the solution proposed by Colombia to reluctance of employers to recruit women: transfer of all social security obligations to public agencies. Combining work outside the home with provision of household services and child-rearing was identified by all but a few of the Governments as still the crucial problem for most women. The nature of its solution was well-known: technological upgrading of household work, increased child-care facilities, more flexible working hours and expanded social security coverage. However, the difficulty of bringing about necessary changes in the context of current economic conditions was noted. Consequently it was felt that a solution lay primarily in broad changes in cultural attitudes which would provide a positive context within which individual women, in co-operation with employers, husbands and other members of their families, might more easily make suitable arrangements. Some considered that, given very high levels of male unemployment, there existed little real motivation for solution of such difficulties.

41. Considerable diversity was reported with regard to recognition of the economic value of women's household work. Most Governments either did not provide information or admitted that little serious attempt had yet been made to measure and acknowledge its value. However, some reported research into means of measurement (Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Philippines), as well as recent shifts in public attitudes (Panama, Venezuela).

42. Intergovernmental organizations reported substantial efforts in support of governments. The role of the International Labour Organisation was reported to be the establishment and adoption of international standards to improve the situation of women and their role in society and in the studying and disseminating of information on over-all trends and developments concerning women workers; promoting action by governments', employers', and workers' organizations and other non-governmental organizations for the betterment of employment and working conditions of women workers. In addition to substantial technical assistance activities, a research programme at global and regional levels had elucidated various aspects of the situation, and publications, seminars and meetings had focussed upon salient problems. In its contribution to the preparation of this analytical report the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations indicated the very wide range of programmes intended to assist rural women in

achieving equality with men which it was undertaking in support of governments, regional and interregional organizations, notably in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, forestry, family life education and "grassroots" training.

43. The International Labour Organisation observed that sectoral programmes and legislation were not sufficient to achieve equality, and were likely to succeed only in the context of broader strategies, in many cases involving national economic restructuring. These cases, in turn, required substantial changes in the international economic order. In order to solve women workers' problems, which were seen as only a part of the problems of the population as a whole, it would be necessary in many countries to change the social and economic structure which will then lead to a new national policy. National policy in favour of women workers could be implemented only under conditions of peace and democracy and under important structural reforms, such as: land-water reforms, industrialization, elimination of illiteracy; professional training free of charge; healthy and equitable conditions of work; equal pay for equal work; favourable housing conditions; accessible child care services, etc.

44. Important conclusions had been reached by a study of women in industry in developing countries. According to a report of ILO: the role of women in industry in developing countries could not be set apart from the concerns of the new international economic order or the global strategies for the satisfaction of basic needs. At the same time, the international community and the national planners had not yet admitted into their consciousness the significant fact that any analysis of industrialization or modes of production or rates of economic growth or equitable distribution among nations and within economies must include a recognition of women's contribution and participation, if the development effort were to be viewed in its totality. Development efforts could be addressed to the entire community, to the needs of both men and women, once one realized that women's contribution to any economy influenced its direction and determines its orientation. The success or failure of any policy in such diverse areas as science and technology, education, nutrition, food processing and distribution, could very largely depend on the extent and degree to which women are involved, neglected or forgotten.

45. At the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development a separate agenda item was devoted to the integration of women in rural development. Many delegates stated that women's equality would result primarily from over-all rural and national development, provided this took fully into consideration women's special functions and potential, rather than from specific "women's programmes" if attempted in isolation. The Conference declared as a principle that "women should participate and contribute on an equal basis with men in the social, economic and political processes of rural development and share fully in improved conditions of life in rural areas". ^{19/} The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference recognized women's role as "a prerequisite for successful rural development

^{19/} Report of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
Rome, 12-20 July 1979 (WCARRD/Rep), Part one, Declaration of Principles,
para. 15 (XIV).

planning and programme implementation" and suggested that governments "evaluate and take steps to minimize the possible negative effects on women's employment and income arising from changes in traditional economic patterns and the introduction of new technology". 20/

46. The link between insufficient food production and the low productivity of rural women is increasingly recognized. 21/ Migration from rural to major urban areas represents in many developing countries a serious waste of human and natural resources. Transformation of the rural area itself constitutes the most effective means of limiting migration, and women's role in that process has been seen to be of central importance. Yet, simultaneously, within urban sectors adjustments need to be attempted, and there also achievement by women of equality with men in the economic field and their consequent effective participation in that field are important but hitherto largely neglected concerns. The UNIDO Preparatory Meeting on the Role of Women in Industrialization in Developing Countries held at Vienna, from 6 to 10 November 1978, identified the following primary constraints upon women's more effective participation: social, attitudinal and institutional barriers; insufficient employment opportunities; inadequate and inappropriate education and training; unsatisfactory employment conditions and environment; lack of participation in decision making, planning and in the trade unions, and insufficient information. 22/

47. In countries with developing centrally planned economies the majority of women achieved, during the last three decades, substantial levels of equality with men in the economic field by means of a three-fold programme: an over-all development strategy supportive of women's advancement; provision of a legal basis for equality of women with men; and explicit policies designed to resolve the particular problems faced by women. In the Asian countries transformation of the rural economy, based upon land reform and reorganization of production units, were the key to the advancement of women's economic role. Labour-intensive construction of rural infrastructure and capital equipment by means of "intermediate" technology and local self-reliance put a premium upon both women's labour and their organizational participation. Technological improvements, including mechanization, did not cause women's employment to decline, nor did it bring about marginalization: the Chinese Fifth Five Year Plan (1976-1980) projected a doubling in requirements for agricultural labour unless large-scale mechanization was carried out successfully. 23/

48. Women's effective economic participation and particularly her resultant improved status was not an automatic consequence of technological and organizational change.

20/ Ibid., Programme of Action, sect. IV, part D, para. iv.

