

International Women's Decade: A Balance Sheet

**by
Lucille Mathurin Mair.**

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I am honoured to be a part of this occasion which has been dedicated to the memory of a remarkable human being. I am most grateful to the Centre for Women's Development Studies and the Indian Council of Social Science Research for inviting me to be here, and to share with the family, friends and associates of J.P. Naik the pride which you take in his life and his enduring achievements, as educator, scholar, humanist.

His was a life which was sustained by his country's great philosophical heritage. It was a life, which was profoundly inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's vision of an egalitarian, and a just society in which women and men genuinely respect each other's humanity. That deep ethical concern lay at the heart of J.P. Naik's commitment to women's equality, one of the most highly valued legacies which he has left behind, so appropriately symbolised in the Centre, whose establishment he masterminded.

I would like in some modest way to contribute to the appreciation and the celebration of that legacy which he bequeathed to us women, and men too.

In every corner of the world women are striving to occupy their place in the sun. Each woman, in due course, discovers that it is fundamentally her self-knowledge, her self-esteem, her self-assertiveness which ultimately secure her that place. And in the process she also learns that there will be a brighter, and a more accessible space for all, for women and men alike, when men of conscience and wisdom like J.P. Naik understand that quest for equality, and share that goal.

How women and men truly regard women is of course the bottom line of the United Nations Decade for Women, which was inaugurated in Mexico City in 1975, International Women's Year, and which is about to enter its last phase. I am asked to present today a balance sheet of these ten years. This is by no means a simple accounting exercise.

The Decade stated its goals and its targets in the Declaration of Mexico in 30 paragraphs, and a World Plan of Action in 219 paragraphs, supplemented by 34 resolutions. These covered key sectors of national, regional and international policy and planning, touching on nearly every vital aspect of the human condition.

Five years later in 1980, the United Nations Conference on Women held in Copenhagen, engaged in a mid-Decade stocktaking and filled the gaps which it found with a Programme of Action—consisting of 287 paragraphs and 45 resolutions.

This year, in Nairobi, the third and final World Conference of the Decade will officially compute the gains and losses which have resulted from this total of over 506 programme points and 75 resolutions. You will understand why, faced with that intimidating inventory, I am taking the

coward's way. I will settle for three indicators, broadly extracted from our encyclopedia of women's concerns. These will be first and mainly the economic situation of women, then some consideration of their political participation, and finally their ideological environment. These I hope will provide an outline for sketching a reasonably credible profile of women in the mid-eighties, and especially women of the developing world.

But first a quick look back to recapture something of the spirit of 1975, the year which brought the Decade into being. This was by no means the first movement of women to improve their lot: every region, somewhere in its past, has some experience of women's activism. But that assembly in Mexico city was the first occasion in history when women representing all regions, all cultures, all religions, all political systems met in the, same place at the same time, seeking a common vocabulary with which to make common cause. Inevitably there were uncertainties, confusions, conflicts. But these tended to be submerged in an overwhelming eagerness to create a global movement of sisters: these would be the new heroines of the space age who together would break through the sex barriers of centuries.

These bright expectations were perhaps understandable, for the first international manifesto of feminism, enshrined in the documents of International Women's Year, met no immediate significant international challenge. This may well have been because, apart from the feminists, no one really took them too seriously, or it might also have been that the moral claims of equality, expressed with such force and, all things considered, with such unity, were persuasive to the world community.

Certainly, it was a community demonstrating a reasonable degree of faith in the ability of international systems and processes to advance human well-being. So that for example, although in the mid-seventies current international development strategies were under attack, especially from the nations of the South, nevertheless there were still upbeat concepts of development being projected. The goals of development were perceived as capable of being salvaged through new international initiatives, such as a reordered economic system, which could ensure appropriate transfer of resources to the Third World for its development needs. Detente, you may recall, still lingered on the agenda of the superpowers in the mid-seventies; it had not yet been erased in the cold peace of the eighties.

In short, the crisis of confidence in multilateralism and international co-operation had not yet assumed today's disturbing dimensions.

In retrospect, by 1975 the age of global innocence was probably passing more rapidly than we then realised; but there were sufficient remnants of global goodwill to justify the nearly euphoric mood in which women in Mexico City proclaimed the Decade's triple goals of Equality, Development and Peace, packed their numerous declarations and resolutions, and headed home, ready to transform their nations and their lives, in particular, their working lives.

Women's economic roles have been the subject of a knowledge explosion, distinguished by assiduous data-collection, research and analysis which have been carried out largely by women themselves. It has served to destroy many old myths, and to open up fresh insights into women's actual and potential economic functioning. Some of the finest minds of every region are confronting the exclusionary and androcentric concept of wage labour, and have pressed for a redefinition of work which embraces the multifaceted productive content of non-monetized labour (mainly female labour), and which can therefore begin to do justice to women's real contribution to the economy.

Rural societies conspicuously reflect the worldwide syndrome in which subsistence agriculture for domestic consumption has always engaged a major proportion of women's work time, and yet men, and women too, show an extraordinary reluctance to acknowledge this fact. But the new concepts and new methodologies which are now being applied are addressing that reluctance. The Decade has generated a healthy scepticism about national census figures: it has brought to the surface hitherto almost totally unenumerated factors, for example, women's work with livestock, which is now being taken into account. As a consequence past calculations are being significantly adjusted. For example, official statistics in an Andean region of Latin America in the 1970s reported three per cent of the women to be engaged in agricultural work: a more recent micro survey reveals the real figure to be 21 per cent. A North African country in its 1976 census of a rural population with 200,000 females over the age of 10 estimated 13,700 of those to be engaged in agricultural activities: a 1980s study has had to correct that to over 86,019 (which is 45.7 per cent of the economically active population). And one could provide examples in region after region of these long overdue recounts.

