



UNITED NATIONS



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CONFERENCE BACKGROUND PAPER

REPORT OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

Held at Headquarters from 3 to 14 March 1975

CONTENTS

Table with 3 columns: Chapter, Paragraphs, Page. Includes chapters I through VII with corresponding paragraph and page ranges.

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OF THE

PREFACE

The Consultative Committee for the World Conference of the International Women's Year was established by General Assembly resolution 3277 (XXIX) to advise the Secretary-General on the preparation of an international plan of action to be finalized by the Conference. The report of the Consultative Committee summarizes the views expressed by the Committee and its Working Group and will be taken into account by the Secretary-General in preparing a revised draft world plan of action in the light of the Committee's recommendations. It will, in addition, be circulated to the members of the Committee and be used as a reference document for the World Conference of the International Women's Year, to be held at Mexico City from 19 June to 2 July 1975.

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1. The Consultative Committee for the World Conference of the International Women's Year met at United Nations Headquarters from 3 to 14 March 1975 to review the draft World Plan of Action. The Committee discussed chapters I, II, III B and IV in plenary. Chapter III A of the draft Plan was discussed in a Working Group. The report of the Working Group is included in the body of the present document.

I. GENERAL DEBATE

2. In her opening statement to the Consultative Committee, the Secretary-General of the International Women's Year and of the World Conference of the International Women's Year spoke of the new dimension and momentum that the goals and objectives of International Women's Year had acquired during 1974 and the early months of 1975. She mentioned, in particular, the adoption of the World Population Plan of Action, the resolutions of the World Population Conference in August 1974, the recommendations of the World Food Conference in November 1974, the Plans of Action on the Integration of Women in Development with Special Reference to Population Factors for Asia and the Far East, and for Africa, adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and by the Economic Commission for Africa in May and June 1974 respectively. She also referred to the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session and by various other United Nations bodies, including the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at its nineteenth session, the eighteenth Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Commission on Social Development at its twenty-fourth session.

3. Stressing the interest that has been expressed in International Women's Year all over the world, she pointed out that a number of countries had inaugurated International Women's Year with special ceremonies, seminars and symposia.

4. A Declaration of Support for International Women's Year 1975 had been signed by more than 80 Heads of State and Government and presented to the Secretary-General of the United Nations by Princess Ashraf Pahlavi of Iran. Liaison officers had been appointed in more than 81 countries and national committees established in 42 countries.

5. Instead of meeting from 23 June to 4 July 1975 as originally planned, the World Conference of the International Women's Year was now scheduled to meet from 19 June to 2 July 1975 at Mexico City.

6. As the proposals and recommendations of the World Conference would be taken into consideration by the General Assembly at its seventh special session, when all aspects of development would be discussed, they would be of particular importance. Moreover, they would also have an impact on various important items to be discussed by the Assembly at its thirtieth session.

7. In conclusion, the Secretary-General of the Conference expressed confidence that the deliberations of the Consultative Committee on the Plan of Action would contribute in large measure to the success of the World Conference and to the

achievement of the goals of International Women's Year for the benefit of society as a whole.

8. In her opening statement the Chairman of the Consultative Committee underlined the potential contribution of the Consultative Committee to the movement for equality of men and women proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations and in multiple international instruments.

9. Although the Commission on the Status of Women had done much to gain legal recognition of the principle of equality, the international conventions that were adopted had not been ratified by many States and even when laws were not discriminatory, practice did not conform to the de jure situation. The major problem at the present time was not so much legal discrimination as traditional attitudes with regard to the place of women in society.

10. Stressing the necessity of changing attitudes that were responsible for the image of woman as an inferior being, an image that all too often encompassed the victims themselves, she emphasized that the role of the mass communications media was of the utmost importance. By forcing women to get married at an early age and confining them to the home, customs in many parts of the world prevented many girls from completing their studies. The relegation of women to the home was due to the failure of some to recognize the social function of motherhood and was based on the erroneous belief that the child was the responsibility solely of the mother.

11. The marginal character of the role of women in the economic development of their countries, including their role in agriculture, was responsible for an enormous waste of human resources and low productivity.

12. Discrimination against women existed in nearly all countries but was particularly evident in the poorer countries where vital needs, such as hygiene, nutrition, literacy, shelter, housing and technical training were lacking at all levels, and in both urban and rural areas.

13. It was to the redressing of those situations that the elaboration of the Plan of Action must address itself.

14. International Women's Year offered the international community a unique occasion for promoting equality between men and women, not only in laws but in daily life, for assuring the full participation of women, and for playing a role in the maintenance of peace. It was not so much a matter of granting rights to women as of recognizing and respecting their inherent rights as human beings.

15. Furthermore, harmonious relations and goodwill between nations could not be guaranteed as long as those conditions did not exist between men and women in their families and jobs and in their countries.

16. In introducing the draft Plan of Action, the Deputy Secretary-General for International Women's Year and the Deputy Director in charge of the Branch for the

Promotion of Equality of Men and Women explained that the draft Plan before the Committee was a working paper that had been prepared on the basis of consultations with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies.

17. In chapter II, on scope and purpose, she drew attention to the attempt to place the Plan within a broad multidisciplinary context within the scope of policies and principles that had already been accepted. The Plan also reflected the regional Plans of Action on the Integration of Women in Development adopted by the Regional Seminars for Asia and the Pacific and for Africa. The present Plan envisaged a 10-year period for its implementation, with provisions for periodic review and appraisal. Emphasis was on action at the national level which was to be supported globally and regionally by international and intergovernmental bodies and organizations. Full support of all public and private agencies and individuals was necessary to achieve the objectives of the Plan. At the international level, the concerted efforts of all international organizations were essential.

18. The Plan was presented in full recognition of the many inequalities that existed between countries and within countries and, in view of this, it stipulated that, where necessary, special measures for women possibly would be needed for an interim period. The establishment of national commissions was also recommended as a transitional measure. The draft Plan included a section on data collection, research and analysis, in view of the paucity of data relating to women and their contribution to economic activities. The role of the mass communications media was considered of the utmost importance in changing attitudes that proved a major obstacle to women's equality and participation in the life of the community.

19. A number of representatives expressed the view that the draft Plan of Action prepared by the Secretariat was a useful and interesting document and formed a good basis for discussion.