21/ The State of Food and Agriculture, 1977 (Rome, FAO, 1978), pp. (vii), 2-4, 2-4/2-9; "The New International Economic Order: What roles for women?" (E/CN.14/ATRCW/77/WD3).

22/ Report (ID/WG.283/23). This document was identified by UNIDO as its contribution to the preparation of this analytical report.

23/ The State of Food and Agriculture, 1977 (Rome, FAO, 1978), pp. 2-25/2-33.

It required continuous constitutional and legal support and mobilization of public opinion in favour of the desirability of women's assumption of a new economic role and increased equality with men in decision making. General constraints upon women's effective economic participation were removed; restriction of rural out-migration effectively prevented disruptive loss of male labour; household labour was reduced by provision of communal facilities and electrification. In China and Viet Nam particularly the energies previously involved in child-bearing and rearing were substantially reduced, and in all countries basic health needs were successfully satisfied. In its reply to the 1979 questionnaire the Government of China emphasized the vital role of women in production and construction, notably in agriculture. Many had been cited as model workers: in factories and other enterprises many women held leading posts, and one third of scientists and technicians were women. Despite substantial advances Governments acknowledged that old problems were not completely resolved. Moreover, the rapidity of technological and organizational change made constant monitoring of women's roles necessary to avoid new inequalities. 24/

49. In its reply to the 1979 questionnaire the Government of Mongolia stressed the importance of women's participation to that country's development. Full contribution to the economy had been assured by priority attention to appropriate education and technical training. Of particular importance had been measures supportive of the combination of functions performed by women in the home, in child-bearing and rearing, in full-time employment and in continuing education. In Cuba the over-all economic structure was altered to allow effective utilization of all human resources. The economic context within which rural women worked was transformed by a restriction of metropolitan urban dominance over the economy, expansion of a balanced system of regional centres, comprehensive rural development, diversification of production and technological and organizational innovation. Participation of women was assured by full provision of health services, appropriate education, effective constitutional and legal protection and the means to political participation, particularly in local decision making. In its reply to the 1979 questionnaire the Cuban Government noted that old prejudices still remained, although much attenuated and rapidly declining in significance in the face of increased employment and public education. Extensive provision of child care facilities and infrastructure together with expanded social security benefits, being further revised during 1979, allowed women's performance of multiple roles with significantly reduced hardship.

B. Women in more developed countries

1. Current situation and trends

50. The majority of the countries with developed market economies which replied to the 1979 questionnaire anticipated an increase in women's employment outside the household. Much of the increase would consist of married women. Considerable proportions would be employed part-time. Indeed, Sweden noted that a decline in full-time women workers was expected, compensated by an increase in part-time workers, who already constituted almost half of the gainfully occupied women

24/ China Reconstructs (Beijing), vol. 26, No. 3 (March 1979), p. 34.

workers. Concentration in traditionally female occupations would continue, although several Governments thought significant entry into previously male-dominated occupations was likely before 1985 (Austria, Greece, Japan, San Marino, New Zealand, United States). However, some Governments were less optimistic, pointing out that the recent recession had been more harmful to women than to men (Austria, Norway, United States). In its observations, the International Labour Organisation quoted the 1979 Follow-up Report of the 1976 Tripartite Conference, which had concluded that the rising number of women entering the labour force had been accompanied by rising female unemployment.

2. Principal determining factors

51. With regard to the causes of most recent trends, the 1979 Follow-up Report noted that:

"A number of factors help to explain this recent increase in unemployment among women. An especially important one is the structure of female employment opportunities. Women, notwithstanding some recent inroads in certain areas of the secondary sector, remained heavily concentrated in a narrow range of tertiary-sector industries and occupations. As the recession struck the industrial sector hardest, services-sector jobs initially provided greater protection to their occupants. It should be added, however, that even during this initial phase of the recession, women engaged in production activities were extremely vulnerable to last-in, first-out layoff procedures, due to their lack of seniority. Yet, more generally, it was as the recession became longer, only to be followed by a weak economic recovery, that women were hit hardest. Many of them worked in low-skill jobs which were jeopardized when production slowed down or failed to pick up again sufficiently. Moreover, the narrowness of their industrial and occupational base ceased to be an advantage once the lingering impact of the recession began to cost jobs in the services sector with a lagged reaction. There is further the danger that the impact of technological change in the tertiary sector in the future could jeopardize women's employment gains and further job opportunities." 25/

The International Labour Organisation observed that technological progress had the dual effect of widening women's employment opportunities and at the same time pushing them into less skilled and less mechanized occupations. This had been found to be true notably in the textile and electronics industries. An informal consultant's meeting held in 1977 had noted the impact of the current situation upon girls aged under 25 years. Competition on the labour market was particularly fierce for them because of the very considerable increase in the rate of participation in the labour force on the part of married women. This trend was expected to continue and was attributed in part to establishment and extension of equal opportunity legislation.

25/ International Labour Conference, 65th session, 1979, Follow-up of the World Employment Conference: Basic Needs (Geneva, 1979), pp. 75-76.

52. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD pointed out at the fifth session of the Conference held at Manila in May 1979 that there had been insufficient structural change away from older labour-intensive branches of industry, in which women were substantially employed and at low levels of skill (TD/221, para. 4). In an introductory statement to the Seminar on the Participation of Women in the Economic Evolution of the Economic Commission for Europe Region held in Paris in July 1979, the Executive Secretary of ECE noted that it was generally recognized that structural changes likely to occur in the world economy would imply a restructuring of domestic economies as well, and that among these changes there were a few which might have a direct impact on the participation of women in the economic evolution of the ECE region (ECE/SEM.5/9, para. 9). A comprehensive review of the situation was undertaken at this seminar. 26/ It concluded that disproportions between jobs available and the distribution of jobs between sexes still prevailed. Differences in earnings for women and men existed and were unjustified. The burden imposed on women by household duties was still substantially higher than that of men. In many sectors the rationalization process had diminished the demand for occupational skills, which had led to a decrease in the average earnings and had been accompanied by an increase in female labour. Average women's earnings in most countries were lower than those of men. The adverse effect of differences in earnings was particularly pronounced in the case of female-headed, single parent households. This was particularly important since the number of such households was increasing. Women remained strongly under-represented in many countries in certain occupations, particularly industrial jobs requiring certain technical skills, top administrative and managerial posts, and academic, scientific and other high skill professions. A disproportionate number of women workers was to be found in the peripheral labour market, with consequent disadvantages from the legal and social security points of view. The persistence of prejudices affecting the mentality of teachers, employers, relatives and young girls themselves, and sometimes structural deficiencies in teaching, were held to be responsible for the tendency for women to follow occupations requiring less education and fewer professional skills, and for them to be concentrated in certain occupations. The extremely adverse impact of uncritical technological advance upon all aspects of the status of women in the industrialized countries and the need for greater understanding of the relationships involved has been set out in a recent UNITAR study. 27/

26/ The summary and conclusions of the seminar (ECE/SEM.5/9), and the study prepared by the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe on "The Economic Role of Women in the ECE region" (ECE/SEM.5/2 and Add. 1-4) were transmitted by that Commission as its contribution to this analytical report. The findings of other recent meetings were also utilized: "The Changing Roles of Men and Women in Modern Society: Functions, Rights and Responsibilities", held at Groningen (Netherlands), 1977; "International Symposium on Women and Industrial Relations" held at Vienna, 1978 under the auspices of the International Institute for Labour Studies, Geneva, which designated the results as part of its contribution to the preparation of this analytical report. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development also transmitted information and observations which were used in its preparation.

27/ M. Bergom-Larsson, Women and technology in the industrialized countries (Science and Technology Working Paper Series, No. 8) (New York, UNITAR, 1979).

3. Ways and means of improvement

53. Inadequate basic education and insufficient appropriate professional, technical and vocational training were identified by most of the Governments as the major obstacles to equal access to employment. Consequently they emphasized provision of improved education and training specifically designed to equalize employment opportunities. A number provided qualification up-grading courses for unemployed women (Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, San Marino, United States). Several observed that many women themselves accepted a discriminatory situation (Belgium, Iceland, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States). Vigorous attempts were being made by most to reduce general bias by means of publicity and information programmes.

54. Women faced numerous obstacles in respect to unequal conditions of work, and notably in attempting to combine employment with household work and child-care. However, with regard to equality of pay for equal work, substantial progress was reported. Many Governments had completed comprehensive amendment of legislation since 1975 (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Israel, New Zealand, Spain, United States). Improvements were also achieved by administrative means, such as expanding employment exchange services, improving inspection arrangements, encouraging affirmative actions by major employers, and reviewing collective bargaining agreements (Belgium, Cyprus, Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, United States).

55. With regard to maternity protection many reported substantial legislative amendments and administrative measures. This, as many other aspects of equality in the economic field, was viewed by the majority of Governments as closely related to the problem of combining household work and family responsibilities with gainful employment. Many Governments have attempted far-reaching and innovative measures. The value of motherhood and maintenance of the family as the basis of national society and of the provision of household services and facilities was increasingly recognized, while research designed to attach precise economic values to these contributions was being undertaken in many countries. Supportive social security measures were being carried out, particularly for single mothers and other female household heads, whether fully or only partly occupied. An important area of progress had been expansion in child-care facilities. However, these programmes called for extra expenditure at a time when most Governments were having to reduce their budgets. Many used the public sector of employment as a lead area for introducing innovative measures such as long-term absences for child-care, flexible working hours and part-time operations. However, some noted that, because of high rates of unemployment, employers were little motivated to attempt adjustments in working arrangements.

56. Governments were actively upgrading and revising their employment and vocational guidance services; undertaking revisions of anti-discriminatory legislation; inducing employers to hire more women by offering tax benefits and subsidies; and undertaking various programmes of affirmative action in the public sector. It was acknowledged that the extent of prejudice was still very high against women's access to employment, in particular, but also to equality of conditions in general. Discriminatory and protective legislation still existed, and some Governments admitted that their powers of persuasion were limited. Recent economic recession had constrained many ameliorative and corrective programmes.

57. The Governments of the four countries with developed centrally planned economies which replied to the 1979 questionnaire observed that, as a result of a three-fold strategy, very high levels of equality in the economic field had been reached: adoption of a socialist economic structure; full protection in constitutions, legislation and labour codes; and a series of special measures. The most important of these latter measures had been education and training and support for women attempting to combine professional, family, domestic and child-care functions. Institutional arrangements for formulation of an employment policy for women were well developed. Average skills had been raised substantially: in the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic women made up 53 per cent of specialists with higher education. Half of all gainfully employed engineering and technical graduates in the German Democratic Republic were women. Social security coverage; extended maternity and child-care leaves; mechanization of household tasks and provision of equipment and services, notably shops and services close to places of work, had been afforded the highest priority.

