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Subject: Highlights of Major Resolutions
Adopted on Issues related to
Women's Employment and Vocational/
Skills Training Needs.

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This report highlights the major Resolutions adopted at the World Conference on the United Nations Decade for Women, held in Copenhagen July 14-30, 1980 with respect to women's employment and vocational/skills training needs.

The identification of major areas of concern and proposed resolutions on those two areas is followed by a succinct statement of the central recommendations that were submitted on both these topics by the ICRW to the AID Task Force on Women and Employment.



I. RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

The major thrust of recommendations made at the Copenhagen Conference centered around legislative measures to ensure that labor policies and action do not discriminate against women in general, and on the basis of their maternal status, in particular.

International women migrants were singled out as a particularly vulnerable group in relation to their access to the employment structure. Special sets of recommendations were articulated for rural women in relation to their rights and opportunities for gainful employment.

The structural linkage between women's employment and the international economic order was acknowledged. Increasing and promoting employment opportunities for women were seen as part of

"national efforts to bring about a more just international economic order, with a view to achieving national self-reliance, increasing economic and technical co-operation among developing countries and the full utilization of the labour force for their own benefit and to promote the socio-economic development of their own countries."

A. Specific Areas of Concern

The Double Burden

The Conference stressed the need to develop through government support a series of welfare measures to enable women to combine work outside the home with their responsibilities as mothers - these include: the increased involvement of men in sharing domestic and child care responsibilities; the working women's access to more recreation and culture; government provision of community-based, work-based and work-related child care services, out-of-school hours and holiday care, crisis care and care for those families engaged in shift work; amenities for adolescent children; reduction in the length of the women's working day; and flexible working hours.

The Marginal Women Worker

The question of women's economic marginality was not identified as an issue. However, some of the resolutions adopted call for measures that are directed at Subgroups of women whose work status is marginal.

The Unemployed: Social legislation should guarantee that women have the same access as men to secure employment, particularly in times of economic recession, and be guaranteed social security benefits, adequate accomodation and medical services on the basis of individual need.

The Unpaid Worker: Recognition of the unpaid work women perform in the household and in subsistence agriculture. Inclusion of such work in the official statistics.

Workers in the Informal Sector: The need to implement policies related to women's work in the informal jobs of the tertiary sector, in particular the coverage of labor legislation for domestic service workers.

For women workers' in the tertiary sector of the economy the following was stressed:

"guaranteeing the right to organize trade unions and other appropriate organizations such as credit and marketing co-operatives controlled by the women concerned; increasing access to managerial and technical training and to financial resources, credit facilities and other inputs in order to improve the working conditions of women and increase their occupational and educational mobility as well as their productivity and economic returns."

Parttime Workers: Provisions be made to insure the extension of levels of remuneration and social security that are proportional to full time workers; and the same level of working conditions and standards of protection as fulltime workers.

Transnational Corporation Workers: The tone adopted by the Conference favored expanding employment opportunities for women in these corporations, with mention for the adoption of policies to prevent "the negative effects," of such type employment

B. Increasing Employment Opportunities for Women:

The Resolutions stressed in general the importance of increasing employment opportunities for women and improve existing ones by upgrading women's skills levels and managerial capacity, "particularly in the low and middle level of the sectors where the majority of women work."

For the promotion of women's occupational mobility it was recommended that "implicit and explicit job evaluation criteria be revised with a view to overcoming difficulties and obstacles to the job advancement and concerns of women."

C. Special Priority Groups

International Women Migrants

The conference singled out International Women Migrants as a particularly vulnerable group on whose behalf host country governments (and countries of origin) should implement special measures to promote their access to the labor market.

Priority Areas for Action were formulated along the following lines:

- Preventing de jure and de facto discrimination in connection with a) preconditions required for entry into the employment market (medical examinations, in particular); b) hiring practices; c) conditions of employment
- Guaranteeing equal rights to wage earners to have access to orientation, vocational training, in-service training, professional advancement, etc; in order to upgrade their occupational status.
- Providing before departure and during their stay in host countries necessary information in a language understandable to them, on labor conditions, industrial legislation, legal rights and obligations and administrative practices.

Rural Women

Strong emphasis was placed on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for the gainful employment of rural women in agricultural and non agricultural jobs; on improving the capabilities and productivity of rural women workers; to extend labor and social security legislation to women working in agriculture; on creating jobs for women in the Agro-industrial sector.

The following priority areas for action were identified:

To promote the incorporation of women in all phases of the agricultural productive process, including post harvesting processing, up to and including the marketing of products;

To provide women with the necessary skills and appropriate technology to enable them to participate better in the process of subsistence food production.

To institute information programming especially for rural women and women from socio-economically disadvantaged groups, aimed at making them aware of opportunities for education, training and skill acquisition and employment.

