



**ANEXO IV e IVa**

**Texto da Intervenção de Portugal no Plenário da Conferência**

**Informação distribuída por Portugal a todos os Países.**

**Fundação Cuidar o Futuro** (cf. Relatório - pág. 6)



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR CONFERENCE

Statement by the

Delegation of Portugal

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

read by Mrs. Maria Regina Tavares da Silva  
member of the National Commission on the Status of Women.

Mexico, 19th June - 2nd July 1975.

Mr. President

Members of all delegations



We would like to address you in the name of a country that is at this moment undergoing a profound change in political and social aspects. The Revolution of the 25th of April 1974 has brought with it new possibilities in the way of democracy and pluralism, in the construction of a true socialism and in the achievement of decolonization. As a matter of fact, the fall of an authoritarian regime has allowed the existence and exercise of democratic freedom, has allowed new patterns of social life and the right for all voices to be heard. The choice of true socialism by the people of our country is the basis for the construction of a classless society, where all have the same opportunities and where exploiters and exploited shall be no more. The Revolution has also started the process of decolonization, based upon the recognition of the right of all peoples to self-determination and independence and of the justice of a struggle for national liberation.

Out of these framework of essential values and policies a new society is emerging in which portuguese women have a role to play.

For us, then, the International Women's Year comes at a time of deep change in political, social, cultural and economical aspects; a time also of quest and tension, a time of growth as a nation and as a people.

The Portuguese Government, in the text of a resolution about



the celebration of the International Women's Year in our country pointed out: "In Portugal, this year coincides with the consolidation of the Revolution of April 25th and its significance becomes, therefore, particularly important, for the evolution of a country in which women represent a great progressive force".

This revolutionary situation that we live now leads us to be particularly sensitive to one of the basic points of this Conference and of the International Women's Year - the whole concept of development and its global significance. We are at a stage when development is vital for our country. It is a pre-requisite for the achievement of our ultimate political goals.

What, then, can be or must be the role of women in such a revolutionary context and in a perspective of development? To answer this question, we would like to share with you all, some of our reflections on this point.

First of all, what does development really mean and how should women participate in its process?

Development, as it has already been emphasised in this Conference "is not only economic growth, but implies change, social, structural and attitudinal change". We certainly agree with the fact that change involves increasing national income, improving levels of living, adopting new technology, acquiring new skills and capacities, changing values of occupations, etc. Indeed, it is very important reforming the social economic structure and establishing new institutions. What is at stake with development is a much broader concept of social change. Social change which implies eco-



conomic growth, needs at least that economic growth which makes fundamental social rights feasible and therefore capable of allowing a new social order. In this context, integration of women in development - that which concerns us now - is the ability to participate actively in the process of change and to utilize effectively the opportunities offered by it: integration of women in development effort is indeed their capacity to introduce a new dynamic force in these process of change made up by the collective attitude and concerted action of women at all levels and in all spheres of social and economic life.

Women must participate - must be present and active as women in this building up of new patterns of society. However, it is true that women have been locked up in a system of relationship where the rules have been more clearly defined than those of men and have confined them to certain spheres of action. We want to stress that even when we speak of the importance of the integration of women in development in terms of the economic value of that participation we take as the most important element the happiness of women, the capacity for them to be active, happiness builders of the new society we all are looking for, regardless of the type of society from which we come, regardless of the unequal distribution of wealth, regardless of the low gross national product or the high gross national product that characterizes each one of our countries.

It's always the woman as a human being, as full human being with a right to happiness and a right to introduce in history a new capacity of being human that is at stake. We are tired of the slogans



that we need to sacrifice ourselves for the next generation. In fact, sacrifice is a beautiful thing when it comes out of a dynamic and personal choice, but can not be imposed by any authorities and sacrifice is not a political rule. It is a moral attitude and as such a moral attitude belongs to the individual conscience. Therefore, it is the women today as they are, as human persons that should be our concern in all the efforts of their integration in development and construction of a new society.

Another element to take into account in this analysis is our conviction that collective force of women will bring about a new aspect in social change. It is very striking to see that social change in all countries has been accomplished mostly by men, and women have to adapt to that change made by men. Even the countries and the revolutions that consider themselves most avantgarde take for granted that women will follow in their wake. In fact, very often women can not do anything else but follow in the way of the rules laid down by men. However, we think that it is time that women help to change drastically the direction of social change. It was very interesting for us to see in the FAO paper concerning the role of women in rural development the concept of social visibility. However, this concept is not only a concept for the rural women, but is also a concept for the urban women. We need, in order to speak in an adequate way of participation of women or integration of women in development, to review completely the capacity of women to make their work and other women's work socially visible.