IV. ACHIEVEMENT OF THE EQUALITY OF WOMEN
WITH MEN IN THE SOCIAL FIELDS

A. Women in less developed countries

1. Current situation and trends

58. With regard to health status, the insufficiency of statistics makes analysis difficult. However, unpublished reports of a meeting on women and family health held by the World Health Organization (WHO) in November 1978 concluded that there was an apparent serious deterioration in the situation of large numbers of women, particularly those in the developing countries and among the lower income groups. Most recent estimates of women's average expectation of life at birth, prepared for 1975-1980 by the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat on the basis of a 1978 assessment of available information, indicated that of the 102 developing countries for which estimates were possible, women's average life expectancy was still less than 50 years in 36 countries, only between 50 and 59 years in 28 countries, and between 60 and 69 years in an additional 24 countries. In 14 developing countries average life expectancy was already above 70 years. Studies suggested that life expectancy was higher for females than that for males by an average of 2 to 5 years. However, in southern and south-eastern Asia, women's conditions were so poor that their life expectancy was slightly lower than that of men. Of the Governments replying to the 1979 questionnaire, several commented that women's health status was not worse than that of men, rather in some respects it was better. Tunisia and Jamaica noted that women made much greater use of health services because of the emphasis given during recent decades to maternal and child health services. Several Governments emphasized that the principal differentiation in health status existed between classes (Dominican Republic, Republic of Korea, Singapore).

59. Reproductive functions remained of central importance to the social and economic role of women in the majority of developing countries. In 14 of the 105 developing countries for which information was available total fertility rates per woman were still over 7 for the period 1975-1980. In a further 43 countries the rate was 6, and in 22, 5.

60. The Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat reported in January 1979 that 72 of the 117 Governments of developing countries for which information was available provided guidance and means of modern contraception within public health services. An additional 13 Governments actively supported the programmes of local authorities or non-governmental organizations, and in 23 countries commercial distribution or distribution by non-governmental organizations was permitted, although not directly supported. In only 9 developing countries did Governments restrict to some extent access to either guidance or means. It is noteworthy that of the 85 Governments which either directly provided or indirectly supported such programmes only 49 had a simultaneous policy of attempting to reduce fertility levels for demographic reasons. Even in these cases, health and welfare objectives were considered to be of equal importance. In 36 countries, provision was entirely designed to contribute to women's health and welfare. Of the

Governments which were able to provide information, however tentative, on the percentages of women who had access to the information and the means to enable them to exercise the right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children, there was still a wide range of percentages from 100 per cent in urban areas to very few in rural areas. Proportions actually using modern contraceptives were much smaller.

61. Statistical information on the status of women within the family unit, and within society as a whole, is not available on a comparable basis for developing countries. Recent studies have shown that proportions of households headed by women are much higher than previously realized, and are a widespread phenomenon in many developing regions. Measurement of status within households in which males were heads was not available in any systematic form. However, evidence for both rural and urban women in many developing market economies suggests that a significant deterioration may have occurred. In rural areas the economic structural changes outlined in section III of this report have resulted in a loss by women of economic functions which had supported if not an equal then at least a respected complementary function. In urban areas, increased dependence upon husband's income had resulted from migration from rural areas and from processes of marginalization. 28/

2. Principal determining factors

62. The low and apparently deteriorating health status of women was attributed by a recent WHO meeting on women and family health as being due largely to a process of socio-economic marginalization resulting from prevailing modes of development which were not geared to meeting the needs of the least well off. Governments of the countries with developing market economies which replied to the 1979 questionnaire noted that the situation reflected the severe over-employment experienced by the majority of women in these countries within a context of high environmental risk to health, including very high levels of reproductive activity. Provision of health services, basic education, adequate housing, water and sanitation had been totally inadequate to compensate for over-all negative factors. Recent economic trends in most of these countries had added to the hostility of the situation, causing marginalization, inflation, food and fuel shortages. The burdens of household service provision had been scarcely reduced in view of the limited application of appropriate technology and capital in this sector. The very low educational status of the majority of women had been a major obstacle to their efforts to achieve equality with men.

63. Among the Governments, only Ecuador and the Republic of Korea considered that no major obstacles to improvement in women's health existed. For the most part, substantial negative determining factors were identified. High levels of

28/ Cynthia Hewitt de Alcántara, "Modernization and the changing life chances of women in low-income rural families" (E/CEPAL/L.197) (submitted by the Economic Commission for Latin America); Olatunde Oloko, Modernization and Social Problems in Africa (Lagos, University of Lagos, 1979) (submitted by the Economic Commission for Africa).

reproductive activity were identified by many (Argentina, Colombia, India, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Peru, Sri Lanka). Mauritius considered this to be the major negative factor. In Peru only 20 per cent of women received medical attention during pregnancy and child-birth; in Bolivia only 10 per cent. Women's low educational status (India, Kenya, Sri Lanka), and consequent ignorance of the benefits offered by health services (Argentina, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mauritius) were important factors, as was the hard physical labour performed by women in household services provision and in agriculture, particularly in the context of underdeveloped technology (Guinea, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Sierra Leone). The over-all context of low incomes and poor living standards (Dominican Republic, Honduras), particularly in urban low-income areas, where they were aggravated by rural to urban migration (Dominican Republic, Peru), were noted as major determinants of poor health status.

64. Underdevelopment was expressed also by the Governments' financially constrained condition and, hence, its inability to provide sufficient health services (Argentina, Bolivia, Botswana, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Malaysia, Paraguay, Peru, Sierra Leone, Togo). Two Governments (Malaysia, Peru) pointed to a deteriorating situation in this regard, with rising costs for materials, equipment and labour. The Dominican Republic and Jamaica identified as serious the brain drain of health sector personnel. Insufficient or inappropriate institutional arrangements (Peru) and inadequate sectoral planning systems (Dominican Republic) were noted.

65. With regard to poor nutritional status (although this was not stated to be worse than that of men) Paraguay identified the underdeveloped situation as the underlying cause. Low educational status and associated retention of inappropriate taboos and bias in nutrition were considered important (Guinea, Ivory Coast, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka), as were the high levels of physical labour performed by women (Ivory Coast, Republic of Korea) and generally low incomes and poor living conditions (Mauritius, Sri Lanka). The responsibility of the over-all structure of the economy was implied or cited in some cases: insufficient attention to food production (Ecuador, Guinea, Honduras, Jamaica, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Peru) and the externally induced pattern of food consumption (Ecuador, Mauritius) were cited as important determining factors. In addition to financial constraints upon adequate provision of facilities and personnel (Honduras, India, Lebanon, Paraguay, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka) the insufficiency of information (Paraguay) and the inadequacy of governmental institutional arrangements, including the absence of comprehensive national nutritional policies (Peru, Philippines, Tunisia), were important constraints. The continued low health status of women constitutes a severe constraint upon women's achievement of equality with men in the economic field and in education. Thus a further vicious circle is established, for unequal economic and educational status have themselves been seen to be major determinants of women's low health status.