20. Several representatives stressed the importance of approaching the problems of women in the context of the more general political, economic and social problems and of directing programmes to all members of society without losing sight of the special problems of women. They emphasized that the quest for equality between men and women must be viewed as part of the general struggle for promoting equality in society. The problem of discrimination against women was not an isolated issue but a problem to be viewed in the broader context of oppression against marginal groups for economic, social and other reasons. Similarly, the problems of rural women must be viewed within the context of the rural family and the rural society. All of these factors constituted the indices of development.

21. Other delegations pointed out that unduly stressing the concept that the problems of women were essentially a reflection of the problems of society might deflect the Conference from its central purpose and that action to improve the status of women must not be postponed until the other problems of society were resolved.

22. Many representatives put forward the view that in the case of countries under

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colonial rule and fighting for national independence, it was of the utmost importance that both men and women continue to join in a concerted effort to combat colonial oppression, foreign occupation, apartheid and racial discrimination and that the present contribution of women to the struggle for national independence should be recognized. Similarly, in countries where people were denied basic political and human rights, it was, in the view of several representatives, imperative that both men and women should join in the efforts to achieve these fundamental rights.

23. Several representatives expressed the opinion that in the efforts to achieve equality between men and women, priority must be given to measures to alleviate problems of women in the developing countries, and to the status of those women who were worse off with regard to education, training, employment and income and who were also lacking in influence in society.

24. One representative proposed that the Plan of Action should be based on two principles: first, the demand for justice such as equal pay for work of equal value, equal educational opportunities, equal access to employment opportunities, legal equality; and secondly, the demand to meet areas of pressing need, such as women's health centres, family planning centres, centres for rape victims, and so on.

25. It was pointed out that equality of men and women should not be interpreted as equality of opportunities on the basis of roles as they existed but as a questioning and reassessment of roles.

26. Representatives also endorsed the basic principle that a change in the traditional roles of women must be accompanied by a change in the traditional roles of men. For women the change must be primarily in increased possibilities for employment and political participation and for men, in increased responsibilities for home and children. Women's right to employment "on equal conditions with men" must be ensured regardless of marital status in order to give them possibilities for an active participation in the community and in public life which would benefit not only women but their families as well.

27. It was further suggested that the problems be classified in two broad categories. The first would include those areas that involved the attitudes of various socio-political groups and of individual men and women concerning the status of women. The second category would involve specific problems regarding the primary survival needs of women and the immediate needs that were necessary to improve existing conditions. In the former, the basic problem was to change the image of woman, held by both men and women, as a second rate human being fit for a limited number of activities, and even in those, not as a decision maker but as a passive follower. The changing of attitudes required a well organized campaign by all groups and institutions involving all educational methods and materials as well as the mass communications media. The latter involved problems of a most urgent nature facing the greater majority of people in the world. It included matters that required a different approach and could, if tackled properly, allow for more immediate and speedy improvements. In this category were problems of

health care, food shortage, overpopulation, illiteracy and the like. Their solution clearly should be a priority in the Plan of Action.

28. To achieve the objectives of development for the benefit of all individuals, the need for structural changes was advocated and for the mobilization of men and women in a concerted effort to establish economic and social justice and equality for the people as a whole.

29. As it was only through the necessary international co-operation that a more just economic order could come about, a number of representatives felt that the Plan of Action should stress and strengthen those concepts that promoted international co-operation and reduced international tensions.

30. A number of representatives also stressed the importance of the contribution of women to the development of friendly co-operation and relations between States. It was only with peace and conditions of peace that it was possible to realize the other objectives of the Year. The view set forth in the draft Plan was that peace was not merely disengagement of armed forces but the establishment of a strategy to maintain that peace. International co-operation could be effective only if there was legal equality between States. It was therefore relevant to make a reference to the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. Similarly, they argued that it was futile to speak of equality when millions were still under the colonial yoke. A reference to the interrelationship of these problems therefore should be made in the Plan of Action.

31. Some representatives supported strongly the endorsement in the Plan of the recommendations in the General Assembly resolution for a reduction of military expenditures by 10 per cent in countries permanent members of the Security Council. They suggested that women's national commissions and social bodies of countries together with national public women's organizations should elaborate recommendations designed to implement the above-mentioned General Assembly resolution, having in mind the possible use of the funds thus released to meet the needs of women and children, particularly in the developing countries.

32. Other representatives strongly opposed this suggestion, claiming that the introduction of extraneous elements would detract from the main issues. They stated that as these proposals were being discussed and studied by other more appropriate forums, this was not the right place to introduce the question of disarmament. A further argument advanced in support of this view was with regard to the problem of assessment of the 10 per cent deduction when military expenditures of some States were not available.

33. It was suggested that the Plan should state the goals more vigorously in the form of mandates to Governments so that they would not simply be one more set of recommendations. What was really needed were active and concrete efforts to translate principles which had been accepted into reality, in line with the threefold objectives of the Year as formulated in the programme annexed to Economic and Social Council resolution 1849 (XLVI).

34. The Plan should provide recommendations not only for the Governments but for women themselves to bring about their participation. It was stated that women had not been sufficiently vigorous and that differences due to philosophy, cultural background, political trends and economic status often produced divisive factors and prevented a unified attitude. It was necessary to set up sources of pressure within the Plan of Action in order that some of those divisions could be surmounted.

35. Some representatives suggested that the Plan of Action should concentrate not only on what should be done but also on how it should be done. As the question of women's status and participation was multidimensional and multisectoral, the issue needed a new orientation.

36. A number of representatives stressed that for the improvement of the status of women it was not adequate simply to promulgate, in Constitutions and other laws, the principle of equality between men and women. Women's rights should be secured with material and legal guarantees - for example, free general and vocational training, equal pay for equal work, labour protection, maternity protection and the like. Governments and society should create for women conditions for successful fulfilment of their responsibilities as mothers, workers and citizens and in keeping with the objectives of the International Women's Year, namely equality, development and peace.

37. Some representatives expressed the view that in order to attain the objectives of the Year special measures were necessary in the interim period and should be reflected in the Plan.

38. Representatives stressed the need to improve the status of women within their countries. It was essential that all existing resources within each country be used for women to seek educational, training and employment opportunities to assure the political right to vote, to hold office, and to exercise the functions of such office and to ensure that equal rights and responsibilities prevailed within the country and within the social and cultural life of each country.

39. While recognizing the need for national action and placing the responsibility for the implementation of the Plan on Governments, representatives stressed the need for a far greater international action than ever before to strengthen national efforts.