D. On Transfer of Technology

The Conference identified the adverse effect that transfers of technology have on labor force disruption, in general, but which affect women more severely than male workers.

In line with this recognition, Resolutions called for the following measures: The development of new programmes and appropriate policies with regard to industrialization and the transfer of technology aimed at maximizing benefits and preventing adverse effects from the transfer of technology on both the employment, training, health and nutrition of women and over-all development. Standards should be instituted to ensure that technologies transferred are safe for utilization, and recipient countries be alerted of the hazards of particular forms of technology.

E. On Decision-Making Power

Two important resolutions were taken to promote the entry of women into decision-making positions:

1. To increase the number of women at decision making levels in both national and international workers' organizations and advisory bodies at least until the proportion corresponds to the number of women exercising a profession.
2. To ensure that development agencies in different sectors of national planning include larger numbers of women in their staff as a matter of policy and, as part of that policy, allocate resources to programmes for women's employment and training, the provision of supporting services and other essential inputs.

F. Legislation And Labor Policies

The Resolutions adopted on the matter of labor policies reflected four different emphasis:

1. An Integrated Approach

- To integrate "labor policies and action in favor of women workers as part of overall employment measures for the entire working population, men and women alike"."

2. An Underprivileged-Specific Approach

- To include in employment policies for underprivileged groups (the rural and urban poor, and indigenous population groups) particular references to the specific situation of women.

3. A Sex Equalitarian Approach

- To promote protective legislation that will counter sexually oriented practices that endanger a women's access to or maintenance of employment, that undermine her job performance and threaten her economic livelihood.

To ratify and implement at national levels conventions and recommendations of the International Labor Organization concerning the rights of women to have access to:

equal employment opportunities; equal pay for work of equal value; equal job security; equal unemployment benefits equal protection of health and safety in working conditions.

4. A Maternal Protectionist Approach:

Legislative and social measures were recommended to

- a) prohibit through inter alia the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on basis of marital status;
- b) ensure that health and safety in working conditions safeguard the function of reproduction
- c) guarantee the right of women to return to work after maternity leave.

The Conference also supported the importance of freedom of association and the protection of the right of women to organize.

RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
RELATED TO VOCATIONAL AND
SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS
FOR WOMEN

The Resolutions adopted at the Conference made little specific reference to occupational skills training in relation to local labor market demands, or to the relationship between nonformal educational needs of uneducated women and this immediate marketability.

The following Resolutions are singled out in that they relate directly to the marketability aspect of vocational and skills training.

- (1) Governments are urged to formulate and implement at national and local levels flexible formal and informal programming of vocational training for girls and women that will:
 - Provide them with new skills, particularly in sectors traditionally reserved for men;
 - Give them access to a gainful economic activity and/or enable them to generate income through production of goods and services;
 - Provide them with training and retaining for secure employment through programmes which must include income maintenance, child care, parental leave and personal and vocational development programmes;

Training programs for women should have flexible time schedules and be accompanied by Support services, like day care centers.

- (2) Special mention is made of the training needs of rural women. Governments are requested to ensure that rural women:
 - Are provided with education, technology and training suitable to their needs, as identified by them in order to improve employment opportunities in rural areas;
 - Are encouraged and adequately trained to participate actively in co-operatives and other organizations concerned with marketing;

- Are provided at all levels of access to formal and non-formal courses in leadership and decision-making, as well as to programmes that teach skills appropriate to their lifestyle and skills which could be utilized, if necessary, for paid employment;
 - Are assured access to technology at all levels, particularly in relation to food storage and preservation, transport and marketing and labour-saving tools and devices;
 - Are not excluded by development assistance programs from access to technological training.
- (3) There are sets of Resolutions adopted by the Conference which single out the training needs of special subgroups of women: underprivileged women; unemployed women; women migrants.

Underprivileged Women

The formulation and implementation of special/additional/diversified programs for illiterate urban and rural women engaged in household responsibilities.

- Provision of opportunities to gain new skills with job opportunities.
- Identification of situational constraints confronted by culturally or socially underprivileged women that hinder their participation in the educational process.

Unemployed Women

- Provision of formal and non-formal training; and retraining to equip them with marketable employment skills.
- Provision of personal and vocational development programs.

Migrant Women (international)

- Provision of educational, vocational training, and counselling services in appropriate languages.
- Access to language and literacy training facilities in the community and work place. Such cases should be accompanied by child care services.

- (4) Some of the resolutions adopted place heavy emphasis on the participation of women in science and technology. This is primarily in the formal/higher educational structure.