But if the Decade can claim some credit for rescuing women from statistical invisibility, it has little progress to report on the incorporation of such statistics into processes of policy analysis and reevaluation. The result is that policies, national and international, still fail to acknowledge women's critical role in agricultural production. And this is one of the most telling indicators of the Decade's failure to achieve its objectives.

A tragic manifestation of that failure is the spectre of African starvation which haunts the world today. African women scholars have in recent years analysed with compelling data the erosion of the status of the rural female population of that continent, where women are central to food production. In Malawi, for example, 69 per cent of full time farmers in 1977 were women. In Gambia women account for 84 per cent of rice cultivation: and country after country in Africa reflects a similar pattern.

Their responsibility for food production has been undermined by the growth of a monetized rural economy, in which international capitalist enterprises have drastically altered women's relationship to land and labour, to income and technology. Commercial cash crops like cocoa, coffee, nuts, have monopolised available lands, and have replaced traditional systems of land tenure by policies of privatisation which create havoc with women's customary ownership and use of land. In some regions of Africa mineral extraction has had comparable effects.

With diminishing access to cultivable land for domestic food crops, women resort to overcropping, they move to less fertile soil where labour is more, exhausting, but without the improved agricultural implements to meet increased physical demands. They frequently shift to unfamiliar, even alien ecosystems, with scant opportunities for gathering to which they traditionally resort for wood, for vegetables and various kinds of plant life to carry them through times of shortage.

Commercialised and technologically advanced agriculture monopolises not only land, but labour, in particular male labour which is then unavailable for tasks of food cultivation. Cash cropping also draws women into its lowest paid unskilled sectors, frequently as seasonal and migrant wage labour. Women are thereby increasingly withdrawn from domestic food production where they have enjoyed relatively autonomous functioning in the past. Domestic power relationships alter: the demands of wage labour place women more and more under male control without commensurate access to male family labour, to land, to equipment, or even to the full income from their efforts.

Notwithstanding countless proposals and recommendations of the Decade which have focussed on rural women as their key targets, national and international rural schemes have not directed resources to women, not even in circumstances where women have established their capacity for successful farming. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation has recently analysed the situation of such women in African countries, pointing out how few women farm managers as compared to men receive the key productive inputs, such as credit, equipment, or the services of agricultural extension officers.

With the global recession of the latter 70s and early 80s came the fall in Third World commodity prices and the deepening depression of the rural economy. This accelerated male emigration out of the countryside, intensifying the feminisation of agriculture, but leaving women for the most part to pursue agriculture within a deteriorating rural infrastructure which imposes dangerous workloads inimical to physical well-being.

The issue of firewood, compounded by the global crises of fuel oil further aggravates rural underdevelopment in its impact on women: for the over exploitation of forests and soils places primary rural energy sources, such as charcoal, animal dung and crop residues in short supply. The International Labour Organisation in a new study documents the fact that more than 112 million people, the majority in Africa, and the majority of them women, live with acute fuelwood scarcity. Their number will more than double by the year 2000. They have diminishing access to the household energy necessary for their fuel intensive income earning activities like food processing, or pottery. In addition, they do not have the energy necessary to provide nutritious food, clean water and a warm place to live.

The alarming and rising levels of the malnutrition of the women and children of African villages have been exhaustively surveyed and reported, for example, by the World Health Organisation and by the United Nations International Children's Educational Fund. In 1984 such overworked and underfed women are measurably more vulnerable to man-made and natural disasters of drought, desertification and civil conflict than they were ten years ago. In 1984, their situation remains high on the list of the Decade's unfinished business.

In looking at other parts of the world, other continents, sub-continents, regions and sub-regions one admits their immense diversity. Nevertheless there are resonances of the African experience also in Asia and Latin America.

In the presence of so many Asian experts here, many of them women, I will speak only briefly of Asia. The international community owes these experts a great debt of gratitude, for their micro studies are, not only informing the world what is happening to women in the world's most populous continent-these studies are also illuminating important processes of structural change in the global economy which have implications for the working lives of women the world over.

In the light of the most recent United Nations' world survey of women, it is possible to pinpoint some trends. Some countries of Asia (India among them) can claim success in applying high yielding grains and capitalised agricultural methodology which have enhanced food production, but they have also at the same time witnessed the growing transformation of peasant farmers, male and female, into landless agricultural labourers. Moreover it has been observed, as in the case of rice processing, that women have become especially vulnerable to displacement by machinery with its automatic preference for male labour.

It has also been widely noted that Asia's technological revolution in agriculture, although producing positive results in the formal market, has made little or no contribution to the diet of

poor rural families. The World Health Organisation in 1982 estimated that 230 million Third World women between the ages of 15 and 49 years, or approximately half of the women of the developing world, the overwhelming majority of whom live in the countryside, suffer nutritional anaemia, a classic poverty syndrome. Pregnant women are the most affected. The regional breakdown shows 30 per cent of Latin America's pregnant women, 63 per cent of Africa's and 65 per cent of Asia's, to be victims of such anaemia. In Asia we are speaking of 43.2 million pregnant women.