66. The reproductive function of women was still regarded in the majority of developing countries as of the highest importance. In conditions of largely labour-intensive technology within a predominantly subsistence economy and with

very high levels of mortality, the reproduction of future labour was of the greatest societal value. Moreover, strong socio-cultural, psychological and political factors continued to support high levels of reproduction. It is noteworthy that, with the loss of economic status brought about by macro-economic processes, the reproductive function of women in many developing countries may have become even more emphatically the principal basis for women's societal status. A number of Governments noted the importance of demographic growth, but acknowledged the need to combine this with improved control by women over reproduction (Bolivia, Guinea, Ivory Coast). It is noteworthy that high reproductive activity and poor health status are closely interdependent. Poor health contributes to high foetal and infant mortality; low survival rates require continuous attempts at child-bearing, contributing substantially to women's poor health. In the absence of meaningful improvement in over-all economic and educational status, with associated achievement of greater social and political equality, changes in reproductive behaviour appear unlikely. In its contribution to preparation of this analytical report the United Nations Fund for Population Activities noted mounting research and programme evidence that improvement in the status of women leads to improvement in the practice of family planning, and that both are associated with women's non-domestic role, in turn influenced by the level of education as well as by economic opportunities.

67. Governments emphasized a number of obstacles to achievement of equality with men in decision making with regard to reproduction. Unfavourable attitudes based upon socio-cultural values were identified as still of considerable importance (India, Mauritius, Sierra Leone). In the Republic of Korea, the preference for sons rather than daughters remained strong, although the Government noted that, with improved education and employment opportunities for girls, parents were to a greater extent acknowledging the fact that the births of daughters was of increasing value. Still considered as important were the beliefs of politically and culturally powerful groups that family planning was equivalent to birth control and hence to an unwelcome demographic decline (Botswana, Colombia, Honduras, Malaysia, Mauritania, Paraguay, Philippines). Botswana noted women's ignorance of the beneficial health and welfare effects of family planning; high morbidity and mortality rates were identified as still relevant (Malaysia); insufficiently widespread programmes (Colombia, Peru) and high drop-out rates (Botswana) were cited. Continued legal constraints and insufficiently formulated over-all policies were cited by Lebanon.

68. Both in terms of its contribution to low health status and in terms of the need to divert time and energy which could be applied to education and extra-household economic activities, high reproductive activity acts as a generally restraining factor upon the achievement by women of full equality with men. Moreover, women's fertility and health have clearly important significance with regard to efforts at national and international levels to resolve imbalances between demographic and other societal processes - that is, to resolve "population problems" which themselves contribute to unemployment, environmental pressure, urbanization and international migration. These in turn contribute to inter-ethnic, inter-class and international tensions.

69. With regard to the achievement of equality with men within the family or household and also within society as a whole, the principal determining factors are those interrelated and negative factors which have resulted in unequal economic, educational and health status. Of these the unequal - and probably deteriorating - economic status may be considered central, determining to a considerable degree both health and educational factors. Thus, the over-all nature of the development process in many developing countries has been such as to retain, if not to deepen, traditional inequalities in family and society, and to add new ones. Of special significance has been the very high levels of male out-migration from rural and urban areas to major urban centres within and outside the country, the reflection of severe regional unbalances in technological and organizational change. Disintegration of the family in conditions of a hostile economic context and often imported disruptive social processes has also been most significant. The Governments almost all reported the continued existence of men's attitudes toward women, accepted by many of them, which held that women should continue in stereotyped and partly segregated functions and hence suffer continued substantial inequality in social as well as economic fields.

3. Ways and means of improvement

70. Almost all Governments with developing market economies reported that extension of facilities and services, with priority to the primary health care approach for rural and marginalized urban populations, was the appropriate means of bringing about an improvement of women's health status - although not designed exclusively for women. The Republic of Korea cited expansion of national systems of health insurance to cover rural women, and involvement of rural women's organizations in health and supportive programmes. Of particular importance were changes in institutional arrangements, including general administrative improvements; integration of maternal and child health services with public health and population services (Haiti, Ivory Coast); allocation of high priority and specific quantitative targets to the attainment of proportions of women provided with services of various types (Tunisia); and decentralization to local levels. Use of rural women's institutions (Kenya, Republic of Korea) was also considered important. The more developed of the developing countries were concerned with establishing facilities using the most modern technology.

71. With regard to nutrition most Governments reported the undertaking of research. Improvement of institutional arrangements was also reported to be important, including preparation of new national nutritional policies (Haiti, Honduras, Paraguay); establishment of a new Institute of Home Economics (Sri Lanka); and a new programme of appropriate technology for food production and processing (India). Several Governments subsidized food, including school meals (Colombia, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Mauritius, Togo) or noted integrated community nutritional projects (Sri Lanka). A number stressed the relevance of improvement in food production, processing and distribution as the best means of resolving these problems (Botswana, Ghana, Guinea, Jamaica, Mauritania, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Togo), including, in some countries, expansion of co-operatives (Lebanon, Malaysia, Sri Lanka). The Republic of Korea stressed stabilization of food prices; Sierra Leone had undertaken distribution and

subsidy of high protein weaning foods. Several countries stressed the critical importance of an improved education for women (Botswana, Madagascar, Republic of Korea, Togo).