From amongst these some resolutions could conceivably benefit women if incorporated at varying levels of sophistication into the non-formal vocational training system:

- The establishment of intermediate technical courses; encouragement of women to enroll in all technical institutes courses and training programs.
- Increasing women's access to special technical training programs. Women so qualified should be helped to obtain jobs suited to their individual skills.
- Provisions that women be introduced on the same footing with men to new types of training in the (advanced) technologies.

II. ICRW RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AID TASK FORCE ON EMPLOYMENT

The major thrust of the ICRW recommendations on women and work in developing countries submitted to the AID Task Force for Women and Employment created specially for the International Conference on Women in Copenhagen is directed to conditions surrounding urban and rural low income women. The concerns highlighted in ICRW's papers dealt with problems associated with the marginal status of women workers and specific actions that Third World governments can take to:

1. Minimize the marginalization of women's work particularly in the informal sector of the economy;
2. Promote the employment of urban and rural women through deliberately expanding the aggregate level of demand for women workers. This can be done through recognizing the structural linkages that exist between present projected labor market conditions/needs at the national level and employment focused strategies for women.
3. Promote the organization of women in cooperatives, in unions and other groups; to facilitate the mobilization of and women's access to productive resources in the form of credit and technology.

A. Specific Areas of Concern:

The Double Burden and Women's Marginality

The ICRW recognized that the double burden of low income women is a serious problem not only in and by itself but also because the policy maker's view of women as "mothers only" is used to explain and legitimate the marginal location of poor women on the periphery of the labor market. This unidimensional view allows policy makers to avoid taking direct action to minimize the perpetuation of poor working conditions for women.

Recommendations for international, national and program level action along the following lines were made:

1. Cautioning against the implicit long term policy which presently channels unskilled women into domestic service, ICRW singled out certain types of intervention that would improve present working conditions of domestic workers. There is critical need to revise international labor laws, social legislation and social security provisions in this direction, and to promote collective bargaining among domestic servants.

2. Following the identification of some of the negative effects inherent in current practices related to women's employment in Transnational Corporations, special recommendations were made to:

- a) establish strong national employment policies which guarantee responsible labor practices;
- b) stabilize women's employment and provide protection against dismissals, lay-offs, etc;
- c) allow for the unionization of women workers.

3. General attention was called to the statistically unrecognized existence and magnitude of subgroups of women who personify the marginal status of women workers, specifically: unpaid worker's; urban migrants; urban informal sector workers; the landless; women-heads of household.

B. Recommendations for:

Employment Focused Strategies to Expand the Aggregate Demand for Women Workers, include:

- (1) encouraging investment in labor intensive industries to promote absorption of the surplus female labor supply by providing incentives for public and private investment (through taxation policies, capital subsidies, labor subsidies, lower interest rates, etc.) in labor intensive industries notable for employing women, such as industrial sewing, tailoring, the textiles, food processing, chemical production, tobacco and paper manufacturing, etc.
- (2) identifying current labor needs and project future trends in relation to national and regional growth by
a) assessing the present productive contributions of women and identifying areas where productivity can be enhanced (e.g., rural agriculture and marketing) and where entry and mobility can be facilitated (e.g., urban manufacturing).
b) identifying the potential pool of female labor in urban and rural locations, in formal and informal activities, and in various sectors and identifying the level of skills women possess or need to develop to participate in these productive areas; c) assessing the number of women occupationally displaced by land reform, modernization of agriculture and urban industrialization.
- (3) Coordinating and integrating efforts to promote women's employment at the regional, national, and local levels; between the private and public sector; and among government branches (legislative, and judicial branches and ministries of labor, health, education, agriculture industry and social welfare).

- (4) identifying and overcoming cultural or structural obstacles that deny women control over the products of their labor.

Special recommendations to increase and facilitate the income generating capacity of rural women, include:

- (1) identifying groups of women who are most in need of income-generating employment (particularly the landless, ostracized racial, religious, or ethnic groups, and women who are heads of household.)
- (2) defining the range of economic activities in which needy women are currently engaged, with a view to raising their output and income-generating capacity or shifting them into more productive activities;
- (3) locating indigenous social networks around which groups of women could be mobilized to work together;
- (4) establishing sources of credit, technical assistance, and training to reach traditionally ineligible groups;
- (5) determining needs for technology to reduce domestic burdens;

C. Access to Credit

Strong emphasis was placed on the need to involve women in credit systems as a central element of larger policies directed at developing overall viable financial markets which provide opportunities to save along with loans.

Suggested strategies for incorporating women's income-generation concerns into the design of credit programs included the following: (a) To direct credit to more economic activities in which rural and urban women traditionally have been active; (b) Make credit available to create new employment/income generation opportunities for all farm activities; (c) Provide credit for all commercialization of home production.