To turn briefly to Latin America. There one finds that the most important structural developments in the rural sector, viz. the commercialisation of agriculture, and agrarian reform have failed to take positive account of women's presence.

Commercial cash crop production has drawn on female labour, but relegated it to the most unskilled and poorly paid seasonal tasks. The resources of official agrarian programmes, primarily land and capital, have gone almost exclusively to men, neglecting women's productive role. It is the universally familiar tale. But given the extent of that female role it is not surprising that agrarian policies which do not work for women do not work for anyone. And today one witnesses areas of Latin America convulsed by agrarian revolution born out of persistent and convergent sexual and socio-economic inequalities.

Women of the region abandon an uncongenial countryside and flood the cities in the most intensive process of female urbanisation in the Third World. In some areas, for example in the Caribbean, young girls and women flee their villages at an earlier age and in larger numbers than their male counterparts.

More often than not the unskilled, largely unlettered female migrant joins a growing population of squatter settlers, and attempts to keep a family together. One out of every three such women is a single head of her household. But this is no great honour, as current studies make clear. The statistical probability is that such a woman is presiding over a household subsisting on the edge of poverty. She seeks, or resourcefully creates, some measure of economic viability in the tertiary informal sectors of domestic service and commerce, which account for 67 per cent of Latin America's female workers.

An underground economy or the so-called invisible or parallel economy develops, dominated by women, a notable phenomenon of Latin American and Caribbean towns, where women often outnumber men. Determined to survive the challenge of urban poverty, women draw on such entrepreneurial skills as they possess, they engage in food processing and distribution, trading, casual forms of domestic employment, and prostitution.

It is a precarious way of living, often conducted in a legal twilight zone, with connotations of instability and marginalisation. In the case of the petty vendor-a key figure in this grassroots economy - she is peculiarly vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the international financial system which sets the terms of her trading.

If the urban dweller is young and single, she is likely to find employment in the industrial sector, which has the highest growth rate of the female labour force. Nearly 30 per cent of all women, of developing and developed nations, are occupied in industry in the 1980s. This is an increase of over 100 per cent over the two previous decades-as compared with a 70 per cent increase for men. The growing involvement of women in this dominant sector of the modern economy can be viewed as a positive indicator of expanding employment opportunities for women. And the

potential is clearly there, although much more statistical data is needed to see this structural shift in its full dimensions.

But we do have sufficient data to know, for example, that female industrial wage levels in all groups show wide disparity with men- ranging from 50 per cent to 90 per cent for comparable work. Women are conspicuously missing from management and supervisory positions, as well as from the bargaining tables. They are disproportionately in those jobs which pay the minimum wages, concentrated in the least skilled tasks of industrial enterprises, with minimal access to technological expertise.

Large and growing numbers of these women, integral to major international manufacturing industries like textiles, are engaged in home production; whereas this has some advantages for women in respect of their domestic and, in particular, child care responsibilities, it can nevertheless prove a profitable management policy for sustaining an unorganised low wage labour force. And this is an issue of current debate in western industrialized as in developing countries.

The essential fact about industrialization which is emerging from this Decade is that it is the women mainly from Asia, and to a significant extent from Latin America, who are altering the sex composition of the global industrial labour force. Women of the developing world account for 70 per cent of the growth rate of women in industry since the 1960s, as compared with 30 per cent of women from developed countries-whose shift to the service sector is the more notable trend-and indeed manufacturing tasks previously carried out by western female workers are falling to the lot of women from the South.

This evolution of a Third World female proletariat results from the frequently shifting relocation of western manufacturing enterprises to countries where vast populations, widespread poverty, and rural-urban migration can ensure seemingly inexhaustible reservoirs of low wage labour. This is essentially a global strategy directed, with some regional variations, by metropolitan based corporations, whose overseas labour force is between 80 per cent to 90 per cent female. The export processing manufacturing plants in textiles, electronics, or sports goods which they establish, differ very little, whether they be sited in South East Asia, in Central America, or in the Caribbean.

There is no question that this new international division of labour which increasingly integrates women into the interdependent global economic system, provides a livelihood for women in countries with great pockets of poverty. But this has to be critically assessed. Analysts of the Decade are doing that critical assessment-weighing the benefits against other factors-such as the low skills and low wages involved, as well as the health and safety conditions of industrial plants, the minimum job security and benefits provided, and above all the high turnover, inherent in the transient nature of these 'footloose' enterprises.

Third World women, alas, have absolutely no control over policies which permit these runaway shops to move in and out of their countries, for they have little or no visible political clout. Despite their vital roles in national and international production, women's economic status in the mid-eighties remains hostage to micro and macro forces which they are powerless to influence.

The final United Nations inventory of the Decade, its World Survey of Women's Condition based on information submitted by over 100 governments, documents the stunning absence of women from those formal institutions and processes which internationally, nationally and locally determine, priorities and allocate resources.

Women, it is true, are found in growing numbers in the rank, and file of trade unions and political parties, but they are scarcely, if at all, present in the higher echelons of these bodies, and with a few exceptions, mainly in socialist countries, their representation in national legislative and executive organs is insignificant. In the summary words of the United Nations report 'only marginally are they recognised at the highest levels of decision making'. This is the global reality, ten years after the international community solemnly committed itself 'to establish goals, strategies and time-tables for increasing within the decade 1975-1985, the number of women in elective and appointive public offices and public functions at all levels' (Mexico Conference, World Plan of Action, Para 62).