72. Of particular importance was the limited proportion of women in higher administrative positions and in policy formulation and plan preparation within the health sector, as well as in such traditionally non-female occupations as general medical practice, and as specialists in areas other than gynecology and obstetrics. Of the few Governments able to provide this information, the proportions of women in policy formulation and plan preparation ranged from zero (Lebanon, Togo), to 7 per cent in Madagascar and Jamaica. Specialists in fields other than gynecology and obstetrics varied in proportions from 2 per cent (Honduras), 4 per cent (Lebanon) to 40 per cent in Jamaica. Proportions in general practice varied from 5 per cent in Honduras to 40 per cent in Jamaica. Of particular significance was the fact that the majority of Governments stated that no special measures were being taken to equalize the situation in these respects.

73. With regard to reproductive functions, Governments confirmed continuation of the recent trend towards the integration of family planning programmes within maternal and child health, general health and primary health programmes (Botswana, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, India, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mauritius, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tunisia). The objective was women's health and family welfare, rather than fertility reduction for national demographic reasons, although this was still of considerable significance in a number of countries (Dominican Republic, India). A number of Governments reported an intensification of these integrated programmes for the benefit of lower income populations (Malaysia). Improved institutional arrangements for family planning and health were reported (Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka). Countries which had previously been reluctant to provide family planning services because of a need for demographic expansion now acknowledged their importance (Ivory Coast).

74. In countries with developing centrally planned economies substantial progress was made in improvement of women's health status by means of innovative preventive health services, supported by improved living conditions, education and higher social status for women. China reported a nation-wide health protection network for women and children at the levels of the county, the commune and production brigade. All women workers in factories and offices enjoyed free medical services, while in the countryside about 80 per cent of production brigades had adopted self-financed co-operative medical plans. Cuba reported particular attention to maternal health and the reduction of infant mortality by means of a continuously improving system of polyclinics, maternal and child health services and obstetrical and gynecological services, and a new system of community health services. Resulting from these improvements average life expectancy at birth for women during the period 1975-1978 had reached 75.5 years (compared to 70.2 for men). Forty per cent of specialists outside gynecology, and also of general practitioners, were women. In Mongolia the dispersed character of rural settlements had made necessary careful provision of dispensaries and clinics, including mobile and flying doctor services. Maternal and child health had been given highest priority.

75. China reported that the population situation still called for widespread family planning, based mainly on improved contraception, but also upon late marriage. A planned population growth was considered conducive both to development of a planned economy and to protection of maternal and child health. The average annual rate of population growth had fallen by half during the decade, reaching 1.4 per thousand. Cuba emphasized provision of family planning guidance and means within over-all health services and in the context of over-all development, in order to improve maternal and child health and reduce abortion. In Mongolia emphasis lay upon removal of health constraints upon women's reproductive activity by means of maternal and child health services and a general improvement in living standards.

76. With respect to over-all reduction of prejudice and discrimination within society, the Governments of countries with developing market economies indicated that establishment of a sound constitutional and legislative basis for equality was a primary consideration. This could support such long-term programmes as education, within which sex-stereotyping would be removed, and more immediate measures of public information. Many pointed out that provisions for equality with men existed in their national constitutions. However, these dated from earlier periods and required revision (Dominican Republic, Honduras, Paraguay). Some countries had recently completed or were still engaged in such constitutional revision, during which the need for careful protection of women's equality within modern conditions had been fully taken into consideration (Ecuador, Peru). Several reported completion of revision of legislation in order to remove discriminatory elements (Ecuador, Mauritania, Peru, Tunisia), while others reported that such revision was in process (Haiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), or was considered necessary (Senegal). The Government of Togo reported as of particular relevance its new family code.

77. The importance of over-all improvement of women's participation in education was identified by a number of Governments (Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Senegal). Peru stressed the value in this regard of co-education. The beneficial impact of the establishment of the various forms of national machineries was noted by several Governments (Egypt, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Senegal, Sri Lanka). By far the most widespread measure was that of public information, including the holding of seminars and the use of public broadcasting systems and other media. The contribution made by non-governmental women's organizations was recognized by most respondents.

78. The very substantial support provided by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, ILO and other inter-governmental and international non-governmental organizations for the work of regional, subregional and national agencies working to improve women's health, control over reproductive functions, and over-all status in family and society is sufficiently well known not to require detailed description in this report.

B. Women in more developed countries

1. Situation and trends

79. The Governments of countries with developed market economies replying to the 1979 questionnaire reported women's life expectancy higher than men by an average of six years. Levels of maternal mortality were very low in most of the countries. Most Governments stated that women's health status was better than or equal to that of men. However, the Federal Republic of Germany pointed out that large-scale prevalence of sedentary occupations among women affected female manual workers more than their male counterparts. They were consequently more subject to cardio-vascular disease or coronary insufficiency. Women became invalids or retired at a much earlier age than men in nearly all occupations. Countries with indigenous and immigrant populations noted that their health status was lower, but did not indicate specific differences between women and men. High levels of health status were reported by four Governments of countries with developed centrally planned economies, in their replies to the 1979 questionnaire.

2. Principal determining factors

80. The majority of the Governments of countries with developed market economies noted that there existed no major problem with regard to women's health status as distinct from that of men, in view of the high general levels of living and provision of health services. However, other Governments identified a variety of problems: increased proportions of women were heads of households (United States); health risks in the home were still not considered an "occupational hazard" (Canada); mental health problems arising from women's situation were over-diagnosed as psychological problems (Canada); paternalistic attitudes of male physicians (Canada); insufficient awareness by doctors of the "housewife syndrome" (Netherlands); insufficient data specific to women's health problems (United States); and the fact that expenditure on new health services was constrained by the economic situation (Australia). Insufficient funds, and in certain instances the nature of governmental structures, with division of responsibility between federal and state or city levels, were noted as the cause of delays in provision of services (United States, Austria). Over-eating was noted by several Governments (Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands).

