



INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

*(Intervenção p. a Conferência Mundial no México)*

On the whole, it must be said that the report contained in document 66/4 goes a step further than all other documents concerned with the integration of women in development. This for two reasons:

1- The fact that the United Nations body itself has made a leap forward with the energy crisis in 1974 which led to the drawing up of a declaration concerning a new international economic order. There, it is clearly stated that there is a new framework for the international strategy on development. That new framework is not labeled with any particular political regime or political ideology, but it is based on some principles which convey with them our concept of politics and above all of international politics.

The main principle underlying the different statements made in that document is the fundamental solidarity of all countries in connection with economic development. Therefore, we are beyond the stage of evolving a certain development rate for the developing countries and of determining how much should the developed countries give from their gross national product to help the developing countries. 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 the countries is a most significant one.

This is very important because women in this context are subject of change. It is a discrimination made by the United Nations body 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 that 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.

If we consider the norms for the participation of women in development there is a new norm still to be found by the collaboration of all countries. We come then to very different conclusions, when we consider the norms, the status and the conditions achieved in the highly developed countries.

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2- The second aspect that should be emphasized as a basic change in the outlook of the United Nations is the fact that the whole criticism made in the last years about the definitions of development or the concept of development with which the United Nations were dealing, very specifically in the strategy for the II decade of development as well as in the report on the social situation of the world is completely answered. As it is recognized in the documents we are studying development "is not only economic growth but implies change, social, structural and attitudinal change".

I may doubt if the main fact is a process that increases the GNP, <sup>the</sup> capacity of society and the institutions and members to accomodate to and sustain modernizations. But I certainly agree with the fact that change "involves" "increasing national income,





improving levels of living, adopting new technology" (which does not mean necessarily the most recent technology), "acquiring new skills and capacities", (these meaning a diversity of skills and capacities in all countries regardless of their economic situation), "changing values of occupations" (and - I stress again- regardless of the degree they occupy in the ladder of economic development). Indeed it is very important reforming the social economic structure and establishing new institutions. Therefore, what is at stake with development is a much broader concept of social change. Social change which implies economic growth, needs at least that economic growth which makes fundamental social rights feasible and therefore capable of allowing a new social order. I couldn't but subscribe therefore to the new concept of integration of women in development stressed in the document. Integration of women in development effort is the ability to participate actively in the processes of change and to utilize effectively the opportunities offered by them. I would add: integration of women in development effort is the capacity to introduce a new dynamic force in these processes 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.



3- To the question: "Why then to make a special item of the integration of women in development", a few answers can be given. Some are laid down in the basic document, others can may be added now. 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. I want to stress that even when later we will speak about 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, peacemakers, 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 we have in some countries or the more even distribution of wealth, regardless of the low gross national product or the high gross national product that characterize 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 sacrifice can not be imposed by any authorities and sacrifice is not a political rule. Sacrifice is a moral attitude and as a moral attitude belongs to the individual conscience. Therefore, it is the women today as they are, as human persons that are our concern in all the efforts of their integration in development.

When we speak of happiness, there is a lot of factors that interfere here, and we would like to develop that in terms of times for creativity, possibility for reflecting upon life, a possibility to know and to understand the different processes that go around in the daily concerns of one's own world.

4- A second element before we enter in the more economic aspect is the conviction that <sup>the</sup> 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 avant-garde take for granted that women will follow in their wake. In fact, women cannot do anything else but to follow in the way of the rules laid down by men. However, I think that it is time that women help to change drastically the direction of social change. But for that we need elements which are not included in the documents we have studied. It was very striking for me to see in the FAO paper concerning the role of women in rural development the concept of social visibility. It is true that even if women are seen in all ways out-wardly and in-wardly in movies, pornography, in all kinds of the gadgets that men, regardless of their political regime, have used in order to oppress women, it is true that women are socially invisible. I think that this concept is not only a concept for the rural women, but is also a concept for the urban women.

There are several anthropological factors which are at the basis of this lack of social visibility. It is true that we can link the familiar role, the inter-familiar role and the extra-familiar role and see in what way they are visible or invisible. The familiar role, for instance, in the urban areas of the highly developed countries amounts nowadays to less than zero.