So widespread is this phenomenon of women's absence from the public arena, that one might be tempted to accept the stereotype of woman as a non-political creature. And this image could be further reinforced by the scarcity of precise quantitative data on women's political activities. For example, very few governments have statistics on how women cast their votes in electoral processes. So one has to look to evidence other than that of official figures for meaningful indicators of female political activism.

It is no surprise that women's vital economic concerns have been often the catalyst for their political action; and they have mobilized in response to the interplay, and impact on their lives, of both micro and macro forces. A shrinking interdependent world closes in on women, and in the process politicises them. So that when an offshore manufacturing plant shifts its location to another low-wage island paradise, the women who lose their jobs understand the internal and external elements which are at work.

Again, when the medicine men of the international financial institutions prescribe harsh remedies to debt-ridden Third World countries, women are able to trace the linkages between a soaring consumer index, cuts in social programmes, disappearance of food subsidies, and the decision making processes of metropolitan board rooms. During this Decade, we have witnessed the previously remote abstraction of an International Monetary Fund assume an awesome reality in the lives of millions of Third World women. Their perception of what they are up against has triggered off their responses in the food riots of Latin America, the Caribbean, North Africa.

Although it is frequently the bread-and-butter concern which lies at the heart of women's political mobilisation, we have also in this Decade seen them propelled by moral outrage on to the public stage.

Latin America's most remarkable and heroic instance was the silent, grim, ceaseless defiance of the Argentine Mothers of the Plaza who dared to call a dictatorship to account for the disappearance of thousands of citizens, and in the process struck a telling blow for the democratisation of a continent.

The Decade also saw the issue of Peace lifted to an even higher position on women's agenda, in response to the mounting militarisation of this period, and the terrifying prospect of nuclear war. In many regions women, with growing sophistication, are calculating the politics and economics of armaments, are comparing development budgets with defence budgets. They are counting the millions who die in Africa for want of food, while the killing trade enjoys its greatest boom in history-to the tune of over 800 billion dollars annually, which is about 20 times the amount available for international development aid.

It was in Copenhagen in 1980 that half a million Nordic women demonstrated their commitment to peace, in their presentation to that Conference. A movement to establish an alternative peace

policy involves women in growing numbers determined that the life force must prevail. They give a new seriousness and a new dimension to the global search for peace.

Issues of independence and national liberation have also alerted women's political consciousness. The imperatives of sovereignty and freedom commit them to national struggles. National struggle legitimises women's political activism in, for example, those areas of the Third World where women mount the barricades beside their countrymen in the wars against racism and imperialism. Those women subsume their priorities as women in the wider political conflict, although they may well be troubled by a question to which there is now no certain answer, namely what place will they occupy, after the struggle is over, in the councils of national reconstruction?

At this point I would like to recall a personal experience. It was in connection with my last international assignment in my capacity as United Nations Under-Secretary General that I arrived with my associates to an official meeting on the Question of Palestine, in the capital of a member state. I was introduced on the tarmac of the airport to the Chief of Protocol. This distinguished gentleman proceeded to look around me, through me, and beyond me. It took him about 40 minutes or so before his mind finally made connection with his eyes, 40 minutes before he could grasp the fact that a woman, and a Third World woman moreover, was the head of a political mission of the United Nations. That 40-minute lapse created a near international incident, fortunately avoided, for international diplomacy, whatever its shortcomings, is geared to deal with a variety of '-isms', including sexism.

This is the steepest hurdle to surmount. This is the saddest lesson of these ten years. For we are now peering into the deep corners of the mind, where, we fear, the Decade's chief adversary resides. We even have it stated in black and white, by those hundred odd governments who, despairing of the slight progress they are able to report in meeting the Decade's high hopes for women's advancement in key national sectors, identify as the main obstacle, 'the deeply rooted traditional socio-cultural value system and attitudes which subordinate women and establish stereotyped sex division of roles in society'.

This of course is nothing new. It is our long standing awareness of this which made us establish a Decade of Women in the first instance. What we know now, which we perhaps did not calculate as accurately as we might have or should have in 1975, is that a Decade is only ten years, a tiny drop in the ocean of infinity, and no time at all in which to topple the patriarchal mind-set of centuries. What we have also gained in these ten years is a shrewder and a more pragmatic grasp of realities-which is all to the good, for the ideological challenge of today is twice as complex as it was in 1975; to meet it will require all the wits which women can muster.

For we see today, a resurgent religious orthodoxy, explicit and strident to a degree which was not evident ten years ago. The apostles of this orthodoxy speak from the chapels, from the mosque, from the cathedral, from the synagogue, from the temple of every major faith. It is present in every region, its constituencies transcend nationality, class, race and, unfortunately, sex. For whatever its doctrinal diversities, this fundamentalism of the eighties has everywhere as a prime target-women; advocating their return to a proper place ordained for them in the exclusive sphere of reproduction. And each region and each religion can point to its peculiar manifestation of this, view of women, reinforcing that traditional value system which created such obstacles for the Decade's governments. And where, as it happens in many instances, the conservatism of Church allies itself with the conservatism of State, one may perhaps be witnessing a nearly monolithic authoritarian response to the Decade's thrust.