40. It was suggested that reports must be submitted annually to the General Assembly in order for the Assembly to follow systematically the measures taken by the United Nations organs in this field. It was pointed out, however, that this issue would be discussed in Mexico. To make such a discussion more fruitful, it was suggested that the Secretariat could prepare a document or perhaps only a statement as to the implications of review and appraisal of progress being considered annually in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women. To carry out the extra work that this would involve, it was suggested by several representatives that the Branch for the Promotion of Equality of Men and Women should be strengthened and the Commission on the Status of Women should be given a more important role. It was also suggested that the fund for voluntary contributions, established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1850 (LVI) for International Women's Year 1975, should be extended in order to carry out projects in conformity with the objectives of the Year.

II. CONSIDERATION OF CHAPTERS I AND II OF THE DRAFT PLAN

41. A suggestion to merge chapter I, "Background to the plan" and chapter II, "Scope and purpose of the plan" (E/CONF.66/CC/2, paras. 1-28) and analyse them as a whole seemed generally acceptable.

42. Chapter I, it was suggested, should include some reference to the special problems of women from the context of their historical and cultural evolution. In support of this view, it was stated that although the problems relating to women dated back for centuries, their present dimensions were new as the productive function of the family and the decision-making role had been increasingly removed from the family setting. Women were being excluded from the major share in the performance of managerial functions which they had once enjoyed. With the increasing shift of services once performed within the family structure (namely, education and training, health care and so on) away from the home, the economic need for women's active participation in these income-producing activities assumed utmost importance for the development of society. It was therefore necessary to make at the very outset a convincing case for the economic benefits of women's participation.

43. Some members also felt that the Plan should reflect achievements made in different parts of the world and in the work of the United Nations bodies in finding solutions to the problems of women.

44. The Consultative Committee adopted a revised version of chapter I, which combined chapters I and II of the original draft Plan. The revised version is as follows:

INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

1. In subscribing to the Charter, the peoples of the United Nations undertook specific commitments: "To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ..., to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women, and of nations large and small, ... and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."

2. Many conventions, declarations, formal recommendations and other instruments have been adopted since then reinforcing and elaborating these fundamental principles and objectives. Some of them seek to safeguard and promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons without discrimination of any kind. Others deal with general concepts of economic and social progress and development, and include international strategies, programmes and plans of action. Some have the more specific aim of eliminating sex discrimination and promoting the equal rights of men and women. The existence of these documents reflects the ever-increasing awareness in the international community of the uneven development of peoples and of the tragedy of all forms of racial discrimination, discrimination on grounds of sex, or in any other form. They express the evident will to promote progress and development in peace and justice.

3. In these various instruments the international community has proclaimed that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women as well as men in all fields. It has declared that all human beings without distinction have the right to enjoy the fruits of social progress and should on their part contribute to it. It has condemned sex discrimination as fundamentally unjust, an offence against human dignity and an infringement of human rights. It has included the full integration of women in the total development efforts as a stated objective of the decade of the 1970s.

4. Despite these solemn pronouncements and notwithstanding the work accomplished in particular by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the specialized agencies concerned, the progress made in translating these principles into practical reality is proving slow and uneven.

5. There are significant differences in the status of women in different countries and regions of the world which are rooted in the political, economic and social structure, in the cultural framework and in the level of development of each country or in the social category of women within a given country. However, basic similarities unite women of all countries, the most notable being the persisting de facto gap between the economic and social status of women and that of men within each country. 1/

6. In order to promote equality between the sexes Governments should ensure for both men and women equality before the law, the provision of facilities for equality of educational opportunities, equality in the fields of training and employment, equal pay for equal work and adequate social security.

7. As a result of the uneven development which prevails in international economic relations, three quarters of humanity is faced with urgent and pressing social and economic problems. The status of women is affected by such problems to a greater degree in this part of the world and improvements in the situation of women are an integral part of the global project for the establishment of a new economic order.

8. In some countries women form the majority of the agricultural work force. Because of this and because of their important role in agricultural production and in the preparation, processing and marketing of food, they constitute a substantial economic resource. Nevertheless, if the rural worker's lack of technical equipment, education and training is taken into account, it will be seen that in many countries the status of women in this sector is doubly disadvantaged.

9. Scientific and technological developments have had repercussions on the position of women in many countries. Political, economic and social factors in each country are important in overcoming adverse effects of such developments. Women's movements, together with the struggle of progressive forces in many countries particularly during the last decade, have brought these problems to the forefront of public awareness at national and international levels.

1/ Some representatives were not in agreement with this formulation.

10. The reality of the problems which women still meet in their daily life and in their efforts to participate in the economic and social activity and the political administration of their countries, ^{2/} and the waste represented by the under-utilization of the potentialities of approximately 50 per cent of the world's population, have prompted the United Nations to proclaim 1975 the International Women's Year and to call for intensified action to promote equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities of both sexes, to ensure the full integration of women in the total development effort, and to involve women widely in international co-operation and hence in the strengthening of world peace.

11. This Plan is not intended as a substitute for existing international instruments and programmes. It is aimed mainly at stimulating national and international action to solve the problems of under-development and of the socio-economic structure which places women in an inferior position, in order to achieve the goals of the International Women's Year.

12. The achievement of equality between men and women implies that they should have equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities to enable them to develop their talents and capabilities for their own personal fulfilment and the benefit of society. To that end, the reassessment of the functions and roles traditionally allotted to each sex within the family and the community at large is essential.

13. The State has the responsibility to create conditions promoting the implementation of legal norms providing for equality of men and women - particularly the possibility to receive free general and professional education, equal pay for equal work, protection of motherhood and access to child-care centres.

14. The necessity of a change in the traditional roles of men as well as women must be recognized. In order to allow for women's equal participation in all societal activities, men must accept shared responsibility for home and children. The objective is not to give women a preferential role, but to ensure the complete assimilation of men and women in the social order.

15. The integration of women in development calls for agreement to widen their activities to embrace all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life. They must be provided with the necessary skills to make their contribution more effective in terms of production and to ensure their greater participation in decision-making, planning and implementation of all programmes and projects. Full integration also implies that women receive their fair share of the benefits of development, thereby helping to ensure a more equitable distribution of income among all sectors of the population.

^{2/} Some representatives proposed the addition of the words: "in many countries of the world".