81. A factor of particular importance was the high degree of sex stereotyping within the labour force of the health sector, with very low proportions of women among senior personnel engaged in policy formulation and plan preparation for the health sector and in administration. Of the 6 countries which provided information, these proportions were only 1 and 33 per cent in Cyprus; 14 and 10 per cent in Norway in 1978; 22 and 6 per cent in New Zealand in 1978; 4 and 22 per cent in Ireland; and, for the two categories combined, 9 per cent in Japan and 8 per cent in the United Kingdom in 1977. In 8 countries the proportion of women among specialists other than those in gynecology and obstetrics varied between 5 and 26 per cent. For general practitioners the variation was between 5 and 35 per cent. However, most Governments indicated that proportions of women among medical graduates and medical students was substantially higher, and the

United States in particular reported a major breakthrough in the numbers of women physicians during the last decade.

82. Generally unfavourable attitudes were still major obstacles. With regard to the sex-stereotyping among health sector occupations it appeared that the imbalance could be readily resolved by the application of affirmative actions. Some Governments reported recruitment policies designed to reduce inequalities (Austria, Canada, Finland, Ireland). Certain special measures were also being taken: in Finland, for the first time in 1979 university level training was to be provided to nurses in the area of health care administration and planning; in the United States, financial assistance was given to individuals and institutions, and medical schools were urged to increase female entry substantially; in Australia, programmes of retraining and re-entry were undertaken to bring back former personnel at higher levels; in Sweden, a governmental commission of enquiry proposed a quota system where there were less than 30 per cent of women (or men) within each occupational category; and in the United Kingdom, measures were taken to assist women doctors and dentists whose domestic commitments prevented their undertaking substantial practice. A number of Governments commented that no special measures had been taken, or even considered necessary.

3. Ways and means of improvement

83. The Governments of countries with developed market economies which provided replies to the 1979 questionnaire indicated that expansion of basic health and maternal and child health, including extension of health insurance schemes and integration of family health and primary health care services facilities, was the measure most likely to improve health status of women, particularly those in rural areas and in least advantaged sections of society (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, United States). In Ireland the combination of day nurseries with local health service facilities was considered particularly valuable; Finland emphasized its primary health services; and the Federal Republic of Germany stressed improvement in early detection of diseases. Special research and surveys were valuable means of identifying the precise problems of women (Austria, Canada). The existence of comprehensive national health insurance schemes was considered an important benefit for women (Canada, Cyprus). With regard to nutritional status, a number of countries reported substantial programmes of research and monitoring, and various programmes of financial support, subsidy and public education including food labelling (Canada, Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands, United States). The Netherlands reported measures to control commercial advertising related to nutrition, which had a negative impact on diet selection and not infrequently also on the conception of sound nutrition in the exposed population.

84. With regard to equality with men in decision making concerning contraception, abortion and sterilization the majority of the Governments noted that means and guidance in use of modern contraceptive methods were accessible to most women, while a lesser proportion was able to obtain abortion for self-determined reasons. In many countries it was thought that only small groups, such as very young women, immigrants and indigenous populations, were still insufficiently provided with means

and information. In others attitudes and the insufficiency of services still prevented full access for some women, notably in rural areas. Affirmative actions had brought about very rapid improvements during recent years. For example, in the United States during the period 1975-1978, proportions of women accessible to modern contraceptive methods had increased in urban areas from 50 to 85 per cent, and in rural areas from 35 to 80 per cent. In the United Kingdom between 1975 and 1977, the proportion of women aged 15 to 44 who received family planning services from clinics or general practitioners increased from 29 to 38 per cent. In Israel, substantial improvement in general public attitudes had been noted during the last five years.

85. The Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat reported in January 1979 that 26 of the 41 Governments of developed countries either provided guidance and means of modern contraception within public health services, while 7 others directly supported the programmes of non-governmental organizations and local authorities. Only in 4 of the 41 countries did Governments still partially restrict women's access to modern contraceptives and guidance in family planning. None of the developed countries had adopted policies designed to reduce levels of fertility. In fact, in 10 countries levels were considered too low, and in an additional 11 countries, although levels were considered satisfactory, various measures had been adopted to ensure that these levels were maintained. In almost half of these countries the reproductive functions of women were considered a matter of substantial demographic importance, and this was significant for women's attempts to combine employment, household and maternal functions.

86. Ways and means of improving the situation in most countries consisted of extension of facilities and personnel, including support of local authorities and private organizations, and public education. Additional means included restructuring of basic health programmes to incorporate effective services (San Marino); legislative amendments (Ireland); and courses for general practitioners (New Zealand). In Israel it was hoped to expand the approach from guidance in contraception to broader services relating to sexual behaviour and the family. In a number of countries, legal constraints upon access to abortion and sterilization on self-determined grounds were reduced or removed during the period since 1975 (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Israel, Norway, United States). However, a number of Governments referred to continuing hostile public attitudes (Australia, Austria, Canada, Iceland, Ireland, Israel). It was anticipated in Austria that implementation of family planning services and access to abortion in some predominantly rural regions would be substantially delayed. In Iceland, schools had not executed laws introducing family planning and sex education. Austria and the United States pointed out that, although abortion had been made legal, it was still not freely provided within public health services. Moreover, funding for these programmes was reported to have been levelling off. In Ireland the sale of contraceptives was still prohibited.

87. The four Governments of countries with developed centrally planned economies which replied to the 1979 questionnaire stressed the extensive measures taken in regard to maternal and child health within a primarily preventive approach to health and with special attention to rural areas. This had enabled women to combine socially useful work with family responsibilities. Consequently, social conditions

had emerged which permitted either a rise in fertility or maintenance of acceptably moderate levels, while maintaining very high levels of women's participation in the non-domestic labour force. The German Democratic Republic noted that recent laws and measures relating to family planning and abortion permitted parents to decide freely whether, when and how many children they would like to have, thereby creating conditions for women and men to decide on the development of their families responsibly and without internal conflicts. They ultimately ensured women complete freedom of choice in the contraction of marriage.

