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A SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN

NGO FORUM

(July 13-20, 1980)

A Report Prepared By:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The three most important tangible results related to women, water, and sanitation that came out of the consultant's participation in the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women NGO Forum were:

1. Discussions on the factors contributing to improvements in water supply and sanitation and their relation to the overall health of women.

The following portion of the Interim Report of the International Symposium on Women and Their Health, held June 8-11, 1980, in Port Deposit, Maryland, details only one aspect of the urgency of the need for safe water and sanitation: "In the Third World women's household work is heavily burdened by the need to fetch water daily. It is suggested that the provision of easily accessible, safe water supplies to reduce this burden should be intensified." The other imperative of the issue is that women should be involved in the selection and implementation of programs and should be facilitated to act as behavioral change agents in their households. There was consensus that lack of safe and adequate water aggravates the health status of women and their families and that, as a result, diarrheal diseases and infant mortality increase considerably. The sociocultural factors relevant to the issue and women's participation in the planning and implementation of programs for water supply and sanitation were discussed. They were seen to be the key issues in making Decade activities more effective components in improving the health of all, including women.

2. The importance of including women in the Decade for Water activities at international, national, and community levels; the need for drawing up recommendations for draft resolutions in the U.N. conference proceedings; and the need for implementation of the recommendations by women's groups on their return home.
3. The opportunity to stimulate discussion on water and sanitation within the context of problems of rural women and their health.

The consultant served as chairperson for two panels: "Women and Health" and "Problems of Rural Women Worldwide." These panels, held the afternoon of Friday, July 18, were recorded on satellite television under the program entitled "Dateline Copenhagen: Woman's View." This was arranged by the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press. This opportunity resulted from invitations from Lynn Stitt of the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues and Maxine Hitchcock of the Overseas Education Fund. Participants on the panel on "Women and Health" included representatives from Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, Kenya, and Costa Rica; the second panel included women from the United States, Australia, Indonesia, and India.

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Activities in Copenhagen

The consultant arrived in Copenhagen from Sri Lanka on Sunday, July 13. That afternoon she checked into the Bella Center and the Amager Center to register for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women NGO Forum, and then located the 500 copies of her paper, "Women, Water and Waste: Beyond Access," which had been shipped earlier from the U.S.

On July 14 the consultant attended the formal opening of the conference and arranged for the distribution of her paper and of the Interim Report of the International Symposium on Women and Their Health at the following Equity Policy Center panels:

- Women's Health: Access/Treatment--July 16;
- Women and Health: Program Designs--July 17; and,
- Women and Health: Issues and Recommendations--July 17.

The consultant participated in the three panels at the invitation of Irene Tinker, Director of the Equity Policy Center. Leela Jayasekara, Founder of the Children's Services Program of the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka, joined her in the first panel. They discussed several issues related to cultural and governmental constraints in Sri Lanka raised in the consultant's paper. In the other two panels on women and health, the consultant served as a resource person and discussant, set up appointments for individual follow-ups with several people, and urged NGOs to raise the issue of the need for women's involvement in Water Decade activities with their official delegations. The consultant then attended the official U.N. Session at the Bella Center and was able to meet briefly with Ambassador McHenry, Vel Philips, and other members of the U.S. Delegation. She also distributed copies of her paper to these persons.

At the NGO briefings, the consultant raised the possibility of an official statement recommending that at least one--and preferably three or more--women be appointed to the National Action Committees for Water Decade Planning.

Virginia Allen, a member of the U.S. Delegation, was extremely interested in the topic of water and sanitation and asked for extra copies of the consultant's paper so that she could use the background statement from the Mar del Plata and Mexico City conferences. The consultant was

also able to talk briefly with Arvonne Fraser, Perdita Huston, Representative B. Miluski, and others at the U.N. about this issue. She left a note on this subject for Richard Danforth, Project Director for the Swaziland Water and Health Project, and suggested statements with possible endorsers from other countries.

While at the conference, the consultant had a chance to discuss water and sanitation with the official delegates of Kenya, Mexico, India, and several other countries.

She spent three afternoons as a resource person on EXCHANGE panels on Rural Women, Data and Research. Ronaq Johan from Bangladesh and Brooke Schaeff from the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama also took part in the discussions.