A last point on this question of development and participa-



tion and one that does concern every country is the concept of fundamental solidarity of all countries in connection with development, namely economic development. This in itself is a very important principle because it puts above the individual needs and rights of the different countries the need for cooperation between all states. The fact that participation of all countries on a basis of equality should be satisfied at the level of the world economic problems with a view to the common interest of all countries is a most significant one. This is important because women in this context are subject of change. It is a discrimination made by the United Nations body itself if we go on distinguishing between women in developed and women in developing countries. We may distinguish them for the sake of analysis, for the sake of stating which are the problems in one part of the world and in the other part of the world, but we can not distinguish them in what concerns strategy, because strategy implies the solidarity among all countries and therefore the solidarity among women of all countries. That solidarity is not only a consequence of the integration which is a part of this new economic order but - this is fundamental for us - it is a basic condition for this new international economic order to be effective. That same change will also be the basis of a new relationship among nations.

We have been sharing with you some reflections on women development and participation. We are coming to an end; however we would like only to say how this is expressed in concrete terms in our country at this moment. In the first place, there is a strong feeling that the conditions are there for women to participate.



There are the conditions and the will and the effort. As a matter of fact portuguese women are there taking part massively in the elections, colaborating in political parties, in neighbourhood commissions, in worker's commitees in mass-meetings and street demonstrations, etc. They may not be at decision-level yet, they may not be in large numbers yet in high administrative and govermental posts, but they, the women among the people take responsibilities and initiatives now. This is for us a source of hope and joy and a promise of a new society that we hope will be based upon justice and solidarity. We could also mention the concrete achievements in the conquest of women's rights, but we shall not go into that now. We shall only say that however much may have been accomplished in this last year, we feel that still almost everything remains to be done. The other side of reality is still the very vivid exploitation of women, both in the labour-market and in domestic life. In professional work women still receive lower wages than men doing the same job. At home, women still carry the burden of a double task not shared by men. Awareness of this oppression is wakening in women's minds. At the same time the capacity and the will to fight against oppression and build justice is growing in their hearts. There is a revolutionary force at work, both in the way of a structural change in society and in the women's own status, role and condition.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, we believe that our task at this moment is to fight both for a Revolution that may lead us to complete freedom as a people and for a Revolution on the Status of Women that may lead us to full participation and fullfilment.





Mr. President

As I finish this statement, allow me to greet in a very special way the women of Angola, Guine-Bissau and Mozambique. That they may help to build new countries of justice of freedom. For them and their peoples the best wishes from the women of Portugal.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



Portugal and the International Women's Year

1. In Portugal, the year 1975 was officially recognized as the International Women's Year by a resolution of the Provisory Government in the session of January 8th 1975. The resolution reads as follows:

"The year 1975 was proclaimed the International Women's Year by the General Assembly of the United Nations. In Portugal it coincides with the consolidation of the Revolution of April 25th and its significance becomes, therefore, particularly important, for the evolution of a country in which women represent a great progressive force.

Considering the great significance and actuality of the goals which the International Women's Year is meant to reach, namely the elimination of all forms of discrimination *de jure* and *de facto*, in relation to women, the implementation of the participation of women in social progress and the recognition of their contribution on the local, national and international levels, for the establishment of peace;

Being aware, on the one hand, of the serious situations of discrimination still existing in Portugal, in what concerns the full participation of women in many sectors of the life of the country and, on the other hand, of the special opportunity which can be offered by the year we are living for a large integration of women in every aspect of the national reconstruction;

The Council of Ministers calls the attention of all the



departments of State, the Armed Forces, Political Parties, Professional organizations and other non-governmental organizations in order that, during this year, efforts may be pursued to make the Revolution now happening a Revolution with an authentic participation of women, according to the genuine character of the portuguese woman and in agreement with the guide-lines proposed by the program of the United Nations".

2. In the line of the programatic principles contained in the resolution of the Government, aiming at the integration and participation of women at every level, we could see the presence of women in high posts in Government and Administration, namely: 1 woman-Minister of Social Affairs, previously Secretary of State for Social Security, 1 woman-Secretary of State for Culture and Scientific Research, 1 woman in the Council os State and a few more in top administrative posts. This presence, however, in the most representative places doesn't exist any more at this moment, which may be considered a step-back in this type of participation.

3. On the governmental level the Comission on the Status of Women, a body for study and action in the Ministry for Social Affairs has been responsible for the official program of the International Women's Year. This Comission has had as its main concern during this year to take advantage of the existence of an International Women's Year for an action of information of public opinion, in relation to the most urgent problems concerning the status of women. Such an action has a special importance in the concrete circumstances of our country, as we have to grasp the opportunity offered by a re-



volutionary moment in which everything is questioned and many forces are at stake in order to try to achieve another revolution in the field of women's situation, which is not necessarily changed by a socialist revolution only.

