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THE FRENCH PROGRAMM FOR  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

By creating a Government Secretariat "to promote all measures the purpose of which is to open up access by women to all levels responsibility in French society and to eliminate any discrimination women might be subject to", the President of the French Republic has demonstrated in a signal way the great importance he attaches to full integration of French women in the Nation's collective economic, social and cultural effort.

France will therefore start 1975 declared to be "International Women's Year" by the United Nations Organization, on December, 18, 1972, in the spirit of reform which moves its government.

It recognizes at the same time that, while it is among the foremost countries on the way to a "de jure and de facto" equality much remains to be achieved yet.

The International Women's Year must provide :

- The opportunity for the Government to show by concrete measures that it is anxious to speed up the already started process of equalization, within the respect of the Nation's deep-rooted traditions.
- The possibility for all women to express their preoccupations, needs, hopes and visions of the future.
- The opportunity for all participants in the French organized sessions to exchange ideas, information and comparisons, to take part in debates which will be fruitful for the women of all countries interested, to make proposals for the years to come.

At the initiative of Madame Françoise GIROUD, Secrétaire d'Etat à la Condition Féminine (Secretary of State for the Condition of Womankind), a Comité National d'Organisation (National Committee) has been set up, representing almost all the women's associations of all leanings.

Thus, the main lines of the French programme have been defined, around a general theme : "The Next Step".

France intends :

- to gather in Paris, on Saturday, March the 1st, Sunday, March the 2nd, and Monday, March the 3rd, women with government responsibilities in the European and French-speaking countries, as well as women of all countries occupying responsible positions in the political, economic, social and cultural fields.

1. - Each of the Government women will be requested to speak about the following during the first plenary session :

- a) her personal trajectory,
- b) the way she attained her present function,
- c) the conclusions she draws from this experience concerning the possibilities for the women of her country to take part in public affairs,
- d) the result of her experience in the government to which she belongs and the difficulties or otherwise, and the constraints or otherwise which she encounters on account of her being a woman,
- e) the objectives which she is setting to the women of her country for "The Next Step".



It would also be interesting if each would answer the following questions :

- Is there, in your function to-day, a noticeable difference of weight, means, efficiency as between men and women ?
- What would you expect of a broader participation by women in the decision-making process?

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Two men, both French, will at the beginning and end of this plenary sessions, put forward their own view of what "The Next Step" could be for women in the world.

2. - Committees will meet in the framework of these "International March Days", each having as its chairwoman, a foreign guest, particularly qualified by her professional, trade union, cultural or political function. They will examine five main themes :

- 1. Political, trade union, and professional participation,
- 2. The role of women in economy (a sub-committee being set up for rural questions,
- 3. Education, training, culture, sports,
- 4. Family, housing, birth,
- 5. Justice, the rights of women, information.

Working groups are already in action in the French framework to present the state of situation and to determine the major problems to be submitted to the committees.

Each of these committees will present a report and recommendations which will be consolidated into a synthesis report.

On the occasion of this international session which

will be under the patronage of the President of the Republic and to which he will be present, certain activities will take place in Paris :

1) a multi-sports meeting, with a view to disseminating a new image of modern woman, as she appears in the mastery of sports.

2) an exhibition illustrating the different images of woman in the world.

3) a Women's Day in all the primary and secondary schools and educational establishments, where pupils will be given broad information about the place and role of women in today's society, their effective participation in all fields of the country's development, and the handicaps which they have yet to overcome.

There will be publication of :

- a brochure, in French and in English, about the situation of women in France,
- a poster,
- a postage stamp,
- a coin.



These "International Days" will be the start of a vast effort to prepare minds throughout France.

During the year **Fundação Cuidar o Futuro** role of the Secrétariat d'Etat à la Condition féminine to impose on women's organizations, or on French women in general, any particular approach to Women's Year, or "The Next Step" theme for reflection and action which it has, for its own part, chosen.

It will only supply to all those who wish it objective documentation for such reflection, and a permanent secretariat which associations, trade unions and ministries will be able to call on if they so wish, to obtain help in preparing their own events and launching them. The role of this Secrétariat permanent de l'Année de la Femme (Permanent Secretariat for Women's Year), under the responsibility of Claude du GRANRUT, will be coordination and the possible supply of services.

The resolutions which will be voted by the committees with international participation in March, will be communicated to all associations having decided to organize their own "Study Days" or diverse other activities, to serve as a non-limitative basis for their work.

For their own part, the regional delegates of the Secretariat d'Etat à la Condition Féminine will create reflection groups which will be open on a broad basis, to men as well as women, so as to gather the greatest number of opinions, criticisms, wishes, about the situation of women in French society, its desirable evolution, pitfalls to be avoided, actions to be undertaken at short and medium term.

The Secrétariat d'Etat à la Condition Féminine wishes to encourage the regional and municipal authorities, as well as each of the associations which so desire, to organize the greatest possible number of meetings, discussions, comparisons and exchanges allowing all to express themselves, to put forward their views and make them known, so that this International Women's Year can be really the Year of all women.

The proceedings of all this activity will be gathered and a synthesis made, which will be published throughout France.

On October 24th 1975, France will celebrate International Women's Day by means of various events, the form of which has not yet been finally decided on, but which will be the result of broad consultation. In particular, Young women and young men will be invited in the framework of regional events organized in each great provincial city, to come and state together their views for the future, for "The Next Step" to make.

In general terms, the Secretariat d'Etat à la Condition Féminine and the Comité National d'Organisation will mainly aim at :

- keeping women better informed so as to develop their social consciousness and their sense of belonging to a community in progress.
- helping them to attain self-assurance and confidence in other women, allowing them to be proud of themselves without nevertheless ceasing to be in harmony with the men, developing their freedom of judgment, of action and of mind with a view to "The Next Step" by French women.

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