D. Legislation

The ICRW emphasized the need to review labor legislation for women to ensure that it is protective rather than protectionist in spirit. Specifically it was recommended that:

- a) the restrictive effects of legislation that bar women a priori from certain types of work be recouched in conditional rather than categorial terms;
- b) social security provisions be extended in a manner to reduce discrimination in hiring practices;
- c) the financing of special protection for working mothers be generated by enactment of policies whereby all employees (whether or not they hire women) contribute to funds for maternity and other benefits rather than involving costs directly related to women's employment.

ICRW RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AID TASK FORCE ON
OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

• At the National Level

1. Identify and project current labor needs and future trends in relation to national and regional growth to make explicit actual and potential role assessments for women as well as men.
 - (a) Assess work/productive contributions of women and identify:
 - i. areas where productivity can be enhanced, e.g.; agriculture and marketing;
 - ii. where entry and skill mobility can be facilitated, e.g., urban industry.
 - (b) Assess labor pool potential including:
 - i. the location and concentration of women in the rural and urban sectors;
 - ii. which sectors women are active in or interested in entering;
 - iii. levels of skills women possess and need to develop.
 - (c) Address training priorities for women to present and projected market demands and growth potentials.
2. Target areas of productivity specifically for the accelerated integration of women (by sector, quotas, new industry sex-bias); provide training with vigorous recruitment of women.
3. Encourage coordination between training programs and development trends of the economic sector. Include incentives to women for participation (e.g., scholarships).
4. Establish or strengthen a Commission for Women to serve as a research and planning advocate for the needs of women in training, employment, access to resources, and access to services.
5. Coordinate national and regional planning and training programs to maximize limited resources (e.g., regional center for training national trainers) and utilize work/field training experience to enhance design effectiveness.

6. Make explicit policy and program objectives at all levels to minimize the possible biases of program and local groups (e.g., extension agents, local religious leadership) that may inhibit women's access to training. Provide concrete plans and resources of the ways and means to enhance women's productive roles through training programs. Encourage the training of women in all field to minimize sex-segregation in national training and vocational occupations.
7. Complement policy oriented to enhance vocational training opportunities for women with policy that encourages the education and training of women at all levels of the professional and paraprofessional spectrum in the fields of science and technology, to avoid perpetuating the sex-segregation between professional and vocational training and occupations.

B. At the Program and Project Levels

Program Access.

1. Emphasize (through financial support, recognition, etc.) training programs that can promote and strengthen the organization of women into women's cooperatives and associations or that facilitate effective integration of women into mixed organizations such as labor unions, and community councils.
2. Encourage the creation of 'training groups' at the local level.
3. Investigate and utilize both formal and informal channels of information and organization operating among women. Encourage organizations that act as 'self-advocates' in articulating training priorities.
4. Recruit and educate women trainers in all skills and methods for specifically reaching women students. Draw these trainers from local communities where possible. Train women as paraprofessionals in all fields in the technical paraprofessions to avoid perpetuating a sex stereotyped paraprofessional and vocational occupational structure.
5. Develop methods and programs which minimize requirements for certain level of literacy, arithmetic knowledge and other such conditions for participation in training programs. Integrate these basic skills into vocational programming. Build on existing knowledge, skills and experience of women.
6. Integrate process as well as content skills to enhance the adaptability of training provided (e.g., organizational process, contact/work with agencies).
7. Utilize methods of training that promote active participation by women; develop leadership potential/skills of women and clarify links between skills and opportunities for women.

8. Establish centers in locations which are readily accessible to concentrations of female population and which require a minimum of travel for participants.

9. Train urban women who participate in the marginal, informal labor market, to enhance their income-generating potential within that market, and to promote their entry into and mobility within the modern sector. Strengthen the participation of poor urban women in associations, cooperatives and unions.

10. Train rural women to:

- (a) Enhance their returns potential in agricultural production;
- (b) Increase their productive activity in new sectors and ensure the availability of complementary resources (e.g., land and credit);
- (c) Enhance productive employment in off-farm activities;
- (d) Create and strengthen community-level associations, cooperatives and unions to increase women's collective access to productive resources.

Skill Marketability

11. Ensure that the skills training provided is responsive to 'current and future market demands' or has market outlets.

12. Ensure that "opportunity building" is integrated into training design by developing information channels for hiring into formal sector, encouraging contracts between employment sector and training programs for hiring trainees; providing access to credit and technology for entrepreneurial and self-employment projects.

13. Introduce skills enabling women to re-orient traditional home production (e.g., poultry, food processing, animal breeding and spinning activities) into the market place.

14. Provide training in marketing, storage and process techniques and in basic managerial, investment and accounting skills to support this re-orientation.

15. Account for age-variations when designing and targeting programs (e.g., training for adolescent girls can often be longer and future oriented while women with large family/economic responsibilities may require different time, skill and immediacy of training application).