16. The promotion and protection of human rights for all is an essential condition for the maintenance and strengthening of international co-operation and peace, just as sustained international co-operation among all countries and peoples is required to achieve peace, justice and equity for all and to eliminate all sources of conflict. True international co-operation must be based, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, on fully equal rights, the observance of national independence and sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs and mutual advantage, avoidance of the use and threat of force, and the promotion and maintenance of a new, just world economic order, which is the basic purpose of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. ^{3/} International co-operation and peace require national independence and liberation, the elimination of colonialism and neo-colonialism, foreign occupation and apartheid, and racial discrimination in all its forms as well as recognition of the dignity of the individual and appreciation of the human person and his or her self-determination. To this end, the Plan calls for the full participation of women in all efforts to promote and maintain peace.

17. The objective of the Plan is to ensure that the original and multidimensional contribution - both actual and potential - of women is not overlooked in existing concepts for development and an improved world economic equilibrium. Recommendations for national and international action are proposed with the aim of accelerating the necessary changes in all areas, and particularly in those where women have been especially disadvantaged.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

^{3/} Some representatives stated that reference to the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States should not be interpreted as indicating a change in the positions of delegations on the Charter as stated at the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

III. CONSIDERATION OF CHAPTER III A OF THE DRAFT PLAN

45. Chapter III A of the draft Plan, "Recommendations for action: National action" (E/CONF.66/CC/2, paras. 30-112) was considered in a Working Group, established by the Consultative Committee at its 3rd meeting (see para. 172 below). The Chairman of the Group presented the following report to the Committee at its 12th plenary meeting on 14 March 1975.

Introduction

46. The Group felt that the introduction to this section (paras. 30-40) should stress the following points:

(a) The present situation of women varied between societies, cultures and regions and this was reflected in differing needs and problems. Any recommendations or guidelines for action must take this into account as well as taking into account what has already been achieved in each country;

(b) Because of this and because the implementation of any plan and the urgency of particular actions in it may well vary according to changing local conditions, each member nation should draw up a set of strategies or a plan of action appropriate to the conditions of that country, bearing in mind the need for continual reassessment and change in light of changing conditions;

(c) The fear was expressed that if the Plan of Action were to be seen as a blueprint rather than, for example, a statement of principles to which action should accord or a set of guidelines for actions by Governments, that it may be harmful to the extent that it would lead Governments or other organizations to believe that the actions listed were all there was to do for women;

(d) The Plan of Action must be sensitive to the needs and problems of women of all age groups and all other relevant categories. It should particularly keep in mind those women who are disadvantaged economically and socially and who lack influence in the differing societies;

(e) While recognizing that local conditions would give rise to different plans of action, it was still felt that some priorities could be established between actions. Thus, for example, there would be little point in creating employment opportunities for women if there were no educational or vocational opportunities for them. Furthermore, it was felt that some aims and objectives were more basic in themselves than others, more important in the long run to women, and that this should be pointed out wherever possible.

(f) While Governments must adopt measures appropriate to their particular conditions, wherever appropriate these measures must be imbedded in the existing governmental and physical structures of that country. In this way the decision-making and planning processes of the Government could be encouraged to play their part.

47. Many representatives suggested that although some of the measures suggested could well be carried out without additional financial expense, it was important that Governments should realize and accept the fact that there would be a cost to the country in such a plan, that is, that this Plan would involve a change in the pattern of government expenditure.

48. There was some disagreement among representatives - first, about the effectiveness of government machinery in bettering the problems about which the Plan is concerned and secondly, as to whether such machinery, if it did exist, should report directly to Government. However, there seemed to be general agreement that wherever legislative or similar changes were introduced, these should be continually monitored not only by Government but by other groups to ensure that these measures were properly implemented and followed.

49. There was general agreement that the eventual success of the Plan would be dependent upon the ability of Governments to take measures which would allow women to overcome their natural inhibitions and lack of self-confidence in their ability to take part in such a plan.

50. The need to be aware of the role that the public service administrations as well as Governments could play in satisfying the needs of women was mentioned.

51. While discrimination should not exist either in constitutions or in legislation, the attempt to eliminate such discrimination, while important, must not become an end in itself. It must be realized that discrimination basically arose from the attitudes that women, men and children have had towards women and from the pressures that various cultures have placed upon women.

Specific areas

52. The Working Group made a number of general comments on the structure of the section entitled, "Specific areas" (paras. 52-112). The members generally agreed that, while bearing in mind the need to shorten the document, each specific area could be broken into two parts - the first being the statement of the problem and the second being a statement of the objectives and, wherever possible, of principles that Governments and others should bear in mind when attempting to implement each particular section (see ST/ESA/SER.B/6/Add.1 and E/CONF.66/CC/L.1). It should be made clear that any subsequent recommendations would not be exhaustive.

53. A number of representatives also expressed the view that those parts of the section that dealt with family planning, in particular in the section on health and nutrition (paras. 89-98), would be more appropriate under the section on population. There was a widely held belief that the concerns of large groups of women, particularly their health concerns, were not adequately dealt with in the document. This suggestion would enable such problems and needs to be elaborated in the appropriate sections.

54. The need to be aware of the role of regional organizations, voluntary organizations, women's groups and individual women and men in implementing the specific areas of this Plan was widely stressed.

International co-operation and the strengthening of peace

55. All representatives agreed that the emphasis on this section (paras. 52-57) in essence should be positive.

56. It was generally agreed that a special day should be devoted to peace and that women should explore, as co-equals with men, ways to overcome existing obstacles to peace and international co-operation. The need to involve girls and boys in such exercise, as well as adults, was mentioned. It was also suggested that March 8 should be accepted universally as International Women's Day.

57. However, it was stressed that peace was not just a one-day-of-the-year matter but something about which we must be continually concerned and active. The need to use the media constantly to mobilize public opinion to compel Governments to act peacefully was stressed.

58. One delegation suggested that one of the reasons why women lacked influence in this area was that, on the whole, women lacked an awareness of themselves as human beings, as part of life in general. It was suggested that women of all countries should undertake, on the basis of ideological pluralism, united action aimed at the moral well-being and peace of all peoples.

59. It was suggested that the Plan should include a section on the role of women in the physical struggle for peace.

60. In an attempt to strengthen this section, one delegation suggested that the substantive points contained in those sections of the Economic and Social Council resolution 1849 (LVI) that deal with peace should be included in this section.

Political participation

61. All delegations were agreed upon the importance of the section on political participation (paras. 58-63).

62. As women participated politically in a number of ways - as voters, lobbyists, elected representatives (or candidates for office), as trade unionists and public officials, including the judiciary - it was agreed that this section of the Plan should distinguish, formulate precisely and discuss separately these multiple roles.

