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## The Education and Training Sector at Copenhagen

by

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In reviewing progress during the previous five years toward the realization of education and training goals set out in the World Plan of Action, reports indicated that although there had been some achievements since 1975, efforts toward eradicating illiteracy had made little progress. Two of every three illiterates in the world are women, and about 80% of all women in Asia and Africa cannot read or write. Half of the world's population is women. Yet women perform nearly two-thirds of all working hours commanding only one-third of the amount paid to the labor force. They receive 10% of the world's income and own less than 1% of the world's property. The five-year period has shown little increase in access to the technological training which could help remedy these inequities. There were some improvements in access to formal schooling, but on the whole, little progress was reported overall in terms of access by women and girls to all levels of education, particularly by those in rural areas of the less developed countries. Consciousness-raising for the needs of women and girls as evidenced by various government plans to deal with educational inequities was viewed as an encouraging aspect of the progress assessment.

Because of the impatience women around the world felt toward this lack of progress, education became one of the major substantive areas included in the 1980 Programme of Action. Although substantive issues were in fact discussed for only about four hours during the two-and-a-half week official conference, the Programme reflects careful review and research. Its provisions with regard to education and training appear in two sections, one under national goals, the other international.

National Objectives in the Programme of Action

1. Equal access to educational and training opportunities at all levels.
2. Abolishing traditional sex role stereotypes.
3. Including education for non-violence, particularly in relationships between men and women in educational programs.
4. Provision of innovative programs and methodologies to meet the special needs of women and the eradication of illiteracy.
5. Establishment of transitional links between school life, apprenticeship and working life to ensure for women and girls better interaction between education, training and employment.
6. Formulation and implementation of education programs with final year courses adapted to specific needs of the country, designed to improve and increase the access of women to gainful employment and give them opportunities to take part in non-traditional activities.
7. Increasing opportunities for women to study and train in science and technology.
8. Developing means to keep girls in school longer and to help find opportunities for them to study subjects which will enable them to achieve positions of influence in the decision-making process.

National Priority Areas for Action

1. Establishment of targets for the abolition of differentials in the literacy and educational attainment rates for girls and boys within overall efforts to increase literacy and education for the whole population.
2. Promotion of national educational accreditation and equivalency programs to encourage the return of drop-outs from the formal education system.
3. Promotion of education programs for children, particularly pre-school.
4. Establishment of targets for the expansion of educational opportunities and facilities for women.
5. Provision of new formal and extracurricular education so that women may combine their household duties with opportunities to improve their educational level.
6. Encouragement through legislation of free and compulsory education for girls and boys at the primary level and establishment of co-education where possible. Provision of trained teachers of both sexes and where necessary transportation and boarding facilities.
7. Increased enrollment of female students in education courses and in science, mathematics and technical courses in particular, and in management training courses in areas of science and technology.

8. Provision for equal access to all levels of general education, vocational education and training for all types of occupations including those traditionally accessible to men using new training schemes such as on the job training, scholarships, inexpensive boarding and lodging facilities, child care, ensuring equal job opportunities after completion of vocational education or training both for entry and re-entry, after a period of absence, into professional life.
9. Examination of curricula and learning materials and removal of sex bias and stereotyped portrayal of the roles of girls and women and the promotion and development of non-sexist materials.
10. Establishment of targets for nationwide implementation of learning materials developed to optimize the potential of women.
11. Inclusion of women's issues studies in university degree programs.
12. Development of programs at secondary, post-secondary and adult education levels to encourage a basic understanding of human rights. Such courses would stress elimination of discrimination on the basis of race and sex.
13. Training of guidance counselors and teachers to assist girls and boys to choose professions according to their abilities and interests and not according to stereotyped sex roles.
14. Design and promotion of teacher education courses which alert teachers to the stereotyped assumptions which inhibit choice in school subjects and to widen the options available to women and girls. Provision of counseling services for benefit of parents, teachers, pupils, workers and employers.
15. Encouragement of parity of men and women in teaching and administration at all levels of education.
16. Identification of the constraints on different culturally or socially underprivileged target groups (girls of school age not attending school, illiterate adults, adults engaged in home responsibilities who need additional education, working women in rural and urban areas, mature women and immigrant women) and development of programs for them.
17. Monitoring or programs taking measures to improve the data on drop-out rates of girls and women and causes, course content, level of skills acquired to facilitate remedial measures and to generate greater commitment to the policy objectives within the system.
18. Provide service for particular target groups with priority for those needing them most: counseling, child-care, earning and learning schemes, transport, clothing, books, supplementary nutrition, reading centers, tutoring in basic subjects such as math, scholarships and stipends. Inclusion of such services should be viewed as priority items in educational budgets.
19. Provision of education for women in the context of life-long learning in all development sectors taking specific measures for funding and personnel.