Food is bought, not prepared, there are electric machi-  
neries in all domestic equipment, in all households, women have very little to do with their studios, with their two, three-rooms apartments, where they live as in a cage and the question can be raised if those women either as housewives or as women who work outside their home are really visible in



what concerns the social visibility of the nuclear family.

It is stressed in the report that in the highly developed countries women have taken the non-productive jobs in what was called "deficitary" zone of employment and activities and I ask myself if the social workers, the secretaries, the interpreters are "visible". Isn't there something tragic in the way we deal with our own secretaries? Isn't there a way as if there would be a screen between them and the world, as if there would be something we dispose of, either we are men or women? (the degree of lateral relationship that can be achieved between the boss and the secretary, doesn't deny and doesn't wipe out the secondary level of their interference and the lack of social visibility that is given to their work).

Therefore, in order to speak in adequate way of participation of women or integration of women in development we would need to review completely the capacity of women to make their work and other women's work socially visible.

5- Let's therefore now concentrate on the points raised in the report. It is said that one key-element is the fact that the inequality between the sexes, the lack of training, adequate training leads to a low productivity of women and therefore low level of wages and poverty?

It is also attached to that inequality that there is a low productivity in many household tasks performed by women. I wonder if we could not measure the productivity of men not in household tasks because that is the same in all the countries, but if we could measure the low productivity of men for instance at the executive level in many administrations, boards, in the endless meetings they held and in the bureaucratic systems they always seem able to produce.



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I wonder if there wouldn't be another "sex" to make the compdison with and to make the norm so that we could indeed know if the productivity of men is 100%!! What I am trying to say here is that the concept of productivity itself needs to be totaly reviewed. Productivity is not only the rate between the output and the input, productivity is also the rate between the affective investments you put in your input, the degree of satisfaction you have through-out the whole process as well as the direct output of your performance for the benefit of others. It is very interesting to notice that the low productivity is attached to a male dominant society even when such a society is moving into a very progressive and dynamic one where justice and equity will be the norm. However, it remains again also to be said: equity between whom and whom? Who is the norm for the humane? That's the big question.



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6- The fact that women do not achieve the complete education or are ~~very~~ more easily than boys, than men, <sup>drop-outs</sup> ~~droped-out~~ throughout the school-system is considered a wastage of investment, because of the occupation women are going to have. It seems, however, that within the whole network of the United Nations body what is at stake is not that waste but much more; are men and women able to create a social climate in which every degree of schooling may be applied in many different ways and can have a direct impact in the social change.

The question is not only how many years of schooling are needed but it is also if the atmosphere, the social climate is one able to ask, to demand from every human being the most of his <sup>of</sup> and her capacities. (not equated with schooling! )

I agree however that there is a relation between a certain degree I wouldn't say of schooling exactly, but a degree of intellectual capacity of rationalization that women have attained on the basis of their experience and the productivity of the tasks they perform in the household as well as in the educational achievement of their children.

In a way it is said that there are economic, social, cultural and biological factors in the productive patterns. There is, as said in the report, a circular relationship between women's role in development process and population factors. It is however very important to notice that men appear to be more traditional than women in their attitude towards the family. I think this acknowledgment by the United <sup>Nations</sup> ~~States~~ points out to a need of a true impact of women in their societies. I don't think that we can solve that by having all the time the mixed groups or the mixed committees and have a fifty-fifty per cent in the composition of all the committees but to my mind the only way to achieve <sup>equality and to achieve</sup> a possibility of building up a new reproductive pattern which in turn will have an importance and an influence in development and social change will be through the collective efforts of women.

7- It is important to note the fact underlined in the report that development efforts may increase rather than diminish economic dependence of women.

Whenever we are discussing the integration of women in development we should always have in mind the fundamental questions: Does this aspect of integration of women in development come back to women as a possibility for more economic independence, for more psychological and social psychic-release, for more self-fulfillment?



It is only when these questions have been answered in a positive way that we can think truly of an achievement in the integration of women in development.

8- With this in mind, we can consider the big headings in which we can summarize the basic issues at stake in the integration of women in development. It does seem to me that the most important one is the attitudinal barrier which has something to do with the concept of development in the way we have stressed earlier, reducing development to economic growth, or, in certain situations, even equating development with the mere fact of nationalizing some enterprises either by sectors of activities or by the number of workers in those enterprises and the second set of attitudinal barriers, those concerning the role and place allocated to women in the social structure.