63. All speakers were opposed to the establishing of quotas to enable women to participate in the political life of each country: the dangers and problems were discussed at great length and it was felt that while there was possibly some merit in establishing goals, strategies and time-tables in this area, first and foremost there was a need to encourage women to have more confidence in themselves and in other women.

64. There was some discussion as to why women were not participating politically. Delegates felt that not only were women often excluded from the political processes, but often they excluded themselves. The Group emphasized the need to change the existing political structures and the ways in which political decisions were taken. Some members argued that only by such a restructuring could the aims of the Plan and the greater political participation of women be achieved.

65. The problem of tokenism was mentioned:

(a) Even when women did, for example, assume ministerial responsibilities, too frequently they were assigned to the "feminine" or social portfolios rather than the central portfolios of finance, foreign affairs and so on. This happened in other areas of political participation as well;

(b) Where women did participate in the policy-making decisions in the political structures, too often only well-educated and financially independent women were able to do so.

66. There was general agreement that paragraph 63 should be deleted.

67. Members of the Working Group generally agreed that special efforts and campaigns were needed to increase the political awareness of women, to make them aware not only of the existing structures but of how they could be changed and also to encourage women to participate actively in public affairs.

68. It was suggested that a separate paragraph be included in this section on women political prisoners.

69. The Group raised the problem of the language of politics, constitutions, political and legal documents and decisions. Members commented on the use of general terms such as "men" to refer to all people, or "statesmen" and the like, and the use of masculine pronouns in political and legal terminology.

Education and training

70. While the principle of the right to education of every human being had been proclaimed and confirmed in many international instruments, members generally agreed that, in reality the enjoyment of this right was not always ensured in the case of boys or men and far less for girls and women.

71. Representatives felt that the objective that ought to be expressed in the Plan of Action was a system of education and training for life and lifelong education which was important to women and girls of all ages.

72. There was much support for the view that the concept of literacy and its application in literacy programmes should embrace more than the traditional and limited subjects.

73. It was generally agreed that education should be non-discriminatory in approach, availability and content and should be aimed at the full development of people, women as well as men, who would thus be better fitted to develop themselves and hence their countries to the best of their ability.

74. The following particular measures were mentioned:

(a) Programmes, curricula and standards of education and training should be identical, without discrimination between the sexes, and should be more broadly oriented towards society and employment opportunities;

(b) Co-education and mixed training groups should be actively encouraged and should provide a special guide to both sexes and an orientation towards new vocations and goals;

(c) The need for child-care and other arrangements must be recognized for education, training and, particularly, retraining to be effective and provide true equality of opportunity;

(d) Vocational training should be increased and special programmes for continuing education, including trade union training schools, organized. These programmes should aim at helping women in their homes as well as in their professions;

(e) Maximum use should be made of the mass media, both as a tool for education and as a means for effecting changes in community attitudes;

(f) Special counselling and guidance arrangements should be provided and while it was essential to relate this counselling to the existing employment opportunities, this counselling must reflect a changing role for women;

(g) Vocational guidance and aptitude assessment processes and materials should be reviewed along with curricula and text books to remove the present, clearly existing sexist bias;

(h) Flexibility both in times and techniques of educating and training must be introduced so that in fact women are given access to such programmes;

(i) The need for the provision of both sex education and sports education was mentioned.

75. Stress was laid on the need to motivate women, to make them aware of existing and new opportunities. Through education women could acquire autonomy and independence and adapt themselves to the changing roles they would experience.

76. It was stated that the desire for literacy could not be imposed, but rather must arise from an expressed need within a community. Literacy programmes aimed at reaching the majority of the population may need to develop new techniques.

77. It was suggested that in redrafting this portion of the Plan, the following sections from document E/CONF.66/CC/L.1 should be taken into account: education and training sections 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6.

78. It was felt important that women regain their past and past culture. Women's history must be seen as an activity in our past and as relevant to our present.

Employment and economic roles

79. It was generally agreed that the situation of working women was still unsatisfactory in many countries of the world. Even where they received equal pay for work of equal value, this had proven to be insufficient. It was clear that equal promotion, training and job opportunities in the public and private sector were also necessary.

80. It was generally agreed that the problem of women in the work force was twofold: first, they were too often underemployed and underutilized; secondly, they were undertrained, underpaid and frequently working in low status jobs with little job satisfaction.

81. Representatives stressed the necessity to provide extensive and flexible childhood services - in particular, child-minding services, before and after school holiday programmes - in order to give women the choice to work.

82. The practice of using women as a reserve labour force which could be called upon to adjust, balance or control other labour market forces was strongly criticized.

83. The importance of enforcing an adult minimum wage throughout all industry areas, including cottage industry and the like, was mentioned.

84. It was suggested that the International Women's Year would be an appropriate time to reassess and, where necessary, bring up to date and ratify all international conventions and other agreements relating to women in the work force.

85. Policies and programmes relating to the employment of women should not be discriminatory on the grounds of sex, age, sexual preferences or marital status.

86. The need for changes in the attitudes of employers and of trade unionists in respect of women's work-force potential, preferences and capacities was emphasized.

87. It was felt important that Governments and trade unions should commit themselves to the creation of part-time employment opportunities and actively look after the economic and social rights of the part-time worker, particularly women part-time workers. The fear was expressed that part-time work often merely reinforced and continued rather than lessened the double roles of women in the paid and unpaid work force. This latter trend was harmful; however, the availability of part-time work was felt to be important.

88. Representatives stressed the importance of the contribution made by women as workers in both the paid and unpaid work force. They suggested that this should be recognized in social service schemes and, in particular, in workers' compensation and rehabilitation schemes.

89. It was felt that protective legislation, although possibly beneficial to women in the short term, in the long term worked against them both in terms of wages and employment opportunities. Protective legislation, should it ever be appropriate, should be applied to all workers.

90. The importance to women of financial independence was stressed.

91. Given that women were the major consumers in our society and that this was another economic role of women, delegates suggested that a paragraph on this should be included.

92. It was suggested that the substance of paragraphs 2, 4, 5 and 6 in the section on the work force in document E/CONF.66/CC/L.1 should be included in this section.

93. The Group also suggested that any provisions relating to maternity leave should take into account the fact that while only women could be child-bearers, child-rearing was an activity that was open to men and women alike. These considerations should be incorporated into such measures.

94. Workers, including women workers who did not speak the language of the country or area of employment, should not be excluded from training, retraining or from employment opportunities for this reason. In these cases, language training should form an essential part of any training.