The International Women's Year, however, has been a motive of interest, not only on the Governmental level, but also for non-governmental organizations of women, with different characters, either feminist, professional, partisan, religious or others, who have introduced this line in their programs and initiatives in different ways.

However, starting in the last two months of 1974, there have been efforts to bring together some of these non-governmental organizations and the Commission on the status of women, in order to elaborate a common program for the year 1975. This program should be flexible enough to allow the participation of different ideological tendencies and different views on a number of problems. On the other hand, one should stress the unifying project of this program - the promotion of the situation of women, both legal and de facto in our society.

Having discussed the meaning and opportunity of the celebration of an International Women's Year in Portugal now, it was agreed within this group that such a celebration was not envisaged, in terms of "festivities" with solemn events, but rather as a series of concrete and progressive efforts at all levels, in the way of accelerating a change in the situation of women.

As first steps to reach this goal, it was stressed the



need to "identify and denounce the areas of discrimination against women in our country", and in these terms the substantive content of the program was approved by the Commission on the Status of Women together with the non-governmental organizations. The organizations collaborating in the program are a total of 14 up till now, but the opportunity for new members remains open. Concerning this group and its composition, one should stress the very remarkable aspect of an effective plurality within it, and at the same time the capability that has been exercised to go beyond ideological differences, differences of method or others, to find a common platform of work and engagement in this action. This fact we consider extremely positive.

In the beginning of January this common program was set in motion, meant to study and reveal to public opinion the following aspects:

- Discriminations against women in Family Law.
- The participation of women in civic and political life.
- The double task of the working woman in contrast with the traditional images of the role of women.
- Differences in wages between men and women and conditions of work in industries with large numbers of working women.
- The status of women and family planning.

During the months of January and February, this groups studied and gathered material concerning the first theme and used it for information through the mass-media.

During the months of March and April the group did some research and thinking on the second theme and the material which was



collected is now being used for information of the public opinion.

The work will continue during the year 1975 in relation to the other themes, the perspective always being that of denouncing the situations of injustice and discrimination, together with positive proposals for the solution of these same situations.

4. Beyond this common program of action for the International Women's Year in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, the existence of this year has been the framework for all the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and has really been present in all the initiatives and actions.

One should stress in the first place a certain impact upon the public opinion concerning the questions inherent in the Status of Women, mainly through articles and interviews in a number of newspapers and magazines, as well as in one program in Radio and one in T.V. One should also stress the work accomplished by women-journalists, through a systematic contact and exchange of information and views, which has already had as an effect a certain impact on public opinion.

The Commission on the Status of Women has also started the publication of an Information Bulletin, mainly concerning the themes of International Women's Year and containing the more relevant national and international news.

As a project, which the Commission on the Status of Women hopes to start soon, there is the existence of one counselling office for women meant to give advice to women concerning their rights and responsibilities.



Also, there is a possibility, which is now being studied in collaboration with a group of artists, to have an exhibition with paintings by women artists to take place in Lisbon and eventually to go to other places of the country.

5. Some non-governmental organizations have also had initiatives of their own to commemorate the International Women's Year. We shall mention but some of the most relevant:

Women's Democratic Movement - This organization celebrated very specially the 8th of March - Women's International Day - with a mass meeting and other events and the edition of a special poster for the Day.

This organization is also preparing a Women's Congress in September, which is also an important phase of preparation for the World Women's Congress to take place in Berlin in October 1975, promoted by the International Federation of Democratic Women. They have also taken part in international meetings preparatory of this World Congress, both in Warsaw and Budapest.

Another significant event was the recent visit to Portugal of Mrs. Valentina Tereshkova, member of the USSR Presidium and well-known cosmonaut.

Women's Liberation Movement - Trying to call the attention of public opinion to the discriminated status of women in many spheres of their lives, this feminist organization held a street demonstration in January 1975, which gave occasion to a violent opposition and strong protest and clearly showed the masculine patterns of Portuguese society.



Among the projects and initiatives of this organization, one should stress the League of Women's Rights, now being organized, in the line of the same so-called League in France initiated by Simone de Beauvoir. Its fundamental purpose is to study and defend the rights of women, especially in the fields of family law and professional work. There is also the possibility of the 1st International Women's Court to take place in Portugal to call the attention of the world to the crimes against women, committed and allowed by a type of society which is ruled by essentially masculine patterns.

6. In what concerns the participation of Portugal in international meetings within the International Women's Year, one should stress the participation of a portuguese delegation in the International meeting in Paris in March which was organized by the French Government, the presence of delegates of the Portuguese Commission on the Status of Women in the European Seminar in April in Brussels and the participation in Varne in the Congress of Women lawyers in May. Portugal is also present in the World Conference of the International Women's Year in Mexico in June-July, and the points of the program have been discussed and prepared by the group of non-governmental organizations collaborating with the Commission on the Status of Women.