One may then properly ask if the Decade has equipped women with the means to confront such a reactionary onslaught? Despite the disappointments of the Decade, I have to believe that it has, for the reason that, consciously or unconsciously, women in these ten years have themselves been waging an unremitting ideological offensive, which can only gain strength, which certainly cannot be reversed.

For during these past few years, women in every corner of the world have done a multitude of things-useful, practical things. They have undertaken projects of all kinds, and they have, in the course, upgraded their technical skills, in planning, and in managing. But much more than that, they have had to learn more about their sisters and themselves. They have cut across classes in new and surprising ways, they have learned new ways to communicate, to learn, to produce knowledge. Increasingly they sensitize themselves to the value of that cliché about knowledge and power. Knowledge is one sure path to empowerment.

In their growing involvement with the politics of knowledge, women are operating on many fronts, and at many levels. At the level of the village or the shanty town, growing respect for the life experience of the poorest women infuses data collection, research and project development, produces innovative techniques of extracting and sharing authentic human experience, all of which enrich the treasury of the intellect. In the citadels of academia where women scholars are daily assaulting the sacred cows of learning, they challenge, for example, the long entrenched Social Darwinists, whose hierarchical view of the universe has served mainly the patriarchs, racists and captains of industry. Or they question the historians who for far too long have been permitted to reconstruct a past devoid of women; or the economists with their myopic view of labour, or whose theory of growth proclaiming the magic of the marketplace for decades has so disastrously deluded so much of the Third World. It is, not surprisingly, a woman analyst who neatly put it this way, 'In the sixties development was two thirds Utopia, today it is a mess to be empirically studied'. And women scholars are doing just that. They are empirically picking to pieces that growth theory and its creatures, they are peering below the surface of that 'income generating project' to see what relationship it has, if any, to women's true development...and much more.

As women reinterpret the world, question the dominant stereotypes, liberate scholarship, knowledge and themselves, they are also quietly and confidently positioning themselves for the real engagement of the Decade and beyond, which is the engagement of the mind.

And I have a feeling that that gentleman whom we honour tonight would also be quietly and confidently cheering them on.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UN WORLD
CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S YEAR**

MEXICO, JUNE 19-JULY 2, 1975

National Governments should:

1. Promote change in social and economic structures to make for full equality of women and their free access to all types of development, without discrimination of any kind and to all types of education and employment.
2. Take appropriate action to implement targets and priorities set, at all levels, ensuring that they take into account women's interests and needs, to improve their situation and increase their contribution to the development process.
3. Ensure that national plans and strategies are sensitive to the needs and problems of different categories of women and of women of different age groups, with special attention to the most disadvantaged in rural and urban areas, and on behalf of women who are victims of particularly discriminatory attitudes.
4. Establish interdisciplinary and multisectoral machinery with adequate staff and budget for accelerating the achievement of equal opportunity for women and their full integration in national life, through investigations and recommendations for needed legislation, policies and programmes and priorities.
5. Provide constitutional and legislative guarantee of the principle of non-discrimination on the ground of sex, and equal rights and responsibilities of women and men.
6. Review and reform the legislations affecting the status of women in the light of human rights principles and internationally accepted standards, providing adequate enforcement machinery and appropriate measures to inform and aid women to utilise their rights.
7. Encourage involvement of women in the promotion of international co-operation, for peace and disarmament and in combating colonialism, neocolonialism, foreign domination, apartheid and racial discrimination.
8. Establish goals, strategies and time-tables for increasing within the decade 1975-1985 the number of women in elective and appointive public offices and public functions at all levels.
9. Provide equal opportunities for both sexes in education and training at all levels, coordinating educational, training and employment strategies, through :
 - i. target dates for eradication of illiteracy with high priority for women in 16-25 age group;
 - ii. free and compulsory primary education, with text books, transport and school lunches;

- iii. integrated training programmes for rural women to accelerate their economic and social development, with special emphasis on modern methods and technology in agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries, cooperatives, entrepreneurship, commerce, marketing as well as health, nutrition, and family planning;
- iv. formal and informal programmes to change social attitudes to women's education, training and employment towards equality, new occupations and changing roles;
- v. research to identify discriminatory practices.

10. Formulate policies and action programmes to promote equality in work, through:

- i. legislation stipulating the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status;
- ii. guaranteeing right to equal pay for equal work;
- iii. special efforts to foster positive attitudes towards women's employment irrespective of marital status, among employers, workers and society at large, to eliminate sex-typed divisions of labour;
- iv. special efforts to eliminate unemployment and underemployment of women;
- v. support for self-employment and self-help activities of women specially in rural areas;
- vi. establishing specific target dates for achieving substantial increase in the number of qualified women employed in skilled and technical work, and increasing the number of women in management and policy-making in commerce, industry and trade;
- vii. opening to women the access to institutional and on-the-job-training;
- viii. ensuring the right to maternity leave with a guarantee of returning to their former employment and to nursing breaks to all women workers;
- ix. special attention to multilateral approaches to combination of family and work responsibilities, e.g. general reduction and/or staggering of working hours, flexible working hours, part-time work for women and men, child-care facilities, etc., with protection of their economic and social rights;
- x. review in the light of scientific and technological knowledge, of protective legislation applying to women only for revision, repeal or extension to all workers as necessary;
- xi. enforcement of minimum wages and their application to cottage industries and domestic work;
- xii. elimination of exploitation of female labour particularly young girls;
- xiii. elimination of discriminatory treatment of women in national social security schemes;