Health and nutrition

95. Representatives stressed the fundamental importance of nutrition to human development and deplored the existing situation in which women in different stages of their lives experience more malnutrition than men in times of food shortage - a reflection of the lesser value placed on women by society.

96. It was generally agreed that this part of the Plan of Action (paras. 89-98) should reflect the health needs and problems of women as human beings and of all ages rather than simply women of child-bearing age and intention, as the present draft emphasized. While special measures were certainly needed in relation to women as bearers of children, the emphasis in this Plan and in consequent programmes must be far broader, taking account of the health needs and problems of the young, the aged, single women, working women and all others.

97. It was generally agreed that women had rarely enjoyed the right to health equally with men, an inequality bearing directly on the value attached to women's lives. This situation was accentuated in countries with shortages of health personnel and facilities.

98. The inadequacy of research, treatment and programmes relating to women's problems, other than those concerned with reproduction, should be rectified.

99. Concern was expressed at the lack of information and attention given to women's understanding of their own bodies, a situation which was exacerbated by the attitudes and prejudices of a predominantly male medical profession. This particularly applied to women in situations of stress, in mental health and in the understanding and treatment of diseases and health problems experienced by women alone, such as vaginal problems, breast and cervical cancer. Concern was also expressed at cultural practices which were inimical to women's health.

100. In relation to health policy, it was felt that the Plan should stress the need to redress the situation in which decisions on such matters as abortion, contraception and family planning were taken largely by men.

101. It was felt that even where health facilities were available, too often prejudices, taboos and superstitions prevented women from using these facilities. A substantial educational programme would be needed to overcome these attitudes.

102. Furthermore, existing health programmes must be reoriented to take into account the needs of rural and isolated people. Diverse and mobile health services aimed at lifting the level of health awareness as well as providing health services in these communities must be provided.

103. Women's medical self-help groups had proven to be effective as an initial strategy: they have proven not only the existence of a need but also women's ability to fulfil this need and in most cases led to the recognition of both these factors.

104. Women must be integrated into the existing and future health services as lay people and paramedical staff but also as professionals. Just as important, however, women must be taught how to use the existing services.

105. Representatives felt that the health problems of women were increased by the fact that too often they had both the psychological and physical strain of working two jobs.

106. They stressed the need for regular health examinations in factories, schools and elsewhere.

The roles of women and men in the family

107. The Working Group discussed the title of this section at length. Many delegates felt that it did not reflect the matters that the section should contain. They generally felt that the section (paras. 99-100) was written around the notion of a legally constituted nuclear family and consequently did not reflect the realities of society, the need to take account of common law unions, the large

number of single people in society, and institutions such as the extended family. Suggestions for an appropriate title included the evolution of the family, the roles of women and men in society and the social roles of women and men.

108. There was considerable discussion regarding the minimum legal age for marriage. A few representatives felt that the minimum legal age should be 18 years but others were of the view that the inclusion of such a suggestion in the Plan of Action would not bring about consequent legislative changes and, indeed, that in many countries matters such as the legal age for marriage and the registration of marriages were essentially unrealistic.

109. It was generally agreed that the section should include some examination of the position of the single person generally and of the single parent in particular.

110. The need to include a section on prostitution was also endorsed.

111. Representatives emphasized the need for social security programmes and national compensation schemes to be based on the needs of men and women in society and to recognize the importance of women in both the paid and unpaid work force.

112. The necessity for women to participate in the planning of urban and housing development in order to ensure that their needs would be adequately and realistically taken into account was also stressed by a number of delegations.

113. The importance of the family and similar institutions as agents of social, political and cultural change was emphasized, as was the need to place value upon the work of those who work in the home, the need for training both sexes to be able to carry out this role and the need of the homemaker for economic independence.

114. There was general agreement that the concept of the head of the household or of the head of the family were outdated, discriminatory and in need of replacing.

Population

115. It was generally agreed that this section (paras. 108-112) should be reduced and should support the relevant recommendations of the World Population Plan of Action.

116. The need to stress the close relationship between developmental programmes, population policies and the status of women was emphasized.

117. It was stated that population as such was not a scourge: the problem arose because we had not been able to solve adequately our problems of human resources.

118. The right of Governments to formulate their own population policies based on the specific conditions of the country was emphasized.

Proposed chapter III: Data collection, research and analysis

119. The Work Group agreed that the material concerning data collection, research and analysis, set out in two separate parts of the draft Plan, should be drafted together in a separate chapter. Delegates felt that this part of the Plan should stress the inadequacies of existing collection, analysis and research in respect of women. In particular, all delegates agreed that there was a need for male/female breakdown of all data collected, including census surveys and other data analyses relating to society.

120. It was strongly emphasized that adequate data collection, research and analysis were prerequisites to attitudinal and basic social change, in that order.

121. Representatives agreed that the value of the contribution of women to the national economy should be recognized and reflected in official statistics. They also noted that social and economic indicators must reflect and be sensitive to the particular position and needs of women in society.

122. All representatives agreed that this part of the Plan of Action should stress the need for an increasing amount of research and that the Plan should facilitate and stimulate research and exchange of research material.

123. In achieving these objectives, women's study courses were felt to have an important role that could be mentioned in this section.

124. There was considerable discussion concerning paragraph 47 of the draft Plan which listed a number of areas of research that should be given special attention. Delegates generally found the list inadequate both because of the difficulties in expression and language and because it was neither exclusive or exhaustive. For these reasons it was agreed that the chapter on data collection, research and analysis should not attempt to list subjects for research but rather indicate those principles and objectives that should be followed in research analysis relating to women in society.

Proposed chapter IV: Mass communications media and attitudes towards women

125. Because of the importance of the mass media in conveying information and values, delegates agreed that this matter should be the subject of a separate chapter.

126. While stress was placed on the positive use that should be made of communications media in both conveying information and attempting to effect attitudes, considerable concern was expressed at the harmful effects of the media in reinforcing traditional attitudes and roles and in imposing alien cultures upon different societies.

127. Representatives felt that the proposed chapter should highlight the existing problems of women that were compounded by the representation of women and men in the mass media.

128. Many representatives expressed concern at the harmful and distorted situations that were conveyed by the media, particularly radio and television, but also newspapers, magazines, comic strips, cartoons and the like. They suggested that the Plan should call on Governments to analyse and review the situation in their countries as a first step in redressing the existing situation.