Whenever women are specifically and above all connected with work that is not recognized and not valued like the household chores, their integration in development is practically non-existent.

9- It does not seem to me that the international strategies of development have helped so far in the integration of women in development. They have set up the same goals for the whole world, they have made of highly developed technology the basic rule of economic progress and they have put on the race all the developing countries. It's about time for us to say this is a complete fallacy, and we are only interested in the integration of women in development when it means indeed into a totality different kind of development.

In what concerns then the concept and meaning of development, I think that what we stressed already earlier is very, very important, and I would like to refer to paragraph 28 which seems to me the key-paragraph in all these reports. If we are going to draw the conclusions from these paragraphs we will be able to see what are the elements for integration of women in development. Indeed, there ~~there~~ it's clearly said that "development implies deep and durable changes in social structure, in the functioning of institutions, in the cultural values of great masses of people".

If the key-question is indeed a question of social change and together with it the institutions and the cultural patterns, it seems clear that the role of women entering the process of development at this stage of history is much more in the direction the productive activities are going to take, into the structure of productive units and in the occupational composition of the population as it is stressed in paragraph 38. It is clear that a new force is needed in the world.

Therefore, when in the comments to the point under discussion <sup>we</sup> talk about the integration of women in development we are all the time concerned with these changes in the productive activities and the structure of productive units. For women the most important thing is not the fact that they can control the production as it is now, but in the sense of building up new models of productive activities, of structure <sup>ing</sup> of these productive units, and above all in the sense of choosing what is the product we want to make. This role of women as a collective force in development can become a decisive force in social change.

10- Moreover, <sup>o</sup> if, as it is stressed in paragraph 36, women have a short life-span of activities connected with the nuclear family,



In ~~that way~~, even while they are taken by the responsibilities of the nuclear family they know this is for a certain period of time and at the ~~same time~~ they all have to keep in mind a goal and ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> project for ~~a~~ society.

It is clearly stressed in paragraph 39, 40 e 41 that this role of women in development as well as <sup>that of</sup> ~~the~~ role of women in a a short life-span of the nuclear family bring about with ~~it~~ <sup>them</sup> not only a change in the functioning of the social and economic institutions but a re-definition of the role of home and family in contemporary society.

11- While we are talking about such basic changes we cannot neglect what is said in this report in terms of the conditions of the peasant women as well as of the women of the suburban regions. In both situations, women carry a tremendous heavy-load and ~~that load~~ <sup>that load</sup> needs to be not only made lighter but recogniz ed as part of development, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> if it's not ~~more~~ <sup>it is</sup> productive because society as a whole has not taken women's work seriously and does not give to it an intensive interest.

12-I wouldn't finish these first comments without stressing, taking into account paragraph 49 and paragraph 50 that is very, very important that women are consumers in society and there-fore somehow they are vulnerable to the uniformity of a one-world model may it come from the capitalist United States or from the Socialist Soviet Union. It is the same highly consumer-oriented society that is at stake. It seems to me that women have to change somehow that pattern.

However, that pattern can only be changed when it will be given to women to choose ~~as~~ other important things rather than just ~~building~~ <sup>buying</sup>. If the only field of choice left to them is the kind of trade-mark of detergentd they will buy, they will con-



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*ver, conforme os trabalhos de esta afiv. mação direta pode ser feita*

centrate on that, but if their fields of choice touch other <sup>spheres</sup> of life, than it is more likely that their role as consumers will be exercised with more receptivity and with less vulnerability to the advertising and other means.

13- It would be important to add a few comments to the participation of women in the economies of their countries. The break-down in occupation between developed and developing countries <sup>is</sup> stressed ~~most~~ mostly in paragraph 59. <sup>There</sup> ~~where~~ it is ~~very important~~ stressed that women in the so-called developing countries have more easily reached a position of overcoming discriminatory situations in decision-making jobs at high level and are very active in the occupations often considered as masculine, while at the same time in the highly industrialized world they are confined in huge numbers in non-productive, non-industrial occupations of a second rate, mostly as "helpers" to the brains behind the work of these executives, when unconsciously the executive acts as a substitute for their own performances.

It seems to me very important to denounce the exploitation of women in developed countries as well as in the enclaves of highly industrialized models that exist in the developing countries.

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