20. Promotion of instruction and interdisciplinary research on women and goals of the U.N. Decade for Women as an input in the educational process, particularly in institutions of higher learning and teacher education to draw on experience acquired in some countries with women's status and to eliminate attitudinal and conceptual biases and prejudices.

#### International Recommendations for Action

The International section focuses its recommendations on UNESCO which is urged to cooperate with other U.N. agencies, to continue its studies and its contributions to the development of research and teaching about women at the university level and in non-formal education. The organization of seminars and workshops on issues related to women in development and the inclusion of women in the substantive discussions of international conferences will be continued by UNESCO.

#### Resolutions Adopted by the World Conference of the U.N. Decade for Women

Forty-eight resolutions were adopted. One major resolution was devoted to education, although education and training were mentioned in many others.

The conference reiterated the Education and Training Goals of the World Plan of Action adopted at the Mexico City U.N. conference in 1975, stressing the objectives of equal access to educational and training opportunities at all levels for women and girls. While urging the provision for programs to eradicate illiteracy and to upgrade functional skills and basic information about employment and health-related matters, the Copenhagen conference urged the inclusion of "values," i.e., an emphasis on education against violence, intercultural programs leading to better understanding of others and thus to peace, education to promote disarmament, and on the elimination of discrimination, particularly that based on race or sex. The conference dealt also with the educational and training needs of women refugees, migrants, victims of natural catastrophies and politically or economically caused upheavals.

Resolution #30, Promotion of equality in education and training, is incorporated for the most part in the Programme of Action. It calls for setting

targets for the elimination of illiteracy by the end of the century and urges governments to adopt innovative measures to see that women are given equal access to education at all levels. It also calls for special efforts to provide women with vocational and technical training and recommends enactment of such legislation as compulsory primary education in efforts to get girls into school and to keep them there. Life-long access to educational and training programs to meet the needs of rural and urban poor women is stressed.

Resolution 36 on Women and Development Assistance Programmes reiterates the importance of on-the-job training for women while Resolution 44 talks of the importance of education and training for rural women. Indeed, the call for education and training runs throughout most of the resolutions: especially disadvantaged women in the Sahel, Sahwari, Namibia, South Africa, women who are refugees, migrants, young, or affected by racial discrimination, all should have access to education and training.

Resolution 7 takes up the theme of peace from the World Plan of Action, urging governments to include peace in educational processes and teaching methods and in the media. In addition, research institutions such as the International Center for Public Enterprises in Developing Countries and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women are urged to undertake practical studies to facilitate meeting the goals of the World Programme of Action.

#### NGO Forum

The non-official participants in the sometimes hectic Forum, where some 200 informal sessions were held daily, gave little attention to the World Programme of Action. There were no workshops or panels on the draft programme in sharp contrast with the avalanche of amendments submitted by the Tribune, the informal "forum" of the 1975 Mexico City conference. Possibly this pointed to a feeling of "marginalization" among women who view themselves as outside of the system

and who see implementation of a program of action as basically out of their hands. Forum participants at Copenhagen apparently felt that progress may come through a slow process, and that women can help each other strengthen the process by exchange of information on their successes and failures. Women from developing countries repeatedly asked for direct funding from NGOs or donor agencies to small women's organizations bypassing the bureaucratic apparatus of local governments and large international agencies which are rarely concerned with their small projects.

One Forum participant at Copenhagen reported that she considered as evidence of progress since the 1975 Mexico conference the fact that more than half of the education and training objectives targeted for action fall in what one could term a 'feminist' category.

Vivian Derryck, Director of the U.S. Secretariat for the Copenhagen Conference, commented that the Copenhagen Conference marked "the first time that the concepts of feminism and sexism were discussed seriously."

Feminism illustrated a North-South gap, according to one Forum participant who reported that in her experience peace, feminism and to some extent religion and Women in Development were heavily North. Apartheid, T.N.C.s, and racism were South.

"Feminist" or not, there was an urgency to the demands for education and training. Women seem to be saying: We want to get rid of illiteracy by the year 2000. We want our daughters to have the same opportunities to learn and earn as their brothers have or should have. We want opportunities to learn about how to improve our way of life and our work. We want good food and health for ourselves and our families and not as many unwanted pregnancies. We want to be a part of what's going on in our town and country and the world. We not only urge--we demand that our governments give a priority to our educational needs for ourselves and our children--especially for our daughters and granddaughters.