- xiv. stimulating efforts of employers', workers' and voluntary organisations to improve women's employment;
 - xv. increase rural women's participation in the formulation of national plans for integrated rural development.
11. Pay particular attention to women's special health needs and child health services, by involving them as active participants in the health planning, decision-making and delivery processes at all levels, and preparing village women as health workers.
 12. Integrate and co-ordinate family planning programmes with health, nutrition and other services, reduce mortality and morbidity.
 13. Protect by appropriate legislation and policy, the rights of women in all the various forms of the family, including nuclear family, the extended family, consensual union and the single parent family.
 14. Frame marriage laws in conformity with international standards, ensuring that women and men have the same right to the free choice of a spouse and enter marriage only with their free consent, minimum age for marriage to enable them to complete education and official registration.
 15. Abolish all institutions and practices which infringe such rights.
 16. Establish family courts.
 17. Investigate and adopt appropriate measures for the protection and needs of (i) migrant women, and (ii) slum women.
 18. Take specific legislative measures to combat prostitution and the illicit traffic in women, with special programmes for rehabilitation of the victims, and ratify United Nations Conventions for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.
 19. Establish a scientific and reliable data base, and develop suitable economic and social indicators sensitive to the particular situation and needs of women as an integral part of national and international programme of statistics.
 20. Collect and analyse all census and survey data relating to characteristics of individuals, household and family composition, to measure:
 - (a) the participation of women in local and national planning and policy-making in all sectors of national life;
 - (b) the extent of women's activities in food production, water and fuel supply, marketing and transportation;
 - (c) the economic and social contribution of housework and other domestic chores, handicrafts and other home-based economic activities;
 - (d) the effect on the national economy of women's activities as consumers of goods and services;

- (e) the relative time spent on economic and household activities and on leisure by girls and women compared to boys and men;
- (f) the quality of life (e.g. job satisfaction, income situation, family characteristics and use of leisure time).

National statistical offices should adhere to the standards established by the United Nations and its specialised agencies for data collection, tabulation and analysis.

- 21. Encourage and support national, regional and international research to critically review the image of women and men portrayed by the media, and increase women in that media management, to correct negative role of media.
- 22. Undertake their own regular review and appraisal of progress made to achieve the goals and objectives of the Plan and to report on its implementation to the Economic and Social Council paying special attention to the problems of rural women.
- 23. Trade Unions should increase women's participation at all levels, and have special programmes to promote equality of opportunity for jobs and training for women workers and leadership training for women.

International agencies should:

- 24. Assist Governments to develop specific projects and programmes, and facilitate free flow of information and ideas among countries, and provide a clearing house for information, experience and ideas.
- 25. Prepare an inventory of social and economic indicators relevant to the analysis of the status of women not later than 1980 in co-operation with the interested specialised agencies, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the regional commissions and other agencies.
- 26. Proclaim the decade 1975-1985 as the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development, Peace, to ensure that national and international action is sustained throughout the period.
- 27. Co-ordinate the activities of various international agencies working to improve the situation of women through the existing machinery. Each Organisation should evaluate what it has done and enhance its contribution by specific measures needed to implement the Plan.
- 28. Increase women's involvement in policy-making at the international level. The Secretariat of the international organisations should eliminate any provisions or practices in their employment policies that may be discriminatory against women.
- 29. Undertake a comprehensive and thorough review and appraisal of progress made in meeting the goals of this Plan at regular intervals.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORLD
CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY,
DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE
COPENHAGEN, JULY 14-30,1980

National Governments should:

1. Establish appropriate machinery to evaluate the extent to which women participate in and benefit from both general and sectoral development programmes at all levels of society in every major sector of national development programmes by:
 - i. ensuring that development agencies in different sectors of national planning include large numbers of women in their staff;
 - ii. sustained efforts to integrate women into national development and planning, particularly in policies for employment, education and health;
 - iii. establishing qualitative and quantitative targets for 1980- 1985 and projections for 1984-1995;
 - iv. reviewing in 1985 and 1990 achievement of such targets for removal of the gap between men and women, also between women in underprivileged population groups and other women in all sectors particularly in employment, education and health.
2. Develop and improve infrastructural technology, basic services and incentives, particularly for poor rural women and urban poor to give equal rights of land-ownership, equal access to credit and financing.
3. Implement measures to mobilise women, particularly poor rural and urban women for learning and productive activity with access to needed developmental services and inputs.
4. Organise the unorganised working women for protection against exploitation and socio-occupational immobility through education, training, supportive child-care services and employment information.
5. Initiate consultations between government and employers' and employees' organisations to examine and improve the conditions of women workers.
6. Sustain efforts to promote and assist grass-root level organisations, establish incentive and concrete programmes for increasing participation of women in management and decision-making process.
7. Enact before the end of the Decade, legislation guaranteeing women equality of right to vote, to be eligible for election or appointment to public office and to exercise public functions equally with men, and protection against sexually-oriented practices which endanger women's access to or maintenance of employment.