The consultant attended several VIVENCIA sessions, as well as several appropriate technology sessions, and met with Elizabeth O'Kelly of the Intermediate Technology Development Group in London.

On the afternoon of July 16, at the invitation of Glen and Millie Leet, the consultant attended a workshop on the "Trickle Up Program, An Experiment for Income Production through Group Self-Employment."

She met informally with several members of the Board of Women's World Banking, including Michaela Walsh and Beatrice Harrette of the Inter-American Bank, Ann Roberts of Rockefeller Foundation, and Nevrou Bordt de Haan of the Netherlands.

On July 18, she attended a workshop on health and family life at the invitation of Bettina Corke, from Decade Media, Inc. Ms. Corke is interested in producing films on water and sanitation issues.

Ester Boserup, a Danish economist, and Irene Tinker joined the consultant on the evening of July 18 for a working dinner. They discussed plans for follow-up, as well as their mutual interests in rural women and change, especially in health. Boserup had to cancel her trip to the Yucatan for the upcoming international conference of economists in Mexico, but asked for copies of all the Maya materials for use in her new book on development and population.

The consultant left the last 50 copies of her paper with the Egyptian Delegation for use at the Forum the following week. The delegates, and others as well, offered to send written comments to the consultant at the Equity Policy Center for incorporation in the revised draft.

On Sunday morning, July 19, the consultant returned to Washington on a flight via Paris.

Appendix A
LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

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- American Friends Service Committee. "Women's Network on Global Corporations." Philadelphia, Summer 1980.
- Corke, Bettina, "Health and Family Life Education/Workshop: Me Too: Men, Family Planning and Women." Decade Media, Inc. New York, July 18, 1980.
- Corke Bettina. "Family Life Education/Workshop: A Three Unit Communication and Information Package on Family Life Education." Decade Media, Inc. New York, July 16, 1980.
- Corke, Bettina. "Employment and Family Life/Workshop: The Hermitage and Its Children: Another Way to Pre-School Day Care." Decade Media, Inc. New York, July 15, 1980.
- Equity Policy Center. "Interim Report/International Symposium on Women and Their Health, June 8-11, 1980." Washington, D.C.
- Leet, Glen and Millie. "Trickle Up Program: An Experiment for Income Production Through Group Self Employment." New York, New York, 1980.
- Ministry of the Interior. "Women and Health." Copenhagen, 1980.
- Planning Committee for NGO Activities. "Forum 80: NGO Programme." Copenhagen, July 14, 1980.
- United Nations. "Review and Evaluation of Progress Achieved in the Implementation of the World Plan of Action: Health." UN Doc. A/CONF .94/9, July 14-30, 1980.
- Union de Mujeres Campesinas. "VENCEREMOS." Ecuador, 1980.
- VIVENCIA. Information Centre, Workshops, Technical Assistance for Projects, Film Festival, Art and Music Groups, NGO Forum, July 1980.
- Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press. "Dateline Copenhagen: Woman's View." Washington, D.C., 1980.
- Women's World Banking. New York, New York, 1980.
- World Council of Credit Unions. "Women Entrepreneurs: Access to Capital and Credit." July 16, 1980.
- World Health Organization. "Health and the Status of Women." UN Doc. A/CONF .94/BP/2, April 9, 1980.

Appendix B
LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED

Appendix B

LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED

Congresswoman Aurora Nania Miller, Mexico

Lourdez Aizba, Mexico

Terry Kautai, Africa

Achola Pala Okeyo, Kenya

Isabel Nieves, Guatemala

Michaela Walsh, Women's World Banking

Gloria Scott, U.S., World Bank

Elinor Barber, U.S., Ford Foundation

Elise Smith, U.S., Overseas Education Fund

Maxine Hitchcock, U.S., Overseas Education Fund

Ann Roberts, U.S., Rockefeller Foundation

Lynne Stitt, U.S., Clearinghouse on Women's Issues, Women's Institute for
Freedom of the Press

Hilda Line, New Hebrides

Marie B. Assaad, Egypt, World Council of Churches

Jane Threatt, U.S., Rural American Women