129. The effect of the media on women as consumers and the domination of the media in many countries by interests sometimes external to the country concerned was also a matter that many delegates felt should be stressed.

130. There was considerable discussion of paragraph 51 of the draft Plan which called for the appointment of women in greater numbers to media management decision-making positions. Some delegates felt that although there were already women in these positions, their influence had been harmful. Others, however, indicated that in the present situation these women were victims of the environment in which they worked and of the wishes of those in control of the media.

131. In addition to those mass communications media mentioned in paragraph 82, it was felt that the broad specification of the media should include public meetings, seminars, lectures, drama, pottery, sculpture, mural painting, professional journals (especially legal journals) and advertising as well as person-to-person communications.

132. In the media today both the family and reality have been distorted. Women have been degraded, treated humourously, harassed, humiliated or debased. Delegates generally agreed that these images of women and this abuse of women must cease and be replaced by new images both of past and present women and by new values and new images of men.

133. It was considered essential that this part of the Plan should stress the importance of those in control of the media being made aware of the changing roles of women and men and the serious effects that the constant reinforcement of traditional stereotypes has had not only on women but on society as a whole. Those most resistant to an honest and realistic portrayal of women were often those who control the press, both the owners and the major advertisers. These latter had a vested interest in ensuring that women continue to see themselves as seeking to acquire new and different material goods.

134. The Committee regretted that, owing to lack of time, it had been unable to give the report of the Chairman of the Working Group the full consideration it deserved. Nevertheless, on the basis of the oral presentation of the Chairman, the Committee endorsed the report in general as reflecting the views of members of the Working Group. Some representatives stated, however, that the report did not represent their views adequately and the Chairman subsequently revised her report to take account of these comments.

135. The Committee requested the Secretary-General, in preparing the final draft of the Plan of Action, to take into account the report of the Working Group and

the specific suggestions submitted in writing by individual members of the Working Group and Committee.

136. In the discussion of the report of the Working Group, it was agreed to restructure chapter III of the draft Plan of Action along the following lines:

(a) The title "General measures" would be deleted and the subsections, (a) "Policy, Administrative and Organizational Measures" and (b) "Legislative measures", would be absorbed in the introductory section. The subsections, (c) "Data collection, research and analysis" and (d) "Mass communications media and attitudes towards women's roles", would become chapters III and IV, as proposed in the report of the Working Group.

(b) The section now entitled "Specific areas" would be described as "Specific areas for action" and would follow the introduction. Wherever necessary, legislative measures should be included in each specific area with cross references to the appropriate part in the introduction.

(c) Former chapter III B, "International Action" would consequently become chapter V with a new title, "International and Regional Action" and former chapter IV would become chapter VI, "Review and appraisal".

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

IV. CONSIDERATION OF CHAPTER III B OF THE DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION

137. Representatives agreed that chapter III B, "Recommendations for Action: International Action" (E/CONF.66/CC/2, paras. 113-139), was of the utmost importance.

138. The problem, however, as stated by one representative, was that international action was supportive and not binding on Governments and there were no procedures at the international level to guarantee implementation of these recommendations. The follow-up action on an international level was considered as important as action on the national level.

139. A number of representatives suggested that the Plan should emphasize that programmes and measures on the advancement of the status of women should be directed to the provision of full participation of all men and women as equal partners in the elaboration of policy and decision-making at local, national and international levels, including planning in the field of development, elaboration of educational programmes and questions of foreign policy, such as disarmament and strengthening of friendly relations between nations.

140. Some representatives also suggested that the Plan should indicate that permanent international co-operation of all countries and peoples was a necessary condition to preserve peace, in which women were particularly interested. Only under conditions of peace was the realization of women's rights possible. For these purposes the Plan should stress the role of women in the defeat of fascism, in the struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism and racial discrimination and in stimulating further active participation on the part of women in all efforts aimed at supporting peace, peaceful coexistence, the elimination of aggression, settlement of international disputes by peaceful means, the achievement of full disarmament and further deepening of the process of international détente, which should be given an irreversible character.

141. A more vigorous approach in the Plan to the implementation of conventions and recommendations by Governments was suggested because often the countries concerned lacked awareness of what their Governments had approved.

142. The effectiveness of national action, in the view of some representatives, depended in large measure on the appropriate machinery to co-ordinate national and international efforts.

143. Some representatives stressed the importance and necessity of fuller use of existing international bodies, including the United Nations, its subsidiary bodies and specialized agencies, for solution of problems connected with the improvement of the status of women.

144. A number of representatives emphasized the vital importance of obtaining adequate information and data that was collected according to uniform international standards and was available to all interested Governments and non-governmental organizations. One representative stressed the necessity of multidisciplinary

and action-oriented research so that research projects were not used as a justification for non-action.

145. The representative of Iran informed the Committee that in view of the great importance of the subject, the Iranian Government had proposed the creation of a regional training and research information centre at the meeting of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Delhi the previous week. The centre, she informed the Committee, would initially be undertaking the collection and dissemination of data and information on existing programmes and policies relating to women in member countries with a view to evolving action-oriented research and new strategies to promote a more active role for women in development. Iran then suggested that an international centre be established in co-ordination with the United Nations and supported through voluntary contributions by Member Nations. The representative of Iran expressed the hope that reference to the establishment of this centre, which would be known as the International Institute for Women's Studies, would be included in the section on research in the revised Plan of Action.

146. Many members of the Committee showed great interest in the Iranian proposal. The Committee agreed that a clear need existed for such a centre even if the details would obviously require careful study. On the broader question of institutional changes, some representatives pointed out that decisions on such questions should only be taken in the light of the results of the World Conference in Mexico. A suggestion was made that the Institute could form part of the United Nations International University.

147. A few representatives, while favouring the idea of regional centres, expressed the view that regional commissions for women would be more desirable because they would have a broader scope. Some representatives also felt that if such regional commissions covered such wide areas, subregional centres might also be set up.

148. Some representatives considered the question to be whether the creation of regional commissions or special committees for the study of questions connected with the status of women was within the competence of the existing regional commissions themselves and whether the Plan should limit itself to considering the feasibility of creating special bodies.

149. In the discussion on technical co-operation, it was agreed that this could be an effective element in obtaining the implementation of plans and programmes. It was considered essential that technical co-operation should be consistent with the plans and programmes of each country.

150. Representatives expressed the hope that there would be increased interest on the part of Governments and more requests for assistance. They also hoped that the Secretariat would be strengthened and that there would be programme officers to co-ordinate programmes of technical assistance for women. They also considered it essential to give high priority to training of experts, from the formulation of programmes to their implementation.