8. Encourage political parties to nominate women candidates and eliminate any formal or informal discrimination which excludes them from decision-making bodies such as councils, boards or informal committees.
9. Allot high priority to providing training and educational opportunities at all levels including those traditionally regarded as occupations for men to ensure equal job opportunity.
10. Conduct studies with a view to eliminate through practical programmes, the adverse impact of activities of transnational corporations and other international economic agreements on the status of women.
11. Instruct all data collecting agencies to:
 - i. give a sex and age breakdown of any information they gather;
 - ii. re-examine the concepts and analytical tools of research relating to economic process as-labour, work, employment, social productivity, household, family, etc. to improve tools for analysis and conceptualisation of economic and social role of women within home and outside;
 - iii. give priority, to research about those women who perform multiple roles to ensure survival of their families and are neglected in social research;
 - iv. develop national and regional indicators to determine the degree of women's participation in development.
12. Support the efforts of non-governmental organisations, women's and, youth groups, employers' and workers' unions, voluntary agencies, community organisations, including religious, groups, mass communication media and political parties in implementing the Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade.
13. Specially encourage and assist women's organisations to perform the functions of:
 - i. mass mobilisation of women (in particular poor women in rural and urban areas);
 - ii. establishing women workers' organisations in non-trade union occupations both in rural and urban areas for protecting them against exploitation and providing necessary child care and other development services and facilities (education, health, expansion of credit and marketing facilities, information on social, political and economic rights etc.).
14. Institute special legislative and action programmes to:
 - i. inform women workers of their legal rights and other remedial measures emphasising the importance of freedom of association and protection of the right to organise;
 - ii. secure for women and men the same right to work and protection of health and safety in working conditions, with unemployment benefits;
 - iii. prevent dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy, or of maternity leave;
 - iv. facilitate return to labour market of women who had left it for family reasons;

- v. provide migrant workers opportunity to enjoy equal treatment and access to vocational training as nationals of host country;
 - vi. to provide part time workers with social security benefits and protection of working conditions remunerations etc.
15. Investigate whether unpaid work in household, agriculture and other productive occupations can be recognised and reflected in official data collections.
 16. Take measures to guarantee that transfer of technology avoid any labour force disruptions which usually affect women more severely.
 17. Ensure that during economic recessions employment market is not less accessible to women than to men.
 18. Give high priority to the health needs of women within primary health care with particular attention to maternity, and the special needs of women in rural and depressed urban areas, and formulate official policies to involve women in planning levels to increase the and carrying out health programmes at all levels.
 19. Develop, implement and strengthen child welfare and family planning programmes and include family planning information in school curricula for boys and girls.
 20. Promote additional research to assess women's physical and mental situation to improve medical attention.
 21. Establish official incentives to increase women's access to training in medical professions and health related researches.
 22. Develop simple economic, social and cultural indicators to measure trends in morbidity and mortality among women and their access to utilization of health services.
 23. Give high priority to formulation and implementation of food and nutrition policies that reflect the needs of women and children of lower socio-economic status in both rural and urban areas.
 24. Develop policies to ensure safe working environment both in home and in work place and provide appropriate technology to relieve the workload of women.
 25. Introduce legislation to eliminate:-
 - i. occupational health hazards likely to affect reproductive functions;
 - ii. environmental pollution; and
 - iii. disposal of toxic chemical and radio-active waste.
 26. Promote extensive health education programmes to eliminate practices detrimental to women's health, and to encourage positive traditional practices, especially breast feeding.
 27. Formulate special programmes for prevention of maternal and infant mortality giving priority to depressed rural and urban areas and to most vulnerable population groups.

28. Promote research on the extent and causes of domestic violence with a view to formulate plan of action for protection of women against such abuse.
29. Promote change in social attitude against stereotyped roles of men and women, to create new and more positive images of women's participation in the family, labour market and in social and public life.
30. Include in educational programmes and methodologies special emphasis on education against violence, particularly violence in relationship between women and men to encourage basic understanding on human rights.
31. Establish links to ensure better interaction between education, training and employment of women, including non-traditional occupations.
32. Increase the opportunities and facilities to promote participation of women in science and technology through education and training.
33. Devise means to encourage girls to stay at school longer and to ensure that courses chosen by them are over a range of fields including professions, management, economic and science which will enable them to achieve positions of influence in the decision making process.
34. Promote national educational programmes to encourage return of women and girls who have dropped out from the formal education system and establish targets for expansion of educational opportunities and facilities for women promoting new and extra-curricular education to enable women to combine household duties with opportunity to improve their educational level.
35. Encourage through legislation free and compulsory primary education for girls and boys including adults in remote, sparsely populated or very underdeveloped rural areas through
 - i. trained teachers of both sexes;
 - ii. transportation;
 - iii. hostel facilities
36. Remove sexist biases in education through:
 - i. eliminating stereotyped portrayal of girls and women in text books and teaching materials
 - ii. promoting development of non-sexist resources and curricular material;
 - iii. including courses on women's issues in university degree programmes;
 - iv. promoting instruction and interdisciplinary research on women and the implications of the goals of the Decade as an input into the educational process.
37. Promote the incorporation of women in all phases of the agricultural productive processes and provide them with the necessary skills and appropriate technology to improve their productivity.
38. Promote the participation of rural women in agricultural policy- making, leading to production of basic foods for family and national consumption.