88. Health care provision had been extended from those covered by health insurance to all citizens. Substantial proportions of women were employed in health sector occupations not traditionally feminine - in Hungary and Romania 36 and 37 per cent of the specialists in fields other than gynaecology and obstetrics were women, and 44 and 58 per cent respectively were general practitioners. Combination of a comprehensive constitutional and legal basis for equality, respect for women's functions as mother and educator, very high levels of participation in employment outside the home, already substantial educational and active public information had resulted in women's achievement of high levels of equality in both family and society.

V. CONCLUSION

89. There appears to exist a close interdependence between achievement of the over-all equality of women and men and several other factors, among them the following: assurance of women's participation in all spheres of national and community life both as contributors and as beneficiaries; adjustment of national economic organization and societal development processes; and improvement in the international economic order. In most developing countries societal integration into the international economic order has caused or has strongly contributed to worsening terms of trade between rural and urban sectors; chronic rural decapitalization and deprivation; excessive investment in and resultant congestion of metropolitan urban centres; subordination of the use of natural and human resources to highly selective production schedules determined almost entirely by the needs of developed countries for primary commodities, rather than by the basic needs of the producing countries themselves; restricted and distorted transfers of technology; establishment of inappropriate education and health systems; and damage to indigenous cultural systems.

90. Each of these aspects has in turn exercised a negative impact upon women's role and status in society and hence their level of equality with men. Thus, integration of these countries' economies within the world economic order may be identified as the principal underlying cause of the retention of pre-existing inequalities, the introduction of new forms of inequality and the loss of opportunities to break out into a new condition of full equality with men. Although the severity of the impact upon women's status and role was possibly unintended, that impact nevertheless appears to be an historical as well as a contemporary fact which must be acknowledged if correct curative actions are to be identified.

91. Moreover, in recent years the international economic order has itself undergone changes, seriously deepening its negative impact upon national economies in both developed and developing countries and in this way actively worsening women's condition. Thus, deteriorating terms of trade, increased protectionism among developed countries, continued removal of capital from developing countries and the recent multiple crises affecting the international economy have severely limited progress in non-oil-producing developing countries. Inflation and shortages of food and fuel have further reduced the living conditions of most urban and many rural women.

92. Just as the nature of integration within the international economic order has been largely responsible for the inequalities of women's status, so the depressed status of women and the existing limitations upon her productivity and effective participation in the economy have themselves severely constrained many aspects of national development, have thereby contributed to the economic weaknesses of developing countries, and hence to the maintenance of an unbalanced international economic order. Furthermore, national and regional weaknesses have contributed to international instability and tensions which have in turn brought about the fluctuations in the international economic order which have had such negative

effects upon women. Thus the set of related causes and effects form a cycle, having negative implications throughout for the achievement by women of full equality with men in all fields.

93. The creation of an improved international framework for development requires parallel reform of systems and mechanisms of development within developing countries themselves. ^{29/} However, as such systems and mechanisms have themselves been largely determined by the international context, the process of change at both international and national levels may be seen as a single mutually supportive process. Such changes appear to be a prerequisite also for the solution of many of the problems which depress the status and role of women. As a result of national developmental experience, the great majority of women in the countries with developing market economies find themselves trapped within a vicious circle from which it is difficult for them to emerge: over-employment, constant childbearing and rearing, ill-health and restricted status. Improved international relationships in trade, finance and technology, and associated improvement in national strategies and structures in strong support of the equality of women and men and women's full participation in all walks of life, will clearly release women from many negative factors and make possible their more effective participation in development and consequently their achievement of full equality with men. Thus, changed international and national economic structures are prerequisites to women's achievement of equality with men; yet, reciprocally, women's contribution is essential if new strategies are to succeed.

94. A simultaneous and closely co-ordinated strategy at both the international and national levels is required to break the cycle. Notwithstanding the significance of the international factors discussed above, national Governments alone have the responsibility for attaching sufficiently high priority to the formulation of comprehensive and co-ordinated policies for undertaking sufficiently careful and detailed intersectoral planning, and for allocating sufficient resources to carrying out a complex set of measures, both direct and indirect. Special programmes are necessary in order to relieve women of immediate burdens and to improve their status as far as possible. Removal of constitutional and legislative impediments and restrictions will provide an essential basis for action programmes. However, such legislative improvements may remain unimplemented, and action programmes may have only temporary or limited impact, if the over-all national societal context is not improved. Thus, for such special programmes successfully to assist the mass of women, notably in rural areas, simultaneous over-all national economic restructuring may be necessary. For example, it cannot be expected that attempts to improve women's health and educational status, to reduce the frequency of pregnancies or the burden of fuel and water collection can do more than ameliorate conditions for any but a minority of women if rural-urban terms of trade deteriorate, if increasing proportions of rural families are denied access to land, improved technology, adequate income and security, or if urban women continue to be faced by accelerating inflation, unfair competition in trade and handicrafts and limited access to employment.

^{29/} "Restructuring the international economic framework", report by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to the fifth session of the Conference, May 1979, (TD/221, para. 9).

95. Finally, the urgency of the situation must be stressed. It is not at all clear that the condition of women in global terms is improving constantly so as to reach at some future date a situation of substantial satisfaction. Rather, the condition of some women appears to be actually deteriorating. Achievement by women of equality with men, solution of such major national, regional and global problems as food, health, population, employment and literacy, and establishment of a new international economic order are closely interrelated matters requiring co-ordinated and urgent attention.