151. With respect to the section on exchange of information and experience, one representative pointed out that it was necessary to have the appropriate machinery for carrying this out. Committee members suggested that the United Nations could undertake a study on this.

152. In the opinion of another representative, the problem of cultural and economic exchange and integration was of great importance for the developing countries and should be included.

153. A number of representatives placed great emphasis on regional co-operation. In this connexion, it was suggested that the Plan of Action should also include the role of intergovernmental organizations. The relationship between the intergovernmental organizations and the regional commissions should be institutionalized.

154. One representative proposed that the Decade 1975-1985 should be proclaimed as the Decade of Women.

V. CONSIDERATION OF CHAPTER IV OF THE DRAFT PLAN

155. There was consensus among the members of the Committee that effective review and appraisal procedures (paras. 140-145) for evaluating progress made in achieving the goals of the Plan was a sine qua non of its success. It was emphasized that the major responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of the evaluation rested squarely with national Governments.

156. Some members pointed out that it was not enough to urge Governments to undertake regular reporting procedures to the United Nations because similar reporting in other areas had not always proven efficient. Moreover, it was important to improve the channels of communication between the United Nations and Governments because replies were often delayed by the bureaucratic process and in the majority of countries no single body within the government structure was responsible for evaluating either the current situation of women or subsequent improvements in their situation.

157. In view of these factors, a number of members thought that national machinery, such as national commissions, should be made directly responsible for carrying out the ongoing co-ordinating, reviewing and evaluating functions that were prerequisites to the implementation of the Plan. A few members also suggested that in those countries where national committees had been established to organize the programme for the International Women's Year, 1975, such committees could be extended on a permanent basis to carry out reviewing functions.

158. The Committee also discussed the question of the periodicity of reviews of progress made in achieving the goals of the Plan. Some members thought that they should be carried out annually while others stressed the need to ensure that reviews coincided with the biennial sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women and with the over-all review and appraisal carried out biennially by the

United Nations in connexion with the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade.

159. The Secretary-General of the International Women's Year and the World Conference of the International Women's Year said that the need to merge the review of over-all development with the review of the advancement of women and their integration in development could not be over-emphasized. Until recently, Governments had not been specifically requested to reappraise their programmes for the integration of women and to evaluate progress made at the national level to involve women in all aspects of national life. This was clearly a crucial aspect of over-all review. She also referred to the fact that the first review dealing with questions relating to women was specifically asked for under Economic and Social Council resolution 1855 (LVI) and was taking place in 1975, the year of the mid-term review of the Second Development Decade. She hoped that Governments would respond positively to the request and pointed out that it was in fact a prelude to the more extensive review procedure to be developed for reporting on successes and failures in meeting the goals of the Plan.

160. Several members of the Committee considered it important for Governments to decide on evaluation priorities. These included a more intensive and broader collection of relevant data and information on women, allocation of adequate funds for this purpose and training of the necessary technical staff. International technical assistance programmes would be particularly valuable in this regard. They could also assist Governments to assess existing evaluation systems with a view to selecting the most appropriate.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

161. Some representatives considered this section of the draft Plan too detailed and felt that a more general approach such as that adopted in the World Population Plan of Action would be more appropriate.

162. In general, the section on review and appraisal was seen not only as an end in itself but as a tool for developing a regular system of evaluating, on a cross-cultural and cross-national basis, the extent to which women participated in all aspects of national life.

VI. ADOPTION OF THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

163. At its 12th meeting on 14 March 1975 the Consultative Committee adopted its report.

164. The Committee requested that the draft Plan of Action amended in the light of the Committee's discussions and the written suggestions and proposals submitted by members of the Committee should be sent to Governments at least two months before the Conference in Mexico.

165. The Committee also requested the Secretary-General, during the period between the end of the Committee's meeting and the Mexico Conference, to continue consultations on an informal basis with interested delegations, particularly with those of Member States represented on the Consultative Committee.

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VII. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

Opening and duration of the session

166. The Consultative Committee for the World Conference of the International Women's Year was established by General Assembly resolution 3277 (XXIX) to advise the Secretary-General on the preparation of an international plan of action to be finalized by the Conference. The Committee met at United Nations Headquarters from 3 to 14 March 1975 and held 12 plenary meetings and eight meetings of the Working Group (as well as informal meetings).

167. The session was opened by the Secretary-General of the International Women's Year and the World Conference of the International Women's Year and Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, Mrs. Helvi Sipilä.

Attendance

168. The following States Members of the United Nations were represented: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, France, German Democratic Republic, India, Iran, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, the Niger, the Philippines, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Tunisia, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Venezuela and the Chairman of the Third Committee of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Observers of other States Members of the United Nations, representative bodies of the United Nations system, and non-governmental organizations also attended the session.

Election of officers

169. At its first meeting on 3 March 1975 the Consultative Committee elected the following officers by acclamation: Chairman: H.I.H. Princess Ashraf Pahlavi (Iran); Vice-Chairmen: Elizabeth Reid (Australia), Anneliese Sälzler (German Democratic Republic), Elizabeth Borges de Tapia (Venezuela); Rapporteur: Ada F. M. Bailor (Sierra Leone).

Agenda

170. The Committee adopted its agenda at its 1st meeting. The agenda was as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Revision of the draft World Plan of Action

Documentation

171. The Committee had before it the Draft World Plan of Action prepared by the Secretariat (E/CONF.66/CC/2 and Add.1); a working paper submitted by Iran with a view to facilitating discussion of the Draft International Plan of Action (E/CONF.66/CC/L.1); a letter dated 20 January 1975 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/10042); a letter dated 6 February 1975 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the German Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/10045); a note verbale dated 21 February 1975 from the Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/10049) and a note verbale dated 12 March 1975 from the Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/10056).

Organization of work

172. The Committee held a general debate on the draft plan as a whole, and discussed chapters I, II, III B and IV in plenary. The Committee established a Working Group of all its members with Elizabeth Reid (Australia) in the Chair. The Working Group discussed chapter III A of the draft Plan of Action section by section. The Chairman of the Working Group made a report on the deliberation of the Working Group to the plenary committee. This report is included in chapter III of the present document.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

Consultation with non-governmental organizations

173. In accordance with rule 83 of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council, the observers of the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Council made statements:

Category I: International Planned Parenthood Federation

Category II: International Council of Social and Democratic Women
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