39. Ensure women's access to appropriate technology and suitable training to improve and promote traditional and small-scale industries.
40. Stimulate full and equal participation of women in co-operatives and other forms of organisations social organisations of labour relating to production, processing, distribution, marketing and consumption.
41. Eliminate from legislation on rural employment, provisions that discriminate against women.
42. Make rural women Aware of their rights and duties so that they can exercise and benefit from participation in cultural, political, economic and social activities of the community.
43. Ensure access of rural women to the use, enjoyment and development of land in equality with men.
44. Allocate sufficient financial resources to carry out field research for initiating, ending and strengthening concrete and integrated action promoting development of rural women and their integration in economic and social activity in rural areas.
45. Create and strengthen necessary infrastructure to lighten the workload of rural women through application of appropriate technology ensuring that such measures do not result in occupational displacement of women.
46. Include provision of community-based, work-based, and work-related child care services, involving mothers in the planning of these services.
47. Improve employment opportunities for rural women with material and technical support as an alternative to their migration.
48. Assist migrant women with employment information, training, education-in language, and their legal rights to settle in the host country.
49. Give special attention to the education of young women ensuring that they are consciously involved in social and political development, and enjoy and exercise their rights and responsibilities.
50. Formulate guidelines for implementing programme of action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women as part of their development co-operation policies.
51. Allow sufficient international personnel in refugee camps to discourage exploitation or any attack upon women refugees.

**Decision for Implementation
by International Agencies**

They should:

1. Support global programmes aimed at women's integration in development, revising and redefining, if necessary, development concepts, objectives and policies to achieve it and:

- i. develop new approaches for increasing mobilisation of women specially of the poor sectors both for advancing their socio-economic status and increasing productivity;
 - ii. provide adequate funds and assistance for activities and develop strategies for full participation of women in economic and social development at national, regional and international levels;
 - iii. assess progress made and obstacles women face in gaining access to health care, particularly primary health care;
 - iv. encourage and support governments, non-governmental organisations, including research institutions in undertaking projects to enable women to improve their economic and social conditions;
 - v. organise seminars and workshops on issues relating to women and development and ensure inclusion of such topics for discussion in international conferences;
 - vi. assist governments in organising training courses with the assistance of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) for improving women's planning, technical and managerial skills in different fields;
 - vii. prepare in close collaboration with specialised agencies, regional commissions and INSTRAW compendiums of statistics on women, containing the most recent data, time-trend analyses as well as national and international measures to improve situation of women. The Directory of International Statistics, prepared by the Statistical Office, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the UN Secretariat should include special section indicating where relevant data exist by which progress towards equality between sexes can be monitored.
2. Office of the UNHCR should render assistance to refugee women in:
- i. legal, humanitarian and moral assistance to prevent exploitation of their vulnerability and ignorance of their rights;
 - ii. special relief efforts with health care, family planning services, and supplemental feeding programmes for pregnant and lactating mothers;
 - iii. training and educational programmes to facilitate necessary adjustments to their new life and preservation of cultural links with the country of origin;
 - iv. skill development for income-earning activity.
3. Bodies and organisations in the United Nations system, particularly UNCTAD, UNIDO, the Centre of Transnational Corporations, ILO, FAO, should include specific provisions relating to women in the International Code of Conduct for Transnational Corporations and on the transfer of technology aimed at diminishing adverse effects of redeployment of industry and technology.
4. The ILO, in co-operation with UNESCO, FAO and WHO should continue and develop studies to assess employment, health and educational conditions of migrant women to assist governments in reviewing their policies concerning employment, social security, social welfare, etc.
5. Regional Commissions in collaboration with specialised agencies should assist countries of the region:
- i. to establish indicators to monitor progress towards equality between sexes;

- ii. prepare a special inventory of social, economic and demographic indicators relating to analysis of status of women in each, strengthening information and data collection systems;
 - iii. increase their level of investment in long-range fundamental research on women and development;
 - iv. recommend integration of the world programme into the work programme of their sectoral units to contribute to the development strategy of the Third UN Development Decade;
 - v. promote fellowships and other special training programmes to improve women's occupational and socio-economic status;
 - vi. undertake "skilled women-power" inventories at national, sub-regional and regional levels to facilitate their recruitment to specialised jobs at national, regional and international levels.
6. The respective specialised agencies of the UN during the second part of the Decade should give special consideration to the conditions to work, working hours and working norms for women and bring their conclusions to the attention of member States.
 7. The UN and UNESCO should ensure inclusion of women in the current work undertaken in preparation of the new international information order as both participants and recipients in information systems.
 8. The Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) should:
 - i. ensure that annual JUNIC plans of action take into account issues and topics of interest to women;
 - ii. advocate building information components into projects which would be disseminating by the Department of Public Information, specialised agencies, etc.;
 - iii. ensure that guides and directories of the UN Information Centre contain relevant data and information about programmes and activities of UN relating to women.
 9. The United Nations and other organisations in UN system should include in their publications, media support activities, training programmes and seminars, etc., specific guidelines on issues and topics of particular interest to women.
 10. The UN should issue booklets, pamphlets and publications with periodic progress reports on Decade activities and encourage exchange of information and experience between women in member States through study visits and distribution of publications.

Decisions for Implementation by Non-Governmental Organisations

They should:

1. Study the ways in which mass communication media, including news media and advertising treat the status of women and women's issues and point out any distorted view about them to the relevant media for correction.
2. Co-operate with Government organisations in implementing the Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade and support governmental efforts in investigating the problems of different groups of women.
3. Assist and promote organisations of women at the grass-root level (especially those established among poor and uneducated women) to promote learning, productive and other developmental activities by:
 - i. providing liaison services for such groups with educational and other developmental agencies;
 - ii. promoting attitudinal change among men and women, and solidarity among women's groups.